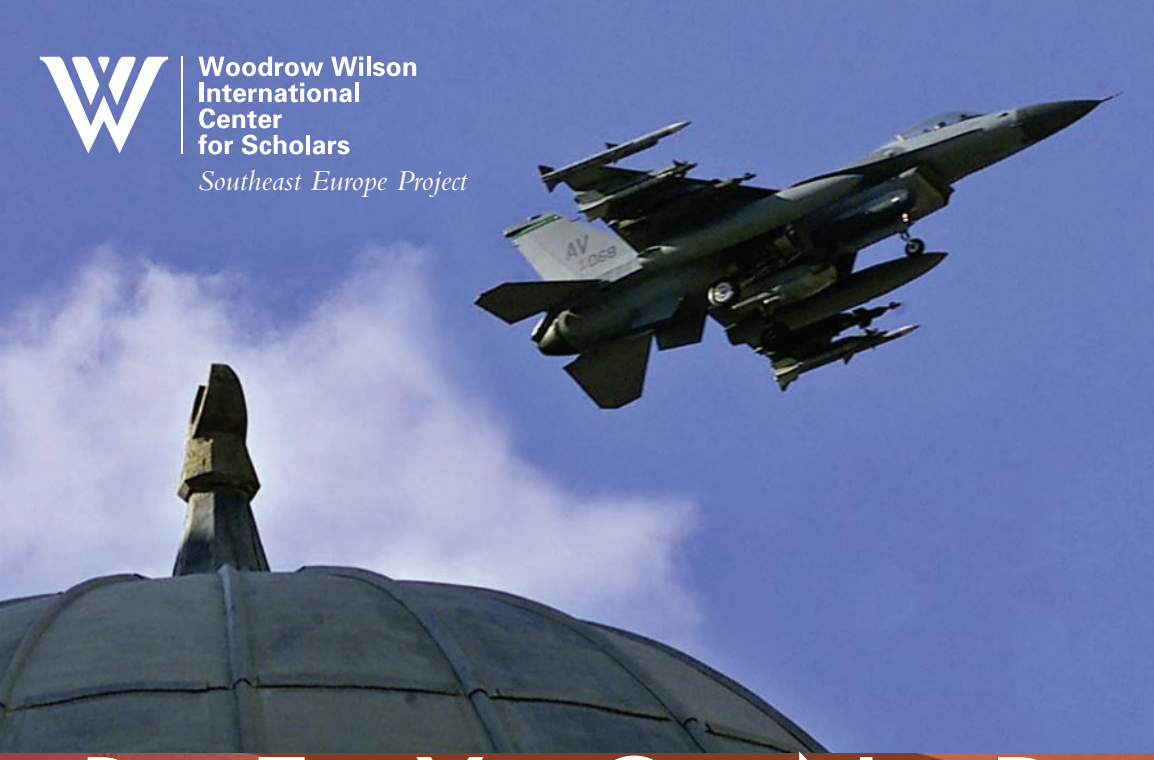

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Southeast Europe Project

BEYOND SUSPICION

Rethinking US–Turkish Relations

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A US Air Force F-16 prepares to land at İncirlik Airbase near Adana in southern Turkey.

Jetty at the Iraqi–Turkish oil pipeline terminal in Yumurtalik on Turkey's Mediterranean cost.

BEYOND SUSPICION: RETHINKING US–TURKISH RELATIONS

IAN O. LESSER

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A frequent commentator for international media, he has written extensively on international security issues. His recent books and policy reports include *Security and Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean* (2006); *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (2003); *Greece's New Geopolitics* (2001); and *Countering the New Terrorism* (1999). Dr. Lesser was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, the London School of Economics, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and received his D.Phil from Oxford University. He is a senior advisor to the Luso-American Foundation, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Atlantic Council, and the Pacific Council on International Policy. He serves on the advisory boards of the *International Spectator*, *Turkish Policy Quarterly* and the International Center for Black Sea Studies, and has been a senior fellow of the Onassis Foundation.

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PREFACE

These are difficult times for Turkey and for US-Turkish relations. It has become fashionable for Americans to ask: Who lost Turkey? For Turks, it is equally chic to question American motives in dealing with Turkey and its region. Mutual suspicions have been an unfortunate aspect of the relationship since the beginning of the Iraq war. Anti-American attitudes have grown substantially across Turkish society, against a backdrop of rising nationalism and sovereignty consciousness. Important foreign policy constituencies in Washington are concerned about the direction of Turkish politics and external policy. These concerns have been reinforced by the Turkish political crisis of spring 2007 and continuing struggles over the future of Turkish secularism, democracy, and civil-military relations. Turkey's troubled European Union (EU) candidacy also underscores the reality that Turkey's future trajectory, including its place in the West, cannot be taken for granted.

Does this mean that the United States is losing Turkey, or that Turkish-American relations have lost their importance? This analysis rejects such views. To be sure, key aspects of the relationship suffer from deferred maintenance, and a reshaped bilateral relationship needs to reflect critical changes in the strategic environment, as well as new perspectives and new actors on both sides. Turkey is moving toward a more active and diverse foreign policy, driven by new perspectives and changing affinities. Much of this new activity will accord with American interests; some may not. But, taking the long view, the relationship has often been characterized by sharp disagreements, alongside areas of shared interest and cooperation. There was never a golden age in US-Turkish relations.

This study starts from the proposition that understanding what has changed in the relationship, and what may be possible in the future, is not simply about assessing changes in Turkey, marked as those may be. There is also a need for sober assessment of what has changed on the US side; and in the foreign policy realm, the changes have been substantial. Thus the problem has at least two parts, or—to be more precise—three, if the rapidly evolving strategic environment is taken as yet another variable. Many of the elements affecting dealings between Ankara and

Washington, from the sharp deterioration of Turkish public attitudes toward the US to resurgent nationalism, are observed in abundance elsewhere on the international scene. Policy differences over the Iraq war have been reinforced by wider unease about the nature and direction of American power, and Turks are more affected by these concerns than most. The challenges to the US-Turkish strategic relationship are neither new nor unique. But they do require a more imaginative response than in past decades, as well as an adjustment of short- and long-term expectations on both sides.

This report reflects research and discussions conducted between September 2005 and April 2007 in the United States, Turkey, and elsewhere. I am most grateful to the many individuals—serving and retired officials, politicians, academics, business leaders, journalists, and private observers—who shared their time and perspectives, sometimes on multiple occasions over the course of the study. The discussions were held on a not-for-attribution basis. Of course, the analysis and conclusions offered here, and any errors, are my own, and do not reflect the views of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the German Marshall Fund, or the friends and colleagues who generously agreed to review the report's draft.

I am particularly grateful to the Smith Richardson Foundation for its generous support for this work, and to the Southeast Europe Project of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington for providing an extremely congenial home for the project, and for its author. The study has also benefited greatly from a series of written contributions from leading Turkish analysts, including Ambassador Özdem Sanberk, Professor Ahmet Evin and Professor Soli Özel. Their thoughtful analyses will be disseminated by the Wilson Center as separate companion pieces to this report.

SUMMARY

Mutual suspicion has been a pervasive feature of US-Turkish relations since the Iraq war. It has become fashionable for Americans to ask: "Who lost Turkey?" For Turks, it is equally fashionable to question American motives in dealing with Turkey and its region. This analysis rejects these assessments. To be sure, key aspects suffer from deferred maintenance, and a reshaped bond needs to reflect critical changes in the strategic environment and the emergence of new perspectives and new actors on both sides. Turkey has been moving toward a more active and diverse foreign policy, driven by new sensitivities, changing affinities, and evolving relationships between religion and secularism, state and society, and nationalism and reform. Some of this new foreign policy will be in accord with American interests, and some will not be. Yet to take the long view, the US-Turkish relationship has often been characterized by sharp disagreements alongside areas of shared interest and cooperation. There is no lost golden age in US-Turkish relations.

Turkey's political crisis over the selection of its next president, and the broader debates it has spurred about secularism, civil-military relations, and the relationship between state and society, is vitally important to the future of Turkey. The cleavages it has revealed may take years to reconcile. But it is a crisis that can only be resolved by Turks. The United States should not hesitate to make clear that American interests are served by democratic solutions, but Washington must also realize that American influence in Turkish domestic politics is limited—and properly so. Political turmoil may make Turkey a less active and effective partner for a period, but eventually the relationship will need to be put on a better footing, whatever the political constellation in Ankara.

Understanding what has changed in the relationship, and what will be possible in the future, is not simply about assessing changes in Turkey. Also needed is a sober assessment of what has changed on the US side, and in the strategic environment as a whole. Many of the elements affecting relations between Ankara and Washington, from the sharp deterioration of public attitudes toward the United States to the resurgence of nationalism, can be seen in abundance elsewhere on the international scene. Policy dif-

ferences over the Iraq war have been reinforced by wider unease about the nature and direction of American power, and Turks are more affected than most nations by these concerns. The challenges to the US-Turkish strategic relationship are neither new nor unique.

Toward a Sustainable US-Turkish Partnership

A strategic relationship on the pattern of the Cold War years is unlikely to re-emerge in the absence of wider, negative developments on the international scene. Relations could drift toward a scenario of strategic estrangement, but this would be avoidable. The most likely—and desirable—scenario will be the development of a recalibrated, sustainable partnership. Movement toward a sustainable relationship requires avoiding near-term crises over highly emotive issues on the bilateral agenda, but the essential contours of this approach are broader gauge and longer-term.

First, expectations need to be brought into line with reality. Turkey has a long history of ambivalence toward American access and power projection in the Middle East, especially in the absence of United Nations (UN) or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mandates. This is most unlikely to change, and American policymakers and strategists must take this reality on board. It is unrealistic to assume that Turkey, with its pronounced sensitivity to questions of national sovereignty, will automatically agree to facilitate American action in the Middle East or Eurasia. But substantial cooperation on regional security is achievable. Turkey has, in fact, been quietly supportive of coalition operations in Iraq, despite overt differences over Iraq policy.

Second, it is essential to acknowledge that a strategic relationship conceived largely in bilateral terms is unsustainable. Few of the leading issues facing the United States and Turkey lack an important triangular dimension involving NATO, EU, or transatlantic relations. Looking ahead, a multilateral frame is likely to be the most predictable and effective context for cooperation. There will be few opportunities for meaningful new initiatives of a purely bilateral character on Iran, Russia, the Balkans, the Black Sea, stability in the eastern Mediterranean, or energy security. The most important external element in the future of the relationship is undoubtedly the evolving nature of transatlantic cooperation as a whole. Both sides have an interest in assuring that Euro-Atlantic relations are set on a new and positive course. A dysfunctional transatlantic relationship,

including a diminished role for NATO, would place even greater pressure on US-Turkish relations and force Ankara into a succession of uncomfortable policy choices. For this reason, among others, Washington will benefit from continued Turkish convergence with Europe—as long as transatlantic relations are stable. Even on Iraq, the European and NATO dimensions are highly relevant, and could be given far greater prominence.

Third, a sustainable relationship must be supported by a web of more diverse ties at the level of non-government institutions, businesses, and individuals. The prevailing security-heavy framework is a legacy of the Cold War, reinforced by contemporary trouble on Turkey's borders. Security and political cooperation may remain the core of the relationship—for good reason—but this cooperation is likely to be less fragile and more predictable to the extent that it is based on broader affinity, transparency, and better-informed public opinion. The progressive normalization, diversification, and "multilateralization" of American ties across southern Europe since the early 1990s has paid important dividends, and offers a useful model for the future of the US-Turkish partnership.

Fourth, US-Turkish relations require active management and an explicit commitment to their continued importance, quite apart from questions of power projection and abstract geopolitics. A considerable part of the current mistrust stems from a Turkish sense that Ankara's interests are not being taken seriously by Washington, which views Turkey as less than helpful on Iraq, Iran, and other issues of concern. Moreover, both countries are now asking fundamental questions about each other's future: the partners as well as the partnership are in flux. To be sure, much American interest in Turkey is derivative of other concerns, while some Turkish interest in the United States also has this quality. But *Realpolitik* has its limits in a fluid strategic environment where the perspectives of a regional and a global power often diverge. A sustainable relationship requires the "flywheel" of affinity, alliance commitment, and frequent high-level consultation.

Policy Implications and Priorities

Act on the PKK—and Put Turkey at the Center of Regional Diplomacy for Iraq. An exit from the deepening crisis in Iraq will require a multilateral approach, engaging Iraq's neighbors and key actors elsewhere. Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and others have figured prominently in the post-Iraq Study Group debate on this question. But Turkey remains

at the margins, despite the fact that Ankara has as much or more leverage over key aspects of the Iraq situation, as well as the leading regional stake in the long-term future of the north of Iraq. Growing tensions between Turkey and the Kurdish leadership in Iraq, and mounting Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) violence inside Turkey, make it imperative that Washington put engagement with Ankara at the top of the regional agenda for Iraq—and make it explicit.

Many of the options for American disengagement or redeployment in Iraq will depend critically on Turkish logistical and political support. A "package" approach to expanded US-Turkish cooperation on Iraq would support both American and Turkish priorities: prompt American political and military pressure on the PKK issue, Turkish pressure on Syria and Iran over their role in the Iraqi insurgency, and long-term planning for stabilization—at a minimum, containment of chaos—in Iraq. Working with Turkey should not be a controversial matter. It would not require the wrenching strategic choices implied in dealing with Tehran or with Syria. Above all, the United States must be responsive to a leading security challenge facing a NATO ally.

Address Long-Term Strategic Problems. Turkish and American policy planners need to open a much more explicit discussion about future challenges and strategic cooperation, aimed at reducing the pervasive sense of suspicion and unpredictability in the relationship. Questions to be taken up include an assessment of the longer-term implications of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East: how to deal with a nuclear or near-nuclear Iran. In the near term, it will be essential to enlist Turkish cooperation on the question of Iran's nuclear program, a shared risk for Ankara, Europe, Washington, and, ultimately, Russia. Turkey's improved relations with Tehran may be turned to advantage in dealing with Iran on the nuclear issue, as well as in cutting off Iranian support for irregular and terrorist groups across the Middle East. These are priorities for American policy on which Ankara can be more active and supportive of US interests.

Joint planning should also focus on the harmonization of American and Turkish approaches to the Black Sea and relations with Russia. A bilateral effort to resolve the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh would be of importance in its own right, and would also greatly enhance the prospects for normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations. The United States will have a strong stake in the consolidation of Turkish-Greek détente through new

confidence-building measures and cooperation on unconventional security problems in the Mediterranean—a strategic imperative that has not disappeared with the improved climate of recent years.

Energy security is another obvious item for the agenda, but the next steps for bilateral cooperation after Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) are unclear. Europe and Russia will be the leading actors in the next round of energy pipeline projects in Turkey's neighborhood. American leverage over Turkey's energy transit position will be far more substantial in relation to Iraqi production and new ventures with Iran. These should be priorities for US-Turkish dialogue and planning.

From an American perspective, it would be most useful to develop a more explicit and predictable understanding on the use of the İncirlik Air Base for regional contingencies outside a NATO framework. Under current conditions, this is most unlikely. But more direct consultation and advance planning with Ankara on some of the most likely cases related to Iran (or, for example, a response to a "loose" nuclear weapons scenario in Pakistan) could encourage a more predictable climate on questions of power projection and base access.

Assist the Turkish Community in Cyprus. Washington is no longer the center of gravity for Cyprus diplomacy. The European context is now central, and inextricably bound up with Turkey's own EU candidacy. Turkey has taken substantial steps toward compromise in its own approach to the Cyprus problem, and developments on the island have moved in the direction of greater interaction and confidence building between the Greek and Turkish communities. Cyprus retains great symbolic significance for Turks, and the United States could take some steps toward ending the isolation of the Turkish community in northern Cyprus by lifting restrictions on direct trade and investment with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Washington should also press its European partners to act on the EU's own commitments in this area. Most important, greater resources should be devoted to the existing very effective program of policy-oriented visits and inter-communal activities undertaken with official American support.

Emphasize Transatlantic Initiatives. The prospects for future bilateral cooperation between the United States and Turkey will be strongly influenced by the quality of transatlantic relations, a key context for any strategic relationship between Washington and Ankara. In many of the

most critical areas of cooperation, including policies toward Iraq and Iran, multilateral approaches will be essential. To put it differently, the core question is not the future of US-Turkish relations, but rather of triangular cooperation among US, Turkish, and European partners at both governmental and non-governmental levels.

The July 2006 joint document on "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership" proposes that new efforts be made to deepen collaboration between American and Turkish institutions. These activities should be promoted with funding from both governments. Ideally, their focus should be triangular, including both institutions and resources from Europe. A key goal of this triangular dialogue should be to encourage Turkish, American, and European action on shared policy challenges in the domestic and international arenas, including—but going beyond—questions of security and geopolitics. Urban, education, and health policy should be on the agenda, alongside questions of regional security and geopolitics. A new high-level commission engaging senior officials, both current and retired, with leading figures from the business and policy communities, might also be established—but it, too, should be trirather than bilateral.

New initiatives on security and defense should be cast in a NATO rather than a bilateral mold. The long-term reinforcement of Turkey's role and trust in the Alliance should be an integral part of America's policy toward Ankara. NATO's effectiveness across a wider range of possible contingencies to Europe's south and east will depend critically on Turkish cooperation. At the same time, Turkey's confidence in Alliance security guarantees—badly frayed over the last 15 years—needs to be restored. American policy should recognize that Turkish security cooperation is likely to be more predictable and extensive when based on NATO and UN mandates. This is a simple reality of the Turkish scene, which lies fully in the European mainstream.

Build the Economic and Civil Society Dimension. This analysis underscores the importance of re-balancing US-Turkish relations, giving greater weight to neglected, non-security aspects of the relationship. Turkey's location, and the reality of multiple security challenges on or near its borders, suggests that security issues and security cooperation will retain immense importance in Turkey's relations with the United States and

Europe. While this is a structural feature for Turkey and its international role, developing the non-security aspects of the relationship, including economic and cultural ties, will pay subtle but important dividends by enlarging the constituency for bilateral relations and bolstering the relatively weak sense of affinity and familiarity at both public and elite levels.

Ultimately, the successful development of economic and cultural ties will depend on myriad decisions by many actors, from investors to educators, from museum curators to scientific researchers. Commercial viability and the pace of globalization will shape what is possible over the next decade. The most important variables will likely be the extent of Turkey's European integration, political stability and reform, and openness to new intellectual and technological currents. On the Turkish side, legal and regulatory reform will be essential spurs to new American investment. On the US side, the principal challenge is to bring more American enterprises and individuals into contact with Turkish partners. Turkey needs to become fashionable to consumers, long-term investors, and cultural leaders.

Pay Attention to Style, and Substance. Substantive policy decisions drive US-Turkish relations on a day-to-day basis. But foreign policy style also plays a role, in public diplomacy and at the level of leaderships and elites. The last few years have seen numerous opportunities lost, in part because the atmosphere of US-Turkish dialogue has been unattractive to key constituencies on both sides. Over the next two years, both Turkey and the United States will have critical national elections, as well as critical opportunities to revive and revitalize their bilateral relationship in a transatlantic context. Turks will seek a sense of renewed interest and commitment from Washington—and acknowledgment of Turkey's importance as a regional actor and a leading partner for the United States. Americans will seek reassurance that Turkey remains committed to its Western course. Both leaderships must transcend the pervasive suspicion that has limited the strategic character of their relationship since 2003. Turkey should be a top candidate for a bilateral summit—ideally to take place in Turkey—after the 2008 US presidential election, once the new administration is in place.

I. INTRODUCTION

As more than one prominent former American diplomat has observed, the United States and Turkey are not "natural" allies. The two countries are geographically distant and, without Cold War imperatives, have had no obvious balancing interest in relation to third powers. Close US-Turkish cooperation serves many important purposes, but it is not existential—that is, it is not essential to the survival of either country. Bonds of affinity and culture, very clear in transatlantic relations as a whole, are somewhat diffuse in bilateral terms. The perceptions of a regional and a global power inevitably differ in key respects. In short, the relationship may be strategic, but it is not automatic and requires work—deliberate planning, maintenance, and high-level engagement. With an accelerated pace of change in Turkey, the United States, and the international environment, Turkish-US relations have become even more high-maintenance. Moreover, the current concentration of challenges on or near Turkey's borders means that bilateral cooperation has been tested more frequently, sometimes daily. Turkey's own internal political stresses place additional uncomfortable demands on American policymakers.

The period since 2003 has been one of extraordinary, but not unprecedented, stress in the relationship. Iraq is at the center of this friction, but differences over Iraq also draw on deeper national anxieties. Two very different events are emblematic of a troubled relationship. First, for American policymakers and strategists, the Turkish Grand National Assembly's failure to approve a plan to deploy substantial American forces via Turkey in the spring of 2003 opened a debate about the value and predictability of the bilateral relationship. This debate continues in many quarters, and has been reinforced by a series of Turkish foreign policy decisions toward Iraq and the Middle East. To be sure, the American request for access to Turkish territory was unprecedented, and many analysts were surprised that it actually came very close to being passed in parliament. In fact, since 1991, successive Turkish governments had been deeply reluctant to put Turkish military bases or territory at the disposal of American forces for *strategic* action

against Iraq (beyond the highly constrained operations Provide Comfort and Northern Watch). American decision-makers should not have been surprised by the Turkish stance in 2003. But tough negotiations with Turkey, and their ultimately unsuccessful outcome, left the Bush Administration and the American strategic community, traditionally a key constituency for Ankara, with a very negative image.

