



# Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views

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## Summary

This report focuses on the foreign policy of Turkey, a long-time valued U.S. NATO ally, and examines the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) recalculation of the country's approach to foreign affairs and its possible effects on relations with the United States. It begins with a discussion of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's theoretical framework for a multidirectional outreach less firmly anchored in the West than in the past and his efforts to seek "zero problems" with Turkey's neighbors and new partners beyond. The AKP is able to follow these guidelines because it has consolidated its political power domestically, exerted unprecedented control over the formerly powerful military, and spurred robust economic growth. The desire for export markets is a major motivator for the directional diversification, and the growth in trade, in turn, contributes to the prosperity and growth of AKP's middle class base which is strengthening the party. Increasingly, the party's Islamist origins also appear to be determining policy. Moreover, the party's foreign policy independence appeals to the traditionally strong nationalism of the Turks and, therefore, contributes to its popularity at home.

This report surveys Turkish foreign policy issues that are of critical interest to U.S. officials and Members of Congress. Three main categories of issues are: ones on which Turkish and U.S. policies continue to coalesce, ones on which policies diverge, and ones which may be less than completely harmonious but not adversarial. The United States and Turkey continue to find common interest in their desire for the stability and territorial integrity of Iraq and to prevent the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), based in northern Iraq, from perpetrating violence in Turkey; for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan; and for the diversification of European energy resources.

In other areas, there has been divergence. Most prominently, Turkish and U.S. officials disagree about whether Iran has a nuclear program solely intended for peaceful purposes or also to produce nuclear weapons and, thereby, pose a threat to allied security. They also differ about the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations, provoked largely by the 2009 conflict between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the May 2010 crisis over Israel's seizure of a Turkish ship bound for Gaza. The AKP government's reaction to these events and sympathies for Hamas complicate efforts to revive Turkish-Israeli ties. In addition, they affect U.S. efforts to find common ground with Turkey about the peace process. The United States also sometimes seems to support Turkey's EU ambitions, normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations, and a settlement on Cyprus more than the AKP.

Finally, the report discusses U.S. policymakers' attempts to grapple with the complexity of Turkish policies, the bilateral relationship, and emerging differences. Obama Administration officials often appear publicly to gloss over disagreements as they reiterate longstanding U.S. appreciation for Turkey's contributions in areas of agreement. Completing the report and of interest to Congress are discussions of U.S. use of the Turkish air base at Incirlik that is vital for cargo deliveries to forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, Turkey's role in NATO's new missile defense architecture, and overviews of bilateral trade and U.S. aid to Turkey.

For domestic context, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Politics of Identity and Power*. See also sections on Turkey in CRS Report R40849, *Iran: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*; CRS Report RL33793, *Iraq: Regional Perspectives and U.S. Policy*; and CRS Report R41275, *Israel's Blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara Incident, and Its Aftermath*.

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## Introduction

Turkey, a NATO ally, is situated amid the troubled Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East regions and is a critical energy and transit hub between Central Asia/the Caucasus and Europe. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) projects Turkey as a major regional power with ambitions to be a global actor and power. Since the AKP was first elected in 2002, Turkey has assumed the post of secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), taken observer status at the Arab League, joined the G-20 group of the largest world economies, held a non-permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, appointed an Assistant Secretary-General of NATO, and a Secretary-General of the Organization for Security Cooperation and Development (OECD), and sought seats on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank executive boards.

Turkish officials communicate their growing sense of power in a manner that Omer Taspinar of the Brookings Institution has labeled “Turkish Gaullism.” They often adopt a moralistic tone in describing their foreign policy approach, claiming that they represent the truth or what is right and characterizing their positions as “fair,” “principled,” or “humanitarian,” sometimes suggesting that others, including the United States, do not.<sup>1</sup> They maintain that Turkey is serving the cause of peace and stability in its neighborhood. Toward that end, the officials say that they seek to facilitate the peaceful resolution of Israeli-Arab disputes and of problems the international community has with Turkey’s neighbors, Iran and Syria. Turkish policymakers have been less proactive regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute over the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Cyprus issue.

Some of the AKP’s regional foreign policy initiatives appear at odds with U.S. goals. In particular, the AKP’s engagement with Hamas, Iran, and Sudan has contradicted U.S. and much of the international community’s policies of isolating those regimes and groups. Turkey’s engagement policy appears unconditional as its officials do not publicly address abuses of human rights or democratic deficiencies of other predominantly Muslim countries. This could undermine the moral high ground to which AKP leaders aspire. The deterioration of Turkey’s relations with Israel is of concern to the Administration and to Members of Congress.

Dealing with this evolving Turkish approach to foreign policy is challenging U.S. policymakers. Some regional specialists advise them to prepare for an *à la carte* or issue focused relationship, driven by both countries’ national interests. Others describe this as a “transactional” approach in which the United States and Turkey have concrete exchanges in order to address common interests.<sup>2</sup> In this manner, the Administration may need to balance engagement with polite confrontation, depending on the issue.

Turkey’s geostrategic importance to the United States is symbolized by the Incirlik Air Base. Since the 1970s, Turkish governments of all political persuasions have granted the U.S. forces permission to use the base under a bilateral defense cooperation agreement. In the past, the United States tacitly granted Turkey considerable foreign aid in exchange for such access. Since the first Gulf War, the United States has not provided significant assistance. U.S.-Turkish trade

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, and other foreign Turkish foreign policy spokesmen often use such descriptions.

<sup>2</sup> These are the views, respectively, of Steven Cook of the Council on Foreign Relations and Ian Lesser of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (hereafter GMFUS).

also is not noteworthy despite the size of both economies. The following sections of this report describe the AKP's policies on selected issues and, as appropriate, U.S. Administration and congressional views of Turkey in these contexts. The penultimate section addresses U.S. policy toward Turkey.

## AKP's Approach to Foreign Policy

Historically, Turkey portrayed itself as isolated in its region, surrounded by troubles in the Middle East, Balkans, and Caucasus and by hostile neighbors in Syria, Iraq, Iran, the former Soviet Union, Greece, and Cyprus. Since taking power, the AKP has worked assiduously to alter the environment that produced this self-assessment by changing Turkey's regional posture, improving relations with its neighbors, and, it claims, working to create a region of peace. The AKP government has pursued a very active foreign policy agenda.

Even before becoming foreign minister in May 2009, Professor Ahmet Davutoglu was the architect of this new approach. He was a key foreign policy advisor to and frequent traveling companion of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President Abdullah Gul, and Ali Babacan, his predecessor as foreign minister. In 2001, Davutoglu published *Strategic Depth*, a treatise calling for a new Turkish foreign policy strategy based on a "multidirectional strategic vision."<sup>3</sup> He argued that Turkey should freely follow policies of its own making instead of following ones that extend "global designs"—a phrase which some read as code for U.S. interests. He called on Turkey to acknowledge and use its cultural and historical ties to its region in order to enhance its geographic depth, which then would determine its strategic depth. He enunciated an approach to the region based on four principles: security for everyone, political dialogue at the highest level, economic interdependence, and cultural cohesion and diversity.<sup>4</sup> He has since unwaveringly followed his own prescription.

Davutoglu's professed goal is for Turkey to have "zero problems" with its neighbors. He maintains that it is incumbent on Turkey to establish order in the region because it is much larger geographically, militarily, and economically than its neighbors, and because of its geography and history. To accomplish this, he says, Turkey should develop a long-term foreign policy vision that enables it to resolve crises proactively and not allow crises to develop into deadlocks.<sup>5</sup> Davutoglu views Turkey as a major regional power broker—a vision that complements Turkey's traditionally strong nationalistic bent.<sup>6</sup> By following his guidelines, he believes, Turkey will maximize its interests and become one of the most influential countries in the world. Longtime observers of Turkey, such as former CIA and National Intelligence Council analyst Graham Fuller, suggest that

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<sup>3</sup> The book has not been translated into English. Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik, Turkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, reviewed by Hasan T. Kosebalaban, in the *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 2001. Many Turkish specialists also have analyzed the book. Davutoglu often gives interviews to the media. He spoke at a GMFUS event in Washington, D.C., in February 2007, and at the SETA Foundation in Washington on December 8, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Bulent Aras, "From Cooperation to Integration in the Middle East," *Sabah* Online, July 22, 2009, OSC Document GMP20090722017006.

<sup>5</sup> "Change of Guard at Foreign Ministry," *Anatolia News Agency* (hereafter *Anatolia*), May 2, 2009, BBC Monitoring European. May 4, 2009, "Davutoglu: Goal is Recognition of Borders," Interview with NTV, September 1, 2009, Open Source Center Document GMP20090901016001. Also, Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU in 2010," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, February 10, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Sami Kohen, "The EU on the One Hand, the Middle East on the Other," *Milliyet*, December 6, 2006, BBC Monitoring European, December 7, 2006.

“The foreign policy vision of Davutoglu is sweeping and likely to persist in one form or another after the AK Party falls from power.”<sup>7</sup>

Davutoglu and other AKP officials dismiss the notion that their policies are “neo-Ottoman,” claiming that NATO remains Turkey’s anchor and the EU remains its “strategic, historical choice.” However, some observers suggest that the AKP’s foreign policy vocabulary “reflects a growing attachment to third-world and non-aligned perspectives”<sup>8</sup> and note, as discussed below, relations with the EU are not progressing. These developments might have ramifications for Turkey’s role in NATO as well as its relations with the United States.

The economic motivation for Davutoglu’s policies deserves emphasis. Since the 1980s, exports have been the engine of Turkey’s economic growth and, since AKP came to power in 2002, they have risen from \$32 billion to \$132 billion. While half of the trade still is with Europe and Germany, Britain, and Italy remain the top recipients of Turkish exports, a growing quarter is with Arab countries and Iran. Turkey has established visa-free regimes with many of its neighbors in order to remove barriers to trade and tourism and it has announced plans to establish a regional free trade zone with Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The government increasingly is reaching out beyond traditional partners to Latin America, Asia, and Africa, where it has opened 18 new embassies. Moreover, tourism revenue has grown from \$8.5 billion to \$22 billion annually, and many new visitors are from Arab neighbors and from Russia.<sup>9</sup>

Some analysts suggest that Turkey’s increasing democratization is another engine driving foreign policy changes. Professor Ilter Turan has observed,

In contrast to earlier times when external affairs were deemed to be only the concern of the government and the state, today public opinion, organized interests, the media, and even studies produced by think tanks significantly constrain governments. Foreign policy questions are taken up both in the legislature and outside, and are debated among politicians and the public with greater frequency and at greater length than ever before.<sup>10</sup>

Although Turan maintains that “economic considerations are more powerful determinants than Islam,” the Islamic inclinations of the Turkish people may be a determinant of policy in many instances, especially if democratization is viewed as a motivation because many AKP constituents are devout and have a greater affinity for other Muslim countries and causes than AKP’s secularist predecessor governments. They are especially sympathetic to the Palestinians and the government’s anti-Israel statements resonate with them.

Today, Turkey enjoys better relations with Greece, close political and economic ties with Syria, growing trade, energy, and other ties with Iran, and fraternal relations with the Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan. Yet, improvements in relations with Armenia have stalled since being set on a course toward normalization in 2009. Ties with Israel have been troubled since that country’s military campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip in December 2008-January 2009 and its interception of a Turkish ship seeking to break the blockade of Gaza in May 2010. Meanwhile, Turkey has not taken a proactive stance regarding the dilatory Cyprus talks. As

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<sup>7</sup> “Turkey Takes Another Turn Eastward,” *Global Post*, June 11, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Lesser, “The New Turkish Lexicon,” *On Turkey*, GMFUS, November 3, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Erdogan cited these figures in remarks in Rize on June 13, 2010, “Turkey Premier Denies Shift in Country’s Foreign Policy,” *Zaman* website, June 14, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Ilter Turan, “Turkish Foreign Policy: Challenges to Turkey’s Western Calling,” *On Turkey*, GMFUS, July 30, 2010.

Armenia, Israel, and Cyprus are notable policy exceptions and are not Muslim states, some AKP critics suggest that it has followed an “Islamic” or Islamist foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

Turkey’s almost relentless engagement with some of its neighbors puts it at odds with some aspects of U.S. foreign policy. The AKP does not share the goal of isolating problematic regimes, preferring engagement with all to advance problem-solving. Davutoglu believes that diplomacy is the answer. Turkish officials suggest that their foreign policy serves to expand relations between the West and the Middle East and adds value to U.S. and European policies by providing additional avenues of approach. They maintain that there is no contradiction between their policies and those of their Western allies. Thus, the AKP has welcomed visits to Turkey by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Palestinian Hamas Poliburo Chief Khalid Mish’al, and Sudanese President Omar al Bashir.<sup>12</sup> However, the United States and much of the international community have policies of isolating these leaders: Ahmadinejad mainly because of Iran’s failure to cooperate with international efforts to ensure that its nuclear program has peaceful purposes and because of his regime’s human rights abuses, Mish’al because the United States and the EU consider Hamas to be a terrorist group, and Bashir because of what the United States and others consider the Sudanese government’s policy of genocide in Darfur and their support for the International Criminal Court prosecutor’s efforts to have him arrested for genocide and war crimes.<sup>13</sup> The U.S. State Department has criticized Turkey’s outreach to each of these men. Although it portrays engagement as a way to change these leaders’ behavior, AKP’s efforts, at least publicly, avoid their abuses of human rights and fail to hold these pariahs to international standards—perhaps because they are Muslim—even as Ankara occasionally risks isolating Turkey from the EU and its NATO partners. They also have not produced a discernible change in their conduct.

Issues on Turkey’s foreign policy agenda of most concern to the U.S. Administration and to Congress are discussed below.

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<sup>11</sup> The late former Ambassador and Nationalist Action Party (MHP) MP Gunduz Aktan at “Back to the Future: U.S.-Turkish Relations after the Bush Presidency,” Brookings Institution panel, January 31, 2008, also Soner Cagaptay, “The AKP’s Foreign Policy: The Misnomer of ‘Neo-Ottomanism,’” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 29, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Turkey’s relations with Hamas and Iran are discussed in this report. With regard to Sudan: President Bashir made a three-day official visit to Turkey in January 2008 and, at the invitation of the Turkish government, attended a Turkish-African Summit in Istanbul that August. The latter visit occurred after the International Criminal Court had indicted him for genocide. Turkish intermediaries dissuaded Bashir from attending another summit meeting in Turkey in November 2009, reportedly after pressure from the European Union and the United States. Prime Minister Erdogan asserted, however, that he did not believe that Sudanese paramilitary forces committed acts of genocide in Darfur, arguing “It is not possible for those who belong to the Muslim faith to carry out genocide.” Asli Aydintasbas, “‘Axis’ Debate from Washington,” *Milliyet*, November 9, 2009, BBC Monitoring European, November 10, 2009, “Turkey PM: Israel War Crimes Worse than Sudan,” Al-Manar TV, November 9, 2009, OSC Document GMP20091109966108.

<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister Erdogan has expressed sympathy for the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

Figure I. Turkey and Its Neighbors



Source: Map Resources. Adapted by CRS.

## Iraq

After the 1991 Gulf war, Turkey allowed U.S. and British planes flying from Incirlik Air Base in southeast Turkey to enforce a no-fly zone over northern Iraq (Operation Provide Comfort/Operation Northern Watch) in order to protect Iraq's Kurds from Saddam Hussein and to monitor Iraq's armed forces. This protective shield enabled an autonomous Iraqi Kurdish administration to develop. Turkish leaders later expressed doubts about the Bush Administration's regime change plans for Iraq and, on March 1, 2003, the Turkish parliament refused to authorize the deployment of U.S. forces to Turkey for the purpose of opening a northern front against Iraq. Turkey has since sought a stable, democratic, and unified Iraq. Foremost, Turkish officials desire an Iraq that retains its territorial integrity, without being dismembered or dominated by any ethnic or sectarian group—an outcome they view as key to regional stability. In addition to their long-standing concern about the Iraqi Kurds' goals, they are worried that Iran could exert excessive influence over a Shiite-dominated Iraq. They also are apprehensive that a U.S. military withdrawal will lead to chaos in Iraq and the region.

