THE IRAQ WAR AND THE TROUBLED US-TURKISH ALLIANCE:

SOME CONCLUSIONS FOR EUROPE[1]

Introduction

Since Turkey's foundation by Ataturk in 1923, the main goal of the country's leaders has been to bring Turkey into the ranks of the developed Western nations economically and politically. This Western orientation got firmly established after the country joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952 and signed an association agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963. Although from time to time Turkey experienced problems in its relations with the United States (US) and the European countries, by the late 1990s it was recognized both as an important strategic ally by the US and an official candidate member by the European Union (EU).

In fact, Turkey's ties with the EU and US have always been strongly connected to each other. Throughout the cold war years, Turkey developed close relations with both the US and Western European countries because Turkish foreign policy makers saw the country's association with these actors as an acknowledgement of Turkey's membership to the Western bloc as well as its Western identity. Moreover, in the post-cold war period the US advocated and lobbied for Turkey's participation in the EU because the presence of a pro-Western, stable, and democratic Turkey substantially contributes to American interests in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia. However, in the run-up to the Iraq War in 2003, Turkey's rejection of the US request to deploy American troops in Turkey to attack Iraq started a sequence of events which seriously damaged the relations between these two countries and which had important implications for Turkey's EU accession process.

This chapter discusses how the Iraq War and the weakened Turkish-American alliance have affected Turkey's EU project and explores the current trajectory of Turkey-US and Turkey-EU relations within the framework of the war in Iraq. First, we present a historical overview of the interaction between Turkey-EU and Turkey-US relations, specifically focusing on the continuous US efforts to make Turkey part of the EU. Then, we discuss the ways in which the Iraq War and the weakened Turkish-American alliance have affected Turkey's EU accession process. In this discussion, we first argue that Turkey's rejection of the US request to open a northern front to attack Iraq via Turkish territory helped Turkish political leaders to focus on fulfilling the membership criteria during this period and to start accession negotiations in October 2005. Second, we show that the US 'war on terror' helped bring Islamic issues to the fore throughout Europe and this increased concerns in the EU about admitting Turkey, which has a predominantly Muslim population of 70 million. Third, we argue that the troubled Turkish-American alliance in the Iraq War, when coupled with Turkey's problems in its EU accession process, shows that Turkey should not see its relations with the US and the EU as mutually exclusive, but instead as mutually reinforcing. Turkey is either going to move toward the West or it is not, and as it is devoted to doing so, it must develop a balanced foreign policy towards both the US and the EU. Finally, we briefly discuss the future of Turkey's foreign policy towards

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[1] Ozlem Kayhan and Dan Lindley, "The Iraq War and the Troubled US-Turkish Alliance: Some Conclusions for Europe," in Joseph S. Joseph, *Turkey and the European Union: Internal Dynamics and External Challenges* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 211-232.

its two Western partners. We acknowledge that in light of the current state of affairs, the future of Turkey's relations with the US and the EU still holds a substantial amount of uncertainty.

Turkey-US-EU relations: A historical overview

The efforts to make Turkey a modern Westernized state have their roots in the eighteenth-century Westernization process of the Ottoman Empire. The deterioration of Ottoman military superiority from the seventeenth century onwards and the continuous defeats of the empire mainly by the European countries led to several efforts by the political and military elites to restore the power of the Ottoman state internally and externally. These reform efforts mostly involved looking to Europe as a model and importing its military technology, lifestyle and way of thinking in order to reinstate the empire's status *vis-à-vis* the European countries.[1]

The establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 was a new and ambitious step in this two-century-old modernization project. After Ataturk founded the republic, he and his colleagues made a substantial effort to create a Western secular state structure and established their main goal as bringing Turkey to the ranks of the contemporary civilization, that is, to the ranks of the developed European countries.

Turkey's Westernization project acquired new momentum after World War II.[2] In the postwar period, Turkey's political elites saw the future of their country's Westernization in the parallel processes of establishing close relations with both the US and Western European countries as well as acquiring membership in the institutions of the Western alliance such as the Council of Europe and NATO.

Turkey's interaction with the US in this period developed mostly as a result of these countries' security concerns. Although Turkey-US relations were based on trade during the late Ottoman and early republican times, the post-World War II developments placed Turkey in a central position in the efforts to contain the Soviet Union.[3] This new era for Turkish-American alliance started with the 1947 Truman Doctrine, which granted economic and military aid to Turkey and Greece with the aim of preventing these two countries from falling to communism. Turkey's participation in the Korean War in 1950 and its admission to NATO in 1952 strengthened the Turkish-American security partnership.

However, this alliance was never without problems during the cold war. Turkey-US relations suffered from several setbacks such as the increasing anti-American sentiments in Turkey in the 1960s; the 1964 Johnson Letter, which stated that if Turkey intervened in Cyprus, NATO might not defend Turkey in case of a Soviet attack during the intervention and that American military equipment could not be used by Turkish forces in Cyprus;[4] American insistence on stopping poppy cultivation in Turkey in 1972; and the imposition of an arms embargo on Turkey by the US Congress as a response to the 1974 Turkish intervention in Cyprus.[5] But despite the emergence of these problems, Turkey and the US built an overall successful strategic alliance during the cold war period.