On the Turkish side, a second image has come to symbolize mistrust in the relationship: the picture of Turkish special operations forces detained by American soldiers during a raid in Kirkuk on July 4, 2003. A minor incident in objective terms, the event touched a nerve in Turkish public opinion, and appeared to illustrate neatly the underlying differences over the future of northern Iraq, and much worse, America's apparent but unintended desire to humiliate Turkey and the Turkish armed forces. In previous decades, Ankara and Washington would likely have handled an incident of this kind quietly, with few political consequences. But in today's Turkey, public opinion counts, and has become a major element in the foreign policy debate. Together with the ongoing perception of American inaction in the face of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) violence, the July 4 incident has fueled an atmosphere of deepening suspicion toward the United States and growing anti-Americanism not only among elites as well as the Turkish public.

Numerous surveys have charted the rise of anti-American sentiment in Turkey since the start of the Iraq war. Many Turkish observers question whether the steady rise in negative attitudes toward the United States is "anti-Americanism" in the strict sense. Turks often stress that these attitudes do not reflect animosity toward Americans as individuals, and visitors to Turkey would generally agree. But at the level of attitudes toward American policy, and toward the United States as an international actor—topics of central concern in this analysis—Turkish public opinion is indeed deeply anti-American. Evidence of elite views is more anecdotal, but also displays a striking distrust of American intentions and policies. It is a critical open question whether these negative views are structural and durable or simply a transient response to events of the past few years.

To a considerable extent, the troubled relationship between Turkey and the United States is about policy differences, principally on Iraq and related issues. But anxiety about the relationship also operates at anoth-

er level and primarily in terms of expert debate on both sides. Is the United States today dealing with a different Turkey and, if so, what kind of an international partner is this new Turkey?[1] New social and political dynamics inside Turkey, continuing debate about the character and behavior of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government, a "new look" in Turkish foreign policy, and unresolved questions of civil-military relations underscore the reality that Turkey is a partner in flux. Turks ask similar questions about the United States, especially in light of America's more focused and unilateral policies after September 11th, with tougher measures of strategic cooperation and declining tolerance for the status quo in areas around Turkey.

It is tempting to argue that Turkey is important to the United States because of its location. Strategists on both sides have drawn on a standard geopolitical lexicon to explain why the relationship remains strategic in the post-Cold War period. To a significant extent, Turkey and Turkish-US relations have been prisoners of a narrow concept of geopolitics. In an era of transnational challenges that span continents as well as regions, the key questions may not be geographic, or "geopolitical" in the traditional sense of politics determined by geography, much less by geography as destiny. Ultimately, it may not matter whether Turkey is a flank or a front, a bridge or a barrier. Far more important is the question of how Turkey will act, and whether Turkish and American interests are convergent or divergent. For decades, the rela-

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1. Numerous authors over the last decade have raised the question of a "new" Turkey with new external policies. See, for example, Graham E. Fuller et al., *Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993); Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War* (London: Hurst, 1988); Alan Makovsky and Sabri Sayari, eds., *Turkey's New World: Changing Dynamics in Turkish Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000); Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey's Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times," *Chaillot Paper,* No. 92, September 2006 (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies); and Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in An Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003). See also two excellent general surveys on the topic of a new Turkey: Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1997); and Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001).

tionship between Ankara and Washington has been described as "strategic," that is, sustained and supportive of the most critical international objectives of both sides. Today, the strategic quality of the relationship can no longer be taken for granted. This analysis suggests that a reinvigorated strategic relationship is not only possible, but will be in the interest of both countries. But it is likely to have quite different contours, with new forms of engagement, new participants, and more realistic expectations.[2]

A reshaped relationship is also likely to be less bilateral in character. Notwithstanding Turkey's uncertain prospects for European (EU) membership, Europe and the future of Turkey-EU relations will be key variables in Turkey's future, as well as a growing factor in relations between Ankara and Washington. The United States has a stake in Turkey's continued convergence with Europe across many sectors. Deeper relations with Washington are unlikely to be a useful alternative for a Turkey increasingly ambivalent about EU membership (against a background of increasing European ambivalence about Turkey). By the same token, closer ties with Europe cannot replace key aspects of the relationship with the United States. Europe and the United States offer Turkey different—but complementary—things. A more nationalistic, inward-looking Turkey, estranged from Europe and mired in its own social and political struggles, is likely to be a more difficult international partner

2. A number of recent studies have assessed challenges and opportunities in the post-2003 bilateral relationship. See, for example, Steven A. Cook and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, *Generating Momentum for a New Era in US-Turkey Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, Special Report No. 15, June 2006. For several analyses on this theme, see the Spring 2005 issue of *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, "Turkey-US Relations: Redefining and Rebuilding." See also *The State of US-Turkey Relations*, Hearing Before the Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives, May 11, 2005, and Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics," *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Autumn 2006, pp. 83–96; F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in An Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2003) and Lesser, "Turkey and the United States: Anatomy of a Strategic Relationship," in Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis, eds., *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004).

across the board, not least for Washington. Many of the new, emerging issues for US-Turkish cooperation in the coming years will have a strong transatlantic dimension, and ought to be approached in a triangular manner by Turks, Americans, and Europeans.

Structure of the Analysis

Section II briefly examines the history of the US-Turkish relationship with an eye toward sustained elements of convergence and divergence. What are the narratives that underlay the two sides' thinking about the relationship? What is remembered and what is forgotten? Was the relationship ever as effective and untroubled as some believe? What can this history tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship?

Section III explores changes on the Turkish side, including social, economic, and political developments with a bearing on Turkish foreign policy and attitudes toward the United States. How should we interpret the deterioration of Turkish attitudes toward the United States in light of the growing role of public opinion in Turkish policy? How might an increased Muslim identity and Turkey's engagement with the Middle East and Russia, as well as a more pronounced nationalism, affect ties with the United States? Should Washington anticipate a change in Turkey's orientation or simply a diversification of Turkey's external policy? How will alternative Turkish futures vis-à-vis the EU shape ties to the United States?

Section IV poses similar questions about the future of the United States as an international actor and a partner for Ankara. To what extent have changes in American strategy and policy since 2001 altered the context for relations with Turkey? Does the shift from regional strategies and partnerships to a more focused strategy driven by counterterrorism, broadly defined, constrain Turkish-American partnership or offer new opportunities for cooperation? Who is interested in Turkey today, and how might this shape the prospects for a diversified relationship?

Section V discusses specific issues at the core of the US-Turkish relationship, including those with a critical or transforming character: Iraq, the Kurds and the PKK, Iran, regional security and reform in the Middle East, Russia, energy security, Cyprus, and the wider economic, technological, and cultural agenda. What are the prospects for cooperation or friction in these areas? What are the steps that matter to both sides?

Section VI offers overall conclusions and policy implications for the United States and Turkey, including priorities for a recalibrated, sustainable relationship. This section also looks ahead to possible paths the bilateral relationship may take and suggests some alternative scenarios. This is less an exercise in prediction than a means of illustrating the forces that will shape Turkish-American relations over the next decade, and how some of these may be forestalled or reinforced.

II. A STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP REVISITED

Recent policy differences and a strong degree of mutual suspicion and disenchantment in US-Turkish relations lead many to look back with nostalgia to a lost golden age of goodwill and cooperation. To be sure, recent history has produced periods of tremendous goodwill and close cooperation. The later years of the Clinton Administration certainly had this quality, epitomized by the highly successful public diplomacy surrounding the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) summit in Istanbul in 1999. In practical terms, this was also a period characterized by strong and effective US support for Turkey's EU candidacy at the EU's 1998 Helsinki summit, close cooperation in successive Balkan crises, the launch of the US-backed BTC pipeline project, and crisis management in the Aegean. This period of close cooperation extended into the early years of the Bush Administration, with critical American support for Turkish economic recovery in the wake of the 2000–2001 financial crisis, consistent support for Turkish assistance through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and Turkish support for US-led action in Afghanistan and counterterrorism more generally.

Viewed in a ten-year frame, it is not surprising that the idea of a lost golden age is popular in both countries. It also encourages the view that the Iraq war changed everything. Taking a longer view on the history of Turkish-American relations, the experience becomes distinctly mixed, with periods of fundamental strategic convergence accompanied by marked friction and even crisis. In this context, the period from the later 1990s through 2002 seems not so much a golden age as a golden moment.

The Emergence of a Strategic Relationship

The American engagement with Turkey is some 200 years old. The first American naval visit to Istanbul took place in 1800, but the core of American interaction with Turkey in the 19th century was commercial or ecclesiastical, rather than strategic in the contemporary sense of the term. American merchants were active participants in the "Turkey trade," which included exports of petroleum products to the Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman Turkey was also a leading purchaser of surplus American arms and ammunition after the Civil War.[3] From the mid-19th century, American missionaries became an active presence in the Ottoman territories, especially in the Balkans and the Levant; it is still possible to encounter individuals in far-flung parts of the United States with old missionary connections to Turkey. Viewed against the very long European encounter with Turkey, this pre-history of US-Turkish relations is quite marginal, but also quite benign. American perceptions of Turkey do not bear the baggage of centuries of Ottoman-Christian confrontation (the first "cold war") or of 19th-century strategies of containment (the "Eastern Question"), history that continues to shape European perceptions of Turkey in subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways.[4] To the extent that American popular and foreign policy interest did focus on Turkey in the 19th century, it was through the lens of support for independence movements in the Ottoman Empire, particularly for the Greeks. A perception of Ottoman backwardness was another persistent theme. In this, American intellectuals were very much in line with their French and British contemporaries. Some of the leading irritants in the bilateral relationship today reawaken Turkish memories of American support for anti-Turkish ethno-nationalist movements in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East.

Ottoman modernizers looked to a unitary and centralizing France rather than the United States as a model for reform, an inclination reinforced by wariness of American federalism. Despite its growing economic power and influence, the United States seemed a distant and marginal actor in European geopolitics, far removed from Turkish strategic concerns, which remained overwhelmingly continental in outlook. The

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3. See James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World 1776–1881* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969); Frank Gervasi, *Thunder Over the Mediterranean* (New York: David McKay and Co., 1975); and Gelina Harlaftis and Vassilis Kardasis, "International Shipping in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea: Istanbul as a Maritime Center 1870–1910," in Sevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, eds., *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization Before 1950* (London: Routledge, 2000).
4. Spanish writers coined the term *guerra fria* to describe their extended conflict with the Ottoman Empire. See Adda B. Bozeman, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft: Selected Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1992), pp. 235–55.

United States entered the Turkish foreign policy calculus proper only with the end of the First World War and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The Treaty of Sèvres, which would have had immense implications for Turkish sovereignty had it been implemented, was seen by many Turks as essentially Wilsonian in inspiration, and part of a wider American tendency to encourage Balkan, Kurdish, and Armenian self-determination at Turkey's expense.[5] The Sèvres experience is still very much alive in the Turkish discourse today, and the "Sèvres syndrome" is a factor in current Turkish suspicions about American policy toward northern Iraq, and Turkey itself. With this historical background, it is hardly surprising that many Turks fear a neo-Wilsonian policy and American talk of transforming the Middle East.

Serious American security interest in Turkey dates from the latter stages of the Second World War and the looming rivalry with Moscow. Before 1945, American policymakers were resistant to operational and political demands in the eastern Mediterranean, which US planners tended to view as a British interest and marginal in strategic terms.[6] Deepening competition with the Soviet Union transformed American interest in Turkey. Indeed the Cold War had its formal origins in the eastern Mediterranean, with security guarantees to Greece and Turkey and the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine. Turkey's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 was in many ways the alliance's first enlargement of strategic consequence.[7]

The bilateral cooperation of the early Cold War years was driven by perceptions of an existential Soviet threat. Deterring a Soviet invasion of Turkish territory and forestalling attempts at internal subversion had a

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5. Cengiz Candar, "Some Turkish Perspectives on the United States and American Policy Toward Turkey," in Morton Abramowitz, ed., *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000), pp. 124–25.
6. American intelligence services were, however, quite active in Turkey throughout the war. This is described in a very lively manner in Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989).
7. See Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980); and Ekavi Athanassapoulou, *Turkey—Anglo-American Security Interests 1945–1952: The First Enlargement of NATO* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).

direct, urgent quality, which was underscored by the presence of American nuclear weapons in Turkey. This was also a period in which images of the Turkish contribution to Western power projection, and the role of military-to-military relations, became central to American thinking about Turkey and US-Turkish relations. These images have proven extraordinarily durable.

Within ten years of Turkey joining NATO and participating in the Korean War, Turkish-American relations began to experience the first of many subsequent crises and setbacks. The Kennedy Administration angered Ankara with its perceived lack of transparency and consultation when it agreed to dismantle nuclear-capable Jupiter missiles, which had been based in Turkey during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The infamous "Johnson letter" of 1964, threatening to withhold American support if Turkey found itself embroiled in conflict with the Soviet Union against the backdrop of a crisis on Cyprus, is still cited by Turks as an example of American unreliability. Turkey's 1974 intervention in Cyprus was even more disruptive to Turkish-American relations, resulting in a four-year arms embargo and setting the stage for ongoing congressional criticism of Ankara's Cyprus policy. During the decades of substantial American security assistance to Turkey, threats to suspend or limit arms transfers became a regular feature of bilateral diplomacy. Cyprus and the Aegean have been leading issues in this regard, but from the 1990s onward more general questions of Turkey's tactics in the battle against the PKK and its human rights policy have taken center stage in arms transfer debates. Turkey was also the focus of much US criticism for its poppy cultivation policies in the 1960s and 1970s.

The bilateral security ties of the Cold War years implied substantial commitments.[8] Turkish territory might have been used for nuclear strikes against Soviet territory, risking retaliation against Istanbul or Ankara, and NATO guarantees meant that the United States might have been required to risk nuclear retaliation against its own territory in defense of Turkey. Turkey's land forces, the second largest in NATO, held a key flank in the conventional defense of Europe from the Balkans to the Caucasus. While in retrospect these contingencies seem highly improba-

8. See Ali Karaosmanoglu, "Problematic Alliance," *Today's Zaman*, March 13, 2007.

ble, they were not seen as remote or inconceivable even as late as the 1980s.[9] Throughout the Cold War, recognition of Turkey's clear contribution to Western security coexisted with periodic anxiety about the health of Turkish-Western relations. A glance at the strategic studies literature of the period reveals many analyses with titles such as "Turkey, NATO and Europe: A Deteriorating Relationship?"[10]

The Gulf War and After – A Troubled Legacy

The strategic relationship of the Cold War period appeared solid from the American perspective, in large measure because it was never strongly tested. The Gulf War of 1990–91 did offer such a test, and Turkey provided valuable support to coalition strategy and operations. But this test ultimately proved corrosive to Turkey's security relations with the United States and other NATO partners. The Özal government and elements within the military favored a forward-leaning approach, including the closure of oil pipelines from Iraq across Turkish territory to the Mediterranean, and American access to the İncirlik airbase and other facilities for air operations against Iraq.[11] Others objected to the deployment of Turkish forces on the Iraqi border, including the then-Chief of the Turkish General Staff who resigned over this issue. Turks have not forgotten the long delay in obtaining even small-scale NATO air defense reinforcements in the months before the war (an experience repeated in almost identical fashion in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war).

For American policymakers and strategists, the extent of Ankara's cooperation in the Gulf war reinforced the image of Turkey as a vital *Middle Eastern* ally—a troubling frame for Turks keenly focused on reinforcing their country's role in Europe in a post-Cold War world. American military officers, more closely involved in often contentious day-to-day interaction with Turkish officials on Operation Provide Comfort, and later

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9. See The Political and Social Studies Foundation, *Turkish-American Relations: Forty Years of Continuity and Change* (Istanbul: SISAV, 1987).
10. Nuri Eren, "Turkey, NATO and Europe: A Deteriorating Relationship?," *The Atlantic Papers*, No. 34 (Paris: Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, 1977).
11. The author recalls a conversation with a very senior Turkish officer some six months before the Gulf war in which it became clear that Turkish planners had been examining this option for some time.

Operation Northern Watch, were less sanguine about the prospects for Turkish cooperation in future crises. Indeed, American access to Turkish facilities and airspace for strategic purposes became progressively more restricted over the course of the 1990s. The Clinton Administration came to assume—correctly—that Ankara would not agree to the use of İncirlik for offensive air operations against Baghdad, including Operation Desert Fox in December 1998.

For Turkey, the aftermath of the first Iraq war came to be seen as the place where the trouble began, with "trouble" defined as PKK terrorism, more complicated relations with Syria and Iran, and more contentious relations with Washington. Turkey sustained substantial economic and security costs for little if any perceived benefit in its relations with the West. The loss of formal trade with Baghdad, Turkey's largest trading partner before the war, was hardly offset by years of black market trade through northern Iraq. Large numbers of Kurdish refugees flowed into Turkey. The period following the Gulf War was characterized by frequent bilateral disagreements, over the rules of engagement for operations Provide Comfort and Northern Watch, the conduct of operations against the PKK in southeastern Turkey and across the border, human rights, arms transfers, and policy in Cyprus and the Aegean. Some of the most contentious issues in the bilateral relationship today, including the provision of actionable US intelligence on PKK movements in northern Iraq, were also at the center of relations during the Clinton years. By the mid-1990s, many Turks saw the United States as a less than reliable ally. At the same time, some American observers had come to see Turkey as part ally, part rogue state. In this climate of mistrust, which was also characteristic of Turkish-EU relations in this period, it was not surprising that Ankara embarked on a policy of strategic diversification with Israel, and even with Russia. The current Turkish debate about new regional ties, and the need to hedge against uncertain relations with Washington, is not new, dating from the 1990s, if not earlier.

Interpreting March 1, 2003

Even against a decades-long assortment of crises and close cooperation in bilateral relations, the Turkish parliament's March 1, 2003 decision not to approve the opening of a second front through Turkey for the looming war with Iraq was a watershed for both sides. The "who lost Turkey?" debate

and the rise of negative views of Turkey among key elements of the American strategic establishment largely go back to experiences predating the Iraq war. How should the events of March 2003 be interpreted? The most reasonable explanation is that the crisis in cooperation over Iraq was a product of mutual misunderstanding on a substantial scale—a strategic as well as a tactical misunderstanding. To be sure, American policymakers had been encouraged by a series of early meetings with the new AKP government, including conversations with AKP advisors even prior to the Turkish elections, and a meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan at the White House in December 2002. Turkey's prompt deployment of forces to Afghanistan in 2001 also offered an encouraging precedent for cooperation in the Bush Administration's global war on terrorism. The extended negotiations around a possible agreement for access to Turkish ports, airspace, and territory took place against the background of Turkey's tentative emergence from the financial crisis of 2000–2001. This only contributed to American assumptions regarding Turkey's stake in a special financial package and support to Turkey through the IMF. Some American negotiators simply believed that Ankara could not afford to say no.

The focus on the economic aspects of the proposed agreement inevitably encouraged a cynical discourse and a contentious negotiating atmosphere, which might have been allayed through the direct involvement of very senior Americans to underscore the importance of coordinated action with Turkey, but such involvement was not forthcoming. By the time the deployment plan came to a vote, key Turkish constituencies, including figures in the Turkish military, were ambivalent or opposed, public opinion remained very negative, and the political implications for the AKP of a "yes" vote distinctly problematic.

On the Turkish side, the real stake was not financial but strategic. Influential Turks certainly took a dim view of Saddam Hussein's regime as a neighbor, but were more concerned about the prospect of instability, conflict, and Kurdish separatism on their border. In this respect, 1990 and its aftermath were—and remain—deeply engrained in Turkish perceptions. Against these concerns had to be set the very real prospect that the United States would act in Iraq no matter what, and that Turkish interests might be better served by winning a seat at the table, which could only be secured through active participation in the coming operation (although some in the Turkish parliament apparently believed that the absence of Turkish approval

might actually forestall an invasion).[12] Indeed, in October 2003, following the close vote against the cooperation plan, the Erdoğan government gained parliament's approval for deployment of Turkish forces to Iraq, an offer quickly turned aside in light of Kurdish objections. Turkey has, however, allowed the fairly unrestricted use of İncirlik and Turkish airspace to give logistical support to coalition operations in Iraq. Perhaps as much as 75 percent of the material shipped to Iraq for military and civilian purposes has gone through Turkey, despite the continued perception that Ankara has been unhelpful on Iraq. Not surprisingly, the Turkish government has adopted a low profile on this question vis-à-vis the Turkish public.

American policymakers started with unfounded assumptions about the predictability of Turkish cooperation and, to the Turks, seemed to take a cavalier approach to Turkish sovereignty concerns. With the exception of some liberal Atlanticists, elements of the business community, and a few strategists with ambitious ideas about Turkey's regional role, the new AKP government enjoyed little support for a more forward-looking stance even among internationally oriented elites. Public opinion, as noted, has been as negative about the war and about American policy as any in Europe. Against this backdrop, the real surprise was that the proposed legislation came very close to being approved. Even if Turkish leaders and opinion shapers been convinced of the wisdom of the American approach, US demands for access to Turkish territory were extraordinary in the context of modern Turkish history. Turks are keenly aware of the part played by foreign forces, and their expulsion in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, in the emergence of the modern Turkish republic.