The high priority that Turkey puts on Iraq's territorial integrity stems mainly from its desire to thwart the emergence of an independent Iraqi Kurdish state that could serve as a model for separatist Turkish Kurds and a staging site for anti-Turkish terror. From 1984 to 1999, Turkey fought a war costing more than 30,000 lives against the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), mainly in southeast Turkey. The U.S. State Department lists the Kongra-Gel(KGK)/PKK as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Of an estimated 4,000-5,000 PKK members, about 3,000-3,500 are believed to be in the Qandil (or Kandil) Mountains of northern Iraq.<sup>14</sup> The PKK took advantage of the chaos in Iraq after the 2003 war to gain this safe haven from which to relaunch a campaign of violence against Turkey.<sup>15</sup> The Turkish government has occasionally deployed military forces into northern Iraq to combat the threat, but also has engaged in diplomacy with Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdish officials for that and for other reasons.

Ankara maintains that if Iraq is unable to stop terrorists from using its territory against Turkey, then it is Turkey's right under international law to defend itself. In the summer of 2006, Turkey mobilized military forces on the border to signal impatience with the continuing PKK presence in northern Iraq. The Bush Administration responded by appointing retired General Joseph Ralston, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), as Special Envoy for Countering the PKK. His appointment succeeded only in preventing Turkey from acting against the PKK for a year, which Turks believe was his purpose, and his resignation was confirmed in October 2007.

Another Turkish military buildup occurred in spring 2007, but action then was limited to increased operations within southeast Turkey and to "hot pursuit" raids and artillery shelling of

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, released August 5, 2010, accessible at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2007/>. In November 2003, the PKK began to call itself the People's Congress of Kurdistan (Kongra-Gel/KGK). The U.S. State Department uses both names, but the group still is commonly referred to as the PKK. On June 27, 2007, then Turkish Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug reported somewhat different figures: between 2,800 and 3,000 PKK terrorists in northern Iraq out of a total group strength of 5,150 to 5,650. "Live Press Briefing on War Against Terrorism," CNN Turk, June 27, 2007, Open Source Center Document GMP20070627734009.

<sup>15</sup> The U.S. State Department designated the PKK as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) on October 8, 1997.

alleged PKK camps in northern Iraq. After a spate of deadly PKK attacks in southeast Turkey in September and October 2007, Turkish forces again massed on the border. Fearing that an invasion would destabilize Iraq, President Bush invited Prime Minister Erdogan to the White House on November 5. The President referred to the PKK as “our common enemy” and promised the Turks “real time” or “actionable” intelligence. He also established consultations among then-Commander of the Multinational Force in Iraq General David Petraeus, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff General James Cartwright, and then-Turkish Deputy Chief of the General Staff General Ergin Saygun. Benefiting from this enhanced cooperation, Turkish forces have launched targeted air and ground strikes against PKK camps and other facilities located in the mountains of northern Iraq and expressed satisfaction with their results.

Turkey also had added strengthened diplomacy to its policy toward northern Iraq. On August 7, at the invitation of Prime Minister Erdogan, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki visited Ankara to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on countering terrorism, including the PKK. However, Maliki noted that the MOU needed parliamentary approval, and he was unable to implement it without the cooperation of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. At that time, Turkey would not engage the KRG because its president, Massoud Barzani, had used inflammatory language regarding Turkey, said that PKK was not a terrorist organization, and admitted that he supported the PKK.<sup>16</sup>

A new Special Envoy to Iraq, Murat Ozelik, reinvigorated relations with all Iraqi factions and, with Davutoglu, expanded that outreach to include the KRG. Although the KRG did not act against the PKK as Turkey wanted, Ozelik met with Barzani and other Iraqi leaders in Baghdad in October 2008. Turkey’s diplomatic moves did not end the violence as its security forces suffer casualties regularly and the PKK is blamed for acts of terrorism in Turkey. In response, the Turkish parliament has annually extended the government’s authority to order cross-border operations into northern Iraq, most recently in October 2010.

Another trilateral mechanism including Turkey, Iraq, and the United States began to operate to counter terrorism with the participation of KRG representatives. In August 2009, Massoud Barzani stated, “The PKK cannot maintain an armed struggle. The people will not support them.” He encouraged (Turkish) Kurds to demand their rights in a peaceful way, not through violence.<sup>17</sup> Barzani has supported the (poorly managed) “Kurdish opening” that the Turkish government announced in 2009 to resolve its Kurdish issue peacefully. He met Prime Minister Erdogan in Istanbul in November 2009. Ankara remained engaged with Barzani when the PKK stopped observing a unilateral cease-fire in June 2010. Barzani then described the PKK’s resumption of fighting as “irresponsible.”<sup>18</sup>

It has been suggested that the relationship between Turkey and the KRG has evolved into mutual dependence. With ongoing U.S. military drawdown from Iraq, the KRG must cooperate with Turkey economically and politically and Turkey has its own interests in economic and political

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<sup>16</sup> In a March 2007 Al Arabiya TV interview broadcast on April 6, Barzani threatened to interfere in predominantly Kurdish populated southeast Turkey if Turkey intervened in northern Iraq. Such comments may have been in response to Turkish saber-rattling.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Massoud Barzani conducted by Nur Batur, “PKK will be Forces to Lay Down Its Arms,” *Sabah*, date not given, BBC Monitoring Middle East, August 3, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> “Iraqi Kurdish Leader Urges Peaceful Solution to Kurdish Issue in Turkey,” *Govari Gulan* (Arbil), July 19 2010, BBC Monitoring Middle East, July 26, 2010.

cooperation with the KRG.<sup>19</sup> As Barzani said in June 2010, “We know that our future lies in maintaining good relations with Turkey.”<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Davutoglu said that Turkey’s goal was “total economic integration” with northern Iraq.

Turkey’s relations with Iraq are not singularly focused on the PKK, but have developed multidimensionally. The Turkish government has relations with all major Iraqi ethnic groups and has encouraged them to work together to develop a functioning democracy and to resolve problems through reconciliation and negotiation. It wants the federal structure of Iraq to function and the Kurds to play a constructive role in it.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul invited Iraqi President Jalal Talabani to visit Ankara on March 7, 2008, to begin a mutual effort to ease tensions. Prime Minister Erdogan then visited Iraq on July 10, 2008, the first such visit by a Turkish prime minister in 18 years. During the visit, the two governments decided to set up a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council with the prime ministers as co-chairs to develop relations in the fields of energy, trade, economy, infrastructure, water, border security, and counterterrorism. Then, in March 2009, President Gul became the first Turkish president to visit Iraq in 33 years. He met with President Talabani and with KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. In August 2009, Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated that Iraq was a strategic partner and friendly country for Turkey, adding that every development in Iraq would affect Turkey, too.<sup>21</sup> Erdogan returned to Baghdad in October 2009. The two neighbors have strengthened relations with numerous memoranda of understanding and other agreements.

Bilateral trade volume was \$7 billion in 2009 and the two governments aim to increase it to \$20 billion by 2014.<sup>22</sup> Turkey is Iraq’s largest trading partner and Iraq is Turkey’s fifth largest trading partner. Some 1,200 Turkish companies do business in Iraq, and Turkish contractors have a major share of construction projects there. Some 400 of those companies do business in northern Iraq. In addition, an estimated 50,000 Turks work in Iraq, many in the north.

Bilateral cooperation in the energy field also is growing. In the fall of 2008, the state-run Turkish Petroleum Company (TPAO) and the Pipeline and Petroleum Transport Corporation (BOTAS) signed an agreement with the Shell Oil Company to cooperate in the exploration, operation, and transportation of oil in northern Iraq. TPAO has another partnership with the Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) in Iraq. TPAO signed an agreement to rehabilitate oil fields in Basra and is pursuing other sites as well. Despite occasional disruptions caused by the security situation that have prevented the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline from working at full capacity, 350,000 barrels of oil flow daily from Iraq to Turkey mainly for international shipping. There are plans to construct a twin pipeline parallel to it and increase capacity. Turkey and Iraq also plan to link Iraqi natural gas to the planned Nabucco pipeline (See “Energy” below.)

The Iraqi Turkomen, ethnic kin of the Turks who reside alongside the Kurds in northern Iraq, continue to be a policy concern for Turkey.<sup>23</sup> Ankara sympathizes with Turkomen complaints of

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<sup>19</sup> “Kurdish Affairs Expert Offers Regional Perspective on Growing Violence in Turkey,” Ron Synovitz interview with Prof. Michael Gunter, <http://www.rferl.org>, June 24, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> “Iraqi Leader Stresses Need for Good Relations with Turkey,” *Anatolia*, June 3, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> “Turk FM Leaves for Iraq, Davutoglu: Turkey-Iraq Relations Develop Around a New Partnership Model,” *Anatolia*, August 11, 2009, Open Source Center Document GMP20090811737001.

<sup>22</sup> Bayram Kaya, “Trade Volume with Northern Iraq to Reach \$20 Billion,” *Today’s Zaman* Online, July 1, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Before the Iraq war, the Turkish government and Turkomen leaders claimed that there were 3 million Turkomen in Iraq out of a total population of about 25 million. Sources suggest, however, that this number is highly inflated and (continued...)

being displaced and outnumbered by Iraqi Kurds returning to the north. (Saddam Hussein suppressed Turkomen rights and forcibly removed Turkomen from the region.)<sup>24</sup> Although the Turkomen issue appeared less acute after 2005 Iraqi national elections in which the group's turnout was far lower than Turkey expected, it still is important because Ankara and the Turkomen are concerned about Kirkuk, a multiethnic city claimed by the Iraqi Kurds situated in the heart of an oil-producing region.<sup>25</sup> Ankara advocates a consensus solution for the status of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, mainly in order to avoid it becoming the financial foundation for a Kurdish state but also to ensure the rights of the Turkomen. Turkey advocates postponing a referendum on the fate of Kirkuk, fearing that it could prove that the city is predominantly Kurdish at the expense of Turkomen residents and that the oil resources on which the city sits could be used to finance an independent Iraqi Kurdish state. Turkish officials argue that Kirkuk and Iraq's natural resources must be equitably shared by all Iraqis. Turkey remains watchful as Iraqi officials have postponed both the referendum and a national census that also would affect the fate of the city.

With an economic dimension due to their effect on agricultural production, bilateral water issues often are problematic as Turkey is the controlling, upstream partner on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and it and Syria have dams on the latter, while Iraq is the dependent, downstream riparian. (The Tigris flows directly from Turkey into Iraq, while the Euphrates flows through Syria before reaching Iraq.) The water levels of the rivers have fallen in all three countries due to severe drought conditions since 2006, leading to desertification in Iraq which severely affects agricultural production. However, Turkey insists that it has kept the 1987 agreement to provide Iraq and Syria with 500 cubic meters per second from the river despite drought conditions that lowered water levels.<sup>26</sup> Syria then releases 58% to Iraq, but Iraq says that it needs 500 cubic meters for itself. All sides appear to want to address the issue in a cooperative, technological way. On September 3, 2009, the Turkish Minister of Environment and Forestry, Iraqi Minister of Water and Natural Resources, and Syrian Irrigation Minister signed a memorandum of understanding to establish joint measurement stations on both the Tigris and Euphrates, and on related matters. Turkey has increased the flow temporarily on occasion.

Reflecting Iraq's importance, Turkey has an ambassador in Baghdad, an ambassador based in Ankara responsible for reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, and consulates in Mosul, Erbil, and Basra.

Turkey supported Iyad al Allawi's Al Iraqiyah bloc, which Iraqi Sunni and Turkomen also supported, in the March 2010 Iraqi national elections. However, Turkey's influence on the

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(...continued)

estimate that Turkomen number about 330,000 and that they have assimilated with other Iraqi groups for years. See Colbert C. Held, *Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 2000; according to the author, there are about 1.5 million Turkomen in the Middle East, residing in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey.

<sup>24</sup> Minority Rights Group International, "World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Iraq : Turkomans," April 2008.

<sup>25</sup> The electoral slate of the Iraqi Turkomen Front won 3 seats in the January 2005 Iraqi parliamentary election, but only 1 out of 275 total seats in the December 2005 election in which Sunnis also ran.

<sup>26</sup> The commitment is in a section of a July 17, 1987 Protocol, which states, "The Turkish side undertakes to release a yearly average of more than 500 cubic meters a second at the Turkish/Syrian border and in cases where the monthly flow falls below the level of 500 cubic meters, the Turkish side agrees to make up the difference during the following month." Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>.

formation of a new Iraqi government was minimal and, in November, Maliki was again designated to form a government. The Turkish Foreign Ministry settled for stating that it was “pleased with the start of the constitutional process.” While Turkey’s initial stand may have offended President Talabani, who will serve another term, and Maliki, the two countries’ economic interests are now so intertwined that they probably will militate against a rift.

Turkish officials insist that multilateral contact groups concerning Iraq include all of Iraq’s neighbors, meaning Syria and Iran, and meetings of neighbors have included Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Arab League. They consult Iranian and Syrian counterparts regularly about Iraq. Kurdish media have reported that Turkish military forces have operated with Iranians against the PKK and the Party for Freedom and Life in Kurdistan (PJAK), a related Iranian Kurdish group, in northern Iraq. If it exists, such cooperation is likely to continue.

Turkish public attitudes toward the United States are deeply affected by PKK violence, for which many Turks blame the United States as “occupier” of Iraq. According to the 2010 *Transatlantic Trends* report, only 6% of Turks thought that Turkey should act in “closest cooperation” with the United States. After an upsurge in PKK violence in June 2010, then-U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey said that the United States cleared air corridors over northern Iraq for use by Turkey’s Israeli-made Heron unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as part of ongoing military cooperation.

## **Israel**<sup>27</sup>

Turkey was the first predominantly Muslim country to recognize the independence of the State of Israel in 1948. After several decades of discreet relations, the Israeli-Arab peace process made public bilateral Israeli-Turkish ties more acceptable to Turks, who are predominantly Muslim and sympathetic to the Palestinians. In 1991, Turkey sent its first ambassador to Israel since recalling his predecessor during the Suez crisis of 1956. In the intervening years, Turkey was represented in Israel by lower level diplomats. The two regional neighbors cemented closer ties in part due to their common view of Syria, which at the time supported the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) insurgency in Turkey, with several military agreements and a free trade agreement in 1996. Ankara sought to triangulate the relationship by using it to develop closer relations in Washington, especially in Congress where Turkish officials took into consideration the influence of pro-Israel groups to counter what they viewed as anti-Turkish ones advocating for Greece and Armenia. In the ensuing years, relations blossomed with Israeli arms sales to Turkey, regular military exercises, the exchange of high-level official visits, and booming trade and tourism. Israel modernized U.S.-made fighter planes, tanks, and helicopters for Turkey, and Turkey purchased Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles.

The Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) victory in Turkey’s 2002 national elections did not disrupt that trend, although Turkey recalled its ambassador when Israel assassinated Hamas leader Shaykh Yassin in 2004 and Prime Minister Erdogan charged that it was a “terrorist act.”<sup>28</sup> Erdogan also criticized Israel’s conduct toward the Palestinians and its war against Hezbollah in

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<sup>27</sup> For additional background, see 98-633F (Archived), *Israeli-Turkish Relations*, July 17, 1998, by Carol Migdalovitz.

<sup>28</sup> “Turkish PM Condemns Killing of Yassin as ‘Terrorist Act,’” Xinhua News Agency, March 24, 2004.

Lebanon in 2006. Yet, Erdogan visited Israel in 2005, and Israeli President Shimon Peres addressed the Turkish parliament in 2007.

Some in Israel became concerned when the AKP invited Khalid Mish'al, head of the Hamas politburo, to Turkey after the group won the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections. Nevertheless, bilateral relations remained steady and Israel still trusted Turkey enough to allow it to mediate four rounds of indirect Israeli peace talks with Syria in 2008.

Relations soured, however, with Israeli's military campaign—Operation Cast Lead—against Hamas in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009. Massive street demonstrations against Israel occurred in Turkey, where anti-Semitic sentiments were expressed openly. Four days before Israel launched its offensive, Prime Minister Erdogan met Israeli Prime Minister Olmert to discuss the Israeli-Syrian peace talks. Erdogan later charged that Olmert had disrespected him by not sharing Israel's military plans and causing (Turkey's) suspension of the Israeli-Syrian talks. Erdogan's rhetoric escalated as he described Gaza as an "open-air prison" and asserted that "Allah will punish those who violate the rights of the innocent."<sup>29</sup> Erdogan's inflammatory condemnations of Israel became unrelenting and he did not mention Hamas's indiscriminate rocket attacks against southern Israel, which Israel cited as the reason for its campaign.

