

Reconstructing Turkish-American relations: Divergences versus convergences

Mustafa Aydın

Abstract

The Turkish-American relationship experienced the most difficult period of its history after the refusal of the Turkish Parliament on 1 March 2003 to allow US troops to open a northern front to Iraq from Turkish territory. By the time a new administration took power in Washington in early 2009, the badly damaged relationship had recovered somewhat and recently has even taken a positive turn. Although the parameters of the recovered relationship are not yet clear, by analyzing the intricacies of diverging and converging worldviews and interests of the two states in the post-Cold War era, one can understand what happened to the strategic partnership of the 1990s and how Turkish-American relations may develop in the future. Accordingly, this paper will first look at the constraints and limitations of the current relationship through diverging interests and contextual viewpoints in the post-Iraq War world. It will then highlight the areas of convergence that existed even during the lowest point of the relationship. Finally, I will argue that, while the strategic partnership may have ended, a strategic relationship between the two states will continue to exist and may even produce a newer form of connection and cooperation, the contours of which will also be outlined for the coming years, taking into account the opportunities and hurdles ahead.

Keywords: *Turkish-American relations, strategic partnership, strategic relationship, special relationship, national interests*

Mustafa Aydın, Department of International Relations, University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, maydin@etu.edu.tr.

Introduction

The Turkish-American relationship has been going through a rough patch since the Bush administration decided to move against Iraq and since the Turkish Parliament on 1 March 2003 refused US troops to open a northern front from Turkish territory. By the time a new administration took power in Washington in early 2009, the relationship had recovered only marginally from the “deepest confidence crisis.”¹ Only by looking at the intricacies of diverging and converging worldviews and interests of the two states in the post-Cold War era can one understand what went wrong and what happened to the strategic partnership of the 1990s.

Although Turks and Americans have connections dating back to 1800, the real beginning of their modern-day relationship should be dated to the early days of the Cold War, when both countries were looking for allies against the “Soviet threat.”² The quickly developed relationship was based on shared threat perceptions, and the rule of the game was clear: Turkey provided bases to monitor/encircle the Soviet Union; the US supplied economic aid and a defense umbrella.³ Due to the constraints imposed by the bipolar world system, the relationship was able to endure multiple crises, such as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis,⁴ the 1964 Johnson Letter,⁵ and the 1975 American arms embargo. A re-assessment followed each crisis, and the 1960s’ quandary led to the signing of the Joint Defense Cooperation Agreement in 1969, while the 1975 embargo and the following negotiations resulted in the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) of 1980. The DECA included eco-

- 1 These were the words of the then Turkish General Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök, to US Ambassador Robert Pearson after the man-handling of Turkish special forces troops by American soldiers in Sulaymania, Iraq, on 4 July 2003. See, “En büyük güven krizi”, *Radikal*, 8 Temmuz 2003, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=80704>.
- 2 For the history of Turkish-American relations, see, Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, eds., *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London: Routledge, 2004).
- 3 For relations during the Cold War, see, George S. Harris, *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971* (Washington: AEI, 1972), Dankwart A. Rustow, *Turkey: America's Forgotten Ally* (New York: CFR, 1989), David L. Stern, *The Wrong Horse: The Politics of Intervention and the Failure of American Diplomacy* (New York: Times Books, 1977).
- 4 During the crisis, President Kennedy agreed to remove Jupiter missiles from Turkey, in exchange for the removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1971), 86-87, Barton J. Bernstein, “Reconsidering the Missile Crisis: Dealing with the American Jupiters in Turkey?,” in *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, ed. James E. Nathan (New York: St Martins, 1992), 95-97.
- 5 In the letter, President Johnson warned Turkey that its “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 [i.e., intervening in Cyprus on behalf of the Turkish minority] which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO Allies.” The letter was later published in *The Middle East Journal*, 20/3 in 1966.

conomic and defense industry cooperation components, signaling that the relationship was slowly passing beyond the equation of aid in return for military bases. It allowed the relationship to mature, and by the end of the Cold War, while Turkey's strategic importance was being questioned, the two countries continued to cooperate against the emerging challenges in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁶

Although the disappearance of the USSR in 1991 changed the basic geo-strategic parameters of the alliance, and Turkey's significance in containing the Soviet Union was no longer an issue, Turkey transformed itself into a reliable regional ally and a stable partner in a very turbulent neighborhood. Turkey's pro-western foreign policy and potential to affect developments in nearby regions made it valuable for the US. Not only did Turkey become one of the closest allies of the US during the Gulf War, but it also changed its long-established policy of disengagement from regional problems. It proved itself a modern and secular Muslim country with a strong drive towards democracy and a working market economy, thus a successful model for the developing Muslim world, both in Central Asia and the Middle East.

On the other hand, cooperation with the US was still important for Turkey for political, economic, and security reasons. The Turkish economy was in need of external borrowing, foreign direct investment (FDI), and new markets for export. The US was valuable as an important source of FDI, as a market for Turkish products, and as a supporter of Turkey's international borrowing in ever-higher figures. Politically, in return for its cooperation during the Gulf War, Turkey received support from the US for its endeavor to create a sphere of influence on the territories of the former Soviet Union, to realize the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline project, and to join the European Union.

The discussions taking place in the early 1990s over the future of European security architecture also nudged Turkey towards the US.⁷ As the debate among the Europeans concentrated on the relevance of NATO and the creation of a new European security system, Turkey found itself threatened by uncertainties in its neighborhood, while

6 For an analysis of the developing relations at the end of the Cold War, see, Ömer Karasapan, "Turkey and US Strategy in the Age of Glasnost," *Middle East Report*, no. 160 (1989), Henri J. Barkey, "Turkish-American Relations in the Postwar Era: An Alliance of Convenience," *Orbis* 33, no. 3 (1992), Carol Migdalovitz, *Turkey: Ally in a Troubled Region* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, 1993), Sabri Sayarı, "Turkish-American Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Issues of Convergence and Divergence," in *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (London: Routledge, 2003).

7 For a summary of this debate and its effect on Turkey's orientation, see, Sabri Sayarı, "Turkey: Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 1 (1992).

its western security connection was being challenged. This realization forced Turkey to reconsider its post-Cold War security orientation. As Turkey's place in the emerging European Security and Defense Policy remained ambiguous,⁸ the bilateral security relationship with the US and the cooperation with Israel resonated among the Turkish security elite.⁹ As a result, what was called a defense and economic cooperation in 1980 was transformed into a *strategic partnership* by the mid-1990s.¹⁰ While Turkey emphasized its special position as an island of stability in an uncertain world, the US increasingly came to regard Turkey as one of the pivotal states that could either upset or enhance American interests within its region.¹¹

Developments since then, however, have changed the parameters of the relationship and demanded a re-formulation. While Turkish discussions on the nature of the post-Cold War era centered on multi-polarity,

8 See, Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "European Security and Turkey in a Changing Strategic Environment," *Yearbook of the Hellenic Foundation for Defence and Foreign Policy* (1990)..

9 For analyses of Turkey's security at this time, see, Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Security Policy: Continuity and Change," in *Politics and Security in the Southern Region of the Atlantic Alliance*, ed. D. Stuart (New York: Macmillan, 1988), Duygu Sezer, "Turkey's Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma," *International Spectator* 27, no. 1 (1992), Kemal Kirişçi, "Post Cold-War Turkish Security and the Middle East," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1997).