Turkey's relations with Europe throughout the cold war cannot be understood in isolation from its ties with the US because during those years the Turkish political elite did not see the country's ties with Western Europe and the US as separate from each other. Turkey perceived Western European countries and the US as its two partners in a single 'Western Alliance'. Thus, Turkey's relations with Western Europe in general and its conclusion of an association agreement with the EEC in 1963 in particular was seen in Turkey mainly as a means to strengthen the country's security-related ties with the West.[6]

The nature of the Turkey-US-EU interaction began to change with détente from the 1970s onwards. As a result of the diminishing hostility between Western and Eastern bloc countries in this period and the subsequent reduction of the security concerns, the political and economic dimensions of the Turkey-EEC relationship began to attract increasing attention.[7] Consequently, in the 1970s and 1980s Turkey and the Western European countries confronted some difficult issues, including the creation of a customs union, Turkey's poor human rights record, and the failure of its democratization efforts.[8] This emphasis on political and economic issues increased even more after the cold war and has substantially shaped Turkey-EU relations since then.

In spite of the change in the nature of Turkey's interaction with the European countries, Turkey-US relations continued to reflect a strong security dimension even with détente and the end of the cold war. While the Soviet threat waned after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the instability and the importance of the regions that surround Turkey ensured that the Turkish-American alliance would continue to revolve around the geopolitical interests and security considerations of these two countries.[9] Specific security related issues included the 1991 Gulf War, ethnic violence in the Balkans in the 1990s, and Turkey's proximity to the Middle East and Caspian oil.

Although the relaxation of the East-West tension and the subsequent end of the cold war changed the nature of Turkey-US-EU interaction, these developments did not fully eliminate the fact that Turkey-US and Turkey-EU relations have been closely connected to each other. In the post-cold war world, this interconnection showed itself mostly in the continuous American efforts to advocate and lobby for Turkey's full membership in the EU.

US Republican and Democrat administrations alike have encouraged the EU's enlargement efforts since the establishment of the EEC in 1957. For the US, each wave of enlargement signified a further extension of the European zone of economic and political stability.[10] However, Turkey's EU membership bid has a more distinctive meaning for American foreign policy than the accession of the rest of the candidate countries to the EU.

In an era in which American strategic interests have focused on dealing with the instability and chaos in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East, it is crucial for the US that Turkey stays strongly anchored to the West as a stable, modern, secular, and democratic ally. Needless to say, Turkey's accession into the EU is the best way to achieve this goal without imposing much burden on the US to keep Turkey as a stable country.[11] Moreover, Turkey's EU membership process acquired the utmost importance after the 9-11 attacks. As the US war on terror has created problems for America's relations with the Muslim world, it is important for the US that Turkey, which has a predominantly Muslim population, remains as a close American ally and a model democracy for the Islamic world.[12]

The US has a number of other strategic interests in a strong and democratic Turkey. First, Turkey provides a buffer and a staging ground with air bases as the US looks toward the Middle East, all of which became even more important in the era of the US war on terror. Furthermore, Turkey is the most stable and politically preferable exit route for Caspian energy sources and is a bulwark and buffer against instability in the Caucasus region. During much of the 1990s, the US developed its strategy of gaining access to Caspian oil through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline, which, along with the associated gas line still under construction, terminated in Turkey. This route for the pipeline was strategically important for the US, which did not want to see the route go through Russia or Iran. Finally, Turkey is one of the most powerful members of NATO, and the US is on Turkey's side in the centuries old game of using Turkey to stem Russia's southward

ambitions. An overview of the economic strength, population, military expenditures and military forces of some of the major players in the region (Table 12.1) shows that Turkey is a key ally for the US. Expenditure per active soldier is given to provide a rough indicator of the quality of forces.

Table 12.1 Strategic overview of some major players in the Middle East

	Gross National Product (GNP, in billions of US dollars)	*Population (millions)*	*Military Expenditure (in billions of US dollars)*	*Military Forces, Active plus Reserve (in thousands)*	*Expenditure per Active Soldier (in thousands of US dollars)*
Turkey	297	70	10.1	515+379	19.6
Iraq	23	26	0	180	?
Iran	148	68	4.1	420+350	9.8
Syria	22	18	1.6	308+354	5.2
Russia	1,400	143	14.1	1,037+20,000	13.6
Greece	202	11	4.1	164+325	25.0

Notes: Figures are for latest year given. Russian dollar figures are purchasing power parity estimates. Iraq is in a state of flux.

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 2005-2006*.[13]

Some suggest that the US wants Turkey in the EU to weaken, not strengthen the Union. These skeptics argue that once Turkey enters the EU, the US will use it as a Trojan horse' to divide the EU and undermine its decision-making capacity.[14] However, this argument is false. At a time when the key events of geo-strategic interest are the rise of China and India, most in the US want to strengthen the West as a whole. Whether it wants to deal with terrorism, turmoil in the Middle East, ethnic conflict in Africa, or the rise of other great powers, the US is better off with a strong Europe. Despite its squabbles with Europe, and occasional signals from Europe that it is trying to balance against the US, Europe and the US both need each other to be strong. The former US President Bill Clinton's words from his speech in Istanbul in July 2002 clearly show this line of thinking:

America cannot remain as the only superpower forever…Therefore, we should develop ourselves to become part of the group that shares our own common values. This is the reason why I support the EU. Of course, one day the EU will surpass the United States economically. But if we belong to the same group with our common values, who cares![15]

American diplomatic efforts for Turkey's EU membership bid became most evident in the mid 1990s when Turkey and the EU were in the process of signing a customs union treaty.