After the Gaza conflict began, Erdogan traveled to Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia ostensibly in search of peace, but he pointedly did not go to Israel with which peace was to be made.<sup>30</sup> During his engagements, he accused Israel of "crimes against humanity." Erdogan claimed, "My emotionality is for those martyred children and women in Palestine. It is not against Israel."<sup>31</sup> He also claimed that he was not anti-Semitic, but blamed "Jewish-supported media for causing disinformation in the world."<sup>32</sup> A few days later, he questioned how Israel could belong to the U.N. when it ignored Security Council resolutions. Some domestic critics accused him of "blindly assuming the role of Hamas's spokesman" and losing the possibility of being its interlocutor with the world.<sup>33</sup> After Erdogan said that he was taking a "Muslim approach" to the humanitarian crisis, others questioned how he could mediate between Jews and Muslims.<sup>34</sup>

Later in January, Prime Minister Erdogan castigated President Peres for his defense of Israel's conduct of the war at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, charging, "You killed people." Erdogan's defense of the Palestinians boosted his domestic popularity just months before nationwide municipal elections and earned him hero status with people in the Arab region.

During these times of heightened tension, the Turkish government did not sever military or defense industry ties with Israel. Exercises and signed weapons contracts were unaffected. However, observers noted that Israel's defense sales to Turkey already had fallen from \$1 billion a year in the 1990s to \$100 million a year from 2007 to 2009. Israelis reportedly complained that

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<sup>29</sup> "Turkey Hears Conflicting Calls of Europe and the Middle East," *Irish Times*, January 10, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Later in the month, the Foreign Ministry dispatched a second rank diplomat, its deputy undersecretary, to Jerusalem.

<sup>31</sup> "Erdogan: My Reaction is No Harsher than Phosphorus Bombs," NTV, January 13, 2009, OSC Document GMP200901013744003.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Ferai Tinc, "Turkey is Not's Obama's Interlocutor in the Middle East," *Hurriyet Online*, January 25, 2009, OSC Document GMP20090125017005.

<sup>34</sup> Burak Bekdil, "Approaching the Middle East," *Hurriyet Daily News Online*, January 16, 2009.

political tensions, demands to share work with Turkish subcontractors, and frequent changes to technical specifications affected feasibility calculations for the arms deals. For their part, Turks were said to complain about expensive solutions to problems that emerged during the work and about late deliveries. Israel's belated delivery of unmanned aerial vehicles was particularly contentious, although some of the delay was attributed to the incompatibility of the system's Israeli and Turkish parts and resulting failures of performance tests.<sup>35</sup>

In September 2009, Foreign Minister Davutoglu cancelled a visit to Israel because it would not allow him also to visit Gaza, which he could have entered via Egypt. In October, Turkey "postponed" part of the annual NATO Anatolian Eagle air defense exercise that had been held since 2001 and in which Israel was to participate. The Israeli military claimed that it was postponed because Turkey had changed the list of participating countries to exclude Israel and the United States and Italy then declined to participate.<sup>36</sup> Prime Minister Erdogan said the drill was cancelled due to public opinion.<sup>37</sup> Others suggested that Turkey was wary of allowing Israeli planes to fly near the borders of Iran and Syria.<sup>38</sup> The next day, Ankara invited Syria to joint military exercises. Also in October, Turkish television aired an anti-Israeli television series depicting Israeli soldiers deliberately murdering innocent children, prompting Israel to protest "incitement" and "teaching to hate" which it said could endanger Turkish Jews and Israelis visiting Turkey.<sup>39</sup>

Some Labor Party members of the Israeli government such as Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Minister of Trade, Industry, and Labor Benjamin Ben Eliezer, both of whom are retired generals, were deeply concerned about the deterioration in relations with Turkey which they considered of strategic importance. In November 2009, Ben Eliezer was the first Israeli cabinet member to visit Turkey since the Gaza operation, when he attended a meeting of the Turkish-Israeli Joint Economic Committee and met with President Gul, Foreign Minister Davutoglu, and Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul. Ben Eliezer is a member of a junior coalition partner and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, his more powerful colleague, criticized the outreach to Turkey. It apparently had been approved by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who did not comment. For its part, Turkey conditioned improvement in bilateral relations on Israel's better treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and progress toward peace. Relations remained uneasy.

Then, in January 2010, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon publicly humiliated the Turkish ambassador while complaining about the television series, renewing tensions. Ayalon formally apologized only after President Gul threatened to recall the ambassador. Later in the month, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak traveled to Ankara on a previously scheduled visit whose purpose shifted to that of repairing relations. He only met with Gonul and Davutoglu, not Gul, Erdogan, or then-Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug.

As a result of Turkey's growing strategic cooperation with Syria and closeness to Iran (see below), Israeli officials reportedly became concerned about Turkey's possible transfer of Israeli

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<sup>35</sup> Umit Enginsoy, "Turkish-Israeli Defense Deals on Hold," *Hurriyet Daily News* Online, October 20, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> "Turkey Excludes Israel from Military Air Exercise," *Al Arabiya*, October 10, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Statement at news conference, October 15, 2009, NTV, BBC Monitoring European.

<sup>38</sup> Erdal Safak, "Israel Operation," *Sabah*, October 15, 2009, BBC Monitoring European, October 16, 2009.

<sup>39</sup> "Netanyahu Joins Condemnation of Turkish TV Broadcast," *Jerusalem Post*, October 16, 2009, Ben Kaspi, Merav David, and Jackie Hugi, "The Finger Points to Erdogan," *Ma'ariv*, October 16, 2009, OSC Document GMP20091016741001.

technology that Turkey had acquired as a result of Israel's military sales.<sup>40</sup> This concern was said to have prompted a review of defense exports to Turkey.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, Turkish officials developed a litany of criticisms of Israel. They repeatedly condemned Israeli settlements and "provocative" actions intended to "change the demography, character, and the status of Jerusalem," maintaining that East Jerusalem must be the capital of an independent Palestinian state.<sup>42</sup>

Turkish officials focus greatly on Israel's reported nuclear status. Stating that they are against all nuclear weapons, they criticize Israel for not joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but never mention Pakistan and India, which have nuclear weapons and have not joined the treaty, or Iran's threats against Israel. In April 2010, Prime Minister Erdogan described Israel as "the principal threat to peace" in the Middle East.<sup>43</sup> After the Tehran Declaration of May 2010 (see "Iran" below), Prime Minister Erdogan said, "since the issue of Iran has been resolved to some extent, the international community should concentrate its efforts to find a solution to the problems in Israel now. There is no nuclear weapon in Iran, but Israel has nuclear weapons. Israel is a regional country too."<sup>44</sup>

Turkey appears to be more disturbed about a possible Israeli military strike against Iran than about Iran's nuclear ambitions. In December 2009, Erdogan declared that any Israeli attempt to use Turkish airspace against neighboring countries, e.g., Iran, would "receive a response equal to that of an earthquake..." and he cautioned Israel against using its relationship with Turkey to wage aggression against a third party.<sup>45</sup>

Turkish-Israeli relations reached their lowest point as a result of Israel's seizure in international waters of a Turkish ship—the Mavi Marmara—that was part of a flotilla intending to break Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip by delivering aid on May 31, 2010.<sup>46</sup> Under circumstances that are still being investigated, Israeli commandos killed eight Turks and one Turkish-American while boarding the ship to divert it to the Israeli port of Ashkelon. Turkey recalled its ambassador from Israel, cancelled joint military exercises as well as trilateral exercises in which U.S. forces participate, and banned Israeli military planes from its airspace. It demanded an apology, compensation for victims, and an international investigation. Israel withdrew its military advisers from Turkey, warned Israeli tourists against traveling there, and refused to apologize after maintaining that it had acted lawfully in self-defense and alleging that the flotilla's planners had terrorist links. The chairman of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), a major business group, called on Turkish companies to reconsider their relations with Israel. However, there was no widespread boycott of Israeli goods; Israeli exports to Turkey rose

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<sup>40</sup> Ran Dagoni, "Future Military Equipment Sales to Turkey in Doubt," McClatchy-Tribune Business News, February 24, 2009, citing *Defense News*.

<sup>41</sup> Arye Egozi, "Due to Tension: Defense Exports to Turkey in Great Doubt," *Yedi'ot Aharonot*, April 13, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100413741007.

<sup>42</sup> "Turkish Premier Calls for Pressure on Israel for Mideast Peace," *Anatolia*, March 9, 2010.

<sup>43</sup> Marc Champion, "Erdogan Calls Israel 'Threat' to Peace; Turkish Premier's Remarks Further Strain Countries' Alliance as Analysts Ponder Nation's Foreign-Policy Leanings," *Wall Street Journal*, April 8, 2010.

<sup>44</sup> "Turkish Premier Says that International Community Should Solve Problems in Israel Now," *Anatolia*, May 18, 2010.

<sup>45</sup> "Turkey Warns IAF Against Using Airspace," *Jerusalem Post*, December 11, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> For an in depth examination of the incident, see CRS Report R41275, *Israel's Blockade of Gaza, the Mavi Marmara Incident, and Its Aftermath*, by Carol Migdalovitz.

in June and July after the flotilla incident and overall exports were higher than in 2009.<sup>47</sup> Erdogan again accused Israel of “state terror” and he and politicians from other parties fed the demonization of Israel by making unsupported references to alleged Israeli support for the PKK, while some in the Turkish media reported it as a fact.<sup>48</sup>

Israel still was not willing to abandon ties to Turkey. Again with the knowledge of Prime Minister Netanyahu, but not Foreign Minister Lieberman, Minister Ben Eliezer returned to action to mollify the Turks, meeting Foreign Minister Davutoglu in Brussels in July. Davutoglu restated Turkey’s demands from which, as of the date of this report, it has not retreated. However, Defense Minister Barak expressed concern over the appointment of Hakan Fidan as new head of the Turkish Intelligence Organization (MIT), describing him as a “friend of Iran” and anxiety that he would share Israeli intelligence secrets with Iran.<sup>49</sup>

Relations have not revived. In September, Chinese planes flew with Turkish ones in the annual Anatolian Eagle military exercise instead of U.S. and Israeli aircraft. Later in the month, President Gul stated, “We will never forgive Israel even if it apologizes for the Mavi Marmara.”<sup>50</sup> Turkey’s National Security Council’s new “Red Book,” a classified document listing perceived threats to the country, reportedly eliminates several that were in prior editions in line with Davutoglu’s “zero problems” policy, such as Iran, Syria, and Greece. However, it is now said to state that Israel’s policy is undermining stability in the region and thereby poses a threat.

The improved relations with Iran and Syria also means that Turkey no longer shares a common threat or needs its “alliance” with Israel as in the 1990s. Moreover, AKP’s growing domination of the domestic political scene overshadows the previously all-powerful Turkish military, which had championed ties with Israel. The verbal onslaught against Israel, some suggest, may be part of its domestic campaign to weaken the military and secularists who favor ties with Israel.<sup>51</sup> Aside from being part of a domestic power play, strains with Israel have emerged as a key component in Turkey’s neighborhood policy. As Foreign Minister Davutoglu told an Arab audience, “despite the grave dimensions threatening peace and security, this incident (flotilla crisis) at the same time constituted an opportunity in giving shape to regional order.”<sup>52</sup>

The breach with Israel has affected Ankara’s relations with Washington. In the aftermath of the flotilla crisis, Turkish officials appeared to suggest that Washington would have to choose between Israel and Turkey. Some Members of Congress who had supported the Israeli-Turkish relationship became highly critical of Turkey. In June, American Jewish organizations also previously supportive of the Israeli-Turkish link and of Turkey reacted to Turkey’s anti-Israel trend by declining to meet a Turkish parliamentary delegation. For its part, the Obama

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<sup>47</sup> Adi Ben-Israel, “Despite Tension, Exports to Turkey rise 8.5%; Trade with Turkey Still Higher than 2009, Even After Flotilla Incident,” McClatchy-Tribune Business News, August 18, 2010, citing *Globes*.

<sup>48</sup> Emre Uslu, “The Undeclared War Between Israel and Turkey?” *Today’s Zaman* Online, June 10, 2010.

<sup>49</sup> “Turkey ‘Uneasy’ about Barak’s Comments on Intelligence Chief,” *Anatolia*, August 3, 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Ilhan Tanir, “Turkey-Israel Relations Continue to Worsen in New York,” *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, September 25, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> Gil Feiler, “Erdogan anti-Israel Outburst Part of Struggle Between Military, Islamists,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 5, 2009.

<sup>52</sup> “Turkish FM: Turkish-Arab World has Most Strategic Zone,” *Anatolia*, June 10, 2010.

Administration circumspectly said that it recognizes the importance of the Israeli-Turkish relationship and supports dialogue “to repair fractures.”<sup>53</sup>

## **The Palestinian Authority and Hamas**

Turkish officials have had contacts with Hamas political bureau chief Khalid Mish'al. Davutoglu met with Mish'al in Damascus, where he resides, and, Mish'al met with AKP officials in Ankara in February 2006, shortly after Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary election. However, Mish'al was neither an elected nor an appointed official of the Palestinian Authority (PA) government. Mish'al's visit to Turkey appeared to some to give Hamas a boost and greater international legitimacy at the expense of Western-favored PA President Mahmud Abbas. Abbas later expressed “unease” with Prime Minister Erdogan's defense of Hamas as it did not recognize him and his administration.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, the Prime Minister did not relent in the face of criticism and openly admonished his “Western friends” that they would “get nowhere” by talking only to Abbas.<sup>55</sup> Erdogan denies Hamas is a terrorist group, maintaining that it is a reform party that was democratically elected to the Palestinian government and that Israeli-Palestinian peace cannot be achieved without it. Turkish leaders support reconciliation efforts between Hamas and Fatah and for Palestinian unity.

Turkey's outreach to Hamas disregarded the approach of the so-called Quartet—the United States, European Union (EU), United Nations and Russia—which had set conditions for Hamas to meet before the international community would engage with it. Those conditions include: disavow violence, recognize Israel, and recognize prior agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Hamas had not met any of the conditions at the time of Mish'al's visit to Ankara and still has not done so. The AKP and its leaders overlook this deficiency. The United States and the EU, of which Turkey is a candidate for membership, consider Hamas a terrorist organization. Some European officials also have met Hamas officials, but U.S. law forbids U.S. government officials from having such meetings.

## **Israeli-Syrian Talks**

For some time, Turkey had good relations with both Israel and Syria, which had suspended their peace talks in 2000. During a February 2007 visit to Turkey, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert reportedly discussed possible Turkish mediation between his country and Syria with Prime Minister Erdogan. The Turkish leader may have seized on this overture to advance his agenda of peace and to enhance Turkey's image as a regional power. On May 21, 2008, reportedly after considerable ground work by Professor Davutoglu, Israel, Syria, and Turkey simultaneously announced that Israel and Syria had launched proximity or indirect peace talks in Istanbul mediated by Turkey. Four rounds of talks took place before being suspended because of Israeli domestic political turmoil in advance of the February 2009 national election and because of Israel's military campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip in December 2008-January 2009.

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<sup>53</sup> U.S. State Department, Daily Press Briefing, July 2, 2010.

<sup>54</sup> Ferai Tinc, “Abbas: God is Capable of Working Miracles,” *Hurriyet* Online, February 9, 2009, OSC Document GMP20090209725003.

<sup>55</sup> Roger Cohen, “Turkey wants U.S. ‘Balance,’” *International Herald Tribune*, April 6, 2009.

Turkey would like to resume its intermediary role, and Syrian officials have said that they prefer talks to continue in that manner. However, Prime Minister Erdogan's harsh criticism of Israel's conduct of the operation against Hamas, of its treatment of Palestinians in Gaza, and of its actions during the May 2010 flotilla incident have made the Israeli government reluctant to use the Turkish conduit.

The Turkish initiative to restart peace talks between Israel and Syria initially appeared contrary to the Bush Administration policy of isolating Syria because of Syria's destabilizing influence in Lebanon, support for Hezbollah and Hamas, and ties with Iran, and contrary to that Administration's emphasis on achieving an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. However, U.S. officials did not object. Instead, they sought to frame Turkey's actions within the context of the efforts to achieve a comprehensive regional peace and as an opportunity to convey appropriate messages to Damascus regarding support for Hamas and Hezbollah and relationship with Iran.<sup>56</sup>

## Syria

The foundation for better Turkish ties with Syria was laid before the AKP came to power. On October 20, 1998, under the threat of Turkish military action, Damascus agreed to recognize the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) as a terrorist organization, to cease all aid to the PKK, and to deport PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who was based in Damascus, from Syria.<sup>57</sup> Syria completely fulfilled its commitments under this accord (the Adana Agreement or Protocol) and bilateral relations improved over the following years. The attendance of Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer at the funeral of President Hafez al Asad, father of current President Bashar al Asad, in 2000 was considered a milestone in relations. Since the AKP came to power in 2002, ties have further strengthened. AKP leaders cultivate close personal relations with President Asad and the two countries' officials often exchange high level visits. Asad made his first visit to Turkey in January 2004 and he has returned often. That December, Prime Minister Erdogan visited Damascus.