10 The rhetoric of strategic cooperation was frequently used since the late 1980s by the former Prime Minister Turgut Özal, who believed that the regional power status he sought for Turkey could only be achieved through US support and thriving Turkish-American relations. Thus, he formed an alliance with the US during the Gulf War and talked about the emergence of strategic cooperation. For him, the new relationship's economic, political and psychological components were as much, if not more, important as its security dimension. See, Sayarı, "Turkey.", Mustafa Aydın, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Gulf War of 1990-1991* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 70-71. The strategic partnership increasingly became part of the bilateral agenda in the mid-1990s, after it was repeatedly emphasized by the Turkish leaders (such as prime ministers Tansu Çiller, Mesut Yılmaz, and others). The American side reluctantly began to use it largely as a goodwill gesture to the Turkish side. On the US side, when President Clinton during his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 15 November 1999 used it to describe the relationship, the term "strategic partnership" gained widespread currency. See, <http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/New/html/19991115.html>.

11 The pivot state concept, originally developed by Halford Mackinder over a century ago, was revived after the Cold War to analyze US foreign policy. One of the earlier examples (Robert S. Chace, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and US Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1996).) defined the pivotal state as "a hot spot that could not only determine the fate of its regions but also affect international stability." Zbigniew Brzezinski popularized the concept in his *The Grand Chessboard*. See, Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). He defined it 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" Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 41. Later, Alan O. Makovsky, Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser used it to analyze Turkey's importance to the US. See, Alan O. Makovsky, "Turkey," in *The Pivotal States: A New Framework for US Policy in Developing World*, ed. Robert S. Chace, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy (Washington: Norton, 1998), Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2003).

the US seemed to toy with the idea of a uni-polar world.¹² As a result of these differing interpretations, Turkey came to look for a more balanced relationship in which the economic component was as important as the military one and in which Europe had a place. The US attitude, on the other hand, especially after the 9/11 events, implied that it was looking more for of a client-state, rather than a strategic partner. This was not a sustainable equation; it was tested by the Iraq War. It was clear that the systemic changes, the differing threat perceptions and the transformation of both countries had resulted in the emergence of divergent world-views and policy lines. The Iraq War only brought to the fore the need to reassess the untenable strategic partnership, to better suit to the realities of the post-9/11 era.

Although the relationship was badly damaged by the events before and after the Iraq War, and even the reliability of both countries as allies was questioned, it recently has taken a positive turn.¹³ It has yet to reach a point where the parameters of the relationship are once again clear. Accordingly, this paper will first examine the constraints and limitations of the current relationship through the diverging interests and contextual viewpoints in the post-Cold War era. It will then highlight the areas of convergence that existed even during the lowest point of the relationship. Finally, it will outline the contours of the relationship in the coming years, while taking into account the opportunities and hurdles ahead.

Questioning the strategic partnership: Changing perceptions and interests

The former US Ambassador to Ankara, Mark Parris, has argued that the concept of strategic partnership in Turkish-American relations was altered in a single day, on 1 March 2003, and that the two sides had

12 See, Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990). He introduced the idea of American unipolarity. Also see all other articles in this special issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine.

13 Among Europeans, Turks had the lowest favorable opinion of the US (8% in 2007, 10% in 2008). The approval rating for Bush's foreign policy was 7% and recorded strong negative feelings about American leadership in the world (56% undesirable), while 65% viewed the US as a possible military threat to Turkey. See Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Global Public Opinion in the Bush Years (2001-2008); America's Image, Muslims and Westerners, Global Economy, Rise of China* (18 Dec. 2008), <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=263>. In return, visiting US dignitaries cited characterizations in movies (*Kurtlar Vadisi-Irak*) and in fiction (*Metal Fırtına*) as proofs of anti-Americanism in Turkey, while Turkish officials pointed to the portrayal of Turks as terrorists in American TV series (e.g., 24) as an American slight towards Turkey. Another survey in February of 2009, however, found out that trust in Barack Obama among Turks was 39%, that favorable opinion of the US reached 22,9%, and that 40% support current US policies, while 44% think of the US as an enemy of Turkey. See, Infakto Research, *Türkiye'nin Ufukları; Türk Kamuoyunun ABD, Amerikalılar ve Obama Hakkındaki Görüşleri*, March 2009.

to rethink their relationship within another concept, for example, as an important alliance.¹⁴ He has argued that Turkish-American relations during the Cold War and Saddam Hussein's rule were defined by the containment policy of the US, first against the Soviet Union, and then against Saddam's regime. Since the US need for containment has ended, the Turkish-American connection, in the absence of such a core concept guiding them, would still be important, but not fundamental, and could not rise to the strategic level.¹⁵ Many analysts have agreed, emphasizing that the relations could no longer be defined as strategic partnership in the post-Iraq war world.¹⁶ Some have even argued that it could never be defined as strategic partnership in the way in which US-UK or US-Israel relations have been for years.¹⁷

Despite its frequent usage by decision-makers and analysts, the concept of strategic partnership in the context of Turkish-American relations has remained without a clear definition,¹⁸ reflecting the ambiguities of the transition period after the end of the Cold War. It was used by US officials to provide needed assurance to the Turks, who felt a loosening of its western connection in the post-Cold War environment. Although Turkey has been a member of the NATO since 1952, it noticed the increased role of European integration in the post-Cold War era to provide anchorage in the West and political stability (thus security). While the EU enlargement towards the East was presented, among others, as a move to project stability, Turkey was left behind.

14 Mark R. Parris, "Starting Over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (2003).

15 Mark R. Parris, "Afterword," in *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (London: Routledge, 2003).

16 See, for example, İler Türkmen's speech at the Seminar on Looking to the Future in Turkish-American Relations (Istanbul: Foreign Policy Forum, 27 April 2004), http://www.tusiad.org/dpolitika/raporlar/3_27nisan.pdf. Also see, Bill Park, "US-Turkish Relations: Can the Future Resemble the Past?," *Defence and Security Analysis* 23, no. 1 (2007), Parris, "Starting Over.", Ian O. Lesser, "Off Autopilot: The Future of Turkish-US Relations," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2005).

17 This argument is based on the understanding that the two countries fundamentally differ in their interests. However, Sean Kay has argued that strategic partnership could include both cooperation and competition and that it is the legitimization of a relationship between two states that crave for joint benefits, although their interests may not always be in harmony. Sean Kay, "What is a Strategic Partnership?," *Problems of Post Communism* 47, no. 3 (2000).

18 The problem partially emerges from the concept itself, which resists definition and has been used in different contexts to denote different types of relationships. It seems that one version of the concept is used to denote US relations with (non-NATO) countries that need support and security assurances. Another version is used to denote US relations with countries such as Russia and China with the aim to delimit the relations. Yet another version is used to define the relationship between the US and its closest allies, such as the UK and Israel. The Turkish-American strategic partnership clearly was on a different level and did not fit any of these categories. For a more general analysis of the typologies of the concept of strategic partnership, see, *Ibid.*: 15-24.