During the talks, the US pressured the EU and lobbied for this customs union agreement in order to help Turkey gain the European Parliament's consent.[16] Moreover, after the 1997 Luxemburg Summit, where Turkey was excluded from the EU's post-cold-war enlargement, Turkish political elites turned to the US for help in convincing the EU member states to include Turkey as a candidate country in the enlargement process. Finally, when Turkey was officially declared a candidate country at the 1999 Helsinki Summit, it was argued that American lobbying by several important figures such as Nicholas Burns, Marc Grossman, and Mark Parris substantially contributed to this positive outcome.[17] Thereafter, the US regularly involved itself in successive decisions of the EU regarding Turkey's membership process. For example, before the 2002 Copenhagen Summit, where Turkey received a tentative date for the initiation of membership negotiations, the Bush Administration pushed the European member states to accelerate Turkey's accession. President George W. Bush even made telephone calls to the French President Jacques Chirac and to the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen—who held the EU presidency at the time—about Turkey's case.[18] Likewise, in 2005, when the European leaders were discussing whether to let Turkey start accession negotiations on 3 October, the US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice made telephone calls to the European leaders to help solve the problem over the issue of Cyprus's possible admission in NATO and contributed to the ending of a deadlock over Turkey's accession. Also after the EU decision to start accession negotiations with Turkey was made, Rice organized a meeting with the ambassadors of the EU member states in Washington and discussed the advantages of making Turkey part of Europe.[19]

The above examples show clearly that the US—especially from the mid-1990s onwards—has been closely involved in Turkey's EU accession process and has lobbied firmly for Turkish membership. However, this should not give the impression that American backing has always been welcomed by the EU and has positively influenced every outcome. In fact, from time to time the US support for Turkey's membership has caused annoyance on the part of the European member states and has been seen as interference in their internal affairs.[20] The 2004 NATO Istanbul Summit provided a very noticeable example of the EU resentment against American lobbying for Turkey's EU membership. During that summit, President Bush talked about the importance of admitting Turkey to the EU as a full member. After this speech, President Chirac said that President Bush 'not only went too far, but he has gone into a domain that is not his own'.[21] Chirac also added that Bush's demand was 'a bit like if France told the United States how they should manage their relations with Mexico'.[22] But despite this European resentment to American lobbying for Turkey from time to time, the continuous US support has contributed positively to Turkey's progress towards EU accession in several occasions, including the 1995 customs union talks and the 1999 Helsinki Summit. In addition to the US lobbying for Turkey's EU project, Turkish-American alliance has also provided psychological comfort for Turkey. Whenever Turkey's relations with the EU deteriorated, the Turkish governments have usually turned to their American partners for help. This has ensured that Turkey's Western orientation would continue despite the country's problems with its European partners.

The Iraq War and the Turkish-American alliance: implications for Turkey-EU relations

Although Turkish-American relations suffered from periodic setbacks from the 1960s onwards, relations were firmly positive at the time of the 9-11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In 1999, the Turkish-American alliance was characterized by the then US President Bill Clinton as a 'strategic partnership', which meant that 'the strategic cooperation is

multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, involving a wide range of overlapping interests in Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East'.[23]

When the Bush Administration declared war on terrorism in the immediate aftermath of 9-11, Turkey acted as a partner in the war against the Taliban. Turkey granted the use of its airspace to the US during the Afghan War and then deployed Turkish special forces troops to Afghanistan. The Turkish government also provided logistical and intelligence support to the US war effort and participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) after the fall of the Taliban regime. Moreover, Turkey took over the command of ISAF from June 2002 to February 2003 and from February 2005 to July 2005.[24]

However, when the US decided to declare war on Iraq as the next stage of its war on terror, Turkey was unwilling to participate in this endeavor. Despite the Turkish-American negotiations in 2002-3 about the potential role of Turkey in a future Iraq War and despite the $24 billion American offer to Turkey in loans and credits, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) could not muster enough votes to allow American troops to open a northern front to attack Iraq from Turkey on 1 March 2003.[25] Turkish-American relations deteriorated even further after this decision owing to a number of ensuing events such as the American troops' detention of 11 Turkish special forces soldiers in Sulaymaniya in the summer of 2003—based on the claim that these forces were planning to assassinate the Kurdish governor of Kirkuk—Turkey's reference to the US military actions in Falluja as genocide, and Turkish uneasiness about the civilian deaths during US military operations against the insurgents in Talafar.[26]