President Asad cites three positions of the AKP government that have enhanced Turkey's standing in Syria and Syria's trust in Turkey: its support for the Palestinians, its refusal to allow the U.S. forces to invade Iraq via Turkish territory in 2003, and its steadfastness while many other countries were trying to isolate Syria and exerting pressure on Turkey to do the same.<sup>58</sup>

Trade is an important dimension of the bilateral relationship. Turkey and Syria concluded a free trade agreement in January 2007; bilateral trade totaled \$1.8 billion in 2009. Ankara and Damascus are designing a gas pipeline and their national oil companies plan to establish a joint oil company. In addition, Turkish companies are establishing factories in Syria to take advantage of cheaper materials and labor. Turkish investment totals \$400 million and is expected to increase

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<sup>56</sup> "USA Welcomes Turkey's Mediation between Israel, Syria," *Anatolia*, June 2, 2008, and "Amid Closure Case, Rice Praises Ties with AKP Govt," *Turkish Daily News*, June 7, 2008. Cam Simpson, "Israel, Syria in Indirect Peace Talks," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2008, "US Welcomes Syrian-Israeli Talks but Stresses Palestinian Track," *Yahoo! News*, May 21, 2008, "Rice: Israeli-Palestinian Track Most Likely to Produce Results," *Associated Press*, May 22, 2008.

<sup>57</sup> For background on these events, see Meliha Benli Altunisik and Ozlem Tur, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," *Security Dialogue*, 2006, 37: 229.

<sup>58</sup> "Turkish Television (TRT) Interviews Syrian President on Regional Issues," *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, October 7, 2010.

in the coming years. Turkey and Syria also have intensified defense ties, conducting their first joint military exercises in April 2009 and holding additional ones since then. In October 2009, the two neighbors signed agreements to lift visa requirements and held back-to-back joint ministerial meetings in the Syrian city of Aleppo and the Turkish city of Gaziantep—attended by ten Turkish cabinet ministers and their Syrian counterparts. The first meeting of a High Level Strategic Cooperation Council took place in Damascus in December 2009, with the two countries' prime ministers acting as co-chairmen. As noted above, some Israeli officials have expressed fear that Turkey may transfer Israeli technology to Syria.<sup>59</sup> Turkey acquired the technology via Israeli-Turkish military cooperation.

On occasion, there are differences over water from the Euphrates River, which flows from Turkey to Syria, which complains that its needs are not fulfilled. The neighbors indicate that they will cooperate on a dam project on a Euphrates tributary. They do not discuss Hatay, a coastal province in southeast Turkey that the French mandate over Syria ceded to Turkey in 1939 but that still appears on some Syrian maps.<sup>60</sup>

## Iran

### Overview

Turkey and Iran share an almost 500 kilometer (310 mile) border that was established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and they have not been to war since then. Over the years, however, their bilateral relations have been characterized by both conflict and collaboration.<sup>61</sup> Tensions sometimes surfaced from the neighbors' competing regional ambitions and from their rival forms of Islam: most Turks are Sunnis, while most Iranians are Shiites.<sup>62</sup> After Iran declared itself an Islamic Republic in 1979, some predicted a worsening of relations because the Turkish Republic established in 1923 had abolished the caliphate, the office of the Prophet Muhammad's successors, and adopted a constitution that guaranteed secularism as a basic principle of the state. However, Ankara's pragmatic policy of accepting and officially recognizing the new Islamic Republic speedily and focusing on economic relations proved the forecasters wrong.

Since it took office in 2002, the AKP government has continued the realistic pragmatism or pronounced self-interest of its predecessors toward Iran, while adding an affinity for other Muslim regimes. Thus, it has expanded bilateral relations markedly. The U.S. invasion of Iraq and a mutual concern about possible instability in their region accelerated the rapprochement. Officials exchanged numerous visits, culminating in Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad's visit to Turkey in August 2008. The AKP government hosted him in Istanbul, thereby working around Ahmadinejad's antipathy to Turkish secularism by enabling him to avoid a usually obligatory visit in the capital of Ankara to the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the

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<sup>59</sup> Ron Ben-Yishai, "Turkish-Syrian Drill Raises Concerns in Israel," *ynetnews.com*, April 27, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> For Background on Hatay (Alexandretta), see Majid Khadduri, "The Alexandretta Dispute," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (July 1945), pp. 406-425, among others.

<sup>61</sup> See also Gokhan Cetinsaya, "Essential Friends and Natural Enemies: the Historic Roots of Turkish-Iranian Relations," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, an online journal, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 2003.

<sup>62</sup> For more information about Sunni and Shi'a Islam, see CRS Report RS21745, *Islam: Sunnis and Shiites*, by Christopher M. Blanchard.

secularist founder of the Turkish Republic. President Gul reciprocated by visiting Iran for a regional summit in March 2009, when he met both Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i and President Ahmadinejad.

Turkey's pragmatism or *realpolitik* was evident in official reactions to Iran's June 12, 2009, presidential election as President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan were among the first international leaders to congratulate President Ahmadinejad on his re-election. Foreign Minister Davutoglu later declared controversies over the outcome to be an internal Iranian affair, while Erdogan described Turkey's policy as a "necessity of bilateral relations."<sup>63</sup> Their continuing unconditional support of the authoritarian Iranian president appeared out of step with NATO and EU member states. AKP's domestic critics charged that these "reflexive and premature" actions may have undermined Turkey's stature and credibility as an interest in stability embodied in the status quo appeared to trump values.<sup>64</sup> Turkish diplomats maintain that they have quietly counseled Iranian officials without wanting to appear to be interfering in their neighbor's domestic affairs.<sup>65</sup>

Prior to visiting Iran in October 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan told the British newspaper, *The Guardian*, "There is not doubt he (Ahmadinejad) is our friend.... As a friend, so far we have good relations and have no difficulty at all."<sup>66</sup> The visit focused largely on energy and trade and a delegation of 200 Turkish businessmen, Members of Parliament, and others accompanied Erdogan. Erdogan also emphasized the need for Turkey and Iran to cooperate in counter-terrorism and "specifically intelligence sharing."<sup>67</sup> The latter might trigger alarms among Turkey's NATO allies and in Israel.

## Nuclear Issue<sup>68</sup>

On the most pressing international issue of the moment, Turkish officials state that Iran has the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and has called on Iran to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to demonstrate that its nuclear program has peaceful intentions. The Turks also want to preserve their own right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, they do not want Iran to develop weapons of mass destruction and thereby upset the regional balance of power and supplant Turkey as the regional center that AKP declares it to be. Foremost, the Turks seek to avoid another war in their region like the one the United States launched in 2003 and failed to unearth Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Tait, "Iran is our Friend, Says Turkish PM Alongside Swipe at Disdainful EU," *The Guardian*, October 26, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> "FM Urges Iranians to Accept Election," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, June 23, 2009, and Ilhan Tanir, "Davutoglu, the Architect, Miserably Fails to Deliver," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, June 27, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> For example, the Turks maintained that they had petitioned the Iranian regime for clemency on behalf of a woman sentenced to be executed by stoning.

<sup>66</sup> Tait, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Dondu Sariisik, "Turkey Seeks Increased Cooperation in Energy, Security," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, October 9, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> For overview, see CRS Report R40094, *Iran's Nuclear Program: Tehran's Compliance with International Obligations*, by Paul K. Kerr. See also, Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar, "Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XV, No. 4, Winter 2008, and Sinan Ulgen, "Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: What Role for Turkey?" *Discussion Paper Series*, Center for Economics and Foreign Policy (EDAM), June 23, 2010, accessible via link in OSC Document GMP20100623737005.

It is in this light that the AKP had hoped the United States and others would view Ahmadinejad's visit to Istanbul on August 14-15, 2008. Observers emphasized that it was Ahmadinejad's first visit to a NATO member state and a EU candidate country. Ankara suggested that the visit provided an opportunity to pass messages at the highest level, but Tehran does not think that it needs an intermediary with the international community. Ahmadinejad has said that he viewed Turkey's efforts to defuse tension and to further constructive dialogue positively.<sup>69</sup> A Turkish newspaper claimed that, during their meeting, President Gul urged Ahmadinejad to accept an incentive package offered by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany (P5+1) to freeze Iran's enrichment program, but Ahmadinejad simply reiterated his stance that the program is peaceful and that Iran would not accept a freeze.<sup>70</sup> There was no official Turkish statement about the conversation and the AKP could not point to any achievements on the nuclear issue resulting from the visit.

The Bush Administration was wary of Turkey's warming of relations with Iran at the same time that Washington was seeking to have the U.N. Security Council consider additional sanctions on Iran because of Tehran's failure to ensure that its uranium enrichment program has peaceful purposes. Moreover, the Administration believed that a prospective agreement for Turkey to develop natural gas resources in Iran and build a pipeline from Iran to Turkey would violate U.N. sanctions intended to pressure Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program and also violate the U.S. Iran Sanctions Act, P.L. 104-172, August 5, 1996, as amended. The State Department warned Turkey against finalizing the South Pars energy agreement, asserting,

such a deal by Turkey with Iran would send the wrong message at a time when the Iranian regime has repeatedly failed to comply with its U.N. Security Council and IAEA obligations.... This is not a time to do business with Iran. It is a time for the international community, including our ally Turkey, to begin considering additional measures to pressure Iran.<sup>71</sup>

U.S. officials expressed hope that Turkish officials would convey messages in line with those of the international community regarding Iran's nuclear program during Ahmadinejad's visit. The Bush Administration had supported Turkey's bid for a nonpermanent seat on the U.N. Security Council for 2009-2010 without apparent second thoughts about Ankara's outreach to Tehran and its possible effect on sanctions.

In October 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan described Iran's nuclear program as "peaceful and humanitarian."<sup>72</sup> He has criticized the international community for its "double standards" in targeting Iran's nuclear program while ignoring Israel's purported nuclear arsenal. He almost always mentions Israel (if not by name, then as "the country in the region with nuclear arms") when defending Iran, which he does frequently.<sup>73</sup> In November 2008, Erdogan told a Brookings Institution audience, "We do not find correct to tell just one country to scrap nuclear weapons. We do not think this is an honest approach. Whoever has nuclear weapons should scrap them first

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<sup>69</sup> Ahmadinejad interview with CNN TURK, August 13, 2008, OSC Document FEA20080813751591.

<sup>70</sup> "Turkey Urges Iran to Accept Incentives, Warns on U.S. Attack," *Hurriyet*, August 16, 2008, OSC Document GMP20080816734006.

<sup>71</sup> Alex Barker and Andrew Ward, "US in Warning to Turkey over Terms of Energy Deal with Iran," *Financial Times*, August 14, 2008.

<sup>72</sup> "Turkey's Worrisome Approach to Iran, Israel," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 29, 2009.

<sup>73</sup> "PM Visits Iran, Receives Praise over Nuke Row, Israel," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, October 27, 2009; "Turkish PM: West Treats Iran Unfairly," *Agence France Presse*, October 26, 2009.

then let us all be rid of them.”<sup>74</sup> Erdogan also views others as unfair “because those who accuse Iran of pursuing acquisition of nuclear weapons have very strong nuclear infrastructures.”<sup>75</sup>

Turkey seeks to have the dispute between Iran and the international community solved diplomatically. Erdogan considers the idea of a military attack on Iran to be “an insanity” and has warned Israel of “a response equal to an earthquake” if it used its relationship with Turkey, referring to Turkish airspace, to “wage aggression on a third party,” i.e., Iran.<sup>76</sup> In October 2009, Turkey cancelled Israel’s participation in an annual NATO military exercise in Turkey ostensibly because of public anti-Israel sentiment resulting from the December 2008-January 2009 Gaza conflict. Some analysts suggested that, in addition, Turkey did not want to give Israel an opportunity to fly in Turkish airspace near the Iranian border. Turkey also opposed the imposition of sanctions on Iran which might harm Turkey’s interests as it had perceived economic losses from U.N. sanctions on Iraq during Saddam Hussein’s tenure.

In October 2009, the P5+1 and the IAEA proposed that Iran exchange, with the participation of Russia and France, 1,200 kg (2,640 pounds) of low-enriched uranium (about 75% of its stockpile) for uranium for a research reactor used to produce medical isotopes. Turkey was not to be involved. Iran did not accept the offer and later launched a program to enrich its uranium to 20%.

In November, then IAEA Director General Mohammed ElBaradei suggested that Iran send low-enriched uranium to Turkey for enrichment. Turkish officials expressed their willingness to participate in an arrangement, but Iran again balked at sending the material outside of the country. In November, Turkey abstained when the IAEA passed a resolution demanding that Iran immediately freeze operations at a previously secret uranium enrichment plant. Its action may have been an indication that Ankara’s “impartiality” has the effect of supporting Iran and distancing itself from its allies.

After discussing Iran with President Obama at the White House on December 7, 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan said, “We do not want to see a country in our region possessing nuclear weapons and we want the countries in the region who have nuclear weapons to be rid of them.” For his part, the President suggested that Turkey could be “an important player in trying to move Iran” in the direction of pursuing peaceful nuclear energy, while providing “assurances that it will abide by international rules and norms.”<sup>77</sup>

In April 2010, during the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton advised Turkish officials that the amount of uranium to be deposited had to increase because Iran had increased its stockpile and had launched the new program to enrich uranium to 20%. It now had sufficient uranium to make a nuclear bomb with the 1,200 kg. President Obama reportedly did not raise the subject during a meeting with Prime Minister Erdogan and a letter that he wrote to Prime Minister Erdogan and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on April 20<sup>th</sup> referred only to 1,200 kg and did not mention the need for Iran to end enriching uranium. The Turkish and Brazilian leaders later cited the letter as the point of

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<sup>74</sup> Transcript of speech accessible via <http://www.brookings.edu>.

<sup>75</sup> Minhac Celik, “Turkish Foreign Policy’s Double-edged Sword: Iran,” *Sunday’s Zaman Online*, January 10, 2010.

<sup>76</sup> “Turkish PM Warns Against Attack on Iran,” *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, September 27, 2009, “Turkey Warns IAF Against Using Airspace,” *Jerusalem Post*, December 9, 2009.

<sup>77</sup> “Obama Sees Role for Turkey in Iran Dispute,” Reuters, December 8, 2009.

reference for their diplomats.<sup>78</sup> The Obama Administration would respond that his letter was not intended as negotiating instructions and dealt only with the Tehran nuclear reactor, not all concerns about Iran's nuclear activities.<sup>79</sup>

In May 2010, as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council were finalizing a resolution to enhance sanctions on Iran for failing to ensure that its nuclear program would be used solely for peaceful purposes, the Iranian government invited Foreign Minister Davutoglu to Tehran. On May 17, Turkey, Brazil, and Iran announced the Tehran Declaration, in which Iran agreed to deposit 1,200 kg of low-enriched uranium in Turkey in exchange for receiving 120 kg (264 pounds) of 20% enriched uranium to fuel the reactor used for medical purposes from the Vienna Group (United States, Russia, France, and the IAEA) within one year.<sup>80</sup> The Declaration did not require Iran to suspend enriching its remaining uranium to 20%, and Iran immediately said that it would continue enrichment. Iran was believed to possess in excess of 2,000 kg of uranium and would still have enough uranium to produce a bomb after the deposit in Turkey. The Declaration also gave Iran the option to withdraw the uranium from Turkey if it determines that the arrangements were not respected, i.e., it did not receive the medical grade uranium. Turkish officials, who did not share the Declaration with U.S. or other P5+1 counterparts before the announcement, referred to conflicting U.S. messages as justification for the contents of the Tehran Declaration and their subsequent actions.

Immediately after the Declaration announcement, Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated, "There is no ground left for more sanctions and pressure" and asserted that President Obama's multilateral diplomacy and policy of engagement had motivated his efforts.<sup>81</sup> His ministry heralded the Declaration for creating a "new and important opportunity" to resume dialogue between Iran and the international community. Turkey's Ambassador to Washington Namik Tan described it as a "confidence-building measure."<sup>82</sup> On May 24, Iran wrote to the Vienna Group, stating that it would accept the uranium swap via Turkey.