Thus, as the EU enlargement took center-stage, the US-Turkish strategic partnership was used as a supplement to link Turkey to the emerging Euro-Atlantic system. The fact that the concept was much employed during those periods when Turkey-EU relations experienced difficult times, such as after the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, supports this argument.¹⁹ Thus, for Turkey, the strategic partnership came to signify a way to anchor in the West through a Washington-leaning option rather than an EU-centered relationship network.

Beyond this, the fundamental parameters of the strategic partnership in the context of Turkish-American relations sat somewhat awkwardly with the changing post-Cold War environment.²⁰ It defined a bilateral relationship, although the Turkey-US connection needed to be triangulated in the post-Cold War era, taking into consideration Turkey's increasingly multi-dimensional foreign policy and its developing connection with the EU. The strategic partnership as it existed did not allow for much multi-dimensionality and resisted the active policy line adopted by Turkey towards its neighborhood. Although it complemented Turkey's initiatives in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where the US policies and interests were not yet clearly articulated in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, it limited Turkey's room for maneuver in the areas where US interests were clearly delineated, such as the Middle East. In these areas, it forced Turkey to prioritize its bilateral relations with the US.

It was also in essence a security-based concept. Analyzing the regional and global post-Cold War issues from a security perspective, however, left increasingly important areas out of focus. It handicapped the countries in dealing with such issues as democratization, economic development, identity clashes, and so on, which required non-military, non-securitized cooperative approaches. Strategic partnership with its emphasis on security glossed over the complexity and interconnectedness of these issues. Instead, it approached them with traditional concepts, such as national interests, alliance relationship and military assistance. Although various joint declarations issued after high-level visits also emphasized cooperation in other areas — such as trade and commerce, energy, drug trafficking, human rights, and the like — the practical implementation of the strategic partnership remained primarily focused on military and defense cooperation between the two countries. This way of securitizing

19 Serhat Güvenç, "Terörizmle Savaş ve Orta Doğu'da Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri", paper presented at the *Seminar on Looking to the Future in Turkish-American Relations*, op. cit., 14.

20 Although frequently argued by others, too, in the following three-fold characterization of the Turkish-American strategic partnership, I benefited from Fuat Keyman's contribution to the seminar on *Looking to the Future in Turkish-American Relations*, op. cit., 28-29.

the relationship ignored Turkey's post-Cold War potential to contribute constructively to discussions on democratization, economic development and socio-political restructuring in its surrounding regions. In short, it under-utilized Turkey's assets and underestimated its wish to play a role.

The concept also created an asymmetric relationship between Turkey and the US. It was not a partnership of equals, but between a global power and a strategically located regional state. When US global interests did not converge or coincide with Turkey's regional interests, problems arose. American interests in the regions surrounding Turkey were crudely defined and straightforward, whereas Turkey's concerns and priorities were fine-tuned to local sensitivities and operated with regard to complicated balances. The US, with its global concerns, could not always heed Turkey's regional needs and priorities. On the other hand, while Turkey could not implement rapid policy changes in its immediate neighborhood, rushed shifts in US regional policies strained Turkish capabilities and decision-making abilities. Traditionally geared towards defensive action rather than proactive policy-making, Turkey found it difficult, dangerous and costly to make adjustments to Washington's changing demands and policy lines, especially in the Middle East.

Finally, the US-Turkey strategic partnership had two aspects related to the Middle East. The first was connected to Iraq in general. It was the Gulf War and Özal's cooperation with the US that heralded the concept, while the discussion about the future of Iraq both before and after the war hastened its end. Whereas Özal's chosen path during the Gulf War highlighted cooperation for the sake of friendship and unity of wider purpose, Turkey's policy line on the eve of the Iraq War was marred by suspicion and complicated by an attempt to secure the benefits of cooperation up front.²¹ The second aspect was Turkish-Israeli relations which, once they reached a certain level of strategic dialogue by 1997, complemented and supported the Turkish-American strategic partnership. Not only did it highlight Turkey's important role in the Middle East as Israel's partner, but it also generated strong support from the powerful Jewish lobby in Washington on issues that were important

21 Since Özal believed that Turkey would eventually benefit from cooperating with the US, he did not bargain with President Bush Sr. The less-than-satisfactory returns, as well as complications created by the emergence of a *de facto* Kurdish entity in Northern Iraq after the Gulf War created suspicion about US intentions, as well as domestic pressures to secure US compensations before the Iraq War. For the effects of Gulf-War-related issues on Turkish decision-making during the negotiations with the US before the Iraq War, see, Koray Çalışkan and Yüksel Taşkın, "Litmus Test: Turkey's Neo-Islamists Weigh War and Peace," *Merip Report*, 30 January 2003, Koray Çalışkan and Yüksel Taşkın, "Turkey's Dangerous Game," *Merip Report*, 27 March 2003.

to Turkey, such as countering the influence of the Armenian lobby and supporting Turkey's demands for advanced military hardware. However, when relations started to cool down and later plummeted, this too played a negative role in assessing the Turkish-American strategic partnership.²²

In addition to the problems of definition and implementation of the strategic partnership, there has been a clear paradigm shift in both international politics and Turkish-American relations, first at the end of the Cold War, then after 9/11, and finally with the American invasion of Iraq. The bilateral connection has been slow to adjust, and the two countries' understanding of the nature and scope of the systemic evolution has differed. While Turkey's regional interests mostly accommodated US global considerations during the Cold War, a different situation has emerged since the end of the bipolar system. Regional interests and problems have gained primacy for Turkey, whereas the US has become more insistent on its sub-regional projects, sometimes contradicting Turkey's aspirations. Turkey's understanding of the nature of the post-Cold War era moving towards multi-polarity (hence its attempt to balance its various relationships) contrasted with the US attempt to create a uni-polar world. Such diversions affected the relationship.

Turkish and American interests specifically diverged in the Middle East, and the relationship has become more intricate as the US became Turkey's "neighbor." When bordering on the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Turkey tried to balance the weight of its superpower neighbor with the US and its NATO alliances. As it came to border on the US by proxy, Turkey also tried to balance its weight. The US occupation of Iraq was, in fact, the last step in a long list of American involvement in the Middle East. Every move by the US to assume direct responsibility for regional security during the 1980s and the following policy changes, from pushing NATO towards out-of-area operations to the idea of establishing a Rapid Deployment Force, triggered contentious discussions. As the US gradually moved into the Middle East, it became one of the controversial points in Turkish-American relations.