The prospect of a large-scale deployment of American forces, especially without a NATO or UN mandate, was difficult for Turkish society to accept. In the absence of a basic bilateral understanding about regional aims, including the Kurdish dimension in Iraq, it was nearly impossible.[13] To be sure, the March 2003 episode was the product of mismanagement on both sides. But the real

12. For retrospective analyses of the March 2003 decision, see Michael Rubin, "A Comedy of Errors: American-Turkish Diplomacy and the Iraq War," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring 2005, pp. 69–80; and Bulent Aliriza and Seda Ciftci, "The US-Turkish Alliance at the Iranian Junction?," *CSIS Turkey Update* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 13, 2006).
13. See Lesser, "Playing Turkey," *Aspenia* (Rome), No. 21–22, 2003, pp. 166–74.

lesson is about the need for accurate perceptions of what is possible, the costs of unrealistic assumptions and deferred maintenance in bilateral relations, and the need for shared strategy as a context for cooperation in regional crises—especially in a new Turkey where public opinion counts.

Bridge or Barrier, Pivot or Model?

Even in the post-Cold War period, when the containment of Soviet power is no longer a feature of grand strategy, policymakers and analysts have persisted in seeing Turkey's geographic position as the basis for its strategic importance and the center of gravity for bilateral cooperation. Turkey's proximity to crisis-prone areas in the Balkans, Eurasia, and the Middle East has made questions of access for military power projection or energy transportation the focus of strategic cooperation with Ankara. This realtor's view of strategy, "location, location, location," has not served either side well in a post-containment era of diffuse regional problems, less-than-existential threats, and new debates about national power and purpose. In particular, it has led to often unrealistic assumptions about what Turkey can and will do in adjacent areas.

Geopolitical arguments about Turkey's role were spurred by the collapse of Soviet power and anxiety about Turkey's continued strategic importance in a post-Soviet era. In retrospect, it is clear that Turkey had little to fear in terms of strategic marginalization. But this was far from evident in the early 1990s, and Turkish (and some American) analysts began to see the rediscovery of a vast, forgotten Turkic world from the Balkans to Central Asia as a vehicle for rethinking Turkish foreign policy and engaging Western partners. This was in many ways a natural extension of the longstanding Turkish interest in the country's role as a "bridge" between cultures as well as continents. The idea of Turkey as a bridge is deeply imbedded in Turkish foreign policy culture and pervasive in the bilateral discourse. It also plays a key role in arguments for Turkish membership in the EU. A lively debate has also grown up around the apparently countervailing but actually compatible idea that Turkey has more often served as a "barrier" in strategic terms, especially as seen from Europe.[14]

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14. See Lesser, "Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War," in Fuller, Lesser, et al., *Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Boulder: Westview/RAND, 1993); and Lesser, "Beyond 'Bridge or Barrier': Turkey's Evolving Security Relations with the West," in Makovsky and Sayari.

Whether as a bridge or a barrier, the discussion about why Turkey matters continues to be driven by geography and essentially 19th—and early 20th—century notions of geopolitics in the tradition of Mackinder, Haushofer, and Spykman. Even today, the AKP government's leading foreign policy advisors lean heavily toward a very traditional notion of geopolitics as the basis for understanding Turkey's position and role. These geopolitical images emanate from Ankara and Washington in roughly equal measure, are mutually reinforcing, and are united in their inclination to view Turkey's position from the "outside in."[15]

In recent years it has also become fashionable to argue that Turkey—and by implication the bilateral relationship—is important because the country is "pivotal."[16] In other words, both developments inside Turkey and Turkish policy will be consequential over a wide area and in diverse ways. The idea of pivotal states also implies that the character and direction of these societies are in flux. This argument exists alongside the geopolitical debate, but differs significantly in that it assesses Turkey's importance from the "inside out." Here, Turkey is important because of what it is, or could become, rather than simply because of where it sits. Brazil, China, Indonesia, India, and Algeria also tend to appear on lists of pivotal states.

The inside-out view of Turkey's strategic importance is exemplified by the idea of Turkey as a model for political and economic development across the broader Middle East, a formulation that became popular in American discourse after the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks. Turkey inevitably emerged as an example of a stable, democratic, and rapidly developing Muslim society oriented toward the West, and a useful model for transformation elsewhere. Leaving aside the question of democracy promotion as a generic counterterrorism strategy, there is little question that Turks have reacted badly to their portrayal as a model for the Muslim world. Many Turks are indeed convinced of the importance

15. On the question of shared and often misleading images, see Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities," *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 51–64.
16. See Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and US Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1996. Alan Makovsky has developed this idea extensively in the Turkish context.

of the Turkish example for development in their region, but the term "model," and all that it implies, is widely disparaged in Turkey, in part because it seems to tie the country too closely to a strategy emanating from Washington. Many Turks are uncomfortable with a formula that offers Turkey as a model for Middle Eastern development, preferring to cast their country's role in European terms. For others, and especially the secular elites, the notion of Turkey as a model for anything Muslim is unappealing and could reinforce religious currents within Turkish society. Unease of this sort has grown as Turkey's own debate about religion and secularism becomes more heated. Ironically, there is some evidence that, after decades of disinterest, some audiences in the wider Muslim world are indeed beginning to take seriously the example of an AKP-governed Turkey as a loose model for political development.[17] Despite the largely negative Turkish response, American policymakers and foreign policy writers persist in offering up the idea of Turkey as a model for the Middle East and the Muslim world.

Two Strategic Cultures

US-Turkish relations developed a strong practical dimension over decades of security cooperation. This aspect of the relationship has persisted in important areas, notably in the successive Balkan crises of the 1990s and in Turkey's contributions to critical international peacekeeping and stabilization operations, including Somalia, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. It is also characteristic of the effective day-to-day cooperation on counterterrorism that exists against a background of broader political and public diplomacy disputes.

Behind this cooperation lies an interaction between two well-developed strategic cultures, with some striking points of convergence and divergence. First, both cultures are relatively security-conscious. Turkey's fear of separatism and irredentism, its troubled neighborhood, and its prominent military establishment have ensured that security issues are never far from the center of national debate. There is a strong domestic dimension to this, and even today the Turkish security debate is in large measure about internal security. On the American side, in the wake of September 11th, the focus

17. Graham Fuller has written extensively on this theme.

on homeland security has been tremendously reinforced. To an important extent, both the United States and Turkey now see their international security concerns through the lens of internal risks.

Second, both societies have a relatively unreconstructed view of national sovereignty. In this they stand somewhat apart from the weaker postmodern idea of sovereignty that has developed within the EU. This general reluctance to weaken national prerogatives underlies much of the Turkish ambivalence about EU membership, however important integration with Europe may be in developmental, strategic, and symbolic terms. The perennially skeptical attitude of American lawmakers to international treaties and regulations, and the sensitivity to perceived foreign interest and influence within American borders, can be perfectly recognized in the Turkish debate. This sensitivity is especially pronounced on matters of military presence and authority. Before the Iraq war, American planners had proposed to deploy as many as 60,000 troops through Turkish territory, an extraordinary request in light of Turkey's history and strategic tradition. Just a few years earlier, after September 11th, NATO's AWACS aircraft with multinational crews (including Turks) were deployed in US air space to assist with air traffic security—an act of Alliance solidarity that Washington was reluctant to emphasize for fear of a negative public reaction. It is virtually impossible to imagine the US Congress approving the transit of large numbers of foreign troops through American territory for any purpose. American and Turkish attitudes toward sovereignty, territory, and security are closer than critics on both sides would like to admit.

Third, both countries have actually had a relatively high threshold for international intervention, accompanied by a willingness to act massively and decisively when this threshold in crossed: Cyprus in 1974 and Iraq in 2003 offer striking examples. Turkish and American foreign policy behavior is subject to a longstanding tension between non-intervention, even isolation, and demands for more active engagement, including the use of force. The use of force in a limited manner, briefly, and for limited political objectives, while not unknown, is less central to the strategic tradition of Turkey and the United States than to France's or Britain's.

There are also some significant differences in strategic outlook, with implications for how Ankara and Washington perceive and act in the international environment. First, and most fundamentally, the United States is a global power with an extraordinary range of international com-

mitments and vehicles for influence from military power to economic and cultural influence, a full spectrum of "hard" and "soft" power instruments. The United States has a systemic stake in issues and developments on a global level. Turkey is a substantial regional power, but its interests and reach are necessarily more limited and more focused. Relations with Washington, positive or negative, are rarely far from the center of the Turkish policy debate. Seen from Washington, relations with Ankara are rarely, if ever, central to the international calculus. Inevitably, this gives a diffuse and transitory flavor to US relations with Turkey. It also encourages a Turkish perception that Turkey is not taken seriously as a regional partner by the United States and that Turkish interests are either poorly understood or ignored. To the extent that Turkey is portrayed as a strategic partner for Washington, the rationale for Turkey's strategic importance is usually a function of challenges in surrounding areas, and other priorities, whether the containment of the Soviet Union or Iran, or transformation in the Middle East.[18] From the Turkish perspective, the American stake in Turkey often seems derivative and calculated.

Second, the United States and Turkey differ substantially in their strategic patience and tenacity. As a global actor, the United States faces myriad distractions and claims on its policy attention and energy. Turkey, too, faces diverse claims on the attention of its policymakers and the public, but on a significantly smaller scale. Turkey is an old power, with a long imperial past, a long strategic memory, and a preference for the status quo. The American approach to international affairs, by contrast, can often seem impatient, generic, and risky. In the post-2001 environment, the rise of a more revolutionary, "transformational" strategy, especially in the Middle East, has been an uncomfortable fit with Turkey's overwhelming stake in stability on its borders, and of its borders *per se*.

Third, on a grand strategic level, the American tradition has combined elements of continental and maritime approaches, reflecting US development, interests, and presence. The United States is an actor in Europe and Eurasia, but it also bears on Turkish interests as a power in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Gulf. Turkey is certainly an impor-

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18. See Alan Makovsky, "Marching in Step, Mostly!" *Private View*, Spring 1999, Vol. 3, No.7, p.38.

tant actor in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, but the center of gravity of the Turkish worldview is arguably continental. When Turks think more expansively about their country's interests and reach, they tend to think in terms of continental geography, from the Balkans to western China. This preference is noticeable even in the new debate about globalization, geopolitics, and Turkey's role, as exemplified by Ahmet Davutoğlu's ideas on "strategic depth." Apart from its intellectual significance, this difference in strategic emphasis has implications for US and Turkish views of a range of policy questions from NATO's mission in the Black Sea region to Turkey's involvement in Mediterranean security initiatives (one notable exception has been Turkey's land and maritime contributions to ongoing European peacekeeping operations in Lebanon).[19]

Convergent and divergent aspects of strategic culture coexist in Turkish-American relations, sometimes strengthening and sometimes complicating cooperation. The relatively fixed strategic imperatives of the Cold War era and the largely status quo orientation of both countries throughout the 1990s have given way to a more fluid and uncertain period, with more active and wide-ranging debates about external policy on all sides. This raises the important—and open—question of divergence and convergence in US and Turkish strategic thought in the years ahead. Changing dynamics in Turkey and in American foreign policy are already fueling these debates, and will very likely set the terms for what is possible in a reshaped, recalibrated relationship.

Evolving Stakes in the Bilateral Relationship

After two centuries of engagement and decades of cooperation what are the US and Turkish stakes in the bilateral relationship in today's strategic environment? Simply put, the United States has several broad stakes in Turkey. First, it has a stake in the stable political and economic evolution of Turkey itself; objectively, because the nature of Turkey's development will have international implications, and subjectively because Turkey is

19. For a survey of Turkey's contributions to multinational peacekeeping and peace support operations in the Middle East, see Selahattin Ibas, "Contributions of the Turkish Armed Forces to Middle East Peace Operations," *PolicyWatch* #1199 (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy), February 15, 2007.

part of a shared community of values and interests. Second, the United States looks to Turkey as a partner in the management of regional challenges (such as Iraq, Iran, and the Black Sea) and some key functional issues (energy security, counterterrorism, relations between the Muslim world and the West). Third, Washington has an interest in Turkey as a contributor to American freedom of action in the direct, power-projection sense and also as a facilitator of American policy. These interests are relatively durable and are unlikely to change substantially over the next decade. But measures and expectations regarding these interests can and will evolve. Turkey's political and social struggles, the renewed specter of the military's intervention in politics, a rise in terrorist incidents, and large-scale public demonstrations have put the issue of Turkey's stability back on the agenda.

Turkish interests in the United States and in the bilateral relationship actually mirror US interests in Turkey. Turks have a stake in the internal evolution of American politics and economy because these are variables with global consequences. Turks will also look to Washington for support on critical regional challenges (e.g., northern Iraq, Cyprus) and functional interests (e.g., trade, investment) and wider strategic objectives such as EU membership. Turkey will also see the United States as a contributor to, or inhibitor of, Ankara's own freedom of action. To an important extent, this will be about Washington not getting in the way of Turkish trade, investment, diplomacy, and security initiatives. It will also be about perceived American interest in and recognition of Turkey as a regional power, in other words, being taken seriously by the global superpower.

III. A NEW TURKEY AND EVOLVING PERSPECTIVES ON THE UNITED STATES

Turkey is a society in flux, a reality underscored by the 2007 turmoil over the election of Turkey's next president, and the wider cleavages it has revealed. Society, politics, and the economy have changed tremendously in recent years, and the country continues to evolve at a rapid rate. The drivers of change are diverse, from demographics to urbanization, from economic opening to the emergence of new social and political movements—and the persistence of some old ones. Kemalism and the secular Kemalist establishment are still part of the Turkish scene, but just one element in a much more varied and fluid social fabric, and hardly in the ascendancy. New elites and new networks have emerged, with new attitudes toward both foreign policy and governance. Above all, public participation in the foreign policy debate has expanded tremendously; public opinion is now a leading factor in Turkish-American relations. This key trend has been accompanied by a new debate about Turkey's international role and the country's international partnerships, including the strategic relationship with Washington. Domestic and regional factors have driven policymakers and the public toward a more wary and ambivalent approach to relations with the United States. While some of these elements may be transitory, others are likely to prove durable.

The Rise of "Anti-Americanism"

Anti-Americanism is nothing new in Turkish politics. In the 1960s and 1970s, anti-Americanism of the left was a staple of the Turkish debate and a feature of right-wing nationalist discourse. However, these were decades in which Turkish foreign policy was the preserve of professional diplomats and the security establishment, and military-to-military relations were at the center of the bilateral relationship. Civilian and military governments of that period might be sensitive to public opinion, but public engagement in the policy debate was less informed, less immediate, and certainly less consequential. The enormous expansion of the Turkish media, increased political participation, and, perhaps most important, the emer-

gence of a new type of populist politics, have greatly magnified the public voice on external policy questions.

Public opinion now counts in Turkish foreign policymaking and, as polling results suggest, this opinion has turned distinctly anti-American. Recent surveys indicate that Turkish public attitudes toward the United States are now the most negative in Europe. This marked deterioration in perceptions of America has special significance for relations between the Erdoğan and Bush Administrations. An avowedly populist government with Islamist roots must deal with a more active and interventionist leadership in Washington, one that confronts Turkey with multiple policy dilemmas in its neighborhood. It is a challenging concoction, one that is not, of course, unique to Turkish-American relations. Indeed, Turkish public opinion, sensitive to both European and Muslim concerns (e.g., the Palestinian crisis, conflict in Lebanon), has multiple sources of pressure when it comes to attitudes toward the United States. To this must be added the tendency of some American officials and experts to ignore the changes that have taken place in Turkey over the last decade, in particular the emergence of new actors in its policy debate. In this as in other key areas, relations suffer from deferred maintenance, with only limited attempts to engage new constituencies beyond traditional bilateral partners on the Turkish side. Indeed, even the traditional partners, such as the military and security establishment, appear increasingly ambivalent toward strategic cooperation with the United States.

The trend toward strongly negative attitudes about the United States might be reversed, or at least offset, by new policy initiatives perceived as favorable to Turkish interests, most notably on the issues of the PKK presence in northern Iraq or on Cyprus. So, too, an overall improvement in transatlantic relations and perceptions of the United States would probably affect public attitudes in Turkey. Without change in these areas, the state of Turkish public opinion will continue to limit the scope for bilateral cooperation, especially visible regional cooperation. When unreservedly positive Turkish public attitudes toward the United States are confined to single digits, bilateral relations face a serious challenge—a challenge given further meaning by the sharper international debate about American power and purpose.

Numerous Turkish and international surveys reveal a sharp deterioration in public attitudes toward the United States since 2002. These sur-

veys also show a significant, although less marked, decline in favorable attitudes toward the EU and the prospects for Turkish membership. Attitudes toward "the West" in general have been under significant pressure, and this reality has fueled concern among both Turkish and Western observers that Turkey is drifting away from its Euro-Atlantic orientation. The most recent German Marshall Fund (GMF) survey of trends in transatlantic opinion reveals continued deterioration in Turkish views of the United States. On a scale of 0-100, Turkish "warmth" toward the United States registers at 20 (down from 28 in 2004), just below Russia at 21. Iran, by contrast, shows 43 and the EU 45. According to the 2006 GMF poll, only seven percent of Turks surveyed approved of the Bush Administration's handling of international policies, with 81 percent disapproving. The Pew Global Attitudes Project also charts the decline in favorable Turkish opinion of the United States, from 52 percent in 2000 to 12 percent in 2006. A recent *Milliyet* newspaper poll puts positive Turkish views of the current American administration at only four percent. Other surveys highlight the fact that Turks view the United States as a leading source of risk to Turkey. A Pew poll shows that some 60 percent of Turks surveyed rate US policy in Iraq as a great danger to world peace (only 16 percent see Iran as such). These are strikingly negative results suggesting that even in a period of overall hostility in public attitudes toward American leadership in Europe, Turkey is in the fist rank.[20]

To be sure, surveys also suggest that these negative attitudes are focused primarily on American policy and leadership and on their perceived divergence with Turkish interests, rather than negative attitudes toward Americans in general. Turks apparently retain a certain admiration for American prosperity, cultural products, and "lifestyle," and so it would be inaccurate to describe Turkish attitudes as anti-American across the board. Turkish analysts and policymakers also stress the volatility of Turkish public opinion, and the potential of favorable American action on the PKK, Cyprus, or other emotive questions to reverse the very negative trends of

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20. See *Transatlantic Trends 2006* (Washington, D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States et al., 2006); "Turkish Public Opinion about the USA and Americans," Infakto/ARI Movement Poll, 2005; and *The Pew Global Attitudes Project* 2006.

recent years. By the same token, what to Turks seem to be new symbolic affronts, such as the possibility that the US Congress will adopt an Armenian genocide resolution or a sense that Washington is interfering inappropriately in Turkey's domestic politics, could spur even more negative public perceptions of Washington. In short, the extent of negative feeling toward the United States is clear; its durability less so. If policy-driven anti-Americanism has become structural in Turkish-American relations, set against a backdrop of increased public involvement in Turkish foreign policy, the implications for the relationship are serious. In Turkey, the Iraq war is widely seen as transforming the debate on the United States from one about convergent or divergent regional policies to one about the nature of American power in general. In this context, it is apparent that many Turks now see the United States as a less-than-benign actor.

Significantly, deep suspicion of American policy is not limited to the Turkish public. A wealth of anecdotal evidence suggests that a broad spectrum of Turkish elites, from the secular to the religious, from state officials to the private sector, in civilian life and in the military, share a deep concern about American intentions in Turkey's neighborhood, and toward Turkey itself.[21] It is not uncommon to find quite well-informed members of the Turkish elite who are convinced that Washington seeks to create a Kurdish state in northern Iraq at Turkish expense, and to contain Turkish power, even at the cost of Turkish territorial integrity. The suggestion that successive American administrations have, as a matter of policy, been committed to the unity of Iraq—and certainly to the territorial integrity of Turkey as a NATO ally—is often greeted with skepticism. These attitudes are uncommon only among liberal-minded intellectuals and segments of the internationally oriented private sector. As one leading Turkish commentator has noted, "anti-Americanism is now the lowest common denominator of Turkish politics."

Turkish foreign policy perceptions and views of the bilateral relationship are being shaped by new social and political dynamics inside the

21. Some go so far as to suggest that Turkey may find itself in a new "cold war" with Europe and the United States, based on Western neglect of Turkish concerns. See Seyfi Tashan, "Is it a 'Cold War' for Turkey?" Foreign Policy Institute (Bilkent University), February 28, 2007. http:www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/documents/270207_b.html

country. As Turkey attempts to select a new president and with early general elections scheduled for July 2007, Turkey's political future is hotly debated. The AKP may well remain in power as a majority government, although the MHP (Nationalist Action Party), the CHP (Republican People's Party), or some new coalition of centrist parties may also cross the ten-percent threshold and join the AKP in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. There is some possibility of a coalition government, which would bring an end to the extended period of stable majority government. Several issues will shape short-term politics, as well as the longer-term context for US-Turkish relations.