Despite Turkey's claims, Obama Administration officials charged that Iran was only seeking to slow the momentum for sanctions and that the Declaration failed to address core issues.<sup>83</sup> On May 18, Secretary Clinton announced an agreement with the other permanent members of the Security Council to proceed with strong new sanctions against Iran. On June 17, 2010, Turkey voted against U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 which imposed enhanced sanctions on Iran, thereby voting against its NATO and EU cohort. Turkish officials claimed that the vote was necessary to ensure their "credibility" and the diplomatic process that they hoped would continue. They further claimed that they could not abstain and at the same time assure the "validity" of the Tehran Declaration. Finally, the officials also contended that their U.S. counterparts had not

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<sup>78</sup> Kadri Gursel, "Iran Notes – 1," *Milliyet* Online, June 27, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100627742002.

<sup>79</sup> U.S. State Department, "Background Briefing on Nuclear Nonproliferation Efforts with Regard to Iran and the Brazil/Turkey Agreement, May 28, 2010, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/05/142375.htm>.

<sup>80</sup> The text of the Declaration was published by Mehr News Agency (Tehran), May 17, 2010, BBC Monitoring Middle East.

<sup>81</sup> "Iran Nuclear Fuel Swap to Take Place in Turkey, Ambiguity Prevails," *Zaman* website, May 18, 2010, BBC Monitoring European, "Turk FM Says All Countries have Right for Nuclear Power for Peaceful Purposes," *Anatolia*, May 18, 2010, OSC Document,

<sup>82</sup> David E. Sanger and Michael Slackman, "U.S. is Skeptical on Iranian Deal for Nuclear Fuel," *New York Times*, May 18, 2010. GMP20100518788001.

<sup>83</sup> U.S. State Department, "Background Briefing," op. cit.

discussed the details of the sanctions with them before the vote, although the Administration said it had worked with the full Security Council.<sup>84</sup>

Secretary Clinton said that the United States “disagreed with their vote,” but added understanding that Turkey (and Brazil) wanted to keep “the door open between themselves and Iran.”<sup>85</sup> She and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed “disappointment” with Turkey’s vote. Gates added, “Allies don’t always agree on things, but we move forward from here.”<sup>86</sup> U.S. officials subsequently encouraged Turkey to help Iran understand that the IAEA is the only channel for action with the P5+1 regarding its nuclear program. On July 12, Secretary Clinton called Minister Davutoglu to discuss the Iranian nuclear program. Her spokesman said, “what we have made clear in our conversations with many countries is that this cannot be a situation of business as usual. This is about the future of the world. This is about the danger of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East...”<sup>87</sup> Sharp criticism of Turkey’s Security Council vote among its Western allies may have prompted Foreign Minister Davutoglu to emphasize Turkey’s “facilitating role” and to that it was “not taking sides in this problem. We are only trying to help.”<sup>88</sup>

The official Turkish view of the Iran nuclear issue is narrow. Neither Prime Minister Erdogan nor President Gul have publicly addressed the implications of a nuclear-armed Iran for Turkey’s own regional power ambitions or the regional balance of power. Nor have they spoken about the potential threat it might pose to Turkey, which may not be surprising given that, according to one recent poll, 48% of Turks are not concerned about a nuclear-armed Iran.<sup>89</sup> Neither mentions Pakistan or India, both of which have not signed the NPT and have nuclear weapons, or Iran’s long-range missile program. In private, some Turkish officials have expressed security concerns about a nuclear-armed Iran and about the impact that it would have on the regional balance of power. They note that Turkey is Iran’s closest neighbor and easily within range of its missiles—even though Iran has not threatened Turkey. These concerns may have prompted Turkey’s possible purchase of U.S. PATRIOT advanced capability (PAC-3) air defense missiles and launchers.<sup>90</sup> A Turkish company already is partnering with Raytheon to produce PATRIOTs to sell to the United Arab Emirates, which presumably also wants the missiles for protection against Iran.

Turkish government officials have said that they would abide by the U.N. sanctions, but not the more sweeping sanctions that the United States and EU imposed subsequently. Prime Minister Erdogan asserted, “we think further sanctions based on allegations and speculations (that Iran is pursuing nuclear arms despite its denials) are unfair and no one can expect Turkey, which has trouble-free relations and a long border with its eastern neighbor, to apply such restrictions.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> State Background Briefing, op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> Mark Landler, “Clinton Says Opponents of Penalties can Still Aid Diplomacy,” *New York Times*, June 10, 2010.

<sup>86</sup> James Canter, “U.S. ‘Disappointed’ in Turkish Vote on Sanctions,” *International Herald Tribune*, June 12, 2010.

<sup>87</sup> “Clinton Discusses Iranian Nuclear Program with Davutoglu,” KUNA Online, July 12, 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Sedat Ergin, “Retuning Turkey’s Role in Iran,” *Hurriyet* Online, July 31, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100731742006.

<sup>89</sup> GMFUS, *Transatlantic Trends 2010*, op.cit.

<sup>90</sup> The U.S. Defense Security and Cooperation Agency (SCA) notified Congress of the possible PATRIOT anti-missile system sale worth \$7.8 billion on September 9, 2009. See DSCA press release at [http://www.dscamilitary.com/PressReleases/36-b/2009/Turkey\\_09-44.pdf](http://www.dscamilitary.com/PressReleases/36-b/2009/Turkey_09-44.pdf). Russia and China are competing to sell similar systems.

<sup>91</sup> “Erdogan Deems Iran Sanctions Unfair,” Al-Manar TV Online, September 11, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100911966037.

Yet, faced with U.S., and not U.N., sanctions for supplying Iran with refined petroleum products valued more than \$1 million, the Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation (TUPRAS) sharply curtailed gasoline shipments to Iran in July 2010, when exports dropped 74% from their June level, and then decided in October to discontinue all activities in Iran's energy sector.<sup>92</sup> (TUPRAS has been privatized and is no longer state-owned.) The Turkish Petroleum Company's (TPAO) investment plans for Iran also are considered vulnerable to U.S. sanctions. Turkish private companies and banks are expected to stay engaged in Iran, although banks with U.S. shareholders reportedly have cut back on their dealings.<sup>93</sup> On September 16, Prime Minister Erdogan and Iranian Vice President Reza Rahimi presided over a meeting of the Turkish-Iranian Business Council at which a large group of businessmen, including Turkish investors, sought to bilateral boost trade. Some of the Turks seek to benefit from reluctance of Arab financial partners to deal with Iran because of sanctions.

## **Shared Concerns on Iraq**

Ankara has made common cause with Tehran in seeking to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq in order to prevent its division into ethnic states that might serve as a model for separatists. Both Turkey and Iran have separatist/terrorist foes who attack them from safe havens in northern Iraq—the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK), respectively—and carry out coordinated operations against their mutual and related Kurdish terrorist threats.<sup>94</sup>

At the same time, Turkish officials have encouraged Iraqi Kurds to play a greater role in Baghdad to help counter what the Turks fear might become excessive Iranian influence over a Shiite-led Iraqi government.<sup>95</sup> Ankara also may believe that greater involvement in the central government might moderate the Iraqi Kurds' separatist inclinations. After the March 2010, Iraqi national elections, it reportedly wanted Iyad al Allawi's Al Iraqiyah list, which Sunni Turkomen and other Sunnis support, to head a new government. Turkish officials presented this stance as in line with their advocacy of inclusion as a means to prevent sectarian violence and ensure peace in the neighborhood, but it also would have served to mitigate the power of Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki's Shiite bloc. In the end, Ankara's influence was minimal as Maliki was designated to form another government.

## **Economic and Energy Relations**

Turkish-Iranian relations have a very strong economic component. About 1.5 million Iranian tourists visit Turkey annually, visa-free. Trade is growing and reached \$10 billion annually in

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<sup>92</sup> "Turkey Exports Less Gasoline to Iran in July – data," Reuters, September 1, 2010.

<sup>93</sup> Louis Charbonneau, "Special Report: Tracking Iran's Nuclear Money Trail to Turkey," Reuters, September 20, 2010, claimed that Turkey was allowing Iranian banks with suspected links to Tehran's nuclear program to do business within its borders, thereby perhaps giving them a safe haven that would enable them to elude sanctions. For example, the article reported that Iran's second largest bank operates branches in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, although it is the subject of U.S. and EU sanctions. Jay Solomon, Marc Champion, "U.S. Approaches Turkey on Iran Sanctions – Nation Emerges as Possible Weak Link in International Campaign to Punish Tehran for its Nuclear Efforts," *Wall Street Journal*, October 20, 2010.

<sup>94</sup> In 2009, PJAK was listed as a Specially Designated Terrorist Group under Executive Order 13224, which blocks property and prohibits transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism.

<sup>95</sup> Anonymous comments of Turkish official, April 20, 2009.

2008, with Iranian exports of oil, oil products, and gas to Turkey accounting for \$7.2 billion of the total.<sup>96</sup> Although trade volume dropped to \$5.5 billion in 2009 with the global economic downturn, Turkey aims to increase it to \$20 billion in 2011.<sup>97</sup> Officials of both governments have said that they hope to increase trade to \$30 billion a year in the next few years.<sup>98</sup> However, some Turkish businesses have complained about Iran's high tariff barriers and difficult investment climate, noting that the Iranian parliament (*majlis*) disqualified Turkish companies from airport and mobile phone contracts in 2004.

In 2007, Turkey and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the state-run Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) to be granted the right to develop natural gas fields in South Pars, to extract up to 20 billion cubic meters (bcm) annually of additional gas, and to transport it via a new 1,850 kilometer pipeline to Turkey. Turkey was to invest an estimated \$3.5 billion and receive 50% of the gas produced. TPAO never finalized the South Pars deal and it was cancelled. In April 2010, Iran announced that a domestic consortium would develop the fields.

A pipeline commissioned in 2001 carries natural gas from Tabriz to Ankara. (See "Energy" below, for more on Nabucco and other pipelines.) Turkey and Iran have formed a joint company to transfer the gas to Europe. However, the European partners in Nabucco (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, and Austria) have declared, "No Iranian gas will be accepted unless the nuclear problem is solved," and U.S. Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy Ambassador Richard Morningstar has stated, "At present, we do not support Iran's participation in the project."<sup>99</sup>

The AKP opposes all energy-related sanctions on Iran mainly because of Turkey's energy needs. However, AKP's critics charge that Iran has never lived up to a contract to provide Turkey with 10 bcm annually, and that the maximum that Turkey has received is 6 bcm. International Energy Agency figures support this assertion. The 6 bcm is less than Turkey's liquefied natural gas imports. Moreover, the Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporations (BOTAS) has a 15-year-old "take or pay" agreement with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and, for the year ending in March 2010, BOTAS imported only 26 bcm of gas daily, instead of 30 bcm as agreed, and had to pay Iran a penalty of \$600 million as a result. The agreement is in effect for another eight years.

Other plans of economic value include an MOU to build three natural gas-fired power plants in Iran and to import 3 to 6 billion kilowatt hours of electricity annually and for an ambitious new road and rail transportation network to link the Turkish Black Sea port of Trabzon and the Iranian Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas, and to establish a free industrial zone on their border.

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<sup>96</sup> Barcin Yinanc and Mustafa Oguz, "Turkey Rolls its Diplomatic Dice," *Turkish Daily News*, August 14, 2008.

<sup>97</sup> "Turkey Willing to Increase Trade with Iran," *Anatolia*, March 19, 2010.

<sup>98</sup> "Iran, Turkey Keen to Boost Trade Exchange," Xinhua News Agency, October 28, 2009.

<sup>99</sup> "Austria Says Turkey's Position in Nabucco Limited," *Turkish Daily News*, May 23, 2008 and "Turkish Minister, US Envoy Discuss Gas Pipeline Project," *Anatolia*, June 4, 2009.

## European Union<sup>100</sup>

Turkey first expressed its aspiration to join the European Union (actually, its predecessor, the European Economic Community) in the 1960's, when it concluded an association agreement. It applied for membership in 1987. An EU-Turkey customs union was achieved in 1995. During its first few years in power, the AKP pursued an ambitious agenda of reforms intended to prompt the EU to begin accession negotiations, and it succeeded when Turkey officially became a candidate for membership in 2005. The AKP appeared to view the EU as a means to prove that that party was not Islamist and for protection against secularist forces seeking its possible closure. The EU's requirements for membership also served to justify AKP's efforts to assert greater civilian control over the military.

However, Turkey began accession talks with the EU in October 2005 under a framework that does not ensure eventual full membership, although no country has heretofore gone through the accession process without membership as a goal. The lack of clarity about the end game derived from the long struggle over whether Turkey should be allowed to join the Union. Many EU citizens and leaders remain wary of Turkey's possible accession given its large population, relatively poor economy (that is now improving rapidly), and Muslim culture. There has been a parallel drop in enthusiasm for the EU in Turkey in part as a result of statements by European leaders who strongly oppose Turkey's eventual EU membership, notably German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy.<sup>101</sup> Sarkozy and Merkel have suggested offering Turkey a "special relationship" or "privileged partnership" with the EU in lieu of membership. They have not defined these terms, which may not mean much more than the customs union Turkey has enjoyed with the EU since 1995.

For its part, the European Commission, the EU's executive, champions Turkey's membership more than some member states and has emphasized why the EU is engaged in the accession process with Turkey. It highlights Turkey's role in regional conflict management, its importance as an energy hub, and its significance to the dialogue among Western and Muslim civilizations.

Turkey and the EU have opened negotiations on 13 out of 35 chapters of the *acquis communautaire* (body of EU laws and regulations) that candidates must conclude and implement before accession, but provisionally closed (completed) only one. Negotiations continue. However, in November 2006, the EU suspended negotiations on eight chapters due to Turkey's refusal to open its ports and airports to Cypriot ships and planes; the EU maintains this is required by the 2005 Ankara Protocol extending Turkey's customs union with the EU to new members of the EU, which included Cyprus. The EU also declared that no further chapters would be closed until Turkey meets the requirements regarding Cyprus. The EU sees Turkey's position as contravening EU requirements for the free movement of goods, although some Turkish officials argue that the airport/seaport issue involves services which are not part of the customs union. Mainly, Ankara

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<sup>100</sup> For a particularly cogent analysis, see Sinan Ulgen, "Turkish Politics and the Fading Magic of European Enlargement," Center for European Reform, September 2010.

<sup>101</sup> Eurobarometer found 45% of Turks surveyed supported EU membership in December 2009, "Support for EU Membership Drops in Turkey," *Anatolia*, December 14, 2009. That figure is within the margin of error of a domestic Turkish poll which reported 49.% support in January 2010, "Davutoglu Most Successful Turkish Minister, Says Poll," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, January 14, 2010. However, the annual GMFUS Transatlantic Trends survey, released on September 15, 2010, found that only 38% of Turks agreed that "Turkey Joining the EU Would be a Good Thing." Survey accessible via <http://www.gmfus.org>.

insists that the EU keep its promise to end the “isolation” of predominantly Turkish Cypriot northern Cyprus before Turkey takes actions benefitting Greek Cypriots, who control the internationally recognized government of Cyprus but only the territory of the southern two-thirds of the island. The European Commission insists that there is no linkage between the EU promise and Turkey’s commitments under the Ankara Protocol, and notes that EU assistance to northern Cyprus has increased and that the EU has facilitated trade between the north and south of Cyprus. (More on “Cyprus,” below.) It is highly unlikely that Turkey would be able to join the EU without a political settlement on the divided island of Cyprus.

Cyprus itself has put a hold on five additional chapters, including the critical energy chapter, and France has put a hold on opening five chapters (one of which is the same as the EU hold) that it views as most related to full membership in the EU, such as security and defense and energy, because, as noted above, the current French government opposes membership for Turkey. Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner has indicated that France would support the opening of the remaining three chapters that can still be negotiated. Nonetheless, a total of 18 chapters cannot be opened as a result of EU, Cypriot, and French holds.

Aside from the Cyprus issue, the EU has demanded that Turkey carry out many reforms, including constitutional changes to ensure an independent judiciary, tighter civilian control over the military, greater guarantees of freedom of expression, and more protections and freedom for religious and ethnic minorities. The so-called Ergenekon investigation<sup>102</sup> into alleged coup plots in Turkey led the European Commission to emphasize the need to follow due process and rule of law. The Commission praises the reforms that Turkey has undertaken so far, but finds them insufficient. EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle welcomed changes to the Turkish constitution approved in a September 12, 2010 referendum as a “step in the right direction” and said that he looked forward to a completely new constitution that would provide “a solid base for a sustained development of democracy in Turkey, in line with European standards and the EU accession criteria.”<sup>103</sup> In its November 9, 2010, annual assessment of Turkey’s progress toward membership, the Commission concluded that the constitutional amendments created “conditions for progress in a number of areas,” but criticized the ruling party’s monopoly of and non-consultative approach to the amendment process. It urged greater effort to improve fundamental rights and freedoms for journalists, non-Muslim religious communities, the Alevi, Kurds, and women.<sup>104</sup> To the Turkish Foreign Ministry’s displeasure, it also again emphasized the Cyprus issue. The Commission noted that Turkey’s foreign policy had become more active in its wider neighborhood and was an asset for the EU. Yet, it called on Turkey to coordinate its foreign policy more with the EU, expressing concern about Turkey’s failure to support U.N. Security Council sanctions on Iran and about its relations with Israel and Armenia.