The most problematic Middle Eastern issue in recent years has been the future of Iraq. This has elevated Turkey into a unique position as an indispensable logistical back-up for the US. The US need for Turkey to play a role in the political and social reconstruction of Iraq, as well as

22 See, Meliha Altunışık, "The Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (2000), Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Turkey-US-Israel Triangle: Continuity, Change and Implications for Turkey's Post-Cold War Middle East Policy," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 4 (1999), Jason Vest, "Turkey, Israel and the US," *The Nation*, 23 August 2002.

its infrastructural build-up, has not been diminished by its presence in the region. While many in the US remember the Turkish Parliament's refusal to allow US forces to stage the Iraqi invasion from Turkey, it is usually overlooked that Turkey has been providing extensive logistical support to US war efforts, both in Iraq and Afghanistan.²³

Although Turkish and American long-term projections *vis-à-vis* Iraq have been similar in general — for instance, in preserving territorial integrity, creating a democratically governed country and a peaceful and stable state — they have substantially diverged about how to achieve these. There has been a visible difference in Turkish and American approaches, and their operational priorities do not match. For the US, the Middle East and Iraq are still far-away regions with substantial resources and in need of order and stability. Its priority has been to attain and hold on to a stable Iraq after Saddam. For this, the US has cooperated with local groups (including the Kurds) who could help its forces in Iraq. For Turkey, however, while stability was also an important issue, the prevention of the emergence of a situation that could threaten Turkey's territorial integrity had the highest priority. Thus, there has been no matter more urgent for Ankara than to keep Iraq intact and to limit its destabilizing effect from spilling over. As a result, Turkey demanded from the US to be more restraining towards the Iraqi Kurds and to clean out PKK forces from Northern Iraq. Washington, on the other hand, beset by conflicting demands in the midst of an increasingly unpopular war, did not want to challenge the *status quo* in the most stable part of Iraq. Although it could be argued that stability in Iraq, a US priority, would secure the territorial integrity of Iraq — hence, preventing it to become a challenge to Turkey's territorial integrity — the linkage between the two is not as direct as it first appears. A divided Iraq could be stable, provided that all Iraqi actors are satisfied. Nevertheless, this would not have pleased Turkey, as it saw danger in the disintegration of Iraq. On the same level, a united Iraq could be unstable and threatening to its neighbors, but still preferable to Turkey, as it has experience in coping with such a neighbor.²⁴

There also emerged a suspicion among Turkish decision-makers regarding US intentions in Iraq. The US stated from the beginning that it opposed the creation of an independent Kurdish state in Northern

23 According to former Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried, 74% of all air cargo that the US shipped to Iraq went through the Incirlik Air Base; 25% of all fuel used by the Coalition Forces was sent through the Habur Border Gate; and Turkey granted blanket over-flight clearances to the US for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. See, *Testimony of Daniel Fried, US-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead* (15 March 2007), <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/110/fri031507.htm>.

24 See, Åsa Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 20-22 and 82-87.

Iraq and explained its close relations with Kurdish groups in reference to tactical reasons. However, the Kurds of Iraq have supported the US since 1991, first to contain and then to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. Especially after the Turkish decision not to enter Iraq with US forces, the Kurds became the main ally of the US in Iraq. This support helped them to move into a privileged position in Iraq. There was also a discrepancy between the US pronouncements before the war and the situation they created, encouraged or overlooked in Iraq, whereby the Kurds have largely consolidated their *de facto* independence.

A connected challenge has been the uncertain status of Kirkuk. Fearing that Kurdish control of Kirkuk and its oil wealth would enable them to finance an independent and then irredentist Kurdish state,²⁵ Turkey has sought shared control of the district by all ethnic groups. The US, however — overwhelmed by opposing views from its long-time ally and local friends, as well as by differences of opinion between its military command, the Iraqi Administration and the US Departments of State and Defense — seemed to waver for some time, causing suspicion in Turkey.²⁶ Nevertheless, the US has continued to re-schedule the referendum initially planned for 15 November 2007, and the fact that it has not taken place so far could be interpreted as the US acquiescing to Turkey's position on this issue and a major success for Turkish policy in Iraq.

Another related issue has been the lingering Turkish suspicions about the US position on the PKK presence in Northern Iraq. The removal of the PKK was not a US priority in Iraq, as long as it did not threaten overall security and stability. Even if the US was able to amass the necessary force to go after the PKK in the mountains areas of Northern Iraq, it did not wish to alienate its Kurdish allies (and later the Kurdish Regional Authority) who were averse to the idea of attacking another Kurdish group while trying to create a Kurdish unity in Northern Iraq.

25 In the early days of the invasion, the US assured Turkey that its forces would control Kirkuk, although later this was not realized. White House Report "Turkey Told Kirkuk Will Be under US Control," <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/April/20030410143441nosnhobj0.1897852.html#ixzz0Afokc>. For Turkish views, see, Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour*, 112-16, Mustafa Aydın, Nihat A. Özcan, and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, *Riskler ve Fırsatlar Kavşağında Irak'ın Geleceği ve Türkiye* (Ankara: TEPAV, 2007), International Crisis Group "Iraq and the Kurds: Resolving the Kirkuk Crisis," *Middle East Report*, no. 64 (2007).

26 The Kurds claim Kirkuk for their autonomous region; Turkomans want a role in ruling the district; Arabs insist that Kirkuk and its resources remain under the control of the national government; and Turkey has lobbied to delay the referendum on Kirkuk's status. The Bush administration in return has focused on the security situation and continuously put off the referendum. See, Brian Katulis and Peter Juul, "The Kirkuk Impasse," Center for American Progress, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/07/kirkuk.html>, Lionel Beehner, "The Challenge in Iraq's Other Cities: Kirkuk," CFR Backgrounder, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11036>.

Such divergences turned out to be important in the rather precarious situation in Iraq and poisoned Turkish-American alignment.

There was also a perceived divergence of views between Turkey and the US regarding the concept of (international) terrorism. Despite official US pronouncements against terrorism in general, in practice they differentiated international (meaning Al-Qaeda) terrorism from other types.²⁷ From the Turkish perspective, although the US had declared the PKK and its off-shoots terrorist organizations, Washington clearly did not regard PKK on par with Al-Qaeda. While it was bombing Al-Qaeda outposts in Afghanistan and occupying Iraq for its security, the US opposed Turkey's actions against the PKK beyond its immediate border. Turkish officials considered this to be a double standard. There were also not-so-veiled accusations that, on occasion, the US aided the PKK.²⁸ In turn, the US worried about possible large-scale Turkish operation, or even an invasion of Northern Iraq, destabilizing the region altogether. This problem has been somewhat alleviated since President Bush called the PKK the "common enemy" of both Turkey and the US after his meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan on 5 November 2007 and agreed to supply Turkey with actionable intelligence, in exchange for Turkey's consent to refrain from large-scale ground operations.²⁹

Diverging views also emerged when Turkey decided to host a Hamas delegation in Ankara only a few weeks after the 2006 Palestinian elec-

27 See the articles published in a special issue of the journal *Connections* 5/3 (2006) on *Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism*. All the articles were part of a project run by the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, with financial support from the US government. These articles and all other discussions currently under way within NATO and its affiliated Center of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism indicate the disparity between US rhetoric and practice towards different terrorist groups.

28 These reached crisis proportions when US-made guns were found on captured PKK members. Although it became later clear that the guns had been given to the Iraqi army and that the Barzani forces then passed them on to the PKK, the US Ambassador had difficulty to explain his country's position to the Turkish public. For developments see, "Wilson: Örgüte Silah Vermiyoruz," CNN-Türk, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2007/turkiye/07/03/wilson.orgute.silah.vermiyoruz/371137.0/index.html>, Murat Yetkin, "Hibe Silahlar PKK'ya," *Radikal*, 19 July 2007. This event was still on the news two years after the event. See "MHP Milletvekili Deniz Bölükbaşı ile Röportaj: PKK'nın Silahları Barzani'ye Gidecek," *Akşam*, 9 March 2009.