Resurgent Nationalism

The first and most potent force on the Turkish scene is nationalism.[22] Turkey has a strong tradition of nationalism and sovereignty-consciousness, and this vigorous, un-reconstructed nationalism has been closely associated with the emergence of republican Turkey, the Kemalist outlook, and the persistence of the "strong state."[23] A consensus among observers holds that Turkish nationalism has risen steadily as a factor in both internal and external questions in recent years. Internally, the mood of rising nationalism makes itself felt on questions of identity and the position of minorities, above all the roughly 20 million citizens of Kurdish descent. Nationalism also interacts with the question of the small Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities—a reality underscored by the January 2007 murder of Hrant Dink, a leading Turkish journalist of Armenian descent, and the public reaction to this event. Turkey's extreme nationalists have made the Dink affair, and perceived slights to "Turkishness" as enshrined in the controversial Article 301 of the constitution, into a *cause célèbre*.

Liberal Turkish intellectuals, such as the Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk, who have been outspoken about minority issues, now feel under

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22. See Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Upsurge Amidst Political Uncertainty: Nationalism in Post-2004 Turkey," SWP Research Paper (Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2006).
23. That is, strong in terms of prerogatives, and not necessarily reach and effectiveness. See Henri J. Barkey, "The Struggles of a 'Strong' State," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No.1, Fall 2000, pp.87–106.

threat in a climate of pronounced nationalism and rising intolerance. This atmosphere is not confined to the margins of society and politics, but now extends to a more overtly nationalist discourse in mainstream politics of the left, center, and right.[24] The deterioration of Turkey's position as a candidate for EU membership is also part of this equation, and is widely blamed for some of the nationalist upswing. In the most extreme scenario, unlikely but not inconceivable, nationalist-inspired violence could destabilize Turkish society, with serious implications for the evolution of the country and its international relationships.

Rising nationalism is also focused outward, affecting the Turkish foreign policy debate and attitudes toward Washington. The re-emergence of PKK violence (perhaps 1,500 people have been killed in PKK-related attacks since 2004), the threat of a Kurdish state emerging from the chaos in Iraq, concerns regarding the fate of Kirkuk as a city with a substantial Turkmen population, and perceived concessions on Cyprus have become rallying points for Turkish nationalists who fear an international conspiracy against Turkish interests. The United States is a staple in the demonology of the nationalist left, as well as of the nationalist right. At the popular level, the nexus between nationalist sentiment and anti-Americanism is visible in the success of books, films, and television programs, such as "Metal Storm" or "Iraq, Valley of the Wolves," all with conspiratorial, nationalist, and often anti-Semitic themes.

Growing anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in Turkish popular culture have been the subject of vigorous complaints from American officials and others in recent years. Turks tend to dismiss this phenomenon as limited, inconsequential to the bilateral relationship, and an unfortunate by-product of a more open society.[25] Not a few Turks note that the 1978 film "Midnight Express" was similarly offensive to Turks and did considerable harm to Turkey's image in the 1980s and beyond. That said, there is little question that the recent spate of controversial films strikes a chord with an increasingly nationalist Turkish public.

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24. See Mehmet Ali Birand, "Society Becoming Anti-US and Anti-Israel," *Turkish Daily News*, July 25, 2006.
25. Senior Turkish officials have had to respond to questions about the effect of nationalist and anti-American films on the bilateral relationship. "Gul Sees No Harm to US Ties as Turks Flock to See Iraq Movie," *Turkish Daily News*, February 6, 2006.

The nationalist moment in Turkey has a range of practical, negative consequences for Turkish external policy and US-Turkish relations. It greatly complicates the problem of developing a concerted stance toward Iraq and increases the likelihood that Ankara will act unilaterally against the PKK in northern Iraq, or even over the issue of Kirkuk. It makes any further Turkish progress on the Cyprus problem difficult and places further obstacles in the way of revitalizing the country's EU project. It puts brakes on the process of political and constitutional reform, as well as resolution of the Kurdish problem inside Turkey. It could ultimately produce a more inward-looking Turkey, a much less attractive partner for investment and international cooperation across the board. Without doubt, it worsens an already difficult climate for security cooperation with Washington, including access to Turkish bases and airspace. In the worst scenario, it could lead to significant instability, friction, and violence within Turkish society.

Turkey is not unique in its turn toward nationalism or the potential re-nationalization of its external policies. This phenomenon is evident elsewhere in Europe, as well as in Asia. To a significant extent, Turkey itself has been the victim of a rising nationalistic and chauvinistic mood in European public opinion, with negative consequences for its EU candidacy. Moreover, the prominence of nationalist rhetoric in its political debate has not yet produced any substantial re-nationalization of Ankara's international policy, even on issues of traditional sensitivity in the Aegean or the Balkans. Attitudes toward the United States have been affected, of course, and northern Iraq remains a key nationalist flashpoint. But an overtly nationalist foreign policy has yet to emerge from Ankara, in large measure because the instincts of Prime Minister Erdoğan, Foreign Minister Gül, and many in the AKP leadership have been too activist and pragmatic for that. Under pressure from nationalist opponents on the left and the right and with national elections looming, many observers worry that the AKP government may feel compelled to act in ways that will directly affect relations with Washington. This could include cross-border operations against the PKK, resistance to further steps on Cyprus, and perhaps a tougher stance on outstanding Turkish-Greek issues in the Aegean.

Recessed Islamic Politics—and Emerging Elites

For many Turks, the defining issue of the day is not Turkish nationalism—something most Turks take for granted—but the growing tension between

secular and "Islamist" visions of the future of their country. The presidential succession crisis of 2007 brought this tension to the fore in a dramatic fashion. There can be little question that Turkey is now a more visibly religious society, and the sources of this more overt religiosity are hotly debated in Turkey. A 2006 study by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) found a sharp increase in the number of respondents identifying themselves primarily as Muslims (51 percent), and only secondarily as Turks. For society as a whole, it appears that Turkey's Muslim identity has come to play a greater role in Turks' personal opinions and worldviews. Certainly the AKP government, with its religious background, has brought a different balance to national perceptions and policies, although one arguably animated more by populism and traditional values than by religion *per se*. The AKP phenomenon might usefully be described as "recessed Islamism," an idea that captures the expanding but still constrained role of religion in mainstream Turkish politics.[26] Without doubt, Turkish society is now more highly polarized between "secularists" and "Islamists" or, more accurately, those who are concerned about the secular future of their country and those who are not.

The rise of the AKP owes a great deal to the collapse of the established political class in the wake of Turkey's financial crisis of 2000–2001. It can also be seen as part of wider social change, in which provincial entrepreneurs and others outside the Istanbul-based secular establishment have acquired greater influence in Turkish politics and economy. Individuals with more religious and traditional outlooks, products of religious schools (*imam-hatip*), and those broadly in the AKP milieu have also become more visible in the infrastructure of the Turkish state, the interior and education ministries, and even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, long the exclusive preserve of the Kemalist establishment. In short, there is a very real class dimension to the internal evolution of Turkey over the past decade. It is not that the established elites in government, business, and intellectual life have been displaced, but rather that Turkish society and policymaking have become more diverse, with new influences, new sources of identity, and new alliances. Small and medium-

26. See Lesser, "Turkey: 'Recessed' Islamic Politics and Convergence with the West," in Angel M. Rabasa et al., *The Muslim World After 9/11* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2004).

sized enterprises are playing a larger role. Central Anatolia is competing for influence with cosmopolitan Istanbul and official Ankara.[27] The new center of gravity in Turkish electoral politics is looking more like a religious-nationalist synthesis, with new actors and new interlocutors for Turkey's international partners.

It is worth stressing that these emerging elites—parallel elites might be a better description—have a different but not necessarily harsher view of Washington and American power. The most vigorous critics of the United States in Turkey today are to be found on the nationalist left, within the opposition CHP, and also on the nationalist right, within MHP and the smaller hard-line movements. The extreme Islamic fringe is, of course, highly anti-American, but also far removed from mainstream politics. Indeed, the AKP has had to defend itself from the charge —extremely damaging in today's Turkey—that it is *too close* to Washington and the sort of movement the US administration has in mind when it talks of Turkey as a model for democratic development in the Muslim world. Not surprisingly, this notion makes many secular Turks, already worried about the AKP's recessed religious agenda, deeply uncomfortable. The political crisis over the Turkish presidency, the lingering specter of military re-engagement in politics, and the prospect of national elections have raised the stakes for AKP and others. If the AKP consolidates its position as a result of new elections, it may feel emboldened and pursue a more assertive social agenda and adopt a more critical policy toward the United States. Or it may look to consolidate its position through compromise with secular moderates—moving definitively toward the mainstream in domestic and foreign policies.

A New Foreign Policy Debate

The rise of the AKP as a political and social movement has also brought a new type of debate about Turkey's international role and policies. The

27. The phenomenon of "Anatolian tigers" has been widely discussed. One of the most intriguing analyses can be found in *Islamic Calvinists: Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia* (Istanbul: European Stability Initiative, September 2005). Turkey, like other societies, including those in the West, has its own "tribes," which can be ethnic, regional, class, and ideological. See David Ronfeldt, "In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes—The First and Forever Form," RAND Working Paper, WR-433-RPC, 2006.

comments and writings of Foreign Minister Gül and the AKP's leading foreign policy advisors, notably Dr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, suggest the emergence of a new look in Turkish strategic thinking, which has significant policy implications. This tentative new look has several dimensions.

First, the thrust is geopolitical in the most traditional sense, but with a very wide geographic scope, giving attention to Asia, Africa, and other relatively neglected areas in the Turkish worldview. Second, there is a strong interest in Turkey's pre-republican history, Byzantine as well as Ottoman, as a source of ideas and of strategic continuity. A tradition of reform, a preference for regional order, and the coexistence of multiple identities are all seen as integral to the Turkish experience. Third, without abandoning Turkey's Western interests and engagement, there is also a strong, implicit interest in rebalancing and diversifying Turkey's external policies, hedging against the unpredictability of relations with Europe, and above all, with the United States.

In this view, the initial post-Cold War period, from 1989 to 2000, was a "lost decade" for Turkey, without a systematic approach to its foreign policy. In various forums, Davutoğlu has offered his view on the key objectives of current Turkish strategy. These include: balancing freedom and security, the domestic aspect of strategy; working toward "zero problems" with neighbors, including Greece, Syria, and Iran; paying attention to the crisis-prone zone beyond the immediate neighbors (Lebanon, Israel-Palestine, Caucasus etc.); structuring relations with global partners, the EU, United States, and Russia, and with multilateral institutions and alliances; and promoting Turkey as a global player, with an emphasis on "soft power."[28]

The emphasis on activism, diversification, and looking beyond immediate borders to shape the environment favorably is summed up in the notion of "strategic depth" (which is also the title of Davutoğlu's book on Turkey's geopolitical position). Taken together, it is an ambitious vision, although not a wild departure from the Turkish approach in recent decades. Through its emphasis on activism in the Middle East and its interest in areas such as South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and Eurasia as

28. This summary is drawn from remarks by Ambassador Ahmet Davutoğlu made at the GMF-SETA Symposium on the Future of Turkish Politics and Foreign Policy, German Marshall Fund of the United States, February 8, 2007.

a whole, it does give the "south" somewhat greater prominence in the Turkish outlook. It displays a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward globalization in its various manifestations. Importantly, this new look shares a widely held Turkish view that relations with the United States (and Europe) should be subject to greater conditionality—with clearer expectations from Washington.

Turkey Faces a New Strategic Environment

Developments in Turkey's region may underscore the country's strategic significance, but they have also greatly complicated US-Turkish relations. Turkey's "zero problems" policy on its borders and its more active stance toward Iran, Syria, and Russia have opened new areas of friction, but also potentially some new areas of cooperation with Washington. At the same time, America's intervention on Turkey's Middle Eastern borders has given bilateral relations a much sharper edge. Various actors in the Turkish foreign policy debate present widely divergent ideas about risks and priorities in the region. In a February 2007 speech in Washington, General Yaşar Büyükanıt, Chief of the Turkish General Staff, stressed that since the creation of the Republic in 1923, Turkey has "never faced risks, threats and troubles at a larger magnitude than it currently faces."[29] This assessment has been keenly debated in Turkey, but it clearly reflects a widely shared sense of increasing complexity on the regional scene and growing demands on Turkish strategy. Implicit in this assessment is the perception that Turkey does not enjoy adequate support from its international partners in this difficult environment. Others have argued that Turkey does indeed face a rapidly changing strategic environment but, in net terms, its position has greatly improved from a decade ago when it nearly came to blows with Greece and Syria and had ambivalent relationships with both Russia and Iran.[30]

Iraq dominates the complex regional agenda. The return of PKK terrorism and insurgency poses a substantial threat to Turkish internal security, although views vary on the extent of this challenge. Some leading advisors to the AKP call the revived PKK violence an "existential" problem for

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29. See Cengiz Candar, "An Exceptional Reception for Buyukanit in Washington," *Turkish Daily News*, February 15, 2007.
30. Graham Fuller has made this point very effectively in recent writings.

Turkey, while others, including some in the security establishment, describe the risk as serious but manageable. But Iraq also raises questions beyond PKK violence. It underscores the unresolved nature of Turkey's own Kurdish problem and calls up the specter of an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's borders, something many Turks fear as a threat to their country's territorial integrity. This complex of concerns may not have started with American policy (although many Turks would date the contemporary rise of the Kurdish problem from the 1990 war against Iraq), but it is now inextricably bound up with perceptions of US action in Iraq.

The prospects for US-Turkish cooperation in new approaches to Iraq are treated in more detail in Section V of this report. It is worth noting here that Turkish stakes in northern Iraq, and in Iraq as a whole, go beyond the questions of the PKK and Kurdish aspirations. Ankara's interests include the fate of the Turkmen minority, the future of Kirkuk, and, perhaps most important, a long-term stake in Iraq's stability. The worst scenario from a Turkish perspective, perhaps worse even than the emergence of an independent Kurdistan, would be the existence of a perennially unstable and insecure Iraq on Turkey's borders, with the flows of refugees and spillovers of violence and criminal activity this might bring. Such a situation would also make Turkey a much more problematic partner for the EU and could further worsen the outlook for Turkish membership. The desire to forestall a complete descent into chaos across the border has led Turkish officials to stress the importance of a continued and meaningful American presence in Iraq, even though the entire US strategy in Iraq is deeply unpopular at all levels of Turkish society.

Iraq has also raised the specter of a sharper Sunni-Shia divide in the Middle East. As an overwhelmingly Sunni country, Turkey could be drawn into this divisive dynamic, alongside Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt. Despite relatively good connections with Saudi Arabia through the AKP, Turkish political leaders and the foreign policy establishment appear wary of this trend, and have so far held the idea of more overt alignment with a Sunni bloc at arm's length. Conscious of the negative implications for Turkish policy in the region as a whole, including relations with Tehran, Ankara is also likely to resist pressures from Washington to act strongly against Shia interests in Iraq. Ankara will have an overriding interest in managing and containing Kurdish aspirations in Iraq, and to that end will almost certainly wish to keep open its relations with both Sunni and Shia elements inside the country.

Beyond Iraq, Turkey under its AKP government has pursued a policy of more active and swift engagement in the Middle East, as enthusiasm for an "EU-first" policy has declined. This is not to say that Turkey has completely overcome its traditional ambivalence regarding relations with its neighbors in the Middle East. Few Turks would seriously argue that ties to the south and east represent a real economic and foreign policy alternative to relations with the West. But the two can certainly coexist as areas for Turkey's external engagement, and the AKP government seems inclined to test this proposition to a far greater extent than did its predecessors. Sustained, high-level discussions with Syrian and Iranian policymakers and some high-profile visits and cooperation agreements point in this direction at a time when Western policy toward both Damascus and Tehran is becoming tougher. Turkey is in the midst of developing more extensive trade and energy ties with Iran, and Tehran has underlined the "strategic vision" in its bilateral relations with Ankara.[31]

One explanation for this new engagement in the Muslim world may be that the AKP's leadership is simply more comfortable with its Middle Eastern counterparts than were their Kemalist predecessors. The Palestinian issue, in particular, has long resonated with Turkish public opinion, and concern with it will surely deepen alongside the rise of a Muslim identity in Turkish society. Whatever the source for this new regional activism, some of it has clearly been irksome to American policymakers and observers. The decision to invite the newly elected Hamas leadership to Ankara, at a time when Turkey's American and European partners were refusing to recognize the Hamas government until it renounced violence and recognized Israel's right to exist, was popular in Turkey but widely criticized elsewhere. Similarly, the AKP government's policy of engagement with Iran and Syria, while within the mainstream of European policy, has not been well received in Washington.

If Turkey continues to balance and diversify its foreign policy through more active engagement in the Middle East and Eurasia, this could spur

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31. "Iran's Offer on Oil Search Pleases Turkey but May Upset US-Turkish Relations," *Today's Zaman*, online edition, February 22, 2007; Fulya Ozerkan, "Turkey, Iran Set to Increase Energy Ties," *Turkish Daily News*, February 22, 2007; and "Iran Eyes Strategic Relations with Turkey," TUSIAD-US, *Selected News on Turkey*, March 2, 2007.

further concern among US observers that Ankara is turning away from its historic Western orientation. In all likelihood, these fears will only materialize in the event of a prolonged estrangement from Europe and of a continued rise of nationalism in Turkey. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between energy and orientation in Turkey's foreign policy. Ankara may devote more energy to relations with the Middle East and Russia, but this does not necessarily mean that Ankara's external orientation—the center of gravity of Turkish interest—will shift away from the West.

The more useful question for American policymakers, at this point, is whether Ankara's new regional activism can *support* Western objectives. The Erdoğan government has acquired useful standing in Damascus and Tehran. Turkey led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan in 2002 and 2005 and has agreed to increase its contribution to ongoing NATO operations in a country where Turkey has historic interests and ties. Turkey has been a visible interlocutor in the attempt to compel Syrian cooperation with the UN-led investigation in Lebanon and has contributed forces to the current European-led peacekeeping effort in the south of the country. Ankara reportedly helped to broker diplomatic contacts between Israel and Pakistan in 2005, and was encouraged to assist in contacts with Hamas and Hezbollah over the return of Israeli captives. Foreign Minister Gül reportedly pressed Tehran on the release of detained British sailors and Marines in April 2007. Turkish-Saudi contacts have deepened considerably in the past few years, and Turkish leaders now participate at the highest level in Muslim peace process diplomacy led by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.[32] Turkey has a stake in containing Iranian nuclear ambitions and could be a viable interlocutor with Tehran on this question (when EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana met for critical talks on the nuclear issue with his Iranian counterpart in April 2007, the negotiations were held in Ankara). Turkish influence could be useful in pressuring Syria to close its borders to insurgents infiltrating into Iraq. The list of possible Turkish contributions to American objectives around the region is long and potentially consequential.

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32. "Erdogan and Gul Back Muslim Nations' Middle East Peace Plan," TUSIAD-US, *Selected News on Turkey*, March 2, 2007.

Outside of the Middle East, Turkey has mixed stakes in American engagement. Interest in the Black Sea is fashionable on both sides of the Atlantic. Turkey sees a range of hard and soft security challenges in this region and is playing a leading role in multilateral cooperation initiatives, from Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) to maritime security arrangements such as the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (Blackseafor) and Black Sea Harmony. In broad terms, Turkish and American interests in consolidating democracy, independence, and security in the region are fully convergent.[33] But the prevailing mood of suspicion regarding US policy has encouraged a wary attitude toward greater American diplomatic engagement and military presence, even in a NATO frame. Ankara, along with Moscow, has resisted the extension of NATO's operation Active Endeavor, a maritime security and counterterrorism initiative in the Mediterranean in which Turkey participates, to the Black Sea. A degree of caution regarding Russian interests is also part of this equation —caution encouraged by the complex web of economic and energy ties that have emerged between Turkey and Russia since the mid-1990s. A more assertive Russian posture might change the Turkish outlook and revive traditional Turkish concerns about Russia as a long-term competitor.

For the moment, however, Ankara is inclined to treat Moscow with growing interest and even as a useful hedge in relations with Europe and the United States. Indeed, some Turkish strategists go much further and anticipate a strategic relationship with Russia as an economic and security alternative to the United States, the EU, and NATO. The very significant development of Turkish-Russian economic and political relations over the past decade is in itself unprecedented given the traditional Turco-Slavic antipathy in Eurasia. Closer relations with Moscow benefit from the convergence of several disparate international policy constituencies in Turkey, including the Russia "lobby" composed of businesses with energy and commercial ties across the Black Sea, an AKP leadership inclined to develop a more creative foreign policy, and elements of the security establishment keen to diversify

33. See the discussion in Ozdem Sanberk, "Turkey, the US and Cooperation for Transformation in the Black Sea Region," paper prepared for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars project on "Reshaping the US-Turkish Strategic Relationship," draft, March 2007.

Turkey's defense-industrial relations. Whether this adds up to a Russian alternative in strategic terms is far less certain.[34] Turks applauded America's stance in Bosnia and Kosovo, and Turkish and US policies toward the Balkans are largely in accord. Here, the challenge from the Turkish perspective may be to keep Washington engaged in a spot increasingly seen as a European area of responsibility. Turkey has been a consistent contributor to peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts in the Balkans, as well as to wider multilateral security initiatives such as SECI (Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative). In the Balkans, Turkey continues to be a status quo actor *par excellence*, wary of changes to borders and adopting a cautious stance on independence for Kosovo. In this respect, Turkish preferences may sometimes diverge from the faster pace of resolution pressed by Washington. But on the whole, this is an area where American sensitivity to the plight of Muslim communities has earned Washington rare high marks from Turks.