There were two major reasons why the Turkish parliament declined to open a second front in the Iraq War from Turkey. First, the US war effort was enormously unpopular in Turkey. According to the polls, more than 90 percent of the Turkish people opposed the war in Iraq and it was not possible for the members of the governing Justice and Development Party, who constituted the majority in the Parliament, to ignore such a vast number. Therefore, the outcome of the voting in the Grand National Assembly represented the almost unanimous Turkish public opinion.[27] Second, the parliament's negative response to the deployment of American troops on Turkish soil reflected the reluctance of the major Turkish political and military actors to involve Turkey in a US war against Iraq. While, on the one hand some political leaders and military officers were concerned about the legitimacy of such a war, on the other hand they were uneasy about the possible postwar instability and chaos in Iraq. For example, although the Turkish armed forces did not explicitly state their apprehension about the Iraq War, they were concerned that if Iraq got out of control and/or an independent Kurdish state was established in northern Iraq, this could have significant consequences for Turkey's Kurdish population. These potential consequences included a rise in the separatist sentiments among Turkey's Kurdish minority and an increase in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorism in the region.[28]

In the aftermath of the 1 March 2003 vote, a number of commentators suspected that Germany's and France's opposition to the war negatively influenced Turkey's stance and resulted in the parliament's rejection of the motion to open a northern front from Turkey. The theory was that, as an aspirational EU member, Turkey rejected the US request in order to align its foreign policy with France and Germany and to gain a favorable position in the eyes of these two major EU members.[29] However, given the high level of public disapproval of the Iraq War in Turkey and the political and military elites' concerns about the implications of this war for Turkey's Kurdish issue, it is difficult to agree with the argument that the Turkish parliament rejected the opening of a northern front in order to gain the favor of the major EU countries.

Instead, it is more accurate to say that Turkey's concerns about the US war in Iraq moved Turkish foreign policy closer to the Franco-German position in this period.[30]

No matter what caused the Turkish parliament to refuse to allow US troops in Turkey to attack Iraq, this decision triggered a sequence of events which seriously damaged relations between Turkey and the US and which had important implications for Turkey's EU accession process. It is worth noting, though, that Turkey still offered some passive but real assistance to the US during the Iraq campaign. Turkey granted the US permission to use its airspace to carry American troops to northern Iraq in March 2003, supported the rotation of the US troops via Incirlik airbase, and approved the use of Incirlik as a cargo hub for the US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.[31]

The first important impact on Turkey's EU project by the Iraq War and the newly weakened Turkish-American alliance was that the country's relative disengagement from the war provided a favorable environment for the Turkish government to focus on its EU accession process. If Turkey had accepted to play a more active role in the Iraq War alongside the US, it would not have been easy for the government to spend considerable time and resources on meeting the EU accession criteria and starting negotiations in October 2005. Turkish political and military leaders would have concentrated most of their attention on the issues of national security and this would have no doubt hindered the major democratic openings in Turkey. Without democratic progress, Turkey would not have moved as far along its path towards full EU membership.

As a result of Turkey's increased focus on its EU project, significant democratization reforms were carried out in 2003 and 2004. In contrast to the reforms undertaken after the 1999 Helsinki Summit, where Turkey was officially declared a candidate country, the reforms of 2003 and 2004 addressed the most controversial elements of the Turkish political structure. This included the role of the military in Turkish politics, the anti-terror law, the Turkish criminal code and the issue of broadcasting in local languages. For example, the sixth harmonization package abolished art. 8 of the anti-terror law, which defines separatist propaganda as a crime, and allowed broadcasting in local languages and dialects. The seventh harmonization package curtailed the powers of the National Security Council (NSC)—which was seen as the main body through which the military exerted its influence on Turkish politics—and turned it into an advisory body, decreased the frequency of the NSC meetings from once a month to every other month and made the military budget subject to the Court of Accounts' review in August 2003.[32] Arguably, it would have been difficult to carry out these extensive reforms had Turkey been more enmeshed in the Iraq War.

The second outcome of the Iraq War for Turkey's EU membership process revolves around Turkey's identity as a predominantly Muslim country. The 9-11 attacks on the US by radical Muslims brought the problem of Islamic fundamentalism to the forefront. The increase in the number of terrorist incidents by radical Islamist groups, which followed the US declaration of the war on terror and particularly its military campaign in Iraq, intensified discussions about a clash of civilizations and the incompatibility of Islam and the West. These events and discussions led to an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe and negatively affected Turkey's EU accession process.

In fact though, the EU's worries about admitting a predominantly Muslim country as a full member are not new and they started long before the US war in Iraq. Several European politicians have openly expressed such concerns since the 1990s. For example, in 1997 the then German chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Dutch politician Wilfred Martens stated that '[t]he EU

is a civilization project and within this civilization project Turkey has no place'.[33] As a result of such statements, Turkey accused the EU of being a 'Christian Club' several times and of excluding Turkey from Europe for religious reasons.[34]

However, the events that took place after the US declaration of its war on terrorism gave a new dimension to the already existing uneasiness about admitting Turkey into the EU. In the wake of the 9-11 attacks, Turkey joined the US efforts to fight against terrorism and emphasized that there was no connection between terrorism and religion. Furthermore, Turkish political leaders continuously affirmed their country's Western, secular and democratic orientation in order to distance Turkey's image from the radical Islamist groups.[35] Also, a number of political leaders in the US and Europe frequently repeated that the US-led war on terrorism was not against Islam. But unfortunately, these efforts were not enough to keep Turkey's EU membership process from being affected by the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe.