29 Reaching this point was not easy, and it involved negotiations, accusations and half-hearted measures. A trilateral coordination mechanism was established in August of 2006 between Turkey, the US and Iraq, against the PKK in Iraq. Prime Minister Erdoğan declared the process unproductive only six months later. It ended with the resignation of the Turkish representative Edip Başer in May (replaced briefly by Ambassador Rafet Akgünay) and the US representative Joseph Ralston in October of 2007. Then, the Turkish Grand National Assembly, under intense public pressure, passed a bill on 17 October 2007, authorizing the government to stage cross-border operations. The military build-up and intense diplomatic efforts led to a meeting on 5 November. For details see, "Tezkere Onaylandı," http://www.dunyabulteni.net/news_detail.php?id=25740, "5 Kasım 2007 Basın Özeti," BBC Turkish, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/pressreview/story/2007/11/071105_pressreview.shtml.

tions, irritating Jerusalem and Washington, since the visit undercut their policy of isolating Hamas internationally.³⁰ Moreover, Prime Minister Erdoğan, in pursuing an active pro-Palestinian policy, has been openly critical of Israeli policy in the West Bank and Gaza, calling Israeli actions acts of “state terror,”³¹ thereby provoking an uproar from the Jewish Lobby in the US, whose cooperation has been important for Turkey in terms of containing the Armenian Lobby in Congress. Recently, the issue experienced another twist when Prime Minister Erdoğan took a very critical position during Israel’s latest attacks on Gaza between 27 December 2008 and 21 January 2009. The final episode came when Erdoğan in protest stormed out of a public meeting with the President of Israel, Shimon Peres, during the Davos World Economic Forum. This endeared him to the Arab and the Turkish public, but threw into questions the level of sophistication of Turkish diplomacy and the future of its facilitator role between Israel and its Arab neighbors, thus weakening Turkey’s influence in the Middle East.³²

This brings us to another problematic issue in Turkish-American relations: the recognition of Armenian genocide claims by the US Congress. Turkish policy-makers and diplomats complain about the way in which the members of Congress have handled the issue. This issue emerges in a rather heated form almost every year and then occupies official agendas for about five to six months. It leads to calls from the Turkish government to the US administration to use its influence on behalf of Turkey and accusations that the Congressmen use this matter as political expediency under the influence of the powerful Armenian Lobby. The administration, on the other hand, usually tries to stay on the sidelines as long as possible, nudging Turkey at the same time to find a “political-diplomatic” solution to the problem. When finally everything else fails and the issue demands urgent attention, the president writes a letter to Congress, mentioning the US strategic need for Turkey, and implores the Congressional leaders not to put the draft bill to vote. In the last attempt during the Bush Administration, eight former secretaries of

30 For reactions see, Soner Çağaptay, “ Hamas Visits Ankara: The AKP Shifts Turkey’s Role in the Middle East,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/winep/policy_2006/2006_1081/2006_1081.html, Amberin Zaman, “ Hamas Leader Meets Turkish Officials in Ankara,” Voice of America, <http://www.voanews.com/tibetan/archive/2006-02/2006-02-16-voa4.cfm>.

31 C. McGreal, “ Turkish PM Accuses Israel of Practicing State Terrorism,” *Guardian*, 4 June 2004, C. McGreal, “ A Strategic Friendship Cools: Relations between Israel and Turkey,” *The Economist*, 26 June 2004.

32 Aslı Aydintaşbaş, “ Erdoğan’s Davos Outburst Is Nothing New,” *Forbes.com*, http://www.forbes.com/2009/01/30/erdogan-turkey-davos-opinions-contributors_0130_asli_aydintasbas.html, “ Echoes of Davos Walkout Still Resonating Worldwide,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2 February 2009.

state and three former secretaries of defense united in a bipartisan move to denounce the passage of such a bill, arguing that it could do only harm and produce no conceivable positive outcome.³³ Nevertheless, the Democrat leader of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, pushed the draft through the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 10 October 2007.³⁴ Although the draft resolution was later withdrawn from vote at the full House due to the gathering opposition in press and President Bush's involvement,³⁵ the issue was not solved, but only relegated to the forthcoming Obama administration.³⁶

The way forward: Convergences for strategic relationship

While it is true that the strategic environment within which the two states operate, as well as their understanding of the requirements of international and domestic settings, has changed and that the era of strategic partnership has ended, none of the issues mentioned above precludes Turkish-American relations from developing in terms of a *strategic relationship*. While the preparation of the paper entitled "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership" and dated July of 2006 proved that the strategic character of the relationship was felt by decision-makers on both sides even after the Iraqi crisis, its announcement without signature highlighted the difficulties to structure a dialogue around a shared strategic vision.³⁷

The two countries may not be able to revive their strategic partnership because of their divergent views on how to handle some of the issues they face. However, they have complementary interests and areas of convergence, around which Turkish-American relations could be

33 G. Kessler, "White House and Turkey Fight Bill on Armenia," *The Washington Post*, 10 October 2007.

34 For criticism that she was sacrificing US interests for her personal political gain, see "Editorial: Secretary of State Pelosi," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 October 2007, D. K. Thomasson, "Pelosi Stumbles over Armenian Resolution," *New York Times*, 15 October 2007.

35 President Bush stated that "Congress has more important work to do than antagonizing a democratic ally in the Muslim world, especially one that's providing vital support for our military every day." See, "Speaker Pelosi Hedges on Genocide Resolution Vote," CNN, 17 October 2007. For the letter from the chief sponsors of the legislation to Pelosi on 25 October 2007, asking to back away from putting it to vote in House, see, Carl Hulse, "U.S. and Turkey Thwart Armenian Genocide Bill," *The New York Times*, 26 October 2007.

36 During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama expressed his support for Armenian claims and talked about encouraging Turkey to end its campaign of denial. See, "Sen. Obama Speaks Out on Importance of Recognizing Armenian Genocide", http://www.anca.org/press_releases/press_releases.php?prid=999. However, the issue was downplayed during the recent visit of US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, to Turkey. See, Sue Fleming, "Turkey, U.S. Play Down Tensions over Armenia Issue," *Reuters*, 19 March 2009.

37 For the full text, see http://turkey.usembassy.gov/statement_070508.html.

restructured. The difference from a mere strategic cooperation would be to develop an overall framework of relationship on a strategic level, defining limitations and constraints as well as convergences, so that both sides would know what to expect from each other. Of course, one needs to qualify this statement by adding that, given self-imposed limitations of public opinions and in absence of a strategic core (such as a shared threat perception) around which the relationship can naturally take shape, any such relationship would only evolve in the mid-to-long term and with care.³⁸

In terms of strategic cultures — that is, the way in which both states see the outside world — there are more convergences than divergences. Both states primarily employ a strategic outlook, with utmost attention devoted to security. There are many long-term issues that demand strategic attention from both states. These include energy cooperation on the East-West corridor; Iran's nuclear ambitions; rising Russian influence in the Caucasus and the Black Sea; the future of the Caucasian countries; the reconciliation between Afghanistan and Pakistan; the future of Afghanistan and Turkey's role in restructuring it; the influence of radical Islam and the Sunni-Shi'a divide in the Middle East; prospects of transatlantic relations and France's return to the military wing of the NATO; Russian dominance of energy markets in Europe; the transformation of traditional Islamic societies; and so forth. Most of these issues are non-bilateral, and Turkey's perception of them is still rather closer to the US views.