In the Aegean, the prevailing détente between Greece and Turkey has meant a degree of American disengagement in the face of more pressing diplomatic and security priorities elsewhere. Indeed, the stabilization of Greek-Turkish relations over the last decade has been nothing short of transformative. It has allowed Turkish leaders and strategists to focus on other challenges, as it has greatly reduced the prospects for conflict in the region. To be sure, the strategy of détente as seen from Ankara and Athens has been closely tied to Turkey's EU project, and observers on both sides worry about the durability of this détente if Turkey-EU relations remain troubled. For the moment, however, it seems that the Erdoğan and Karamanlis governments are committed to a policy of normalization. In the "zero problems" framework, détente with Greece continues to pay dividends for Ankara, even in the absence of substantive progress on long-standing air and sea space issues in the Aegean.

From an American perspective, Aegean détente has also been transformative, removing a leading flashpoint within NATO and a perennial chal-

34. For alternative views, see Suat Kiniklioglu, "The Anatomy of Turkish-Russian Relations," Sakip Sabanci International Research Award, Brookings Institution, March 2006; and Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, "Russia and Turkey in the Caucasus: Moving Together to Preserve the Status Quo?" *Russie.Nei.Visions*, No. 8 (Paris: IFRI, January 2006).

lenge for crisis management. American diplomacy played a crucial role in averting an armed clash between Turkey and Greece over the islets of Imia/Kardak in 1996. In the early 1990s, fear of a possible Greek-Turkish conflict over developments in the Balkans—much exaggerated as it turned out—animated American strategy toward the region. Today, Greek-Turkish relations are far from the center of the debate about US-Turkish relations.[35]

On Cyprus, Ankara may look to the United States as a key actor in the normalization of international relations with the Turkish north of the island, but the future of Cyprus is now intimately bound up with European policy and Turkey's EU candidacy. Washington is no longer the center of Cyprus diplomacy, and Turkey is likely to have some difficulty in compelling American attention to a problem that, while unresolved, is far down the foreign policy agenda in Washington. The United States could act to permit direct trade and investment with the TRNC and to ease the economic isolation of the north of the island, as both Washington and Brussels have suggested they would do. For the United States, this would be a largely symbolic and low-cost gesture, but one potentially important in Turkish opinion. The prospects for a Cyprus settlement now seem much more remote, driven by a hardening of attitudes within the EU and a rising nationalist mood in Turkey. Both factors work against the adoption of a reshaped Annan Plan. The prospects for a resolution are likely to be more heavily driven by developments on the island, and between the Greek and Turkish communities, where there are some important long-term incentives for normalization.

The EU Factor

The varying pace and tumultuous nature of Turkey-EU relations has changed the foreign policy debate in ways that inevitably affect ties with

35. On the new climate in Greek-Turkish relations, see Thanos Dokos and Fatih Tayfur, "Greece and Turkey," *EuroMeSCo Papers,* No. 28 (Lisbon: IEEI, 2004); Mustafa Aydin and Kostas Ifantis, eds., *Turkish-Greek Relations: The Security Dilemma in the Aegean* (London: Routledge, 2004); Marisa R. Lino, ed., *Greek-Turkish Relations: A Key to Stability in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Bologna: SAIS, 2005); and Lesser, "Security and Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean," *ELIAMEP Policy Paper,* No. 5 (Athens: ELIAMEP, 2005).

the United States.[36] Regardless of the actual outlook for Turkish membership, a path fraught with pitfalls but also many opportunities over the next decade, the process of overall Turkish convergence with European practices and institutions is likely to continue. This process is, ultimately, what counts for Europe and the United States, and quite possibly for Turks, many of whom are confused or troubled by the European project and uncomfortable with its implications for national sovereignty.

The December 2006 European Council decision to suspend negotiations with Turkey on eight of 35 chapters reflected tensions in Turkey's candidacy that had been building for some time. Ankara's refusal to open its ports to Cypriot trade was the proximate cause of the most recent reversal in the accession talks, but the current setback reflects mounting ambivalence on all sides. Public opinion in key EU member states is increasingly against the idea of Turkish membership in the wake of the failed referenda on a European constitution, and there is open opposition of key political figures, including the new French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, who has repeatedly stated that Turkey "has no place" in Europe. Turks, too, are having second thoughts in the face of European critiques. Immediate perceptions drive the debate, despite the long-term nature of the process, perhaps 10–15 years in the most optimistic membership scenarios. The open-ended character of Turkey's candidacy and the lack of a defined end state (full membership? privileged partnership?) reinforce concerns that Turkey's candidacy may prove hollow. In the wake of recent EU decisions, Prime Minister Erdoğan has stated that Iraq "is now more important for Turkey than the EU." Reforms undertaken to advance Turkey's European integration are now more likely to be described as national rather than European objectives, with the Copenhagen criteria becoming the "Ankara criteria." Ankara has announced that Turkey's own priorities and timetable for reform will now take precedence over a Brussels-driven accession strategy.[37]

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36. For an excellent discussion of Turkish foreign policy, including relations with Washington in light of the EU project, see Burak Akcapar, *Turkey's New European Era: Foreign Policy on the Road to EU Membership* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).
37. Mark Beunderman, "Turkey Defies EU with its Own Accession Agenda," *EU Observer,* March 2, 2007. http://euobserver.com/9/23614.

The United States has consistently championed Turkish membership in the EU, even if Washington's ability to push Turkey's case has declined steadily since the 1999 Helsinki Summit. Now that Turkey is launched on the path to accession, however uncertain, policymakers on all sides will need to ask more serious questions about the implications for US-Turkish relations over the next decade. Some Europeans may persist in their fear that Turkey within the EU will serve as a "Trojan Horse" for American foreign policy preferences. In reality, closer Turkey-EU relations will almost certainly pose a greater challenge of adjustment for Washington. Turkish policy is already within the European mainstream and far closer to European than American approaches on a range of questions, not least Iran, Iraq, and the Middle East peace process. This essentially European orientation extends to contentious global issues, including the International Criminal Court and international cooperation on climate change.

Even if Turkey's candidacy stalls or proves hollow over the coming years, the result is unlikely to be closer ties with Washington. In the case of estrangement from Europe, Turkish opinion could shift even further in the direction of a more sovereignty-conscious, nationalistic posture, a development that would complicate relations with Washington as much as with Brussels. Only against a background of vastly heightened regional risk, against which American deterrence and reassurance would be essential, would a return to closer strategic cooperation with the United States be the natural outcome. Scenarios that could trigger this response include renewed competition with a more assertive Russia or friction with a nuclear-armed or nuclear-ready Iran.

If Turkey's candidacy proceeds apace and the process of Europeanization continues, this could encourage a useful diversification and deepening of Turkish-US ties, especially on the economic front. In this scenario, movement toward Europe can have a multiplier effect on trade and investment links to the United States. American investors may be impressed by Turkey's recent growth rate of around six-seven percent and the performance of the Istanbul stock market, which since 2002 has at times made real returns of 50 percent or more. But over the longer-term, the American business community is more likely to be impressed by improvements in the soft infrastructure for direct investment—effective rule of law, transparency, and a predictable regulatory climate—that would come with steady adherence to European practices. Continued

integration with Europe would contribute to an aura of attractiveness and familiarity—with transatlantic consequences.

This effect could also be felt in the political and security realms, but only if transatlantic relations as a whole develop positively. From a Turkish perspective, a troubling scenario is one of transatlantic friction and drift, in which Ankara is compelled to choose between American and European policies in key regions and on key issues or, worse still, is estranged from both Washington and Brussels. Under these conditions, American support for Turkey's candidacy is likely to fall on deaf ears in Europe. It could even prove counterproductive as many Europeans come to see Washington's lobbying as inappropriate meddling in an internal European affair. Beyond European discomfort with the notion of EU membership for a Muslim country of Turkey's size, many Europeans are not happy to extend EU borders to an unstable and conflict-prone Middle East. In this context, the future of American policy toward Iraq and Iran, and its affect on regional stability, may have more influence on European perceptions of the costs and benefits of Turkish membership than any direct lobbying on Ankara's behalf. With turmoil and conflict on Turkey's Middle Eastern borders, geo-strategic arguments about Turkey's membership of the kind Washington has pressed for over a decade may actually prove counterproductive.

IV. CHANGING AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE BILATERAL CONSTITUENCY

Much has been made of the idea that the United States may be "losing" Turkey as Ankara is increasingly alienated from its Euro-Atlantic partners and shifts to a new external policy—or turns inward. Without dismissing signs of real flux in Turkish perceptions and policies, the notion of losing Turkey can turn into a misleading caricature of a complex relationship. Not least, it encourages an assessment of the bilateral relationship focused almost exclusively on a changing Turkey. Changes in *American* strategy and policy also exert a strong influence on US-Turkish relations, and these changes have acquired a significant, perhaps revolutionary, character in recent years, with major implications for international partners. In an equally unfortunate caricature, Turks may well ask if they are losing the United States. The traditional strategic constituency that has bolstered the bilateral relationship from Washington is now less predictably supportive, while new constituencies are emerging.

A Different Kind of American Partner

There is an understandable tendency among America's international partners to particularize their relations with Washington and to focus on the unique and historically distinctive in their bilateral relations. But viewed from the United States, these relationships, even the most important of them, are part of a global perspective, with interests that cut across regions. Over the last decade, and most dramatically since September 11, 2001, American foreign and security policy has been transformed in ways that have changed the nature of the United States as a partner for Turkey.

First, the overwhelming focus on counterterrorism has led to the subordination of many traditional foreign policy priorities and spurred greater activism in areas seen as directly related to national security in the narrow sense. In the Middle East and Eurasia, it is only a slight exaggeration to describe the current American strategy as one of extended homeland defense. Given the primacy of internal security concerns in

Turkey's own strategy in recent decades, this approach is not necessarily unfamiliar to Turks. Yet the growing attention to challenges such as terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction also means that longstanding regional ties and policies are measured much more closely in terms of their ability to contribute to specific functional requirements. If Turkey or other allies can offer active assistance, the way is clear to closer cooperation. If not—as with Turkey in Iraq—the perceived strategic utility of the relationship will decline. The current environment is one of sharper requirements and sharper judgments in terms of bilateral relations, at least in security terms.

American strategy is now less "regional" in nature. The global war on terrorism has been defined as a pervasive, functional challenge. It will have regional manifestations and effects, but it is essentially transnational in nature. The American foreign policy apparatus is still organized largely along regional lines, Europe, Near East/South Asia, Latin America, etc., but the regional approach has been under assault for at least a decade, and long before September 11th compelled a new focus on transregional challenges. Today a growing amount of American external policy energy is devoted to global issues that cut across traditional regional lines. This trend has important implications for a US-Turkish relationship that has been defined largely in terms of regional cooperation and regional institutions.

The traditional flywheel of alliance commitments and cohesion has lost a good deal of its momentum and will be less effective in sustaining the relationship in times of disagreement. In past decades, key aspects of the US-Turkish relationship were more easily pursued in a NATO framework, rather than bilaterally. Turkey has had much to gain from NATO enlargement and transformation, processes that have contributed greatly to making the Alliance more active and relevant in Turkey's neighborhood. In the wake of successful NATO enlargement, however, a good deal of the steam has gone out of American NATO policy. American strategy is now less NATO-centric, which is a reflection partly of the shift of security concerns to areas beyond Europe and partly of a certain fashionable skepticism in Washington about NATO's capacity to contribute to new security challenges. In this process, an important alternative "geometry" for US-Turkish security cooperation has been weakened.

Second, the US pursuit of a more active policy aimed at transforming societies and compelling changes in behavior in regions adjacent to

Turkey presents Ankara with difficult choices, of which Iraq is only the most dramatic example. The desire to "shake things up" in Syria or to forestall Iran's nuclear ambitions by force would pose new dilemmas for Turkish policy. For decades, the US-Turkish strategic relationship was based largely on the defense of the regional status quo, both territorial and political, an approach well suited to Turkey's essentially conservative foreign policy outlook. Today, Turkey faces an American partner with much more dynamic objectives in areas of shared interest. To be sure, the deepening crisis in Iraq has dampened the enthusiasm of American strategists and policymakers for transformative interventions. Yet the core of a preventive strategy remains, and many of the leading contingencies for preventive action are on or near Turkey's borders.

The lack of an agreed bilateral approach to power projection, including the use of İncirlik airbase for non-NATO contingencies, will be an even greater liability for the relationship in these conditions. Elements within the American strategic community tend to regard the breakdown of bilateral cooperation in advance of the Iraq war as a watershed event which cast grave doubt on the predictability of US-Turkish defense cooperation in regional crises. In reality, since the end of the first Iraq war in 1991, successive Turkish governments have been unwilling to allow the use of İncirlik for anything other than the most limited, non-strategic operations in Iraq. Ankara's reticence on the use of Turkish territory and airspace for American power projection should come as no surprise to American policymakers (Turkey does support ongoing coalition operations in Iraq in logistical and other ways short of direct assistance with offensive operations). Cooperation along these lines, absent a NATO or a UN mandate, or pressing Turkish defense needs that cannot be met in other ways, has been, and will remain, exceptional.

Third, Turks will continue to be uncomfortable with prevailing American thinking about Turkey's role in the broader Middle East and North Africa. Few Turks, even those keen to expand Turkey's relations to the south and east, welcome the notion of Turkey as a model for the Middle East, either because they prefer to see Turkey's role described in Euro-Atlantic terms, or because they are skeptical about the exportability of democracy to the Arab world, or both. In somewhat different terms, and using somewhat different language, the EU is also attempting to promote democratic transformation in the Mediterranean, the Black Sea,

and the wider European neighborhood. Turkey has a stake in this transformation, but may prefer the less intrusive approach emanating from Brussels, especially against a background of widespread anti-Americanism among the Turkish public. American, and possible European pressure for new political and economic sanctions aimed at Syria or Iran will be particularly difficult to reconcile with Ankara's policy of greater political and economic engagement with these neighbors. Not least, the ability to portray Turkey as a model for regional development will turn on continued stability in Turkey's politics and economy, something that cannot be taken for granted in the wake of Turkey's troubled presidential selection and the political stresses of 2007.

Finally, the critical transatlantic context for the bilateral relationship is in flux, to say the least. In the period when Europe was the center of gravity of American strategic concerns, Turkey had a specific and predictable place in terms of European defense. Absent a return to more competitive relations with Russia, American strategy will continue to be cast largely in terms of extra-European challenges. Over time, there will be real potential for a structural shift of American attention to China and the Asia-Pacific region, a possibility about which European observers have periodically expressed concern. With the perception of China as a growing strategic competitor in many sectors and the ongoing risk of a crisis over Taiwan, the next decade may see a marked shift of attention eastward, with implications for American engagement in Eurasia and the Middle East. From the Turkish perspective, this could mean a world in which the US presence as a regional actor is less predictable and increases the need for an enhanced European role on the periphery of the continent. In some areas such as the Gulf, there may be too much American influence for Turkish taste, while in other areas of interest to Turkey, such as the Balkans or Cyprus, there may well be too little US engagement.

To a greater or lesser degree, any American administration is likely to be unconfortable with explicit attempts to develop multi-polar alternatives to American influence in international affairs. But attempts to create new poles and alignments are inevitable and will likely emerge over the coming decades in various forms in Europe and Asia. China, Russia, India, Brazil, and the EU itself will all have a stake in a more multi-polar system and certainly in a less unilateral American posture. Turkey may face some important choices in this setting, and could be among those

emerging regional powers with a stake in holding American power at arm's length. Alternatively, in an environment of resurgent nationalism and re-nationalized policies, Ankara may seek strategic reassurance through a reinvigorated relationship with Washington. Less likely is the possibility that over the next decade Turkey will seek to become a regional hegemon in its own right through accelerated military modernization and diplomatic activism, a development that Washington may view with some unease.[38] At a minimum, Ankara is very likely to pursue a more independent and assertive path in international affairs, requiring significant adjustments in the way US policymakers and analysts view Turkey.[39]

A Changing Constituency?

Turkish diplomats and commentators often complain that Turkey lacks an effective lobby in Washington. Americans, even within foreign policy circles, are rarely knowledgeable about Turkey and interest in it has often been derivative of other concerns. The Turkish-American community, perhaps 400,000 strong (since many individuals who might reasonably describe themselves as Turkish-Americans do not identify themselves this way, the real figure could be much higher), is relatively small and geographically dispersed. It does not act with the same vigor and coherence as the lobbies that the Turks often find themselves confronting in the Washington political fray. Turkish public diplomacy with American audiences has not been markedly effective. But Turkey has benefited from a very significant American lobby in the defense community, both uniformed and civilian, and in the strategic establishment. The US Air Force presence at İncirlik, while prone to labor disputes and differences over operations at the base, has produced several generations of American officers with knowledge about and an interest in Turkey. The defense-industrial relationship has also had its ups

38. See Edward J. Erickson, "Turkey as Regional Hegemon - 2014: Strategic Implications for the United States," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, Autumn 2004, pp. 25–45.
39. This assessment is at the core of Graham Fuller's analysis in "Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Summer 2004, pp. 51–64; see also Fuller's forthcoming book on Turkey and the Middle East (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace, 2007).

and downs, but continues to be a source of keen American business interest in Turkey. Military training and exchanges have also been part of this equation. American strategists, from the Cold War period onward, have taken an interest in Turkey as a strategic partner, whether for conventional defense, regional stability, counterterrorism, or energy security.

The security dimension of the relationship has been the cornerstone of support for Turkey in the US Congress and elsewhere. Yet the post-2003 climate has been characterized by a degree of disenchantment with Turkey and US-Turkish relations precisely within this critical constituency. Ankara's arm's-length approach to the Iraq war has left a legacy of distrust that has not been fully overcome, and has been reinforced by Turkey's more active engagement with Hamas leaders, Syria, Iran, and Russia. To be sure, Turkey has given very important logistical support to American forces in Iraq and has been an active partner in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Some American policymakers who once thought they knew Turkey well, now find their understanding outdated and less relevant to current Turkish realities. There are also some marked differences in perception about cooperation with Turkey across US military commands. Not surprisingly, the CENTCOM leadership, with responsibilities in the Middle East, has been wary of the Turkish role in the wake of March 2003, and CENTCOM perceptions matter in the context of possible action against the PKK. By contrast, EUCOM, viewing Turkey through the lens of NATO and European security, takes a much more favorable view of the state of US-Turkish relations and new areas for cooperation.

As the American strategic establishment has come to see Turkey in less consistently favorable terms, the American financial community has begun to take a much stronger interest. The heated debates about Islamism versus secularism or Turkey's drift away from the West, common in Washington, are rare in business circles. To the extent that this interest is sustained, it could augur a significant shift and a diversification of the Turkish constituency in the US; such a trend would have implications for debates about some of the most contentious issues in the bilateral relationship, including Cyprus, and the recurring question of Armenian genocide resolutions in the US Congress. If Turkey's political turmoil begins to have a negative effect on the Turkish economy, this process of diversification could be arrested or reversed.

IV. Changing American Foreign Policy and The Bilateral Constituency

Looking ahead, relations with Turkey will be a leading test case for the next phase in American foreign policy. Few bilateral relationships have been as badly damaged by the Iraq experience and the perception of American unilateralism. Turkey has been keenly affected by transatlantic differences, as well as by frictions between the United States and the Muslim world. At the same time, Turkey can be a critical partner in containing crises in Iraq and Iran that threaten to further hobble US strategy in the next few years.

V. CORE ISSUES

A number of regional, functional, and symbolic issues now dominate the US-Turkish agenda. Perception and misperception on core questions in these areas now sets the "limits of the possible" in the relationship. In many cases, the most effective approaches and the best prospects for cooperation will be transatlantic and multilateral, rather than bilateral. In some cases, divergent stakes and perspectives are unlikely to be fully reconciled, and both sides will need to adjust their expectations.

IRAQ, THE KURDS, AND THE PKK

The Iraq war touches on the most sensitive problems affecting Turkish society and politics, above all the issue of Kurdish identity within Turkey and across the region. The AKP government has encouraged a more open and active debate on the Kurdish issue—with some success—but it remains a flashpoint across the political spectrum. Renewed PKK violence and deteriorating relations with the Kurdish administration in northern Iraq have also driven the AKP toward a tougher stance. Events since 1990 have reinforced the impression that developments in Iraq (as well as Syria and Iran) are intimately linked to Turkey's own internal security. The latest incarnation of the PKK insurgency has only underscored the significance of developments in this area and revived fears of Western, especially American, encouragement for Kurdish nationalism. Ankara very nearly came to blows with Syria in 1998 over its support for the PKK, and Turkey has intervened sporadically in northern Iraq as part of its cross-border counterinsurgency strategy.[40] In short, the Kurdish-Iraqi equation is the most troubled dimension of Turkey's external policy and one subject to historic sensitivities at both the public and elite lev-

40. In 1995, Turkey launched large-scale operations against PKK bases across the border, involving around 35,000 troops.

els.[41] In the wake of the Iraq war, it has also become a central issue for Turkish nationalists, and the leading flashpoint in relations with Washington.[42]

To be sure, many Turks misjudge American strategy and intentions with regard to Kurdish separatism and Iraq. Successive US administrations have made it clear that the United States does not favor a break-up of Iraq or the creation of an independent Kurdish state, certainly not one that might threaten the integrity and security of a NATO ally. Repeated assurances on this score have done little to reduce the now widespread Turkish suspicion regarding US policy in northern Iraq. The most tangible demonstration of American commitment to the policy of a united Iraq and a secure Turkey would be concerted action against PKK bases and leaders in the region, something that many US strategists would favor. But with immense demands on American attention and resources elsewhere in a chaotic and insecure Iraq, few policymakers will be enthusiastic about opening a new front inside Iraq, especially in a region that appears relatively secure from the vantage point of Washington. Because of this, US policymakers have been constrained in their ability to act in the one area that might reassure Turks about the direction of Washington's policy. Of thirteen issues of common concern noted in the July 2006 bilateral "vision" document produced by Turkish and American negotiators, the fight against the PKK ranks as the eleventh priority. The perception of American inaction on the PKK issue is deeply troubling to Turks, even to those who take a measured view of the Kurdish question as a whole.