Terrorist attacks by radical Islamist organizations on Europe increased after 9-11 and gained new momentum after the US declared war against Iraq. Such terrorist incidents mostly targeted those European countries that participated in the Iraq War alongside the US. The Istanbul bombings, where British targets (as well as synagogues) were attacked in November 2003, the Madrid train bombings in March 2004, which were committed by Muslim immigrants of Moroccan descent, and the bombings in London's underground trains in July 2005, for which Al Qaeda claimed responsibility, are examples of this situation.[36]

The Islamic issues came to the fore throughout Europe in the aftermath of 9-11 and especially with the US invasion of Iraq had two important consequences for Turkey's EU membership process. First, the terrorist acts of Islamic fundamentalists increased awareness about the EU governments' failure to integrate their approximately 15-18 million Muslim population into the European society.[37] This strengthened the feelings of 'us' versus 'the other', that is, Islam versus the West in these EU countries and confirmed 'the other's' hostility and willingness to use violence against their host societies.[38] As a result, discrimination against Muslims increased substantially in Europe. According to a survey on religious attitudes conducted on behalf of *The Wall Street Journal*, more than 50 per cent of the Western Europeans viewed Muslims living in Europe with suspicion in September-October 2004. The number reaches over 70 per cent in certain countries such as Netherlands and Sweden.[39] Not surprisingly, this situation had a negative impact on Turkey's EU accession process because Turkey's full membership means the inclusion of 70 million more Muslims into European society. It is possible to observe this negative attitude towards Turkey's aspiration to full EU membership in the statements of several European politicians. For example, in 2002 the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing declared that 'Turkey is not a European country' and that Turkey's membership in the EU would mean 'the end of Europe'.[40] Also, in 2004 German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that 'Turkey does not fit into the EU because it is "culturally different"'.[41] Second, the successive terrorist acts by radical Muslim groups in Europe created a fear in the minds of European publics that Turkey's membership in the EU will 'make it easier for Islamist terrorists to attack from within'.[42] Such fears probably increased with the discovery of several Islamist terror cells in European countries.

In sum, the events that followed the 9-11 attacks and especially the US war in Iraq brought Islamic issues to the forefront and negatively affected Turkey's EU membership process. The Turkish government argued that their country's full membership could weaken arguments about a rising clash of civilizations and build a bridge between Europe and the Muslim world,

but this did not protect Turkey's accession process from increasing anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe.

The third major influence of the US war in Iraq and the weakened Turkish-American alliance on Turkey's EU membership process is a rather circular one. We argued above that Turkey's refusal to play a more central role in the Iraq War helped the political elites to focus their full attention on fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and to start accession negotiations in October 2005. However, despite this positive outcome, the events on the path to the October 2005 decision decreased the optimism for the EU project.

It was hard for Turkey to hear continuous intra-EU discussions about how Turkey's full membership with its poor economic conditions and predominantly Muslim population will impose a tremendous burden on the EU countries, to contemplate European arguments that Turkey has to recognize Cyprus in order to become a full member, to see the rejection of the EU Constitution by the referenda in France and Netherlands, and to witness the inability of the EU to agree over the organization's budget. All these difficulties with and within the EU clearly showed that Turkey cannot afford to consider its relations with the EU and the US as two mutually exclusive policy options in this era and that it should follow a more balanced policy towards its Western partners.[43]

Turkish political leaders once again had to acknowledge that Turkey's EU accession process would be a 'long and winding road'[44], as characterized by the late President Turgut Ozal. They realized that a weakened Turkish-American alliance was not the best foreign policy tool at hand when Turkey needed substantial support for its accession process. As a result, Turkey decided to formulate a more balanced foreign policy towards the EU and the US.

Since the initiation of its relations with the US and the EU, Turkey usually opted to turn to one of its Western allies when it felt disappointed and excluded by the other. For example, after the 1964 Johnson letter, which stated that NATO might not defend Turkey if the Soviet Union attacked it during a possible Turkish intervention in Cyprus, and after the 1975 arms embargo, which was imposed on Turkey by the US Congress, Turkish political leaders turned to Europe and focused their attention on improving their relations with the Western European countries.[45] Likewise, in the post-cold-war period when Turkey-EU relations weakened owing to Turkey's shortcomings in its democratization and human rights records, Turkey turned to the US and built a strong strategic partnership with the latter.[46]

However, the recent developments with regard to Turkey's EU membership process changed the dynamics of this interaction. As an EU candidate, which started accession negotiations, Turkey no longer really has the luxury to suspend political dialogue and turn to the US whenever it gets frustrated by the European attitudes, actions or decisions. On the other hand, Turkey cannot choose Europe over the US and disregard its relations with the US altogether because American backing and lobbying is a valuable asset for Turkey in its challenging EU accession process. This expectation is based on the positive US role in the conclusion of the 1995 customs union treaty and in the 1999 Helsinki decision to grant official candidate status to Turkey.[47] Further, the US has long had a better understanding than the European countries of Turkey's foreign policy priorities and security concerns than the European countries. This was clearly seen in the Turkish-American cooperation regarding the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and the important role the US played in the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999.[48] Therefore, Turkey will continue to need US help in its security and defense related considerations.