From the American perspective, Turkey is one of the few countries in the world whose importance to the US did not diminish with the end of the Cold War. Contrary to some analyses,³⁹ the US can not afford to sacrifice its strategic relationship with Turkey, as long as it remains a western-oriented stable country in a very problematic neighborhood. Many analysts continue to view Turkey as a "pivotal state" at the crossroad of the troubled regions of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus.⁴⁰ Its cultural attractiveness in terms of being the only Muslim

38 A number of recent studies has already assessed the challenges and opportunities for post-Iraq War bilateral relations. See, for example, Steven A. Cook and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, "Generating Momentum for a New Era in US-Turkey Relations," (Council on Foreign Relations, June 2006), Joshua W. Walker, "Reexamining the US-Turkish Alliance," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2007), Philip H. Gordon and Ömer Taşpınar, *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe and Turkey can Revive a Fading Partnership* (Washington: The Brookings Institute, 2008), John C.K. Daly, *US-Turkish Relations; A Strategic Relationship Under Stress* (Washington: Jamestown Foundation, 2008), Stephen J. Flanagan and Samuel J. Brannen, *v: Implications for US-Relations* (Washington: CSIS, 2008).

39 See, Jonathan E. Lewis, "Replace Turkey as a Strategic Partner?," *Middle East Quarterly* (Spring 2006).

40 See, Note 11. Park has also argued for the importance of Turkey to the US as a pivotal state in the Middle East, see, Park, "US-Turkish Relations," 49-51.

state in the Middle East able to combine modernity, democratization and market economy in today's world makes Turkey an important asset. Turkey's achievements in aligning with Europe and sustaining its economic development are also important aspects of Turkey's appeal in its neighborhood, where the US has increasingly focused in the post-9/11 era. The US clearly needs success stories, and it is obvious that the Iraqi saga or the colored revolutions neither of the Ukraine nor Georgia have so far been able to produce them. Turkey is still the only credible example of modernization in a tolerable democratic environment and market economy, while having an overwhelmingly Muslim population.

Moreover, Turkey's strategic value to the US as a reliable partner and conduit in the Middle East still remains high, if not enhanced by the decision of the Obama Administration to start withdrawing US forces from Iraq and concentrate on Afghanistan. In both cases, Turkey's value as logistical back-up and post-crisis stabilizer is important. By the same token, a disillusioned and unhelpful Turkey could easily complicate the Iraqi theater.⁴¹ In a similar fashion, even though there has been a change of rhetoric towards Iran since the advent of the Obama administration,⁴² the need to contain Iran has not changed. The US forces both in Afghanistan and Iraq will not be able to contain/control Iran, since neither country is stable and provides secure supply lines to the US. It is also impractical to impose any future embargo (UN-backed or otherwise) on Iran, unless Turkey cooperates. Moreover, Turkey still provides the most acceptable moderate alternative to the Iranian version of the radical Islamic model of governance. Finally, Turkey, like it or not, continues to play a role in countering further Iranian involvement in Iraq.⁴³

Still, in the Middle East improving Turkish-Syrian relations are also important for keeping dialogue channels open, guiding Syria towards a cooperative mold and, if all fails, encircling it with Israel and US-dominated Iraq. In a more positive case scenario, Turkey's role as facilitator between Israel and Syria would eventually pay off and result in a peace accord and a weakening of the Syria-Iran axis. Along these lines, one

41 For further analysis of Turkey's possible role in Iraq's future, see Aydın, Özcan and Kaptanoğlu, *Riskler ve Fırsatlar Kavşağında Irak'ın Geleceği ve Türkiye*. Also see, International Crisis Group "Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperation?," *Middle East Report*, no. 81 (2008).

42 Helene Cooper and Mark Landler, "On Iran, Obama Plans Talk and Some Toughness," *New York Times*, 3 February 2009, Doyle McManus, "Obama's Iran Strategy," *Los Angeles Times*, 22 February 2009.

43 See, "Bush to Warn of Dire Effect If US Leaves Iraq," Reuters, 19 March 2007, A. H. Cordesman, "Iraq and the Crocker-Petraeus Testimony: The Risks that Only Time and a Sustained US Presence Can Deal With," *CSIS*, 8 August 2007, Bill Park, "Iraqi Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US Policy," *Parameters*, no. 34 (2004).

can also speculate about a possible contribution by Turkey towards the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, through its contribution to intra-Palestinian reconciliation (see Altunışık's contribution to this volume).

In the context of Caspian energy resources, Turkey still has an important place in the US project to secure the East-West energy corridor. Although not always seeing eye to eye with the US, Turkey plays a role in the stabilization of the Caucasus, supporting independence and territorial integrity of the regional countries, aiding Georgia and Azerbaijan in their military readiness as well as restraining Azerbaijan from resuming conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, in order to break the connection between Russia and its last ally in the Caucasus, Armenia, the US needs Turkey, first to entreat Azerbaijan towards a manageable solution in Karabakh, and second to connect Armenia to the West through a normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations.

Turkey is also a lucrative arms market for the US, even though American state-to-state military and economic aid was phased out completely during the 1990s. The US is the largest weapons supplier to Turkey, despite Turkish attempts to diversify its sources, and projected US sales to Turkey in the near future include contracts for around \$15 billion worth of fighter planes and related material.⁴⁴ US companies' involvement in bids to establish nuclear power plants in Turkey were strengthened by the ratification of the "US-Turkey Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy" by the Bush administration in June of 2008.⁴⁵

From the Turkish perspective, too, neither American strategic importance nor its politico-economic significance has diminished. In order to become a regional power in the Caucasus and the Middle East or to achieve strategic depth, Turkey needs US cooperation in both political and economic terms. Turkey's fragile economy is not powerful enough to play such a role by itself and can at any time slide back into a precarious position, should Turkey lose the support of the IMF and the World Bank, where the US has leverage. US support of Turkey's EU membership quest has also been helpful, even though it has created an occasional backlash with some EU members. US support was important, if not critical, on various occasions, both to further the Turkish bid and to keep it in the Western mold when its relations with the EU were not quite on track. Furthermore, just like Turkey needed US political and financial support and expertise to realize the BTC pipeline, it still needs strong

44 Daly, *US-Turkish Relations*, 40.

45 For full text, see http://www.taek.gov.tr/uluslararasi/anlasmalar/usa_text.pdf.

US support for the Nabucco project linking Caspian (and possibly Iranian and Iraqi) natural gas to Europe. Since this kind of mega-project reflects political priorities as much as economic interests, US strategic prioritization and political pressure are needed to push ahead with the project in the face of dragging negotiations regarding the small print of the contract.