Regardless of American and Turkish preferences, both countries must reckon with the possibility that an independent Kurdish state could emerge out of the deepening chaos in Iraq. This scenario is no longer a taboo subject in the Turkish strategic debate, and some analysts now quietly argue that

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41. See Bill Park, *Turkey's Policy Toward Northern Iraq: Problems and Perspectives,* Adelphi Paper No. 374 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005); Henri J. Barkey, *Turkey and Iraq: The Perils of Proximity* (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace, 2005); and Henri J. Barkey and Ellen Laipson, "Iraqi Kurds and Iraq's Future," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 4, Winter 2005, pp. 66–76.
42. On bilateral cooperation against the PKK, see Testimony of General Joseph Ralston (USA, Ret.), Special Envoy Countering the Kurdistan Workers Party, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe, March 15, 2007.

a stable Kurdish state could be managed and accommodated within the regional order, and that it might even become an asset for Turkey. That said, this line of thinking remains outside the mainstream discourse and provokes strong reactions from Ankara when Kurdish leaders in Iraq raise it. Even under benign conditions, Ankara would find it difficult to confront the emergence of a Kurdish state unilaterally, without the cooperation and resources of Western partners. Ankara might well conduct limited military operations against PKK strongholds in northern Iraq and would surely seek US assistance or at least acquiescence for such actions. Beyond this, Turkish military intervention to forestall or shape the emergence of a new state, or to create a semi-permanent buffer against PKK infiltration, would imply substantial costs in Ankara's relations with the United States and Europe. All of this underscores the centrality of northern Iraq and the Kurdish issue to US engagement with Turkey. In operational terms, Turkey probably does not need the United States to conduct cross-border strikes against the PKK, which may have only a transitory effect on the security situation on both sides of the border. But in political terms, American support is crucial.

There are signs that Turkey is adopting a more forward-leaning approach to the Kurdish question. Turkish political and security leaders have debated the merits of direct talks with Kurdish officials aimed at undercutting the PKK's position in an increasingly autonomous northern Iraq. At times, the Erdoğan government has appeared open to the idea of direct talks with Kurdish officials, while the Turkish military remains opposed to it. As Turkey moves closer to elections, and as relations between the Kurdish leadership and Ankara deteriorate, the prospects for dialogue have waned, while the possibility of outright conflict has increased.

Turkish officials have reacted positively to aspects of the Baker-Hamilton (Iraq Study Group) report, including its proposals to delay any referendum on the status of Kirkuk and to give priority to regional diplomacy for Iraq. Ankara would certainly support the opening of American dialogue with Iran, Syria, and others to stabilize Iraq and forestall a wider conflict. Such dialogue will remain highly controversial in the United States, and it presupposes a separate and prior series of decisions on American policy toward these two "rogue" states. Notably, Turkey has been largely absent from the ongoing American debate about the regional diplomacy option. Ankara's role is either taken for granted, assumed to be problematic, or simply lost from the perception of key policymakers

and analysts. Given Turkish stakes in Iraq—at least as great as those of the United States—and the centrality of Iraq policy in bilateral relations, it would be more useful to put Turkey *first* on the list of interlocutors for American diplomacy on Iraq. Some leading US foreign policy figures have gone further, to argue for a "grand bargain" involving Turkey, the Iraqi Kurds, and the United States, with the aim of salvaging a stable rump state from the chaos in Iraq. This package deal might include Turkish pressure on Iran and Syria to prevent the infiltration of insurgents and weapons into Iraq and a NATO presence or specific guarantees to Ankara in relation to risks on the Iraqi border. It would require tremendous political will and a willingness to change long-established policies, and is unlikely to be taken up explicitly by Ankara. But it points the way to new thinking and possible new modes of cooperation on a deepening, shared crisis.

Ankara will be keen to prevent a rapid American withdrawal from Iraq, fearing a complete collapse of the Iraqi state and the acceleration of Kurdish demands for independence.[43] The option of redeploying some US forces to northern Iraq is nonetheless problematic for Turkey. A residual force of this kind could act against insurgents and extremists elsewhere in Iraq and bolster the government in Baghdad. It might also have the implicit mission of defending a Kurdish entity in the north against outside aggression. Turks would naturally see this force as a deterrent to Turkish intervention, and many in Washington might agree. There is no question that a redeployment of US forces in the north of Iraq would be logistically difficult, perhaps impossible, without close coordination with Ankara.[44]

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43. Against a backdrop of mounting political and expert pressure for an accelerated withdrawal. See, e.g., Steven N. Simon, *After The Surge: The Case for US Military Disengagement from Iraq,* Council Special Report No. 23 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, February 2007).

44. As noted earlier, Turkey already plays a vital role in Iraq logistics. Roughly 75 percent of the air cargo sent to Iraq passes through İncirlik, and the land border at Harbur gate accounts for about a quarter of the fuel shipments destined for coalition forces. Access to Turkish airspace has also been vital for refueling operations. "US-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead," Testimony of Daniel Fried, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe, March 15, 2007.

Even if an independent Kurdish state does not emerge in the near future and PKK violence is contained, Turkey will face a host of political, economic, and security challenges emanating from Iraq. Even a stabilized Iraq under a consolidated central government will pose risks, as large numbers of jihadists and other violent actors leave Iraq to carry on terrorist and criminal activity elsewhere, on the pattern of Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. Turkey, the United States, and Europe should share a strong interest in managing the longer-term transregional consequences of the Iraq crisis. This should extend to Sunni-Shiite reconciliation in Iraq and the prevention of a wider regional clash along sectarian lines. Among America's regional allies, Turkey is perhaps best placed to mediate between Sunni and Shiite interests. Turkey is an overwhelmingly Sunni country with standing among the leading Sunni states. It also has a comfortable relationship with Iran, and stands apart from Arab-Iranian rivalry. If Washington opts for more energetic regional diplomacy as part of a viable exit strategy from Iraq, Turkey will be an essential partner.

Counterterrorism Strategy

Turkish security officials tend to share the view that the international community faces a "long war" in the struggle against terrorism. But Turks consistently stress that the terrorist risk goes beyond Islamic extremism of the Al-Qaeda type, of which Turkey has also been a victim, most notably in the November 2003 Istanbul bombings. Alongside violent jihadist networks, some affiliated with Turkish Hezbollah, others imported, Turkey faces the much more pressing problem of PKK irregular warfare in southeastern Anatolia and terrorism by the PKK and splinter groups in urban areas across the country.[45] Many of these groups benefit from networks in Europe and, for this reason, Europe is arguably the most important partner for Ankara in the struggle against the PKK. Islamic extremists with ties to Turkey also have a history of operating in Europe and have been the subject of intelligence and judicial cooperation between Ankara and key European states, especially Germany. Since

45. See Soner Cagaptay, "The Iraq Study Group Report and the PKK: Dealing With an American Problem," *Policywatch*, No. 1174 (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 12, 2006).

2005 Turkey has operated a NATO-established regional "center of excellence" for counterterrorism training.[46]

Despite differences over action against the PKK in northern Iraq, day-to-day counterterrorism cooperation between Turkish and American agencies is reportedly good and focuses on extreme Islamist and left-wing terrorist networks, as well as remnants of Ansar al-Islam operating in northern Iraq. The PKK itself does not have a history of targeting Americans or American institutions, and there remain strong political disincentives for it to do so. A hard-pressed or fragmented PKK might nonetheless act against American targets in Turkey, Iraq, or Europe.

Quietly, at the official civilian and military levels, there has been a good deal of useful cooperation on the PKK issue, although not of a kind likely to impress a skeptical and suspicious Turkish public. Most Turkish observers welcomed visits by American intelligence officials to Ankara in December 2006, presumably to discuss this issue. Similarly, Ankara has welcomed the appointment of retired General Joseph Ralston and of his Turkish counterpart, General Edip Baser, as envoys to address the PKK problem in its various dimensions. To date, the envoys have focused more heavily on closing down PKK funding and organization in Europe than on direct action against the PKK inside Iraq. Ankara has also been dissatisfied with the trilateral nature of the discussion, and would prefer a focus on bilateral US-Turkish cooperation. The issue of US action—or inaction—against the PKK remains the leading agenda item in the bilateral relationship. In the absence of demonstrated practical support for Turkey on this issue, the risk of unilateral Turkish action across the border has grown substantially, with the AKP government and the Turkish military now under considerable domestic pressure to act.

Turkey and the United States share a focus on terrorism as a long-term strategic problem, albeit with somewhat different counterterrorism priorities. Not surprisingly, Turkish policymakers and the Turkish public tend to place greater stress on the underlying sources of the terrorist impulse and terrorism as a tactic, including the unresolved Palestinian issue. In this

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46. Selahattin Ibas, "Fighting Terrorism: A Chance to Improve Bilateral-US Turkish Ties", *Policywatch*, No. 1203 (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 22, 2007).

respect, Turkey is essentially in the European and Middle Eastern mainstreams. The United States has a critical stake in helping Turkey to address the PKK challenge, a leading security threat to a key NATO ally and a spur to rising Turkish nationalism that threatens the fabric of bilateral cooperation in multiple areas, including action against networks targeting the United States. Turkish policymakers have a role to play by reminding the public that Washington was actually instrumental in the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya in 1999, that it treats the PKK as a terrorist organization, and that it will be an essential partner in the long-term management of the Kurdish problem in northern Iraq. Estrangement over the issue of the PKK works against the counterterrorism interests of both countries.

Iran and Nuclear Proliferation

Given its own stake and its expanded economic and political relations with Tehran, it is possible that Turkey could play a role in the dialogue with Iran on the nuclear issue and other matters. The Iranian leadership has been keen to cultivate closer ties with Ankara, encouraging Turkish participation in gas exploration and development in Iran and even citing Turkey as one of the possible Muslim beneficiaries of an Iranian civilian nuclear program (an offer Ankara has politely ignored). At a time when the United States appears unresponsive to Turkish pressure for action against the PKK, Iran stresses its commitment to contain Kurdish separatism, and has even shelled PKK camps near its border. Iran is not high on Turkey's list of strategic concerns, but Turkish policymakers are also aware of Iran's ability to promote instability in the region and to threaten Turkish security directly or indirectly. Although Turkey has lived with a Russian nuclear arsenal on its borders for decades, Turkish strategists are increasingly concerned about their country's exposure to regional proliferation trends. Iran already deploys ballistic missiles capable of reaching Turkish population centers, and current versions of the Shahab-3 ballistic missile with a range of roughly 1,500 kilometers can reach Ankara from launch sites near Isfahan.[47]

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47. Uzi Rubin, *The Global Reach of Iran's Ballistic Missiles* (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2006), pp. 20–22.

The prospect of a new nuclear neighbor in the Middle East would be deeply worrying for Ankara. The emergence of multiple nuclear powers in the region—one possible consequence of a nuclear-armed Iran—would change the strategic environment dramatically. It could accelerate the re-nuclearization of Russian strategy and affect military balances and doctrines from the Aegean to Central Asia and beyond. Turkey is unlikely to respond by pursuing a nuclear weapons program of its own, although it would have the technical capacity to do so.[48] But this would make the continued credibility and effectiveness of the NATO security guarantee a central question, and could ultimately drive Ankara to renew and reinforce the security relationship with Washington as a nuclear guarantor.

Iran's nuclear and missile programs would make tactical and theater missile defense a higher priority for Ankara and put Turkey in a key front-line position for NATO theater missile defense, including the deployment of radars and boost-phase interceptors.[49] The geometry of the strategic missile defense system now being pursued by the United States, with proposed facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic, probably means that it could not cover Turkey, Italy, or Greece, the European countries most directly exposed to missile risks emanating from the Middle East. Turkish officials have suggested that they do not share the concerns about this gap expressed by the NATO Secretary General and others, and that Ankara will focus on national and NATO responses to the problem of missile defense.[50] Turkey's growing exposure to weapons of mass destruction would also complicate the use of İncirlik or other Turkish facilities for US or NATO operations in the Middle East. Turkish strategists will need to

48. Lesser, "Turkey, Iran and Nuclear Risks," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Summer 2004, pp. 81–100.

49. Turkish military officials cite improved defenses against Iranian missiles as an urgent priority for procurement and defense-industrial cooperation. Turkey faces a choice between the American Patriot system, Israel's Arrow II, and Russia's S-300. "Turkish Military Want Air-Defence Missiles Against Iranian Missiles," NTV television (Istanbul), January 14, 2006, as reported in *BBC Monitoring Europe-Political*, January 14, 2006.

50. Barcin Yinanc, "Turkey's Position on US Missile Defense Program," *Turkish Daily News*, March 14, 2007.

weigh the benefits of NATO guarantees against the risk that Turkey's territory might be targeted in future crises.

Turkey and the United States share an interest in forestalling the emergence of a nuclear Iran. Nonetheless, Ankara greatly prefers the use of diplomatic rather than military instruments to address the Iranian nuclear program. Ankara would probably reluctantly support expanded UN-imposed sanctions on Iran if they became necessary. Unless Turkish territory was under explicit threat from Iran, and given the pressure from public opinion, it is most unlikely that any Turkish government would openly support American or Israeli military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities. Turkey would be indirectly exposed to the retaliatory consequences of an armed conflict between Iran, the United States, and/or Israel ranging from the disruption of energy markets to an upsurge in violence by proxy forces acting with Iranian support. Some 45,000 Turkish trucks transit Iran en route to Central Asia and China every month, forming an economic bridge that would be threatened by conflict with Iran or by comprehensive economic sanctions. Short of the use of force, Turkey's closer relationship with Tehran might allow Ankara to facilitate diplomacy, even coercive diplomacy, over the nuclear issue, Iran's policy toward Iraq or Lebanon, and other matters of concern to Washington.

Transformation in the Broader Middle East

Democracy promotion in the Middle East appears as agenda item number one in the July 2006 bilateral "vision" document.[51] Yet, as noted earlier, many Turks are openly skeptical about the idea of Turkey as a model for transformation in the region. It is arguable that a great deal of this resistance flows from the post-Iraq atmosphere in US-Turkish relations and the implicit assumption that Turkey is useful as a model primarily because it is Muslim. When couched in secular terms many Turks are quite keen to trumpet the success of Turkish democracy, development, and close ties to the West as an example for adjacent regions and a component of their country's soft power. For obvious reasons, Turkey is a key stakeholder in related efforts to promote tolerance in Muslim-Western relations. Turkey

51. *Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the US-Turkish Strategic Partnership* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, July 2006).

co-chairs the high-level group of the UN-sponsored Alliance of Civilizations. A Turk, Ekmelleddin Ihsanoglu, chairs the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The AKP government has put considerable energy into building a more influential role for Turkey in the Muslim world as a whole. There are also indications that the Turkish experience, long seen as *sui generis* or unattractive across much of the Middle East, is now attracting greater interest among Arab reformers, both secular and Islamist. This more positive view of Turkey is reflected in the recent decision of the Arab League to support Turkey's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Overall, Turkey is now a more influential and serious interlocutor for the United States in relations with the broader Middle East, including questions of governance and political reform.[52]

Turkey continues to be uneasy with US-led policies of democracy promotion in the Middle East, where these efforts are seen as revolutionary or highly transformational. Ankara clearly prefers to have democratic and open regimes on its borders and across Turkey's larger "strategic depth." To this end, and also to remain engaged in a key aspect of Western international policy since 2001, Turkey has supported the US-led Broader Middle East and North Africa project (BMENA), co-chairing the Democracy Assistance Dialogue of the Forum for the Future. But Turkey will be unenthusiastic about policies of democracy promotion that explicitly aim at regime change or changes in the regional order. To the extent that Washington pursues a lower-profile approach to political reform across the region, most Turks will approve. It will also be difficult to decouple Turkish attitudes toward democracy promotion in the Middle East from American policies on issues of growing importance to the Turkish public, above all the Palestinian question. Turkey's EU prospects will also play a role. If Turkey's EU candidacy continues to be troubled, this could weaken an important aspect of renewed Middle Eastern and North African interest in the Turkish example—development through closer integration with Europe.

Turks will follow closely (perhaps too closely?) official American reactions to the ongoing political crisis in Turkey itself. The credibility

52. See Meliha Benli Altunisik, "The Turkish Model and Democratization in the Middle East," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, Nos. 1 and 2, Winter/Spring, pp. 45–63.

of US policy on democracy promotion in Turkey's region will inevitably be affected by what Washington says or does not say on questions of secularism and civil-military relations. Beyond an obvious preference for "democratic" processes, the United States will need to avoid creating the impression that it is meddling in Turkish internal politics, in an atmosphere in which American statements are readily distorted or misinterpreted.

Energy Security

Turkey's role in energy security is a key aspect of its geo-strategic importance, and energy issues have been central to American interest in Turkey since the 1990s.[53] In addition to being a major consumer of energy from surrounding areas, Turkey has emerged as a leading conduit for energy trade from diverse producers to diverse consumers. Indeed, Turkey is at the center of an emerging Mediterranean market for energy that is set to play a key role in European and world trade in the future. This trend started in the 1970s with the construction of twin pipelines to bring Iraqi oil to Turkish terminals on the Mediterranean. In the 1980s, the construction of the first of a series of large-scale gas pipelines from Russia launched a geo-economic relationship that has only gained in importance over time. In the 1990s, planning for new energy routes to bring Caspian oil and gas to international markets made American backing for the BTC route a centerpiece of US-Turkish relations. The combination of political support from Washington and commercial viability (something that had been questioned early on) was widely seen as crucial to the successful completion of the project.[54]

Since 2000 there has been a striking proliferation of new oil and gas routes around and across Turkey, from the Blue Stream line bringing gas under the Black Sea, to new lines carrying Iranian and Azeri gas to Turkey and onward to European markets. Looking ahead, there are plans to expand Blue Stream, to bring Egyptian gas to Turkey, and to build a major new gas link from Turkey to a Central European hub in Austria,

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53. See Fried, "US-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead."
54. John Roberts, "Dossier Energy: The Cut-Throat Energy Politics of Russia and Turkey," Europe's World, http://www.europesworld.org, February 28, 2007.

the proposed 4.6 billion euro "Nabucco" line.[55] A Samsun-Ceyhan gas pipeline system could bring oil, gas, and possibly water to Israel and onward, via Ashkelon and Eilat. Regional gas links across the Mediterranean and the Adriatic make it possible to bring North African gas to Balkan markets; they have opened the way for a range of Greek-Turkish joint ventures, with positive implications for economic interdependence and stability in the eastern Mediterranean. Taken together, these projects place Turkey at the center of Eurasian energy development. With existing lines used to their full capacity, Turkey would be a conduit for roughly five percent of world oil exports. If all the proposed new lines are built, this figure could be closer to ten percent. Depending on the extent of Iranian exports over the next few years, Turkey could become a conduit for 12-15 percent of global pipeline gas deliveries.[56]

In the context of US-Turkish relations, Turkey's growing role in energy security has several meaningful dimensions. First, the diversification of energy transit routes will have a stabilizing effect on world oil markets and will also support American strategic interests if shipments through the Gulf remain exposed to disruption. As Turkey becomes a more important energy transit country, new opportunities may open for US companies if the proposed projects have a sound commercial basis. Turkey stands to gain significantly from the transit fees on oil and gas shipments. It will also have a stake in reducing the already unmanageable number of tanker transits through the Bosporus, one reason is why safety and environmental concerns have emerged as a leading driver of Turkey's pipeline policy over the last decade. Because a good deal of future energy development in and around Turkey concerns gas rather than oil, Europe will also have a more direct stake in Turkish energy politics. As European concerns about Russia's energy policy have grown, a southern corridor through Turkey becomes more attractive as an alternative, or at least as a useful diversification in Europe's energy supply.

Turkey, too, has been concerned about its over-reliance on Russian supply, and Russian dominance of new energy projects (roughly 65 percent of Turkish energy consumption is gas, and roughly 65 percent of this gas comes from Russia). But Ankara will also be sensitive to its own polit-

55. Roberts, "Dossier Energy."
56. Roberts, "Dossier Energy."

ical and commercial stakes in Russian-Turkish energy trade.[57] Over the last decade, and especially in the context of the BTC pipeline, Washington has been seen as a supporter of Turkish interests in a critical sector. As regional energy geopolitics have become more complex and energy security debates more pointed, energy could just as easily emerge as a source of friction in bilateral relations.