As a result of their need for a more balanced approach towards Turkey's relations with Europe and the US, Turkish political leaders made substantial efforts to mend the country's relations with the US in the aftermath of the 1 March 2003 decision. As mentioned above, Turkey opened its airspace to the US aircraft going to Iraq, allowed transit passage of American troops via Turkey, and declared full support in the US's Greater Middle East democratization project. Turkey even agreed to send troops to Iraq to fight against the insurgency alongside the US, but this plan fell through as a result of Iraqi opposition to Turkish intervention.[49] The fact that the US took some steps in alleviating the economic and political isolation of Turkish Cypriots such as sending a trade delegation to Turkish Cyprus in February 2005 and using Ercan Airport, which is on the Turkish side of the island, during this visit shows that there is progress in restoring the Turkish-American alliance.[50]

The future of Turkey-US-EU relations

When one looks at the current state of Turkey-EU and Turkey-US partnerships, an obvious fact is that uncertainty surrounds Turkey's future relations with these two actors. On the one hand, Turkey made substantial progress in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria and started accession negotiations with the EU in October 2005. On the other hand, uneasiness about the idea of Turkey's full membership still exists in the EU. First, several European leaders point out problems with Turkey's economy, democracy, human rights record and policies towards the Kurdish minority. Second, the ongoing Cyprus issue also creates obstacles in Turkey's accession process. The island of Cyprus has been divided between the Greek and Turkish sides since Turkey's military intervention in 1974.

In the latest attempt to resolve this issue, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed the Annan Plan to unify the island. This was put to referendum in April 2004; 65 per cent of the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor of it and 76 per cent of the Greek Cypriots voted *no*. In the aftermath of the referendum, European politicians were glad to see that Turkey made a substantial effort to resolve the Cyprus issue. A number of European leaders promised that they would take action to decrease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots in the international arena. However, the Greek Cypriots entered the EU in May 2004, and the EU has failed to take serious action to alleviate the isolation of the Turkish side of the island. On the contrary, politicians such as French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin stated that Turkey could not start accession negotiations and become a full EU member without resolving the issue of recognition of Cyprus. Finally, in major EU countries such as France and Germany, politicians question Turkey's Europeanness and raise doubts about the rationality of admitting a predominantly Muslim country. As an alternative to full membership, a number of European politicians such as the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy suggest that Turkey should have a 'privileged partnership' with the EU.

Concerning the future of Turkey's alliance with the US, there has been considerable improvement in Turkish-American relations since Turkey's rejection of American troop deployments and disagreements over subsequent event in Iraq. Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's recent visits to the US and his support for the US's Greater Middle East democratization project were welcomed by the US. The American opening to the Turkish Cypriots in order to help ease their economic and political isolation strengthened this positive

atmosphere, as did Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's telephone calls to the European leaders when they were discussing the initiation of accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005.

However, this does not guarantee a problem-free Turkish-American alliance in the future. There are several areas of potential disagreement between Turkey and the US policy. First, any number of problems can be envisioned with the Kurdish population in Turkey and in Iraq. Indeed, Turkey is lukewarm about the role of the Kurds in the future of Iraq and its possible implications for Turkey's Kurdish minority. A number of Turkish politicians and military officers believe that an independent Kurdish state in the region will result in an increase in the Kurdish separatist sentiments in Turkey and a subsequent rise in PKK terrorism.[51]

These concerns reflect a long and bloody history. Turkey fought against the PKK from 1984 to 1999, until the organization's leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in Kenya. The PKK, which caused more than 35,000 deaths in Turkey, declared a cease-fire after Ocalan's capture. However, this cease-fire was renounced in June 2004.[52] According to the estimates, around 1200-2000 PKK militants have entered Turkey from Iraq since the end of this cease-fire and they have carried out 109 attacks.[53] As a result, Turkey is concerned about the recurrence of PKK terrorism and has asked the US to take action against the PKK militants in northern Iraq, including arresting the organization's leadership cadres.

However, the US has different interests in Iraq and has not done much to help Turkey fight the PKK. In turn, Turkish political and military leaders are concerned about the lack of an effective US policy initiative against the PKK, and some have argued that Turkey has the right to carry out trans-border operations in order to combat PKK.[54] Others are beginning to consider what additional steps can be taken to adjust to the new reality of a strong Kurdish political presence in northern Iraq. This situation has important implications for Turkish-American relations because Turkish public opinion is increasingly blaming the US for the recurring PKK violence since it is the US military, working with Kurdish militias and Kurds in Iraqi uniforms, that operate in and control northern Iraq now.[55] Moreover, if Turkey decides to conduct trans-border operations in northern Iraq, this could vastly complicate matters with both the US and the Iraqi government.

Second, Turkey and the US disagree on how to deal with Syria and Iran. Although both the US and Turkey are in favor of democratization in these countries, they promote different ways of achieving this objective. Turkey endorses a policy of engagement mainly because it is a neighbor of Iran and Syria and has trade relations with these countries. Moreover, Turkey knows that Syria and Iran's cooperation could be helpful in Turkey's fight against PKK terrorism since both Iran and Syria have Kurdish minority populations and they share Turkey's concerns about the possibility of an independent Kurdish state in the region.[56] In contrast to the Turkish position, the US pursues a policy of isolation and forceful action, in necessary, towards Syria and Iran and has been applying economic sanctions against these countries. Such divergence in the American and Turkish attitudes became evident when the US tried to prevent Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's visit to Syria in summer 2005.[57] These examples show that the Turkish-American alliance will in the future continue to experience obstacles that are due to differences in their foreign policy attitudes.