Turkish supporters of EU membership have become dismayed since 2005, believing that the AKP has given EU membership a lower priority after achieving the start of accession talks. The AKP’s reform program lost momentum even as the government adopted a new national program and revamped bureaucracies responsible for integrating with the EU. Some analysts attributed that

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<sup>102</sup> For a discussion of Ergenekon, see CRS Report R41368, *Turkey: Politics of Identity and Power*, by Carol Migdalovitz.

<sup>103</sup> Sebnem Arsu, “Turkey Sets Its Sights on a Whole New Constitution,” *International Herald Tribune*, September 14, 2010.

<sup>104</sup> “Key Findings of the 2010 Progress Report on Turkey,” <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=memo/10/562>.

presumed change to AKP's disenchantment with the EU after the unrelated European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld a ban on wearing headscarves at Turkish universities on November 10, 2005. (The AKP has Islamist roots.) The lack of consistent attention to the membership issue was underscored when then-Foreign Minister Babacan decided not to give up his portfolio as EU negotiator when he became foreign minister in 2007. Although technically he played both roles, Turkey lacked a full-time EU negotiator for some time. In 2007, President Gul indirectly criticized the government by urging it to "hasten" the reform process. He said, "Integration with the EU is a state policy and a strategic decision. But it cannot run at an idle speed.... The reform process cannot be in tatters."<sup>105</sup> In their defense, AKP officials note that Turkey held four elections in 2007 and that the ruling party also had to fight a suit to ban it from politics. So its priorities were perforce different. European Commission responded by criticizing the government for failing to develop a comprehensive reform plan despite the strong mandate it had won in the July 2007 national election. In its view, the delay engendered by the 2007 elections no longer justified the inattention.

In January 2009, in advance of a trip to Brussels, Belgium, where the EU is headquartered, Prime Minister Erdogan finally appointed Egemen Bagis, a close associate, as EU negotiator. Yet, as one astute observer suggests, the AKP no longer considers the EU anchor vital for its survival.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, it has been selective in the political changes it has chosen to enact, focusing on those that enhance the party's power such as reducing the political role of the military and increasing executive control over the judiciary. Meanwhile, the AKP has neglected reforms that the EU requires for greater democratization such as revision of the political parties law, lowering the 10% of the vote threshold for parties to enter parliament, and protecting press freedom.

The AKP government, at least rhetorically, portrays its EU vocation as part of its regional foreign policy, suggesting that Turkey is the link between its region and Europe and that Europe should be eager to exploit Turkey's geostrategic position. Yet, under Foreign Minister Davutoglu, it has paid more attention to regional affairs than to Brussels. Moreover, Turkey's growing foreign policy independence and ties to Iran have strained its relations with the EU, leading some in the European Parliament to call on Ankara to further coordinate its foreign policy with the EU, particularly regarding Iran, even before the November 2010 progress report.<sup>107</sup>

At the same time, prominent voices in the AKP have been questioning whether Turkey still needs the EU. Deputy Chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee Suat Kiniklioglu has suggested that Turkey's "economy is strong enough to do without a union that is struggling with its own financial problems" and claimed Turkey's reforms would continue without outside impetus because there are strong domestic forces behind them.<sup>108</sup> Turks who are not in the government question why their dynamic, forward-looking homeland should "end up shackled to an economy with severe debt, financial instability, and an uncompetitive workforce."<sup>109</sup> As one scholar noted, "The Turkish wish to join the EU was always driven mainly by economic reasons

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<sup>105</sup> "EU Reforms are the Best Remedy for Post-Case Era," *Turkish Daily News*, August 4, 2008, citing Hasan Cemal interview with President Gul.

<sup>106</sup> Ulgen, *op. cit.*

<sup>107</sup> Dondu Sariisik, "EU to Ask Turkey to Adopt 'More European Iran Policy,'" *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, November 25, 2009.

<sup>108</sup> Joost Lagendik, "Is the EU Still Important to the AKP?" *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, June 16, 2010.

<sup>109</sup> Colin Freeman, "Turkey Goes Cold on Joining EU," *Sunday Telegraph*, July 11, 2010.

rather than ideological reasons. Turks never cared about being European.”<sup>110</sup> In November 2010, President Gul, probably reflecting public sentiment, suggested that, “Maybe, when the time comes, the Turks will say ‘we have fulfilled the reforms, we have upgraded the standards to EU level, this is enough for us’ and maybe will not feel the need to become a member of the union.”<sup>111</sup>

Some government officials feed popular discontent with the EU with complaints that European countries are not providing sufficient assistance to the fight against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), whose major funding sources are in Europe. The German Marshall Fund’s 2010 *Transatlantic Trends* report found that only 38% of Turks still favored joining the EU, down from 73% in 2004, while European support for Turkey’s membership fell from 29% to 23%. The mutual discontent with the protracted process is real.

While the accession process plays out toward its unknown end, Turkey continues to receive considerable EU financial assistance that is programmed to rise in the coming years. The aid is intended to prepare Turkey for membership. Major aid categories include transition assistance and institution building, cross border cooperation, regional development, human resources development, and rural development.

**Table I. European Union Assistance to Turkey**

| Year | Amount (in Millions) |
|------|----------------------|
| 2009 | €566.4 or \$753.2    |
| 2010 | €653.7 or \$869.3    |
| 2011 | €781.9 or \$1,039.7  |
| 2012 | €899.5 or \$1,196.1  |
| 2013 | €935.5 or \$1,244    |

**Source:** European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/financial-assistance/index-en.htm>.

Successive U.S. Administrations, of both political persuasions, have supported Turkey in its efforts to achieve EU membership in order to anchor Turkey more firmly in the West and encourage its democratization. Some Members of Congress seek to use Turkey’s EU ambitions as a way to get it to meet EU standards as soon as possible. For example, S. Res. 615, introduced on July 17, 2008, urged the government of Turkey to respect the religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Christian Church, who has his seat in Istanbul. It noted that the EU requires candidates to guarantee the human rights of religious minorities, who in Turkey include Greek Orthodox believers.

In June 2010, after Turkey voted against enhanced U.N. Security Council sanctions on Iran in opposition to its NATO and EU cohort, Secretary of Defense Gates blamed “some in Europe

<sup>110</sup> Prof. Birol Baskan, on Al Jazeera TV, quoted in David Poort, “Turks Cool to EU Membership,” McClatchy-Tribune Business News, September 16, 2010. This may be a reinterpretation of history as Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern Turkish Republic viewed being European as the same as modern and modeled his reforms on European laws and actions.

<sup>111</sup> “Turkish President’s Exclusive Interview with BBC Turkish Service,” *Anatolia*, November 8, 2010.

refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought... (W)e have to think long and hard about what we might be able to do to ... make the stronger linkages with the West more apparently of interest and value to Turkey's leaders."<sup>112</sup>

AKP critics, however, argue that the European Union is not to blame for stalling the accession process. Rather, they put the responsibility squarely on the AKP, which they maintain does not "share the dream of a liberal, Western Turkey" and is only using the accession process to gain legitimacy and curb the power of the secular military.<sup>113</sup> Other scholars note that Turkey's EU entry is at least 10 to 20 years away, and the main impediments to Turkey's accession are Cyprus, the Kurdish question, and weak rule of law. Instead of blaming the EU, they suggest that U.S. policymakers push the Turks to reform by aligning "itself with Turkish and European advocates of change and help transform Turkey into a more tolerant and democratic society. Only then is EU membership likely."<sup>114</sup>

## Cyprus<sup>115</sup>

Cyprus is divided between the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus, which is administered by Greek Cypriots and controls approximately the southern two-thirds of the island, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is administered by Turkish Cypriots and controls the remaining third of the island. The ethnic division of the island occurred after Turkey's invasion in 1974 in response to a Greek-sponsored coup there. (Turkey maintains that it legally intervened under the terms of 1960 treaties to protect the Turkish Cypriots, its ethnic kin.) Since 1977, the U.N. has made many attempts to reunite Cyprus, but none has succeeded.

Prospects for a Cyprus settlement appeared to improve for the first time in years after March 21, 2008, when (Greek) Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat met and agreed to establish working groups and technical committees to prepare for new negotiations on a settlement that would reunify the island, which has been divided since 1974. The two leaders subsequently decided to begin negotiations on September 3.

Many Greek Cypriots, however, believed that Talat would not be able to conclude a settlement without the approval of Ankara, where key constituencies might not agree to the compromises needed. The AKP strongly supported Talat in 2004, when Turkish Cypriots approved and the Greek Cypriots rejected the last U.N. plan for reunifying Cyprus (the so-called Annan Plan). AKP leaders may have been disillusioned by their failure to achieve positive results with the bold moves they took in 2004, when they ceded considerable power to draft a settlement plan to the United Nations. Meanwhile, entrenched foreign ministry bureaucrats and the Turkish military oppose aspects of a settlement. For example, the Greek Cypriots call for the withdrawal of the approximately 30,000 Turkish soldiers from the island and oppose renewing the 1960 treaties that gave Turkey certain rights to intervene in Cyprus. On March 29, 2008, then-Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Yasar Buyukanit, visited northern Cyprus and stated, "Our soldiers are here for the security of the Turkish Cypriots and they will continue to be here. Reaching an

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<sup>112</sup> "Gates Slams EU Over Turkey," *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Soner Cagaptay, "Turkey Lost Turkey," *Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Henri Barkey, "Turkey Does an About-Face," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 2010.

<sup>115</sup> For history of the events leading to the division of the island and earlier efforts to achieve a settlement, see CRS Report RL33497, *Cyprus: Status of U.N. Negotiations and Related Issues*, by Carol Migdalovitz.

agreement is not enough alone for withdrawal of (Turkish) soldiers from Cyprus.... We should see how safe Turkish Cypriots are. We should believe they are safe.”<sup>116</sup> Then, on April 11, then-Land Forces Commander General Ilker Basbug asserted that Cyprus is an issue concerning the security of Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Therefore, he said, the 1960 Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance, which grant Turkey rights regarding Cyprus, should not be diluted.<sup>117</sup>

After the Turkish Cypriot February 2010 election of right-wing nationalist “President” Dervis Eroglu, who maintains that two founding states should create a new Cyprus as opposed to the Greek Cypriot insistence that the current Republic of Cyprus would continue, the AKP government convinced him to stay at the negotiating table with the Talat-Christofias framework. Prime Minister Erdogan attempted to change the dynamic by influencing the views of the Greek Cypriots in March 2010, when he gave his first interview to Greek Cypriot journalists. He said that he had no hidden agendas and wanted to find a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. In answer to the question of whether he was prepared to withdraw Turkish troops from the island, Erdogan responded that Turkey would honor any agreement agreed to by both communities. However, the (Greek) Cypriot government dismissively called on him “to move from words to deeds.”<sup>118</sup> Eroglu and his Turkish brethren have called for a solution by the end of the year and for an international conference to accelerate the talks. Turkey insists that Turkish Cypriot leaders have status equal to Greek Cypriot leaders at any eventual conference, according to Foreign Minister Davutoglu, but the Greek Cypriots reject that notion.<sup>119</sup>

The lack of a resolution to the Cyprus dispute also has been a vexing impediment to closer EU-NATO security cooperation. In 2003, the EU and NATO reached a comprehensive package of agreements known as Berlin Plus to govern EU use of NATO planning support, assets, and other capabilities.<sup>120</sup> It stipulated that EU member states which are not NATO members must be members of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) to participate in NATO-EU consultations. Cyprus is not a member of NATO or of the PfP and became an EU member in 2004. Cyprus and other EU members then argued that it should not be treated differently from other EU countries and that should be allowed to participate in EU-NATO cooperation on issues such as terrorism. Turkey has blocked Cyprus from reaching a security agreement with NATO that would allow Cypriot participation, and it refuses to allow the sharing of NATO intelligence and resources with the EU. Meanwhile, Cyprus has not allowed Turkey to participate in the fledgling European Defense Agency (EDA). Some of Turkey’s European NATO partners, notably Germany, France, and Britain, have expressed concern about the effect Turkey’s obstruction is having on cooperation between NATO and the EU in Afghanistan.

The United States has had a long-standing policy of support for U.N. efforts to achieve a settlement to reunify the island of Cyprus and at times has had a State Department Special Coordinator for the issue. The Bush and Obama Administrations did not appoint a coordinator and rely on a deputy assistant secretary of state and on the U.S. Ambassador in Nicosia. The Bush

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<sup>116</sup> “Military Gives Support for Cyprus Peace,” *Turkish Daily News*, March 27, 2008, and “Turkish Chief of Staff says Agreement on Cyprus not Enough for Troops to Pull Out,” *Anatolia*, March 29, 2008, BBC Monitoring European.

<sup>117</sup> “General Basbug Says Cyprus Issue is a Problem Concerning the Security of Turkey and the TRNC,” *BRTK* (Bayrak Radio and Television Corporation (of northern Cyprus)), April 11, 2008, OSC Document GMP20080411017006.

<sup>118</sup> Stefanos Evripidou, “Politicians Dismiss Erdogan’s Friendship Offensive,” *Cyprus Mail*, March 3, 2010.

<sup>119</sup> Serkan Demirtas, “Turkey Renews Call for Cyprus Conference,” *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, July 6, 2010.

<sup>120</sup> For details of Berlin Plus, see [www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape\\_eu/se030822a.htm](http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape_eu/se030822a.htm).

Administration praised the efforts of President Christofias and Mr. Talat to reach an agreement and welcomes their “ownership” of the process. It did not comment on the caution voiced by Turkish military and political leaders.

Some Members of Congress also support the Christofias-Talat talks, and have criticized Turkey’s role on the island. For example, H.Res. 1631, agreed to by voice vote on September 28, 2010, calls for the protection of religious sites and artifacts from and in Turkish-occupied areas of northern Cyprus as well as general respect for religious freedom; and it urges Turkey to take specified actions toward that end.

## **Armenia**

### **Bilateral Relations**

Turkey recognized Armenia’s independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, but did not establish diplomatic relations. It also supported Armenia’s integration in international organizations. Armenia has a representative to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization headquartered in Istanbul and has held the six-month rotating presidency of that organization. However, Turkey closed its land border with Armenia in 1993 in response to an Armenian military offensive against Azerbaijanis in and near the predominantly Armenian-populated region of Nagorno Karabakh of Azerbaijan.<sup>121</sup> The Azerbaijanis are close ethnic kin of the Turks, and Turkey has significant energy ties to Azerbaijan.<sup>122</sup> Therefore, Ankara sympathizes with and pays attention when Azerbaijan objects to any warming in relations between Turkey and Armenia before the Nagorno Karabakh issue is resolved.<sup>123</sup>

As preconditions for normalizing relations with Armenia, Ankara demanded that Yerevan abandon efforts to gain international recognition of the 1915 “genocide,” renounce claims to Turkish territory (areas that the Soviet Union ceded to Turkey in the 1921 Treaty of Kars), and withdraw from Nagorno Karabakh. Despite the border closing, Turkey claims that it does not impose an embargo on Armenia as Armenians charge because there are direct flights between Turkish cities and Yerevan, and Armenia has open borders with Iran and Georgia. Illicit trade between the two neighbors via Iran and Georgia is believed to be substantial. In addition, Turkish officials note that more than 40,000 Armenians work (many illegally) in Turkey. The economic harm of the border closure on Armenia is difficult to gauge.<sup>124</sup> Armenia seeks the establishment of diplomatic relations and the opening of the border without preconditions.

In 2005, in a letter to then-Armenian President Robert Kochariyan, Prime Minister Erdogan offered to set up a joint commission of historians to investigate the events of 1915. Armenians refer to the 1915 events as their national genocide and reject investigations as questioning or

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<sup>121</sup> Azerbaijan may be Turkey’s closest ally. The Azerbaijanis are close ethnic kin of the Turks and lucrative gas and oil pipelines from Azerbaijan transit Turkey.