Finally, in a hypothetical, yet nevertheless imaginable conflict (or tension) between Turkey, Iran, Syria, or even Russia, Turkey may still wish to count on the US as an ally. Turkey was unhappy during the 1980s to watch the build-up of the Iraqi military arsenal, including strategic weapons systems. It was the Turkish military's conclusion that during the 1980s Turkey was quantitatively and qualitatively overpowered by the superior armaments of countries aspiring to regional hegemony — namely, Iraq and Syria.⁴⁶ Turkey's dispute with Iraq and Syria over the water issue carried with it the dangers of military confrontation with either side.⁴⁷ Iraq's invasion of Kuwait only helped to heighten this perception, highlighting Iraq's willingness to use military means to realize its regional hegemony. It is clear that, despite the avalanche experienced in Turkish-American relations due to the Iraq War, Turkey still needs the US to bring about a favorable Iraqi future and a more conciliatory and cooperative Syria. Turkish decision-makers are acutely aware of their limited influence in shaping regional balances and possible nightmare scenarios, should the US suddenly disappear from the Middle East.

Clearly, just as the underlying assumptions of US need for Turkey has changed since the end of the Cold War, Turkey's need for US support has also undergone a transformation. During the Cold War, much of the need derived from the American ability to protect Turkey against a Soviet invasion or nuclear attack. After the Cold War, this has been qualified based on emerging threats and a revision of Turkey's threat perceptions as well as other needs. Although the official security conceptualization of Turkey is still dominated by traditional security issues, economic, cultural and humanitarian issues have also started to rear their head. In these areas, too, Turkey seeks US support. This analysis

46 Turkey responded to these threats by increasing its military budget from \$1.7 billion in 1989 to \$4.8 billion in 1991. Amikam Nachmani, "Turkey in the Wake of the Gulf War: Recent History and Its Implications," *Insight Turkey* 1, no. 3 (1999): 139. For Turkey's Middle East worries at the early 1990s, see, Sezer, "Turkey's Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma," 17-32. The emergence of the PKK as a threat on the domestic front also played a role in the increase of the military budget. See, Şükrü Elekdağ, "2½ War Strategy," *Perceptions* 1, no. 1 (1996).

47 Andrea K. Riemer, "Water Issues and the Extended Understanding of 'Security': The Southeast Anatolia Project as a Multidimensional Potential for Crisis?," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Affairs*, no. 26 (1996).

has so far shown that both countries' need to cooperate has not disappeared in the post-March 2003 world, but that the cooperation needs a re-definition in the context of the new circumstances. Most of the differences emerge not in the substance of the problems, but in how best to respond to them. The facts that both countries can still speak of future joint projects and did not forsake each other during the worst crisis in their partnership prove the resilience of the connection between them.

Conclusion

Turkish-American relations have shown great resilience over the years. Recently, they have been badly strained by events related to Iraq. One of the seasoned observers of Turkish-American relations, the former US Ambassador to Turkey Morton Abramowitz, has compared the feelings in the US after the Turkish parliament's refusal to allow US forces to pass through Turkey to Turkish feelings after the Johnson Letter.⁴⁸ The difference in 2003 was that this time it was the US at the receiving end of the rebuke, and that it was primarily the Americans who had to overcome feelings of betrayal and frustration.

However, the former US Ambassador to Turkey Eric Edelman, waiting to take up his post in Ankara in July of 2003, explained to the Turkish press on 6 June that, although the Turkish-American alliance had passed a rocky road, there were still many areas of convergence. The two countries had built a strategic partnership during the 1990s, after almost fifty years of alliance. After 9/11 and the Iraq War, both countries face new strategic environments and need to re-build their partnership, taking into account new strategic realities. Although at the moment there is no strategic core concept to bind the two states, the above-mentioned areas of cooperation could still become the base for the creation of a strategic relationship.

The full recovery of the relationship still seems elusive in the short run, demanding a change in US global positioning and/or a decisive presidential involvement. Yet, it has come a long way since 2003. The decision-makers on both sides now know better about what to expect from each other and what the other side can deliver. After the fence-mending during the second term of the Bush administration, the picture seems more promising. There is plenty of material to work with, and much common ground. But the parameters of the strategic partnership/relationship have changed, and the relations are in need of fine-tuning. The US preference to act alone in the post-9/11 world has created sus-

48 Morton Abramowitz, "What's up With Turkey?," *Wall Street Journal*, 25 March 2003.

picion and weakened relations. A more cooperative multi-dimensional approach by the Obama administration has the potential to affect a positive change.

It is clear by now that, as the focus of Washington's geo-political calculus has unavoidably shifted towards the areas around Turkey, the two states will find themselves time and again in a situation in which they have to cooperate with each other. It is also clear that the importance and quality of Turkey's geo-strategic position and value to the US have undergone changes since the end of the Cold War. Turkey's importance is now a qualified one, no longer related to and derived only from *where it is* — in other words, to its strategic position between either East and West, or North and South — but also to *what it is* — that is, a secular working democracy with a market economy in a predominantly Muslim country. Its ability to become a model for economic and political development to a large number of countries in two important sub-regions of the post-Cold War era — namely, the greater Middle East and Eurasia — makes Turkey a special ally, if not a strategic partner.

Although Turkey and the US have finally started to cooperate since November of 2007 regarding the PKK in Iraq, the two countries cannot limit their dialogue and cooperation only to the PKK, or Iraq, or any other security problem around Turkey that temporarily necessitates them to work together. They need to foster a much more diverse relationship. In fact, the list of issues about which the two countries need to be in constant dialogue is remarkably long, and the fact that most of these issues are not bilateral in character shows the level of their relationship. Their relationship has evolved from a one-dimensional security cooperation of the Cold War era to a multifaceted and dynamic one today. The two states cannot shy away from or fail to establish the necessary structures to maintain this complicated relationship. Only if they succeed will the Turkish-American alliance continue to prove its resilience.

References

- "5 Kasım 2007 Basın Özeti." BBC Turkish, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/presreview/story/2007/11/071105_pressreview.shtml.
- Abramowitz, Morton. "What's up With Turkey?" *Wall Street Journal*, 25 March 2003.
- Altunışık, Meliha. "The Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era." *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (2000).
- Aydın, Mustafa. *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Gulf War of 1990-1991*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1998.
- Aydın, Mustafa, and Çağrı Erhan, eds. *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future*. London: Routledge, 2004.