What kind of a policy should Turkey develop toward the EU and the US in the months and years to come? Without a doubt, Turkey should make a concurrent effort to improve its relations with both the EU and the US. Although Turkey is disappointed with the arguments of several European leaders against Turkey's membership, it is important to keep in mind that Turkey's EU project is a 'civilizing mission' for the country's leaders to bring Turkey to the

ranks of the Western developed nations.[58] It is possible that Turkey's commitment to the West may backslide, either because Europe becomes more polarized and/or because Turkey itself becomes less committed to Western values. We do not believe this is in the best interests of anyone.

The most fitting way to respond to the challenges against Turkey's accession process is to develop Turkey economically and politically and to change the European image that Turkey's membership will bring more burden than benefit to the EU. In order to achieve this goal, the Turkish political elites should continue with the EU harmonization reforms, which played a very important role in the decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005. On the other hand, during this process, Turkey should also try to improve its relations with the US. There is no doubt that a strong Turkish-American alliance is in the interests of both of these countries. Despite certain differences in policies, Turkey and the US share similar interests in issues such as bringing stability and democracy to the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, taking advantage of the energy resources of the Caspian basin, and showing that Islam is compatible with democracy and modernity. Moreover, a close relationship with the US can be a strong bargaining tool for Turkey in its EU accession negotiations and in its attempts to solve the Cyprus issue. Although it is highly likely that Turkey's EU membership will move Turkish foreign policy away from the US and bring it closer to some European positions, a Turkey, which is firmly anchored to the West, is in the best interests of the US.[59] It is also true that the common interests between the US and EU far outweigh their differences, and that these common interests are only likely to grow. Thus, in the following months and years, Turkey should avoid seeing its relations with the US and the EU as mutually exclusive and should give its full attention to improving its relationship with both of these Western partners.

Notes

[1] F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2003), p. 45.

[2] Soli Ozel, 'It Truly Is a Long and Winding Road: The Saga of EU-Turkey Relations' in *AICGS/DAAD Working Paper Series: Turkey and the European Union* (2004), p. 3.

[3] Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty,* pp. 159-62. Also see Cagri Erhan, 'Main Trends in Ottoman-American Relations', in Mustafa Aydin and Cagri Erhan, eds, *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 3-25.

[4] For the full text of the 1964 Johnson Letter, see 'Correspondence Between President Johnson and Prime Minister Inonu, June 1964, as Released by the White House, 15 January 1966', *Middle East Journal* 20 (1966), 3: 386-93.

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[6] Atilla Eralp, 'Turkey and the European Union in the Post-Cold War Era', in Makowsky and Sayari, *Turkey's New World: Changing Dynamics in Turkish Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000), p. 173.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., see also Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, p. 49.

[9] Michael M. Gunter, 'The U.S.-Turkish Alliance in Disarray', *World Affairs* 167 (2005), 3: 113-23.

[10] Kristin Archick, 'European Union Enlargement', *CRS Report for Congress* (7 March 2005), p. 6; Engin Soysal, 'US, EU and Turkey', Center for Strategic and International Studies, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/events/050404_summary.pdf, p. 1 ; Marc Grossman, 'Americans Should be Ready if the EU Misses its Chance with Turkey', *Financial Times* (16 September 2005).

[11] Morton Abramowitz, 'The Complexities of American Policymaking on Turkey' in Morton Abramowitz, ed., *Turkey's Transformation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000), p. 159; Alan Makovsky, 'U.S. Policy Toward Turkey: Progress and Problems', in Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation and American Foreign Policy,* p. 245; Morton Abramowitz, 'Introduction: The United States and Turkey: New Opportunities, Old Problems', in Abramowitz, *The United States and Turkey*, p. 17; Cengiz Candar, 'The Post-September 11 United States Through Turkish Lenses', in Abramowitz, *The United States and Turkey*, pp. 169-70; Henry J. Barkey, 'The Endless Pursuit: Improving U.S.-Turkish Relations' in Abramowitz, *The United States and Turkey,* p. 216; Ozel, 'It Truly is a Long and Winding Road', p. 8; F Stephen Larrabee, 'American Perspectives on Turkey and Turkish-EU Relations' in *AICGS/DAAD Working Paper Series: Turkey and the European Union* (2004), pp. 26-7; 'The Effects of the Iraq War on the U.S.-Turkish Relationship', Transcript*,* Council on Foreign Relations (6 May 2003), http://www.cfr.org/publication/6024/effects_of_the_iraq_war_on_the_us_turkish_relationship.html.

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[14] Kemal Kirisci, 'Between Europe and the Middle East: The Transformation of Turkish Policy', *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8 (2004), 1: 39-51, pp. 42, 47.

[15] Cited in Candar, 'The Post-September 11 United States Through Turkish Lenses', p. 170.

[16] Morton Abramowitz, 'The Complexities of American Policymaking on Turkey', p.179; Eralp, 'An Insider's View of Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its American Connection', p. 117; Barkey, 'The Endless Pursuit: Improving U.S.-Turkish Relations', p. 215; Makovsky, 'U.S. Policy Toward Turkey: Progress and Problems', p. 245;

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[19] 'Rice'a Sukran Sunuldu' (Gratitude Was Presented to Rice), *Radikal* (6 October 2005).