<sup>122</sup> The Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline and the Baku-Tblisi-Erzurum gas pipeline are major energy projects benefiting both countries. The planned Nabucco gas pipeline would be another.

<sup>123</sup> See CRS Report RL33453, *Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests*, by Jim Nichol for more on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

<sup>124</sup> Armenia registered an estimated gross domestic product growth rate of 13.8% in 2007 and 6.8% in 2008. The rate fell an estimated -15% in 2009 as Armenia experienced a recession mainly due to the global financial crisis which produced a sharp drop in remittances and in the construction sector. CIA, *World Factbook*, February 4, 2010.

denying the genocide, but Armenian officials say that Turkish recognition of the genocide is not a precondition for diplomatic relations. Some Armenians, particularly those in the diaspora, suggest that an investigation implies doubt about or denial that there was a genocide and they oppose a commission. The Turkish government has consistently denied that there was a genocide.

Beginning in 2008, hope for an improvement in relations developed. That April, Prime Minister Erdogan sent a letter of congratulations to new Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan on his appointment. He said that “building good neighborly relations through a dialogue” is a top priority.<sup>125</sup> Erdogan emphasized that earlier proposals remained on the table, referring to his 2005 offer to President Kocharyan to set up a joint commission and to accept any conclusion reached. Sargsyan responded by expressing his government’s readiness for a dialogue.<sup>126</sup>

In July 2008, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan called on Turkey to establish normal political relations to enable the creation of “a commission to comprehensively discuss all of the complex issues affecting Armenia and Turkey,” contending that only through structured relations and an effective dialogue could the “most contentious historical issues” be dealt with. He invited President Gul to attend a World Cup qualifying match between the Armenian and Turkish national soccer teams in Yerevan on September 6. Armenia also established a visa-free regime for the entry of Turkish fans for the match.

In the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict of August 2008, Prime Minister Erdogan proposed a Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform and discussed it with Russian, Georgian and Azerbaijani leaders. Erdogan stated that the Platform would target regional peace and security, economic cooperation and energy security, be based on the principles of the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, and include a mechanism for problem-solving and management, although the contours of the Platform remained vague and lacked substance. The Prime Minister stated that talks also would be held with Armenia, and the Armenian foreign minister welcomed this statement and declared that Yerevan would support the Platform. However, Azerbaijani officials said that they would not cooperate with Armenia in any umbrella organization until its troops withdraw from their territory.

Some analysts have suggested that Turkey sought the warming of Armenian-Turkish relations as a message to Washington as well as Yerevan, with the intent of impeding congressional or presidential recognition of the genocide. It also would bolster Turkey’s regional power ambitions. The United States seeks a reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey in order to strengthen stability in the Caucasus. Then-Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried called on Armenia to acknowledge the existing border with Turkey and disavow any claim on its territory, while calling on Turkey “to come to terms with a dark chapter in its history,” i.e., the period which the Armenians refer to as their genocide.<sup>127</sup> U.S. Democratic and Republican administrations have never used the term genocide to describe the events of 1915 so as not to offend Turkey.

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<sup>125</sup> “Armenia, Turkey Express Desire to Normalise Bilateral Relations,” *ITAR-TASS*, April 27, 2008.

<sup>126</sup> Reports of secret bilateral Turkish-Armenian talks in Switzerland have not been confirmed, but such talks are noted in Richard Giragosian, “Armenia and the New Turkish Proposal,” *Turkish Daily News*, August 22, 2008.

<sup>127</sup> Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, “The Caucasus: Frozen Conflicts and Closed Borders,” June 18, 2008.

Washington was not informed before Prime Minister Erdogan proposed Caucasian Stability and Cooperation Platform, although it had long urged Ankara and Yerevan to improve their relations. While visiting Turkey, Senator Richard Lugar, ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said that he expected discussion of the proposed platform to be postponed until Russian troops completely withdrew from Georgia.<sup>128</sup> In the end, nothing appeared to develop from the Platform proposal.

On April 22, 2009, apparently culminating two years of secret talks, the Turkish, Armenian, and Swiss foreign ministries simultaneously issued a brief statement announcing that Turkey and Armenia had agreed on a “comprehensive framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations.”<sup>129</sup> The agreement did not ameliorate the intractable issues that continue to prevent normalization. President Sargsyan insisted that Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh had not been discussed with the Turks and that the establishment of relations with Turkey would not affect international recognition of the genocide.<sup>130</sup> The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry released a statement saying that “the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations must proceed in parallel with the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the occupied lands of Azerbaijan.” In particular, Baku vehemently opposed Turkey’s opening of its border with Armenia before the Nagorno Karabakh issue is resolved. Prime Minister Erdogan sympathetically asserted, “there is a need to lift the occupation so that we can take our steps comfortably. Otherwise, we would do wrong to our brothers in Azerbaijan.”<sup>131</sup>

Nonetheless, on August 31, 2009, the foreign ministries of Armenia, Turkey, and Switzerland jointly announced a plan to guide the establishment and development of relations between Armenia and Turkey. They stated that Turkey and Armenia had agreed, with the help of Swiss mediators, to begin internal political consultations on a Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations and a Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations.<sup>132</sup> The consultations were to be completed within six months; then the protocols would be signed and submitted to the respective parliaments for ratification. Foreign Minister Davutoglu and Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian signed the protocols in Zurich on October 10, 2009, in the presence of Secretary of State Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

The Protocol on the Development of Bilateral Relations called for the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey within two months after it enters into force. As noted, Turkey closed the common land border in 1993 in response to what it viewed as a harsh Armenian offensive against Azerbaijanis in the conflict over the Azerbaijani territory of Nagorno Karabakh. Armenians eventually seized and still hold all of Nagorno Karabakh and seven surrounding Azerbaijani provinces (*rayons*). Azerbaijan demands that Turkey not reopen the border until the Karabakh issue is solved.

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<sup>128</sup> “US Senator Hopes for Turkish Caucasus Plan Postponement until Russian Pullout,” *Anatolia*, August 26, 2008, BBC Monitoring European, August 27, 2008.

<sup>129</sup> Text of statement available on the websites of the Armenian and Turkish Foreign Ministries.

<sup>130</sup> “Armenian Leader Denies Accord with Turkey to Stop Genocide Recognition,” Public Television of Armenia, April 25, 2009, BBC Monitoring Central Asia, April 26, 2009.

<sup>131</sup> Cansu Camlibel and Vercihan Ziflioglu, “Armenian FM Nalbandian Last-Minute Arrival Sign of ‘Discomfort,’” *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, April 6, 2009.

<sup>132</sup> The Protocols are available on the websites of the Armenian and Turkish Foreign Ministries foreign ministries.

The signing ceremony had to be rescued after Nalbandian wanted to give a statement referring to the Armenian genocide and Davutoglu wanted one to refer to Nagorno Karabakh. Minister Lavrov and Secretary Clinton managed to have the ceremony proceed without statements. President Sargsyan attended a soccer match in Turkey four days later. However, shortly after the ceremony, he declared that relations with Turkey could not call into question the genocide and Prime Minister Erdogan insisted that relations with Armenia could not develop without the end of the occupation of Nagorno Karabakh and made it a precondition for ratification. Their views have not changed as of the date of this report.

The Protocol on Developing Bilateral Relations also calls for “a dialogue on the historical dimension with the aim to restore mutual confidence, including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations.” Although this statement does not mention the genocide, it provoked the withdrawal of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), an Armenian political party which is related to the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), an active U.S. lobby, from the Armenian government and the launching of its campaign against ratification. ARF argues that the protocols unacceptably undermine international recognition of the genocide, legitimize the current border between Armenia and Turkey (thereby denying ARF’s territorial claims to eastern Turkey, which it refers to as Western Armenia), and link the normalization of relations between Armenian and Turkey with a resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh issue (for which ARF opposes territorial concessions).

In January 2010, the Armenian Constitutional Court issued an opinion which reinforced Turkey’s reluctance to ratify the protocols. The Court ruled that the obligations stipulated in the protocols do conform to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia.<sup>133</sup> However, it also found that they cannot be interpreted or applied in a way that would contradict the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia or Paragraph 11 of the Declaration of Independence. The Preamble is a general statement of values. Paragraph 11 states, “The Republic of Armenia stands in support of the task of achieving international recognition of the 1915 Genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia.” This part of the opinion outraged Turkey. After heated official statements, the Turkish parliament requested clarification from Yerevan about the effect of the Court’s opinion. Turkish officials say that no clarification has been received. Foreign Minister Davutoglu claimed that the Court interpretation contradicts the Protocols’ “essence and substance.”

The Obama Administration viewed the Court decision as a “positive step toward normalization” because it permits the Protocols “to move forward toward parliamentary ratification and does not appear to limit or qualify them in any way,” according to Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon.<sup>134</sup>

In February 2010, President Sargsyan submitted the Protocols to parliament for ratification, but said that it would only act after Turkey’s legislators did so. Ten days later, the Armenian parliament passed a bill to allow the suspension or termination of signed international agreements, i.e., the Protocols, before they enter into force. The action was said to be in response to Erdogan’s linking of the Protocols to the Karabakh issue. Ankara has not proceeded with

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<sup>133</sup> For text of the Constitution, see the website of the National Assembly of Armenia at <http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=constitution&lang=eng>.

<sup>134</sup> “U.S. Praises Armenian High Court Ruling on Turkish Protocols,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (hereafter RFE/RL), January 25, 2010.

ratification. According to Foreign Minister Nalbandian, negotiations “were finalized by the signature of the protocols,” so no new round is needed and the final step in the normalization process is ratification.<sup>135</sup>

On June 19, 2010, there was an unpleasant reminder of the instability of the regional situation due to the unsettled Karabakh conflict. Despite the cease fire, a skirmish resulted in the deaths of four Armenians and an Azerbaijani soldier. The incident did not spark a greater conflict. The Organizations for Security Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) Minsk Group, i.e., the United States, France, and Russia, have unsuccessfully tried to resolve the Karabakh dispute since 1992. Turkey is a member of the OSCE, but not the Minsk Group. Additional unexpected incidents may occur unless there is a settlement.

## **Genocide Issue**

Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu has stated that foreign, “third party,” efforts to recognize the genocide “will make this normalization impossible” and it may be a complicating factor.<sup>136</sup> Members of Congress have repeatedly introduced resolutions to urge Administrations of both political parties to recognize the Armenian genocide in some way. In the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res. 106, introduced on January 30, 2007, sought to have the President affirm the “U.S. record relating to the Armenian Genocide.” The House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved the resolution by a vote of 27-21 on October 10, 2007, with more than half of the Members of the House listed as co-sponsors at some point. However, after officials of the Bush and past Administrations expressed fear that the resolution might detrimentally affect U.S. forces in Iraq, who depend on cargo transiting Turkey, about two dozen Members withdrew as co-sponsors and a possible majority in support of the resolution may have been lost. On October 25, 2007, key supporters of the resolution requested the Speaker not to bring it to a vote.<sup>137</sup>

The 111<sup>th</sup> Congress also took up the issue. On March 4, 2010, the House Foreign Affairs Committee narrowly approved H.Res. 252 by a vote of 23-22.<sup>138</sup> The resolution made a number of historical “findings” about the Ottoman Empire’s actions against its Armenian citizens during the period from 1915 to 1923 and about past U.S., U.N., and other statements about those actions. It then called on the President to

(1) ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of the failure to realize a just resolution; and

(2) accurately characterize the systematic and deliberate annihilation of 1,500,000 Armenians and genocide in his annual message commemorating the Armenian genocide issued on or about April 24....

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<sup>135</sup> Edward Nalbandian, “Turkey has Gone Back on its Word: Armenia’s Foreign Minister Says Ankara Needs to Prove its Good Intentions,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 11, 2010.

<sup>136</sup> Sebnem Arsu and Sabrina Tavernise, “Turkey Criticizes House Committee Vote on Armenian Killings,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2010.

<sup>137</sup> Richard Simon, “Sponsors Delay Genocide Vote,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2007.

<sup>138</sup> In the Senate, S. Res. 316, introduced on October 21, 2009, but not voted on in committee, would have the same effect.

S. Res. 316, a parallel measure, was introduced and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations on October 21, 2009. No further action was taken.

Turkish officials maintain that the Armenian deaths were the result of civil conflicts accompanying the end of World War I and the demise of the Ottoman Empire. They note that many Muslims died in those conflicts as well and adamantly deny that Armenians were victims of a genocide. Members of a multiparty Turkish parliamentary delegation who visited Washington to witness the vote said that they would not take up ratification of the Protocols or support opening the border until the Karabakh issue is resolved.<sup>139</sup>

In response to the Committee's vote, the Turkish government took several actions. First, it recalled Ambassador Namik Tan from Washington until, as the Prime Minister said, it got a "clear sign" on the fate of the resolution. Ankara also monitored President Obama's annual April 24 statement commemorating the Armenian tragedy for use of the word genocide. Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated that it was "a matter of national honor for us."<sup>140</sup> In 2009, in order to maintain working relations with Ankara, President Obama, who had promised to recognize the genocide during his election campaign, used the Armenian words *meds yeghern* or "great calamity" to refer to the atrocities.<sup>141</sup> Turkish officials were not satisfied at that time, with Prime Minister Erdogan charging that the statement was "a nonfactual and unacceptable interpretation of history."<sup>142</sup> In 2010, the President used the same phrase. The Turkish government also discouraged business groups, such as the powerful Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD) and others, from visiting the United States for some time. The prominent annual American-Turkish Council conference scheduled for April in Washington was postponed until October after the group learned that no Turkish ministers or military officers would attend. While visiting Saudi Arabia, Erdogan was quoted as controversially claiming "the Jewish lobby in the U.S. supported this resolution."<sup>143</sup>

Foreign Minister Davutoglu criticized the Administration for not doing enough to influence the Committee vote by explaining the importance of relations with Turkey and said that it would set back Turkish-Armenian reconciliation.<sup>144</sup> U.S. State Department spokesman P. J. Crowley stated that Secretary Clinton had spoken to congressional leaders about the White House's desire that the resolution not come to the floor of the House for a vote. He said that "further congressional action would impede the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia."<sup>145</sup>

Prime Minister Erdogan would like Yerevan to exert influence over diaspora communities which seek genocide recognition resolutions in foreign countries. On March 16, 2010, he stated that the status of 100,000 (sic) illegal Armenian immigrants in Turkey could be reassessed, implying that

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<sup>139</sup> Parliamentarians' statements. Chatham House rules prevent attribution of the quote to a specific deputy.

<sup>140</sup> Fulya Ozerkan, "Turkey Expects Stronger Action from Washington on 'Genocide' Issue," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, March 9, 2010.

<sup>141</sup> Statement accessible via <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

<sup>142</sup> "Turkish PM Criticizes Obama's Message on '1915 Events,'" BBC Monitoring European, April 17, 2009.

<sup>143</sup> "Turkish Minister Cancels U.S. Trip Following House Panel Vote," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, March 9, 2010. In the past, several Jewish American groups who favor Israeli-Turkish relations urged Members of Congress not to approve genocide resolutions. This year most of the groups abstained from engaging on the issue at all. Only the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) actively opposed the resolution.

<sup>144</sup> Sebnem Arsu and Sabrina Tavernise, "Turkey Criticizes House Committee Vote on Armenian Killings," *New York Times*, March 6, 2010.

<sup>145</sup> "Turkey Angry at U.S. Armenian 'Genocide' Vote," RFE/RL, March 5, 2010.

they could be deported.<sup>146</sup> He may have wanted to make Yerevan understand that it has other interests at play in the genocide issue and in normalization of relations. His remarks were criticized at home and abroad, and the Prime Minister then suggested that they had been “distorted.”<sup>147</sup>

## **Afghanistan**

Turkey has close ties with Afghanistan which date back several centuries and which intensified during the time of the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in the early 20th century. For this reason and others, it attaches great importance to the independence, national unity, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Because Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country and the only Muslim country in NATO, its participation in NATO’s military operation in Afghanistan at whatever level is considered symbolically significant. However, Turkish officials believe that, for what they refer to as historical, cultural, and religious reasons, Turks should not disturb the trust that Afghans place in Turkey by fighting other Muslims. The Turkish General Staff agrees with the civilian leadership’s opposition to committing combat forces.