Second, Turkey's energy policies will have implications for American strategy in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. Turkey will be a critical line of communications for future shipments of Iraqi oil and gas to Europe, as well as a potentially important outlet for Azeri gas and oil. Barring a transformation of US-Iranian relations, however, Washington will be uncomfortable with new Turkish-Iranian energy deals, in particular with the use of Turkish territory as a corridor for Iranian oil and gas exports. Similarly, the United States, wary of a new strategic competition with Moscow, may seek to limit the expansion of Russian exports to Europe and the Middle East through Turkish infrastructure. In both cases, Turkey is likely to resist American pressure to limit its energy-related cooperation with problematic neighbors when this works against Turkey's own economic and political interests. If the bilateral relationship as a whole is troubled, American leverage will be further reduced in this area.

Third, American behavior will influence Turkey's own energy interests. US support for the BTC was certainly strategic from the Turkish perspective. Yet the capacity of BTC is roughly half that of the existing pipelines from Iraq to İskenderun. A decade of economic sanctions and continued insecurity in Iraq mean that only a relatively small amount of Iraqi oil comes to market via Turkey. In short, what the United States does in Iraq to influence oil production and the security of pipelines has a very substantial effect on Turkey's role—and income—as a transit country. Geopolitical risk is a leading obstacle to the further development of energy infrastructure around and through Turkey, and, from a Turkish perspective, US foreign and security policy can contain or inflame these risks.

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57. See Daniel Fink, "Assessing Turkey's Future as an Energy Transit Country," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Research Notes*, No. 11, July 2006; and Mevlut Katik, "Russian Pipeline Play Poses Dilemma for Turkey," *Eurasia Insight,* September 27, 2006.

Energy geopolitics will reinforce American and European perceptions of Turkey's strategic importance and Turkey's sense of its own international role. But the diversification of routes, the proliferation of projects, and underlying questions of commercial viability, will make it difficult to harness Turkey's energy policy in support of American strategic objectives. Turkey will, however, look to Washington to help create the necessary conditions of security in adjacent regions (and in Turkey's own southeast) to allow new pipeline schemes to go forward with confidence and to let existing routes function at greater capacity.

The Black Sea and the Mediterranean

The United States and Turkey share broadly compatible objectives in the Black Sea. These include the consolidation of political and economic transitions, particularly in Georgia and Ukraine, and the progressive integration of countries around the Black Sea within the Euro-Atlantic system. There is also a full convergence of interest around the need to address the maritime, environmental, and unconventional security risks characteristic of the region. Ankara has a strong stake in avoiding revived competition between Russia and the West, a competition that would almost certainly center on the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Turkey would also benefit substantially from the improvement of the region's transportation infrastructure. Turkish strategists and observers tend to share the view that stabilization and integration around the Black Sea is one of the last, key pieces in the post-Cold War European security puzzle. Increased American and European interest in the Black Sea has brought greater, largely positive attention to Turkey as a strategic partner for the West.

In operational terms, the outlook for US-Turkish cooperation around the Black Sea is more mixed, based largely on differences of perspective on ethno-nationalist issues, from Kurdish separatism (taking a broad perspective on the region) to the fate of Azeris in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenian-Turkish relations.[58] Washington and Ankara certainly share an interest in conflict resolution and crisis man-

58. See Ozdem Sanberk, "Turkey, the US and Cooperation for Transformation in the New Black Sea Region" (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007 [forthcoming]).

agement in these areas, but Turkey is inclined to measure its policy much more finely in terms of its own territorial and security interests. Washington would certainly like to see a normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia, not least because it might offer a means of resolving historic debates over the Armenian "genocide," defusing a standing source of tension with the US Congress. But Turkey is inclined to move more cautiously, tying the prospects for normalization to Armenian policy on Nagorno-Karabakh. (Turks point out that despite the economic blockade, tens of thousands of Armenians have migrated to Turkey to work in Istanbul and elsewhere.)

Turkey is keen to prevent any erosion of its sovereignty or of the controls enshrined in the 1936 Montreux Convention governing passage through the Bosporus Straits. In reality, the United States has little interest in pressing Turkey over restrictions on naval passage through the Straits, but the prospect of a more intrusive American military presence in the Black Sea has given rise to some anxiety in Ankara.

The new strategic environment in the Black Sea also raises questions about the longer-term balance of American, European, Russian, and Turkish influence in the region. NATO now has three Black Sea members, and Bulgaria and Romania have cultivated a close strategic relationship with Washington. In the post-2003 climate, these states now feature as alternative partners for power projection in the American strategic discourse. Turkey accepts the security benefits of Alliance enlargement, but worries—probably unrealistically—about being marginalized in the face of a more permissive environment for defense cooperation across the Black Sea. Similarly, Turkey stands to benefit from the economic development and integration of Bulgaria and Romania into the EU. But Romanian and Bulgarian accession is also a source of some resentment in view of Turkey's own troubled EU candidacy.

To the extent that the EU becomes a Black Sea power, this will raise the stakes in Europe's relations with Russia. Here, Turkey may be forced to choose between its own policy of economic and possibly strategic cooperation with Russia and a more assertive European *Ostpolitik*, in which Turkish interests will inevitably be subordinated to those of Berlin and Paris. The American posture toward Moscow could become more assertive still, posing further difficult choices for Ankara. Russia's own behavior will be a key factor. A more aggressive Russian policy in

its Near Abroad and around the Black Sea could threaten Turkish interests, as well as those of Azerbaijan, with which Turks have a strong sense of affinity. In these conditions, a revival of historic Turkish sensitivity to Russian power is likely and could mean a rapid end to the idea of a new Turkish-Russian strategic relationship. For the moment, however, Black Sea security has been a vehicle for modest cooperation between Ankara and Moscow. Russia participates in the Turkish-led Black Sea Harmony maritime security initiative, which Ukraine and Romania are likely to join in the near future. American strategic planners are taking a closer interest in regional activity of this kind, perhaps as an alternative to higher-profile—and more controversial—approaches such as the proposed extension of NATO's Operation Active Endeavor to the Black Sea, a move that Turkey and Russia have opposed.[59] The Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (Blackseafor), also led by Turkey, is another regional framework of this kind. These activities are all basically congruent with American interests, even in the absence of an American role.

As Europe and the United States develop a stronger strategic interest in the Black Sea and as questions about Russian policy toward the region grow, Turkey is likely to loom as a more prominent partner for Western strategy, politically and operationally. The Black Sea is also emerging as one of the leading priorities for Turkey's more active regional diplomacy. This confluence of trends suggests considerable potential for cooperation between Ankara and Washington and for Turkish and American institutions aimed at promoting stability and development in the region. But the diverse nature of Black Sea risks and strong national sensitivities to extra-regional influence suggest that this cooperation may be best pursued through multilateral and regional efforts, rather than bilaterally. In practical terms, this should mean American support for regional initiatives led by Turkey.

The shift of American strategic priorities to the south and east on the European periphery underscores the need to develop a more transparent and cooperative relationship with Turkey as a Black Sea power. Similarly, there is potential to enhance cooperation with Turkey in the

59. See Joshua Kucera, "The United States Develops a Strategic Plan for the Black Sea," *Eurasia Insight*, March 1, 2007. Eurasianet.org.

Mediterranean, both bilaterally and via NATO initiatives. Turkey and the United States share an important trait in their respective approaches to the Mediterranean: both are longstanding Mediterranean powers, but neither Turkey nor the United States is inclined to define itself as such or to give Mediterranean strategy per se high priority in its policymaking. Apart from the historically important strategic competition with Greece, and the Cyprus issue, Turkey's contemporary involvement in the Mediterranean is rather diffuse. The détente between Greece and Turkey and the very substantial reduction in tension in the Aegean should open the way for closer cooperation between Turkey and the United States in the eastern Mediterranean. As in the Black Sea, the most effective approach may be one of "variable geometry" involving bilateral cooperation or multilateral activity with others, including Greece and Israel. Turkey is already doing much more via its participation in European-led peacekeeping operations in Lebanon (largely a maritime activity). The trilateral US-Turkish-Israeli Reliant Mermaid maritime exercises are a good example of what can be done, as are operations conducted as part of Active Endeavor. Egypt and others in North Africa could also be brought into these activities, which can easily focus on "soft" and non-traditional missions of surveillance, prevention of human trafficking and smuggling, search and rescue, environmental security and commerce protection, and counterterrorism and counter-proliferation.[60]

There should also be a special role for Turkey in the development of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (the latter focused on the Gulf). Turkey has much to offer in the area of security partnership and outreach to Arab and Muslim countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Both Ankara and Washington could be more involved in this aspect of Alliance affairs as a contribution to regional confidence-building. Turkey's role as mentor in the Arms Control and Regional Security talks in the 1990s, part of the multilateral track of the Madrid peace process led by the US and Russia, was an excellent precedent for this kind of cooperation.

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60. See Orhan Babaoglu, "US-Turkish Cooperation Against New Maritime Threats in the Mediterranean Basin," *Policywatch* No. 924 (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 7, 2004).

Cyprus and Turkish-Greek Relations

The Cyprus issue has played a central, largely negative, role in the bilateral relationship since the 1960s. It remains a highly visible problem, driving much of the US Congress attention to Turkey and serving as a key measure of partnership or friction in Turkish views of the United States. Yet Cyprus is arguably a less salient part of US-Turkish relations today, and is set to decline further on the bilateral agenda. There are several reasons for this. First, developments on the island have produced a stable security situation, although the prospects for a settlement along the bi-zonal bi-communal lines long championed by the United States are distant. In this regard, the Cypriot rejection of the Annan Plan has been a considerable disappointment, but Turkey's support for it and the difficult concessions made prior to the referendum have certainly been acknowledged in Washington. The ability of Cypriots to cross the Green Line and increased people-to-people contacts between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island, virtually without incident, have also contributed to a relaxation of tensions. Whether this more open atmosphere can be sustained without progress in Turkey's EU candidacy is an open question. For the moment, however, in clear contrast to past decades, the situation on the island poses little direct risk to American security interests.

Second, Turkey's EU candidacy and the opening of accession negotiations, however troubled, have made Cyprus a matter for Europe, with a declining role for Washington. To the extent that the Annan Plan, or a variant of it, can be taken forward again, this will be an area for UN action. The United States will be supportive, but the scope for American diplomatic intervention on the Cyprus problem is narrowing. Cyprus diplomacy is now certainly a low priority for policy attention in Washington given pressing demands elsewhere.

Third, the Cyprus question has become increasingly "decoupled" from Turkish-Greek relations and Aegean stability. Not entirely, of course, as Cyprus remains an emotive issue in public opinion in Turkey and Greece, and a flashpoint for nationalist agitation. But developments on Cyprus are now very unlikely to bring Ankara and Athens into armed conflict. This is a substantial change in the regional picture, driven by changes in policy on all sides, and a marked departure from the atmosphere of brinksmanship that characterized Turkish-Greek relations

through the late 1990s. As a result, much of the negative rationale—avoiding conflict between two NATO allies—that compelled US attention to Cyprus, the Aegean, and even the Balkans, has evaporated. A return to tense relations between Ankara and Athens would likely draw additional American policy interest and almost certainly place Turkish policy under greater scrutiny in Congress and the Administration.

Turkey's support for the Annan Plan has left an important legacy in the form of a loose commitment to ease the economic isolation of the Turkish north of the island. The EU is also committed to progress in this direction. The pace of this economic opening remains disappointing to Ankara. From the Turkish perspective, a visible step toward normalizing US relations with the TRNC (well short of recognition, which is politically impossible) is consistently cited as an action that could have immediate and positive effects on bilateral relations. As a practical measure, the United States could open unrestricted trade with the TRNC, ideally in parallel with similar action from Brussels. The economic effect of this is unlikely to be major, but it could have an important influence on public and elite opinion in Turkey, at little or no political cost to Washington.

The Diversified Agenda – Business, Society, and Culture

After a decade of awareness, Turkish and American policymakers still need to address the challenge of developing a more diverse relationship in which security cooperation is balanced by other kinds of engagement, both governmental and civic. In the realm of "soft power," US-Turkish relations have been impeded by the lack of broad public interest in Turkey and the narrow support base for issues of importance to Ankara. The relatively underdeveloped economic relationship has been part of the problem. The absence of significant cultural interaction is another.

An intriguing comparison can be made between America's relationships with Turkey and India. With India, the United States enjoys deep and diverse relations, spanning economic, scientific, and cultural ties, which are spurred by a large and active Indian-American community. India has become trendy, and interest in India has expanded tremendously across the United States. Links between Hollywood and Bollywood and between Silicon Valley and Bangalore are commonplace subjects in American political and business circles, alongside the more controversial

debate over outsourcing.[61] Yet the development of a "strategic" relationship between Washington and Delhi has proven difficult. With Turkey, this predicament is reversed: the strategic relationship is longstanding, but the economic and cultural dimensions remain underdeveloped.

The quality of the bilateral relationship continues to be measured, overwhelmingly, by the quality of interaction at the high political level and in defense terms, with too little in the way of an underlying society-to-society relationship. To a degree, this is the inevitable product of a geopolitical approach to relations and the multiple crises on or near Turkey's borders. Yet the lack of a broad-based engagement that would reach beyond American foreign and security policy elites leaves the relationship highly exposed to geopolitical risks and differences of perspective in regional crises.

Turkey's economic success since the financial crisis of 2000–2001 has accelerated economic and social modernization that had been underway for decades, with its earliest origins in Ottoman reforms. In the early post-Second World War period, at the start of the "strategic relationship" between Turkey and the United States, some 80 percent of Turks worked in agriculture and Turkey was largely a rural, traditional society. Today, less than a quarter of the population works in agriculture and Turkey is a heavily urbanized society. Over the last five years, its economy has registered the highest growth rate within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as high as nine percent in 2004. GDP growth now hovers around six-seven percent per year. Turkey's historic experience of high inflation, often well over 50 percent annually, has been brought under control and is now in single digits, only slightly higher than the European norm. As one senior former diplomat and active observer of the Turkish scene has noted "too few Turks and virtually no Americans are aware of how much longer it would have taken to achieve this [development] without support from the US and the international economic institutions that the US has created…. This achievement should be a source of pride to both sides—and a stimulus to cooperation for further achievements."[62]

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61. For an excellent new survey of India, including India-US relations, see Mira Kamdar, *Planet India* (New York: Scribner, 2007).
62. Ozdem Sanberk, "Turkey, the US and Cooperation for Transformation in the New Black Sea Region," p. 2.

The US-Turkish economic relationship is modest but growing, driven by the expansion of the Turkish economy and the dramatic overall increase in foreign investment in Turkey since 2002, and since 2004 in particular.[63] Bilateral trade is roughly $10 billion per year. Trade with the United States represents about seven percent of Turkish exports. These are significant figures, but far below the levels of Turkish trade with Europe or Russia.[64] As small and medium-sized Turkish firms become more adept at approaching the American market in areas such as specialty agriculture, this trade volume could expand substantially. American exports to Turkey are relatively insignificant in overall terms, with the exception of the cotton industry, where the Turkish market is second only to China.[65]

Some 600 American firms are involved in commerce with Turkey, but analysts in both countries agree that bilateral trade is well below attainable levels. Ankara has periodically lobbied for the idea of a US-Turkey free trade agreement, a step that could significantly expand Turkish exports to the United States but may or may not be compatible with Turkey's existing customs union with the EU.[66] If Turkish-EU relations remain stalled or go into reverse, Turkish interest in securing a bilateral trade agreement with Washington may revive.

Foreign direct investment in Turkey has increased dramatically, and the country is rapidly making up for lost decades of very low investment. Since 2004, Turkey has received more foreign investment than in the previous 80 years taken together. American investors are participating in this trend, which has been driven by Turkey's stable majority government, impressive economic performance, large internal market, emergence as an important energy *entrepôt*, and expanding service sector. Evidence of this interest can be seen in Citigroup's purchase of a 20-percent stake in Akbank for $3.1 billion and GE Capital's acquisition of a 20-percent stake in Garanti

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63. For a survey, see *Economic Partnership Between Turkey and the USA: Recent Dynamics* (Istanbul: Turkish-US Business Council, March 2006).
64. Total Turkish exports now run at about $100 billion per year, with roughly half going to the EU.
65. US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agriculture Service, "Cotton: World Market and Trade," September 2006.
66. See *The Analysis of Turkish-American Economic and Commercial Relations and Suggestions for the Future* (Istanbul: TUSIAD, March 2003).

Bank.[67] Turkey's booming real estate market is attracting American investors from Warren Buffet to Hilton. Tourism, transportation, food and beverages, and technology are also attractive sectors. Financial services and portfolio investment continue to lead the way, but some Turkish observers would prefer to see the growth of more substantial long-term investment in manufacturing and other tangible sectors. There are promising opportunities, even if Turkey is no longer a low-cost economy. The most profitable Ford plant worldwide is located in Turkey, a 50-50 venture with the Koç Group.

Financiers keep a wary eye on political risk and levels of Turkish debt, and this wariness has increased with uncertainty over the country's presidential and parliamentary elections. Today, the Turkish economy and the economic aspects of US-Turkish relations are not as vulnerable to political risk as in 2000–2001, but continued economic stability cannot be taken for granted—on either side. To an extent, heightened American enthusiasm for trade and investment in Turkey has been driven by the prospect of eventual Turkish membership in the EU. If Turkey's candidacy encounters further difficulties, this could have an inhibiting effect. It is unlikely to be disastrous unless Turkey's own economic liberalization program is derailed, and the overall convergence with European practice comes to a halt. The postponement of critical privatization decisions, growing criticism of IMF-inspired policies, and the adoption of more populist economic rhetoric as the AKP government moves toward elections will surely worry international investors. But the prospect of a renewed mandate for the AKP government or of a stable AKP-led coalition is likely to be the leading factor in external assessments of the Turkish economy.[68] Overall, and in marked contrast to the mood in Washington, business circles remain relatively "bullish" on Turkey. Talk of "who lost Turkey?" is relatively rare on Wall Street.

The need to develop the economic dimension of US-Turkish relations has been on the bilateral agenda for some time and has been the subject of ongoing reflection in official working groups and within organizations

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67. Eric Dash, "Citibank Adds to Presence in Turkey With a Deal," *The New York Times*, October 18, 2006.
68. I am grateful to my colleague Oliver Mains of the German Marshall Fund of the United States for his contributions to this analysis.

such as the American-Turkish Council, the Turkish-US Business Council, the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (TÜSIAD), and the American Business Forum in Turkey. Interest in Turkey's ongoing privatization program, and new opportunities for US firms, has also spurred a re-launch of the bilateral Economic Partnership Commission. Ultimately, like other emerging markets, the prospects for development in this area will depend critically on commercial viability, the improvement of the "soft infrastructure" for business in Turkey, and assessments of political risk.[69] Turks who focus on this question tend to see the opportunity for expanded economic cooperation with the United States in the context of burgeoning opportunities elsewhere, in Europe, but also in Russia, China, Central Asia, and the Middle East. In many ways, the diversification of Turkey's international economic ties parallels the expansion of its foreign policy horizons.

Defense-industrial trade has long been central to bilateral economic cooperation. This sector will remain important, driven by Turkey's ambitious defense modernization program (perhaps $6 billion per year over the next decade) and increasingly sophisticated capacity for co-production of defense goods. Turkish participation in large-scale projects such as the Joint Strike Fighter program and a major F-16 up-grade project suggests that Turkey remains committed to the defense-industrial relationship with the United States, tempered by a desire to diversify the country's defense imports and offset the risk of new limitations on arms transfers. The United States is seen as a preferred but not entirely reliable supplier of defense goods and services. Co-production, joint ventures, and technology transfer will be key factors in the future of cooperation in this sector. Their scale and visibility make defense projects among the most exposed to suspensions and boycotts in the event of new bilateral crises. Passage of an Armenian "genocide" resolution in Congress or other political sanctions emanating from Washington could trigger action of this kind (on the pattern of the suspension of Turkish defense cooperation with France

69. A recent survey by the American Business Forum in Turkey (ABFT), an organization established by 70 American corporations invested in the country, points to an unpredictable legal system and corruption as leading problems inhibiting new American investment in an otherwise favorable climate. See Cuneyt Ulsever, "How Do American Corporations See Turkey?" *Turkish Daily News*, April 10, 2007.

in 2006). Bilateral economic relations could also be disturbed by new, sharp disagreements over northern Iraq or new sanctions against Iran and Syria, countries where Turkish trade and investment are growing.

Turkey's economic performance and the state of political ties between Washington and Ankara will provide the critical backdrop for a more diverse relationship. But less tangible elements will also play a part. With some notable exceptions, Turkey has not had the kind of prominence it could and should have on the American cultural agenda. For reasons of history and affinity, Europe is a well-understood and natural territory for American cultural and intellectual elites. India and Brazil have a fashionable prominence on the American scene. Turkey, by contrast, remains at the margins. The potential for Turkey to become more visible and "trendy" clearly exists, however, and is underscored by the country's growing cultural and artistic profile, from Orhan Pamuk's Nobel Prize, to the 2005–2006 Picasso exhibition at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, and the opening of Istanbul Modern. At a time of less clear-cut and easily measured strategic cooperation, soft-power interactions of this kind, alongside new economic ties, could come to play a more important role in bilateral relations, engaging different constituencies and bringing a modern image of Turkey to the fore.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This analysis points to substantial new pressures on US-Turkish relations emanating from both countries, and from the strategic environment. Relations have become less predictable, more difficult to manage, and more exposed to differences in perspective and policy at a time of mutual insecurity. The least likely scenario for the future is a return to an imagined golden age of concerted strategy, common policies, and predictable cooperation. US-Turkish relations were never so simple, and their future is likely to be even less straightforward. The United States and Turkey have much to offer to each other, and new opportunities for cooperation of a "strategic" kind will arise. But dispelling suspicion and restoring the strategic quality of the relationship will require more realistic expectations on both sides—a recalibration of relations to reflect new conditions and new constraints. Whatever the character and quality of the relationship in the years to come, it is certain to look quite different from the pattern set in the Cold War years, or even after 1990.