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[21] William Safire, 'Beware Of Certitude', *New York Times* (30 June 2004). Also see Onis and Yilmaz, 'The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?'; Mike Allen, 'Bush Chides U.S. Allies on Mideast; In Speech, He Exhorts Move to Democracy', *Washington Post* (30 June 2004).

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Role in Rebuilding the Afghan State', *PolicyWatch* 1052 (18 November 2005), Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2403.

[25] The Turkish Grand National Assembly voted 264-250 in favor of the motion. However, because of the 19 abstentions, the 'yes' votes could not form the absolute majority of the representatives who participated in the voting process.

[26] Dexter Filkins, 'Turkey says U.S. Has Detained Some of its Soldiers in North Iraq', *New York Times* (6 July 2003); Max Boot, 'West Should Welcome Turkey', Los Angeles Times (16 December 2004), http://www1.cfr.org/pub7566/max_boot/west_should_welcome_turkey.php; Mark Parris, 'Allergic Partners: Can U.S.-Turkish Relations be Saved?', *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4 (2005), 1: 49-58; Mark Parris, 'U.S.-Turkish Relations', *Testimony Before the House Committee on International Relations*, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?_CID=240; Murat Yetkin, 'Irak'ta Tehlikeli Gelismeler' (Dangerous Developments in Iraq), *Radikal* (11 September 2004).

[27] Omer Taspinar, 'The Turkish Turnaround', *Daily Times* (14 October 2003); 'The Effects of the Iraq War on the U.S.-Turkish Relationship', Transcript, Council on Foreign Relations (6 May 2003).

[28] 'Cook: Despite Some European Qualms, Turkey Will Eventually Join the EU'; Bulent Aliriza, 'Seeking Redefinition: U.S.-Turkish Relations After Iraq', *CSIS Turkey Update* (5 June 2003); Gunter, 'The U.S.-Turkish Alliance in Disarray', p. 119; Onis and Yilmaz, 'The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?'.

[29] Max Boot, 'West Should Welcome Turkey'; Gunter, 'The U.S.-Turkish Alliance in Disarray', p. 119.

[30] Onis and Yilmaz, 'The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?'; Mark Parris, 'Allergic Partners: Can U.S.-Turkish Relations be Saved?', *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4 (2005), 1, http://turkishpolicy.com/default.asp?show=spr_2005_Parris.

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[32] Harmonization Package-59th Government, http://www.byegm.gov.tr/on-sayfa/uyum/uyum-ingilizce-59hukumet.htm.

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[34] Eralp, 'An Insider's View of Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its American Connection', p. 134.

[35] Ibid., p. 127; Candar, 'The Post-September 11 United States Through Turkish Lenses', p. 147.

[36] Robert S. Leiken, 'Europe's Angry Muslims', *Foreign Affairs* 84 (2005), 4, http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050701faessay84409/robert-s-leiken/europe-s-angry-muslims.html.

[37] It is quite difficult to find the exact number of the Muslims living in Europe. First, several European countries do not have data on religious groups. Second, the size of the Muslim community is a sensitive issue in Europe. And third, the statistics change according to how Europe is defined. For example, including Turkey as part of Europe changes the number. Approximately 15-18 million is the number of Muslims in the 25 EU countries. See 'An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe', *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (October, 2005), The Pew Research Center, http://pewforum.org/publications/reports/muslims-europe-2005.pdf, p. 3.

[38] See Jeffrey Young, 'Madrid Bombing Anniversary: One Year Later', *Voice of America* (March 10, 2005), http://www.globalpolicy.org/empire/terrorwar/analysis/2005/0310madridanniv.htm.

[39] 'Anti-Muslim Bias "Spreads" in EU', http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4325225.stm; Marc Champion, 'Europe's Claim to be a Land of Multicultural Tolerance is Being Sorely Tested', *Wall Street Journal* (15 December 2004). Also see 'Findings of the GfK Survey on Religious Attitudes in Europe', available at http://www.gfk.hr/press_en/religion.htm.

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[44] Ozel, 'It Truly is a Long and Winding Road', p.4.

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[47] See Onis and Yilmaz, 'The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?' and Morton Abramowitz, 'Turkey at a Crossroads', *Wall Street Journal* (29 June 2005).

[48] Larrabee and Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty,* p. 68.

[49] Gunter, 'The U.S.-Turkish Alliance in Disarray', p. 121; Parris, 'Allergic Partners: Can U.S.-Turkish Relations be Saved?'

[50] Soner Cagaptay, 'Changing Turkish Public Attitudes Toward the United States: Premises and Prospects', *PolicyWatch* 969 (7 March 2005), The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=2272; Murat Yetkin, 'Buyuk Ortadogu'ya Evet' (Yes to the Greater Middle East), *Radikal* (9 June 2005).

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[54] Yetkin, 'Ankara'da PKK Asabiyeti Yukseliyor' (Anxiety over PKK is Rising in Ankara); 'Zebari Uyardı: Irak'a Girmeyin' (Zebari Warned: Do Not Enter Iraq), *Radikal* (25 July 2005).

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