- Aydın, Mustafa, Nihat A. Özcan, and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu. *Riskler ve Fırsatlar Kavşağında Irak'ın Geleceği ve Türkiye*. Ankara: TEPAV, 2007.
- Aydıntaşbaş, Aslı. "Erdogan's Davos Outburst Is Nothing New." *Forbes.com*, http://www.forbes.com/2009/01/30/erdogan-turkey-davos-opinions-contributors_0130_asli_aydintasbas.html.
- Aykan, Mahmut Bali. "The Turkey-US-Israel Triangle: Continuity, Change and Implications for Turkey's Post-Cold War Middle East Policy." *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 4 (1999).
- Barkey, Henri J. "Turkish-American Relations in the Postwar Era: An Alliance of Convenience." *Orbis* 33, no. 3 (1992): 447-64.
- Beehner, Lionel. "The Challenge in Iraq's Other Cities: Kirkuk." CFR Backgrounder, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11036>.
- Bernstein, Barton J. "Reconsidering the Missile Crisis: Dealing with the American Jupiters in Turkey?" In *The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited*, edited by James E. Nathan. New York: St Martins, 1992.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- "Bush to Warn of Dire Effect If US Leaves Iraq." *Reuters*, 19 March 2007.
- Chace, Robert S., Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy. "Pivotal States and US Strategy." *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1996): 33-51.
- Cook, Steven A., and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall. "Generating Momentum for a New Era in US-Turkey Relations." Council on Foreign Relations, June 2006.
- Cooper, Helene, and Mark Landler. "On Iran, Obama Plans Talk and Some Toughness." *New York Times*, 3 February 2009.
- Cordesman, A. H. "Iraq and the Crocker-Petraeus Testimony: The Risks that Only Time and a Sustained US Presence Can Deal With." *CSIS*, 8 August 2007.
- Çağaptay, Soner. "Hamas Visits Ankara: The AKP Shifts Turkey's Role in the Middle East." Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/winep/policy_2006/2006_1081/2006_1081.html.
- Çalışkan, Koray, and Yüksel Taşkın. "Litmus Test: Turkey's Neo-Islamists Weigh War and Peace." *Merip Report*, 30 January 2003.
- . "Turkey's Dangerous Game." *Merip Report*, 27 March 2003.
- Daly, John C.K. *US-Turkish Relations; A Strategic Relationship Under Stress*. Washington: Jamestown Foundation, 2008.
- "Echoes of Davos Walkout Still Resonating Worldwide." *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2 February 2009.
- "Editorial: Secretary of State Pelosi." *Wall Street Journal*, 16 October 2007.
- Elekdağ, Şükrü. "2½ War Strategy." *Perceptions* 1, no. 1 (1996): 33-57.
- Flanagan, Stephen J., and Samuel J. Brannen. *v: Implications for US-Relations*. Washington: CSIS, 2008.
- Gordon, Philip H., and Ömer Taşpınar. *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe and Turkey can Revive a Fading Partnership*. Washington: The Brookings Institute, 2008.
- Harris, George S. *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945-1971*. Washington: AEI, 1972.
- Hulse, Carl. "U.S. and Turkey Thwart Armenian Genocide Bill." *The New York Times*, 26 October 2007.
- International Crisis Group "Iraq and the Kurds: Resolving the Kirkuk Crisis." *Middle East Report*, no. 64 (2007).
- . "Turkey and Iraqi Kurds: Conflict or Cooperation?" *Middle East Report*, no. 81 (2008).
- Karaosmanoğlu, Ali. "European Security and Turkey in a Changing Strategic Environment." *Yearbook of the Hellenic Foundation for Defence and Foreign Policy* (1990): 177-86.
- . "Turkey's Security Policy: Continuity and Change." In *Politics and Security in the Southern Region of the Atlantic Alliance*, edited by D. Stuart. New York: Macmillan, 1988.
- Karasapan, Ömer. "Turkey and US Strategy in the Age of Glasnost." *Middle East Report*, no. 160 (1989): 4-10.
- Katulis, Brian, and Peter Juul. "The Kirkuk Impasse." Center for American Progress, <http://www.american-progress.org/issues/2008/07/kirkuk.html>.
- Kay, Sean. "What is a Strategic Partnership?" *Problems of Post Communism* 47, no. 3 (2000).
- Kennedy, Robert F. *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Norton, 1971.
- Kessler, G. "White House and Turkey Fight Bill on Armenia." *The Washington Post*, 10 October 2007.

- Kirişçi, Kemal. "Post Cold-War Turkish Security and the Middle East." *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1997).
- Krauthammer, Charles. "The Unipolar Moment." *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990).
- Larrabee, Stephen, and Ian O. Lesser. *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*. Santa Monica: Rand, 2003.
- Lesser, Ian O. "Off Autopilot: The Future of Turkish-US Relations." *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2005).
- Lewis, Jonathan E. "Replace Turkey as a Strategic Partner?" *Middle East Quarterly* (Spring 2006): 45-52.
- Lundgren, Åsa. *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.
- Makovsky, Alan O. "Turkey." In *The Pivotal States: A New Framework for US Policy in Developing World*, edited by Robert S. Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, 88-119. Washington: Norton, 1998.
- McGreal, C. "A Strategic Friendship Cools: Relations between Israel and Turkey." *The Economist*, 26 June 2004.
- . "Turkish PM Accuses Israel of Practicing State Terrorism." *Guardian*, 4 June 2004.
- McManus, Doyle. "Obama's Iran Strategy." *Los Angeles Times*, 22 February 2009.
- "MHP Milletvekili Deniz Bölükbaşı ile Röportaj: PKK'nın Silahları Barzani'ye Gidecek." *Akşam*, 9 March 2009.
- Migdalovitz, Carol. *Turkey: Ally in a Troubled Region*. Washington: Congressional Research Service, 1993.
- Nachmani, Amikam. "Turkey in the Wake of the Gulf War: Recent History and Its Implications." *Insight Turkey* 1, no. 3 (1999).
- Park, Bill. "Iraqi Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US Policy." *Parameters*, no. 34 (2004): 18-30.
- . "US-Turkish Relations: Can the Future Resemble the Past?" *Defence and Security Analysis* 23, no. 1 (2007): 43-45.
- Parris, Mark R. "Afterword." In *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, 252-53. London: Routledge, 2003.
- . "Starting Over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era." *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (2003).
- Pleming, Sue. "Turkey, U.S. Play Down Tensions over Armenia Issue." *Reuters*, 19 March 2009.
- Riemer, Andrea K. "Water Issues and the Extended Understanding of 'Security': The Southeast Anatolia Project as a Multidimensional Potential for Crisis?" *The Turkish Yearbook of International Affairs*, no. 26 (1996): 81-100.
- Rustow, Dankwart A. *Turkey: America's Forgotten Ally*. New York: CFR, 1989.
- Sayarı, Sabri. "Turkey: Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis." *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 1 (1992): 9-21.
- . "Turkish-American Relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Issues of Convergence and Divergence." In *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, 91-105. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Sezer, Duygu. "Turkey's Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma." *International Spectator* 27, no. 1 (1992): 17-32.
- "Speaker Pelosi Hedges on Genocide Resolution Vote." *CNN*, 17 October 2007.
- Stern, David L. *The Wrong Horse: The Politics of Intervention and the Failure of American Diplomacy*. New York: Times Books, 1977.
- "Tezkere Onaylandı." http://www.dunyabulteni.net/news_detail.php?id=25740.
- Thomasson, D. K. "Pelosi Stumbles over Armenian Resolution." *New York Times*, 15 October 2007.
- Vest, Jason. "Turkey, Israel and the US." *The Nation*, 23 August 2002.
- Walker, Joshua W. "Reexamining the US-Turkish Alliance." *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2007): 93-109.
- White House Report "Turkey Told Kirkuk Will Be under US Control." <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/April/20030410143441nosnhojb0.1897852.html#ixzz0Afokc>.
- "Wilson: Örgüte Silah Vermiyoruz." CNN-Türk, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2007/turkiye/07/03/wilson.orgute.silah.vermiyoruz/371137.0/index.html>.
- Yetkin, Murat. "Hibe Silahlar PKK'ya." *Radikal*, 19 July 2007.
- Zaman, Amberin. " Hamas Leader Meets Turkish Officials in Ankara." Voice of America, <http://www.voanews.com/tibetan/archive/2006-02/2006-02-16-voa4.cfm>.