Alternative Scenarios

What paths are possible for US-Turkish relations? Strains in the bilateral relationship and a very different international environment make it clear that relations between Washington and Ankara are now very much off autopilot. Policymakers on both sides will need to consider a range of possible scenarios over the next five to ten years. The future of the relationship is more accurately described in terms of a spectrum of cooperation and conflict on diverse questions. Three illustrative scenarios, or paths, are worth considering and anticipating.

First, and the most troubling, is the possibility of "strategic estrangement." At a structural level, this scenario could emerge from continued sharp differences over regional strategy, and especially over Iraq. It could also flow from developments inside Turkey that could drive Turkish society and policy away from its Western partners toward a more Eurasian or

Middle Eastern orientation or toward a more inward-looking and nationalistic posture.[70] The impetus for this could also come from the international environment and might be strongly encouraged by rising nationalism in Europe and elsewhere. This analysis suggests that Islamism *per se* is less likely to be the engine of strategic estrangement than Turkish nationalism and a wider re-nationalization of foreign and security policies. If strongly negative public (and elite) attitudes toward the United States, both its policy and its power, prove durable, the risk of strategic estrangement will increase.

If Turks do not perceive an overt threat from regional competitors such as Iran or Russia, the costs of an arm's-length attitude toward Washington will decline. Similarly, the emergence of an independent Kurdish state, tolerated or perhaps encouraged by the United States, in the absence of a revolution in Turkish attitudes, could be sufficient to push Turkish-US relations toward a complete break. Even short of this, new American policies of containment vis-à-vis Iran, Russia, or even a more assertive Shiite-dominated Iraq, would likely be at odds with Turkish interests and would reinforce the logic of estrangement on both sides.

At a proximate level, strategic estrangement could be triggered by a crisis over the fate of Kirkuk or an incident flowing from Turkish cross-border operations against the PKK. It could also result from US military action against Iran in the absence of a UN or NATO mandate. Passage of an Armenian "genocide" resolution by the US Congress, a very real prospect at some point in the absence of a normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, against a backdrop of strongly nationalistic sentiment, could compel Ankara to respond in ways that would undermine an already fragile framework of strategic cooperation. A ban on bilateral uses of İncirlik airbase or retaliatory measures in the political and commercial spheres cannot be ruled out. Even serious damage of this kind could be repaired, just as relations recovered from deep frictions over Cyprus in the mid-1970s, but in the absence of an overriding strategic imperative, the estrangement could prove long-lived. The fact that scenarios of this nature are now openly discussed in

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70. See, for example, the strong argument along these lines in Soner Cagaptay, *Secularism and Foreign Policy in Turkey: New Elections, Troubling Trends* (Washington, D.C.: Washington

Ankara and Washington is a measure of the perceived deterioration in the relationship in recent years. Conscious estrangement is not the most likely scenario. But a drift toward a more distant relationship, in which key aspects of bilateral cooperation atrophy, is a real possibility given prevailing conditions and attitudes.

Second, the bilateral relationship might move toward "revived strategic partnership" of a kind closely resembling the cooperation of the Cold War era. A scenario of this sort would require satisfactory resolution of current points of friction, principally over the PKK and Iraq. It would be encouraged by a general restoration of transatlantic cooperation in which Turkey would be a leading partner, through NATO and possibly the EU, if Turkey's EU candidacy proceeds in a positive manner. But these factors will only go part way toward encouraging a revived strategic partnership of the traditional kind. The essential, additional element would be the emergence of a major strategic challenge of a kind that Ankara could not meet unilaterally or through its ties with Europe. Similarly, the challenge would require the United States to see Turkey as an indispensable partner. Conditions for a revived strategic partnership could arise from a new confrontation between Russia and the West, a confrontation that would very likely be focused in the south and east, on Turkey's doorstep. An extended cold war with a nuclear or near-nuclear Iran could be another stimulus to US-Turkish cooperation, provided Washington and Ankara share a similar assessment of the risks posed by a rising Iran.

A new shared challenge might also take the more diffuse but potentially no less threatening form of pervasive instability, conflict, and chaos across the area of Turkey's "strategic depth," from the Levant to the Black Sea, the Gulf, and beyond. Turkey's exposure to refugee flows, spillovers of political violence, and regional conflict would give Ankara a strong stake in bolstering and reinvigorating its security partnerships, above all with the United States. In truth, this path for relations is undesirable because it relies on highly adverse trends in the international environment. It is also unlikely, because it presumes Turkey's willingness to subordinate its strategy to approaches developed in Washington (Ankara's willingness to do this was tenuous even at the height of the Cold War). It is even less likely that American strategy will be driven by Turkish security needs alone, as the ongoing differences over policy toward northern Iraq and the PKK illustrate. In these conditions, a larger extra-European role for NATO, in which American and Turkish

perspectives could be accommodated, might prove more practical and effective than a revived bilateral partnership *per se*.

A third path might be described as a "recalibrated" or sustainable relationship, potentially quite different from past images of strategic cooperation but still highly desirable, and within reach for both sides. Given the continued, shared stake in positive relations—even as a hedge against uncertainty—a shift toward a recalibrated relationship is quite likely. From the Turkish perspective, the American card is one that Ankara will almost certainly wish to keep, whatever its relative priority in Turkish foreign policy. As a practical matter, in diplomatic, security, and economic terms, engagement with Washington as the dominant global actor is virtually unavoidable. For Washington, even given the declining predictability of cooperation on power projection issues, the sheer number of crises and critical developments on Turkey's borders or nearby, makes a sustained relationship valuable.

Movement toward a sustainable relationship requires the avoidance of near-term crises over highly emotive issues on the bilateral agenda, but the essential contours of this approach are broader-gauge and longer-term. First, expectations need to be brought into line with reality. Turkey has a long history of ambivalence on issues of access and power projection in the Middle East, especially in the absence of UN or NATO mandates. This is most unlikely to change, and American policymakers and strategists must take this reality into account. It is unrealistic to assume that Turkey, with its pronounced sensitivity to questions of national sovereignty, will automatically agree to facilitate American action in the Middle East or Eurasia. Moreover, Turkey is not alone in its careful measurement of security cooperation with Washington, as the political crises in Italy over similar questions clearly show. Turkey has, in fact, been quietly supportive of coalition operations in Iraq, despite overt differences over Iraq policy. Iraq has been made a test of the relationship in ways that have not served the interests of either Ankara or Washington.

Second, it is essential to acknowledge that a strategic relationship conceived essentially in bilateral terms is unsustainable. Few of the leading issues facing the United States and Turkey lack an important triangular dimension, involving NATO, EU, and transatlantic relations. Looking ahead, a multilateral frame is likely to be the most predictable and effective context for cooperation. On Iran, Russia, the Balkans, the Black Sea, stability in the eastern Mediterranean, or energy security, there will be few

opportunities for meaningful new initiatives of a purely bilateral character. The most important external element in the future of the relationship is undoubtedly the evolving nature of transatlantic cooperation as a whole. Both sides have an interest in assuring that Euro-Atlantic relations are set on a new and positive course. A dysfunctional transatlantic relationship, including a diminished role for NATO, would place even greater pressure on Turkish-US relations and force Ankara into a succession of uncomfortable policy choices in the coming years. For this reason, among others, Washington will benefit from continued Turkish convergence with Europe—as long as transatlantic relations are stable. Even on Iraq, the European and NATO dimension is highly relevant, and should be given far greater prominence.

Third, a sustainable relationship must be supported by a web of more diverse ties at the levels of non-government institutions, businesses, and individuals. The prevailing security-heavy framework is a legacy of the Cold War, which has been reinforced by contemporary trouble on Turkey's borders. Security and political cooperation may remain the core of the relationship—for good reason—but this cooperation is likely to be less fragile and more predictable to the extent that it is based on broader affinity, transparency, and a better-informed public. Security cooperation cannot be the only measure of cooperation. Again, the Italian example is instructive. Bilateral basing issues and policy disputes over Afghanistan have shaken the government in Rome, and anti-Americanism is very much part of the Italian landscape. An Italian court has asked for the extradition of Americans involved in the covert rendition of suspected terrorists on Italian soil. Yet few would suggest that the underlying relationship between the United States and Italy is in jeopardy. The relationship is too diverse and too deeply imbedded in a transatlantic context for this risk to be taken seriously. The progressive normalization, diversification and "multilateralization" of American ties across southern Europe since the early 1990s has paid important dividends and offers a useful model for the future of US-Turkish relations.

For structural reasons, Europe will remain the natural focus of economic cooperation for Turkey. But much more can be done to encourage American trade and investment in Turkey, including participation in less traditional areas such as financial services. The most important factor in this regard will be Turkey's own convergence with European practices, a devel-

opment that is likely to spur much greater private sector interest in Turkey across the board. Here, as in other areas, the European and transatlantic vocations are complimentary and reinforcing, rather than competitive. Ultimately, the deepening of the economic dimension of the relationship will depend on decisions taken by individual businesses on the basis of commercial viability and predictable political risks. Positive political relations between Washington and Ankara, in a transatlantic context, alongside political stability in Turkey, will be the best recipe for increased trade and investment.

Finally, US-Turkish relations require active management and an explicit commitment to their continued importance, quite apart from questions of power projection and abstract geopolitics. A considerable part of the current mistrust stems from a Turkish sense that Ankara's interests are not being taken seriously, while Washington sees Turkey as less than helpful on Iraq, Iran, and other issues of concern. Moreover, both countries are now asking fundamental questions about the future of the other—the partners as well as the partnership are in flux. To be sure, much American interest in Turkey is derivative of other concerns, and so is some Turkish interest in the United States. But *Realpolitik* has its limits in a fluid strategic environment where the perspectives of a regional and a global power will often diverge. A sustainable relationship requires the "flywheel" of affinity, alliance commitment and frequent high-level consultation.

These conclusions suggest a short list of essential policy priorities for both sides:

Avoid the Perception of Meddling in Turkish Internal Politics

Turkey's unfolding political crisis, and the wider debate about secularism, civil-military relations, and the relationship between state and society that the crisis has opened, is vitally important to the future of Turkey. It is a crisis that can only be resolved by Turks, and the cleavages that it has revealed may take years to reconcile and may never be fully resolved. The United States should not hesitate to make clear that American interests are best served by democratic solutions, but Washington must also realize that American influence in Turkish domestic politics is limited—and properly so. Political turmoil may make Turkey a less active and effective partner for a period, but eventually the relationship must be put on a better footing,

whatever the political constellation in Ankara. An activist stance toward Turkish domestic politics is likely to do more harm than good, and will reinforce public and elite suspicions of Washington.

Act on the PKK - and Put Turkey at the Center of Regional Diplomacy for Iraq

There is now a growing consensus in Washington and internationally that an exit from the deepening crisis in Iraq will require a multilateral approach, engaging Iraq's neighbors and other key actors. Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and others have figured prominently in the post-Iraq Study Group debate on this question. But Turkey remains at the margins, despite the fact that Ankara has as much or more leverage over key aspects of the Iraq situation and the leading regional stake in the future of northern Iraq. Growing tensions between Turkey and the Kurdish leadership in Iraq, and mounting PKK violence inside Turkey, make it imperative that Washington put engagement with Ankara at the top of the regional agenda for Iraq—and make this engagement explicit. In the absence of a very high-level and sustained effort along these lines, there is a strong possibility of unilateral Turkish action against the PKK inside Iraq, which would risk an even deeper rift with the United States.

Looking ahead, many of the options for American disengagement or redeployment in Iraq will depend critically on Turkish logistical and political support. A "package" approach to expanded US-Turkish cooperation on Iraq would support both American and Turkish priorities: prompt US political and military pressure on the PKK issue, Turkish pressure on Syria and Iran over their role in the Iraqi insurgency, and long-term planning for stabilization—at a minimum, containment of chaos—in Iraq. Working with Turkey should not be controversial, since it would not require the wrenching strategic choices implied in dealing with Tehran or Damascus. If the United States cannot be responsive to the leading security challenge facing a NATO ally, then the outlook for the bilateral relationship is truly worrying. Indeed, conditions in Iraq suggest that building a stable postwar strategic order in the region, with Ankara as a leading partner, may now be a more important and realistic objective than the reconstruction of Iraq along existing lines. Despite the current pressures on NATO in Afghanistan, it may be worth considering a NATO role in preventing PKK infiltration from northern Iraq.

Address Long-Term Strategic Challenges

Turkish and American policy planners need to open a much more explicit discussion about future challenges and strategic cooperation, aimed at reducing the pervasive sense of suspicion and unpredictability in the relationship. Questions to be taken up should include an assessment of the longer-term implications of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, that is, how to deal with a nuclear or near-nuclear Iran should diplomacy fail. In the near term, it will be essential to enlist Turkish cooperation on the question of Iran's nuclear program, a shared risk for Ankara, Europe, the United States, and, ultimately, Russia. Turkey's improved relations with Tehran may be turned to advantage in dealing with Iran on the nuclear issue, as well as Iranian support for irregular and terrorist groups across the Middle East. Like the PKK issue for the Turkish side, these are top areas for American policy in which Ankara can be more active and supportive of US interests. It is also imperative that US policymakers give equal weight to the theater missile defense problem in considering new strategic defense initiatives. The United States cannot expect to have the support of NATO allies most exposed to nuclear and missile risks emanating from the Middle East, most obviously Turkey, unless their own exposure is addressed in new defense projects.

Joint planning should also focus on the harmonization of American and Turkish approaches to the Black Sea and to relations with Russia. A bilateral effort to resolve the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh would be important in its own right. It would also greatly enhance the prospects for normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations, which would, in turn, encourage more positive approaches to the Armenian "genocide" debate, among both Turks and Armenians and within legislatures on both sides of the Atlantic.

The United States will have a strong stake in the consolidation of Turkish-Greek détente through new confidence-building measures and cooperation on unconventional security problems in the Mediterranean—a strategic imperative that has not disappeared with the improved climate of recent years.

Energy security is another obvious agenda item, but the next steps for bilateral cooperation in the post-BTC period are unclear. Europe and Russia will be the leading actors in the next round of energy pipeline projects in Turkey's neighborhood. American leverage over Turkey's energy transit position will be far more substantial in relation to Iraqi produc-

tion and new ventures with Iran. These should be priorities for US-Turkish dialogue and planning.

From an American perspective, it would be most useful to develop a more explicit and predictable understanding on the use of İncirlik for regional contingencies outside a NATO framework. Under current conditions, this is most unlikely. But more direct consultation and advance planning with Ankara on some of the most likely cases related to Iran (or, for example, a response to a "loose" nuclear weapons scenario in Pakistan) could encourage a more predictable climate on questions of power projection and base access.

Assist the Turkish Community on Cyprus

Washington is no longer the center of gravity for Cyprus diplomacy. The European context is now central, and inextricably bound up with Turkey's EU candidacy. It is unrealistic to expect American policy to depart from its well-established support for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation along the lines of the Annan Plan. But Turkey has taken substantial steps toward compromise in its own approach to the Cyprus problem, and developments on the island have moved in the direction of greater interaction and confidence building between the Greek and Turkish communities. Cyprus retains great symbolic significance for Turks, and the United States should take prompt steps toward easing the isolation of the Turkish community in northern Cyprus by lifting restrictions on direct trade and investment with the TRNC. The United States should also press its European partners to act on the EU's own commitments in this area. More resources should be devoted to the very effective existing program of policy-oriented visits and inter-communal activities undertaken with official American support. The White House might take the step of appointing a new Special Cyprus Coordinator, ideally an individual with credibility in both communities and with influence in Washington. But this will have little meaning without a renewed administration commitment to Cyprus diplomacy—and the prospects for this are limited by pressing demands elsewhere, from Iraq to the Middle East peace process.

Emphasize Transatlantic Initiatives with Turkey

This report suggests that the prospects for future bilateral cooperation between the United States and Turkey will be strongly influenced by the

quality of transatlantic relations, which are a key context for any strategic relationship between Washington and Ankara. In many of the most critical areas for cooperation, including policies toward Iraq and Iran, multilateral approaches will be essential. Put another way, the core question is not the future of US-Turkish relations but the future of triangular cooperation between US, Turkish, and European partners at governmental and non-governmental levels.

The July 2006 joint document on "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue" proposes new efforts to deepen collaboration between American and Turkish institutions. Leading institutions in both countries will be keen to join this endeavor and to bolster the few bilateral dialogues now underway. These activities should be given tangible support through funding from both governments. Ideally, their focus should be triangular, including institutions and resources from Europe. A key goal of this triangular dialogue should be to encourage Turkish, American, and European action on shared policy challenges in the domestic and international arenas, including but going beyond questions of security and geopolitics. Urban, education, and health policies should be on the agenda, alongside questions of regional security and strategy. A new high-level commission engaging senior serving and retired officials and leading figures from the business and policy communities might also be established, as some recent reports have recommended—but it, too, should be tri- rather than bilateral.

Similarly, and where possible, new initiatives on security and defense should be cast in a NATO rather than a bilateral mold. The long-term reinforcement of Turkey's role and confidence in the Alliance should be an integral part of US policy toward Ankara. NATO's effectiveness across a wider range of possible contingencies to Europe's south and east will depend critically on Turkish cooperation. At the same time, Turkey's confidence in Alliance security guarantees—badly frayed over the last 15 years—needs to be restored. American policy should recognize that Turkish security cooperation is likely to be more predictable and extensive when based on NATO and UN mandates. This is a simple reality of the Turkish scene, lying fully in the European mainstream.

New transatlantic approaches of this kind are likely to become even more important as American support for Turkey's EU candidacy becomes a less significant factor in the outlook for Turkey's European project. To be sure, the United States will retain a strong interest in Turkey's EU membership

and an even stronger interest in Turkey's continued convergence with Europe. Turkey's membership prospects are unlikely to turn critically on support from Washington over the next 10 or 15 years. But Ankara, Washington, and Brussels will have a stake in assuring that Turkey's European and Atlantic ties are compatible and mutually reinforcing.

Build the Economic and Civil Society Dimensions

This analysis underscores the importance of re-balancing US-Turkish relations by giving greater weight to neglected, non-security aspects of the relationship. Turkey's location, and the reality of multiple security challenges on or near its borders, suggests that security issues and security cooperation will retain immense importance in Turkey's relations with the United States and Europe. This is a structural feature for Turkey and its international role. But developing the non-security aspects of the relationship, including economic and cultural ties, will pay subtle but important dividends by enlarging the constituency for bilateral relations and bolstering the relatively weak sense of affinity and familiarity at both public and elite levels.

Ultimately, the successful development of economic and cultural ties will depend on myriad decisions by many actors from investors to educators, from museum curators to scientific researchers. Commercial viability and the pace of globalization will shape what is possible over the next decade. The most important variables will likely be the pace and extent of Turkey's European integration, political stability and reform, and openness to new intellectual and technological currents. On the Turkish side, legal and regulatory reform will be essential spurs to new American investment. On the US side, the principal challenge is to bring more American enterprises and individuals into contact with Turkish partners. In the broadest sense, Turkey needs to become fashionable for consumers and long-term investors, something that has already happened, to an extent, in financial services and real estate.

Governments, foundations, and non-governmental institutions can play a role by expanding the opportunities for visits and expert and academic exchanges, the full range of society-to-society contacts. Given Turkey's burgeoning private university sector, there is tremendous potential for American students at all levels to study in Turkey. Some programs of this kind exist, but they should be expanded (the strategic effect of "study abroad" programs is not given the attention it deserves; the effects are obvi-

ous in Anglo-American and Franco-American relations and, increasingly, in American ties to Central and Eastern Europe). Post September 11th restrictions—real and perceived—on student visas deter many Turks from coming to American universities. Obstacles of this kind should be examined and reduced for Turkey as a NATO ally.

Pay Attention to Style, and to Substance

Substantive policy decisions drive US-Turkish relations on a day-to-day basis. But foreign policy style also plays a role, in public diplomacy and at the level of leaderships and elites. The last few years have seen numerous opportunities lost, in part because the atmosphere of US-Turkish dialogue has been unattractive to key constituencies on both sides. Over the next two years, Turkey and the United States will have critical national elections, as well as critical opportunities to revitalize the bilateral relationship in a transatlantic context. Turks will seek a sense of renewed interest and commitment from Washington—and acknowledgment of Turkey's importance as a regional actor and as a leading partner for the United States. Americans will ask for reassurance that Turkey remains committed to its Western course. Both should look to transcend the pervasive suspicion that has limited the strategic character of the relationship since 2003. Turkey should be a top candidate for a bilateral summit—ideally in Turkey—after the 2008 US presidential election and after a new administration is in place.

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