Turkey has twice commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): from June 2002-February 2003 and from February-August 2005. During each command period, Turkey boosted its troop strength in Afghanistan. During its first command, the Turkish contribution increased to a battalion-task force of approximately 1,300 troops. After ceding command, during the period from February 2003-August 2004, Turkey reduced its ISAF contingent to 300 military personnel and 3 helicopters for use in medical evacuation and reconnaissance. When Turkey took command of ISAF a second time, it deployed a mechanized infantry brigade and ran the Kabul International Airport with a total of 1,430 troops. Turkey again increased its forces to 1,220 troops when it assumed joint leadership with France and Italy of the Regional Command Capital (RCC) in Kabul in August 2006. In addition, former Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (parliament) and former Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin served as the NATO Secretary-General’s Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan from November 2003-August 2006.

On November 1, 2009, Turkey reassumed the Regional Command of ISAF in Kabul and increased its troop presence by 958 to 1,758. Turkey will hold the command for another year, beginning November 2, 2010. Turkish forces in Kabul command Albanian, Croatian, Czech, Azerbaijani, and Georgian troops. When the Turkish General Staff confirmed the takeover of the Kabul command, it clarified that “the Turkish Armed Forces would not be used for fighting terrorism, drug-trafficking, and mine-clearing missions.”<sup>148</sup> Turkish officials insist that, although combat capable, their troops have no combat mission except for the protection of reconstruction teams and contractors. In December, Defense Minister Gonul stated, Turkey has “not changed or reduced the number of caveats” for the mission<sup>149</sup> Moreover, judging from past behavior, troop levels are likely to decrease when Turkey again cedes command .

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<sup>146</sup> “Premier Says Ankara May Reassess Status of Illegal Armenians in Turkey,” *Anatolia*, March 16, 2010.

<sup>147</sup> “Turkish PM: Statement on Deportation of Illegal Armenians in Turkey Intended to Attract International Community’s Attention,” *Trend News* (Baku), March 20, 2010.

<sup>148</sup> Website of the Turkish General Staff, <http://www.tsk.tr>.

<sup>149</sup> Abdullah Bozkurt, Ercan Yavuz, “Turkey Balks at Providing Afghan Combat Troops,” *Today’s Zaman* Online, December 4, 2009.

Turkey has had a civilian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Wardak province, about 40 kilometers west of Kabul, since November 2006. It is staffed by experts and trainers from various Turkish institutions and protected by about 70 to 80 Turkish soldiers. The PRT's mission includes development of administrative and judicial systems, training police and increasing their capabilities, and conducting activities to improve and support infrastructure, public works, and social support to raise the quality of life of the local population. Turkish officials have established another PRT in Jowzjan (alt. transliteration Javizjan) province. Turkish forces there will work on development projects in that province and in Sar-e Pol province jointly with Swedish forces.

Turkey continues to train the Afghan National Police Force, and has trained approximately 1,100 policemen so far. It constructed and bears all costs of a Police Training and Education Center. In 2007, Afghan officials from the Afghanistan National Narcotics Interdiction Unit participated in a drug unit commanders' course conducted by experts from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration at the Turkish International Academy Against Organized Crime (TADOC) in Ankara, with funding from both TADOC and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE). Follow-up training was held in Afghanistan in 2008. In October 2009, Turkey began one-week training courses for civilian Afghan officials at the Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAIE) in Ankara.

With regard to military training, after meeting President Obama at the White House on December 7, 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan said that Turkey has offered to establish a military training center in Afghanistan and to train an Afghan army battalion there in addition to training another battalion in Turkey. In addition, approximately 120 Afghan military officers train in Isparta, Turkey monthly. Turkey is a major sponsor of the National Military Academy in Afghanistan, where 17 Turkish advisors are assigned, as well as of the Kabul Military High School, with 11 instructors/advisors. Smaller groups of Turkish military advisors are at other Afghan training centers. In all, Turkey has trained approximately 5,000 Afghan soldiers so far. Turkey also has donated arms and equipment for the Afghan military.

In response to President Obama's December 1, 2009, remarks on Afghanistan, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying, "Afghanistan's future will be determined under the leadership and ownership of the Afghans" and reiterating Turkey's long-standing view that "the problems in Afghanistan cannot be solved by military means alone."<sup>150</sup> To support other means, Turkey has committed U.S.\$300 million in non-military aid. In 2009 alone, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) contributed \$96.4 million to Afghanistan. Turkey has a special ambassador based at the Foreign Ministry in Ankara responsible for reconstruction in Afghanistan (and Iraq) and TIKA implements all technical assistance programs. Foreign Minister Davutoglu reported that Turkey has built 34 schools, 6 clinics, and a hospital. Other Turkish aid is being channeled for road construction, for a bridge over the Kabul River, for the repair of mosques, and for potable water wells in rural areas. Moreover, in 2008, Turkey provided 755 tons of humanitarian food assistance across Afghanistan.

Other means also includes encouraging the Afghan government and allies to talk to the Taliban, which Davutoglu observed is not "the equivalent of Al Qaeda."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Statement accessible at Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>.

<sup>151</sup> Interview by Natalie Nougayrede, "Sanctioning Iran only Exacerbates the Situation," *Le Monde*, December 19, 2008, OSC Document EUP20081219029007.

Finally, Turkey also has historically close relations with Pakistan and President Gul has hosted annual trilateral summit meetings since April 2007 with his Afghan and Pakistani counterparts as well as of their chiefs of staff to discuss relations to help them overcome problems. On each occasion, the leaders have reiterated pledges to cooperate in many areas—from security and counterterrorism to economic development and transportation.

After the announcement of the U.S. force surge in Afghanistan and the call for increased NATO contributions in 2009, there was additional focus on Turkey because it has the second largest military in NATO. Then-U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey requested Turkish officials to make additional troops contributions, to show more “flexibility” in defining their mission (i.e., to lift caveats constraining their service), and to allow more troops to serve outside of Kabul.<sup>152</sup> The Turkish government resisted these entreaties.<sup>153</sup> Some analysts suggest that the Obama Administration may be reluctant to demand much more from Turkey for Afghanistan because of its need for Turkish cooperation in stabilizing Iraq, dealing with Iran, and on other regional issues.

## Energy

Turkey has a very proactive energy policy and strategy. The Foreign Ministry notes that Turkey is geographically close to 72% of the world proven gas and 73% of its oil reserves in the Middle East and Caspian basin. Therefore, it views Turkey as a “natural energy bridge between the source countries and consumer countries....”<sup>154</sup> U.S. Undersecretary of Energy Daniel Poneman also describes Turkey as an “essential energy corridor.”<sup>155</sup> A number of significant pipeline projects have been completed or are planned to transit Turkish territory. Turkey has limited domestic energy resources. Aside from transit fees and access to hydrocarbons for its own use, Turkey benefits by diminishing the threat of an environmental catastrophe as the pipelines bypass the heavily trafficked Bosphorus (or Istanbul) Strait through which more tankers would otherwise transit en route from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. However, Russian tankers still use the Bosphorus heavily. Energy pipelines also further Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s goal of increasing economic interdependence and cooperation among neighboring countries and thereby providing a stronger foundation for regional peace.

## Oil and Gas Pipelines

The following are the major pipelines transiting Turkey:

The completed Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline may be considered the first fulfillment of Turkey’s modern vision. Since 2006, it has carried oil from Azerbaijani Caspian fields via Georgia to the Turkish Mediterranean for shipment to international markets. In 2008, Kazakhstan

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<sup>152</sup> Ugur Ergan, “Everyone is ‘Combatant,’” *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, December 3, 2009, OSC Document GMP20091203742003.

<sup>153</sup> For example, Yasemin Congar, “Afghanistan Bargaining,” *Taraf Online*, December 3, 2009, OSC Document GMP20091203742007.

<sup>154</sup> Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Directorate General, for Energy, Water, and Environment, *Turkey’s Energy Strategy*, January 2009.

<sup>155</sup> Speech to American-Turkish Council annual conference, October 19, 2010.

began shipping its oil across the Caspian for pumping via the BTC. A companion Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline became operational in 2007. (BTE also is known as the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP)). BTE may link to the long-planned Trans-Caspian Pipeline (TCP) intended to transport gas from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan westward, but TCP has failed to materialize because littoral states have not been able to delineate their borders.

The Turkish-Greek Interconnector (TGI), operational since 2007, carries Azerbaijani gas from Turkey to Greece. A pipeline from Italy to Greece will connect to TGI, transforming it into the IGTI. The IGTI, which will have a capacity of 12 bcm a year.

Turkey is the critical link in ambitious plans to construct the 3,300 kilometer (2,050 miles), estimated €7.9 (\$11 billion) Nabucco Natural Gas Pipeline to transport a maximum of 31 bcm of gas annually via Turkey to Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and, finally, to Austria. It is being built by a consortium of companies from participating countries and Germany, including the Turkish state-owned Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), with each owning an equal 16.67% share. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2012 and the pipeline may come on line in 2015 to begin to supply about 5% of Europe's needs. Nabucco is viewed as enabling European countries to lessen their dependence on Russian gas and thereby enhance their energy security, although it has been suggested that the pipeline would not ease Europe's dependence and only fill growing demand over a long term.<sup>156</sup> Russia supplied almost 25% of Europe's gas needs last year. In March 2010, the European Commission pledged an initial €273 million (\$379million) for Nabucco and, in September 2010, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) committed to providing up to \$4 billion or half the cost of the project. Despite these showings of confidence, some analysts question the prospects for the pipeline and projections regarding possible gas supplies.

Other Turkish foreign policy priorities have been ensnared in the Nabucco project. It has been believed that the pipeline would not be viable without Azerbaijani gas supplies, but Baku was upset with Turkey's effort to improve ties with Armenia before the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was resolved. (See "Armenia" above.) Shortly after Armenia and Turkey signed protocols on establishing relations, Azerbaijan signaled its discontent by signing an agreement to supply a small amount of gas to Russia and thereby suggesting that it had alternative outlets to Nabucco. However, as the situation was evolving, representatives of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic (SOCAR) said that they were ready to supply 7.3 bcm of gas from the Shah Deniz 2 field scheduled to come on line in 2016 to Nabucco, and President Ilham Aliyev has voiced his interest in the pipeline on subsequent occasions.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, Turkish officials have repeatedly bowed to Azerbaijani concerns by making progress on the Nagorno Karabakh issue a precondition for improving relations with Armenia. Turkey also maintains that progress on Nabucco would be accelerated if the energy chapter in its accession negotiations with the EU were opened, but it has not made that a precondition for moving forward. As noted above, Cyprus is blocking the opening of that chapter.

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<sup>156</sup> Shang Xuqian, "Timely Investment Key to Success of Nabucco Pipeline Project," Xinhua News Agency, May 14, 2009, OSC Document CCP20090514968220.

<sup>157</sup> "Azerbaijan Set to Become Main Supplier of Nabucco, Gas Pipeline," Turan News Agency (Baku), October 6, 2009, BBC Monitoring Central Asia.

A Turkish link to the Arab Natural Gas Pipeline that transports Egyptian gas Jordan and Syria has been discussed for some time. It probably will not be completed before 2012 and, eventually, it also could connect to Nabucco.

The Kirkuk-Ceyhan (or Yurmurtalik) oil pipeline from Iraq is Turkey's oldest pipeline and its capacity is larger than the BTC. However, sabotage related to the insurgency in Iraq and the PKK has intermittently interrupted the flow, and the pipeline has not operated at full capacity. Nonetheless, Turkey and Iraq have plans for a parallel gas pipeline that would link to Nabucco. In July 2009, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki attended the signing ceremony for Nabucco and offered to supply it with 15 bcm of gas (half the capacity) annually by 2015. The offer was not a formal commitment and probably depends on arrangements between the Baghdad government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in the north. In August 2010, the German partner in Nabucco signed a cooperation agreement with the KRG, which Baghdad denounced as illegal as it does not recognize energy contracts signed by the KRG. The KRG's Natural Resources Minister has claimed, "I am confident we can supply more than 50% (of the gas supply for Nabucco, identical to Al Maliki's offer). In fact, if we can prove the full tcf (trillion cubic feet) of reserves, we can supply the entire needs of the Nabucco pipeline."<sup>158</sup> Fulfillment of his boast would depend on stability in Iraq.

In addition, Turkey imports gas from Iran via a pipeline from Tabriz to Ankara that both governments foresee as linking to Nabucco. Tehran claims to have a deal to transport gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey for Nabucco via a pipeline in northwestern Iran.<sup>159</sup> However, Turkey's European partners in Nabucco oppose Iran's participation before the nuclear issue is resolved.

Turkey imports more than 55% of its own gas from Russia. It receives about 10 bcm a year from the Blue Stream Natural Gas Pipeline that transits the Black Sea to the Turkish port of Samsun. Blue Stream came on line in 2005. It also obtains about 6 bcm a year from the Soviet-era Trans-Balkan pipeline from Russia via Ukraine and Bulgaria. Plans for a Blue Stream 2 that would parallel Blue Stream and then branch off towards Israel were suspended in June 2010, several weeks after the crisis over the aid flotilla (discussed about in section on relations with Israel).

Turkey agreed in August 2009 to allow Russia to carry out feasibility studies (seismic and environmental tests) for the South Stream pipeline in Turkish Black Sea waters and in principle to the pipeline's construction.<sup>160</sup> South Stream is to carry Russian natural gas across the Black Sea to Bulgaria and further to Italy and Austria, bypassing Turkey, and many view it as Nabucco's rival. However, Turkish officials claimed that South Stream and Nabucco are not rivals but "complementary."<sup>161</sup> The agreement puzzled observers as South Stream is viewed as a competitor of Nabucco. However, Turkey also hoped that in exchange it would attract Russian oil to supply the stalled Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline from Samsun to Ceyhan, also known as the TransAnatolian Pipeline (TAP)—not to be confused with the TransAdriatic Pipeline with the same acronym. TAP was to be 555 km long with a capacity of 545 million barrels per year. In October 2009, Russian, Italian, and Turkish companies signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction and operation of the pipeline as well as for the transportation, refining, and joint sale of oil products.

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<sup>158</sup> Irem Koker and Fulya Ozerkan, "US Signals it Prefers Nabucco over Other Pipelines," *Hurriyet Daily News*. com, October 1, 2010.

<sup>159</sup> "Iran Redraws Energy Map to Defy U.S.," *UPI Energy Resources*, January 14, 2010.

<sup>160</sup> South Stream would have twice the capacity and more three times the cost of Nabucco.

<sup>161</sup> "Turkey Says Gas Pipelines Not Rivals, but 'Complementary Projects,'" *Anatolia*, August 7, 2009.

Although the head Transneft, Russia's state-owned pipeline corporation, announced in September 2010 that talks on Samsun-Ceyhan had stalled, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin had suggested that his country would keep its promise to Turkey.<sup>162</sup> Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz has stated that Turkey plans to begin constructing the pipeline in the second half of 2011 and expects Russian oil to fill about half its capacity.

In addition to the pipelines, Turkey imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Qatar, and Trinidad & Tobago last year.

## **U.S. Energy Policy**

In April 2009, Secretary of State Clinton named Ambassador Richard Morningstar as her Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy to support an east-west energy corridor. He and Senator Richard Lugar attended the signing ceremony for the Nabucco agreement. Although United States is not a participant in Nabucco, it is a major supporter. Welcoming the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nabucco in July 2009, the State Department said, "Energy security is gained through diversity—diversity of energy sources, delivery routes, and consumer markets, and the Nabucco pipeline is an example of that diversity." It did not say that Russia is the country from which Europe needs to diversify and Morningstar later suggested that Russia could participate in the Nabucco project, "not as a controlling partner but as a participant."<sup>163</sup> He elaborated, "I don't think it would be healthy to see Russia in a controlling position with respect to the Nabucco pipeline, but if it could contribute and create a win-win situation as a minority supplier that would seem to be a normal business."<sup>164</sup>

The United States also believes that the pipeline would contribute positively to Turkish-European relations and perhaps help strengthen Iraq's economic stability (if it is a supplier).<sup>165</sup> Ambassador Morningstar has stated that Kurdish participation "cannot and should not happen without an agreement between Baghdad and Arbil (regional capital of the KRG)," which has not yet materialized.<sup>166</sup>

U.S. officials have welcomed each announcement of prospective suppliers for Nabucco, but opposes Iran's participation until the nuclear issue is solved.<sup>167</sup> However, Turkey's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yildiz has stated that his country would "permit the transit of any gas."<sup>168</sup> Ambassador Morningstar also hailed the Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector as potentially offering the same benefits as Nabucco and recommended that participants in Nabucco and TGI talk. In October 2010, Morningstar said, "We made it clear that we support the Southern Corridor. We also made it clear that the Nabucco pipeline is preferable strategically and

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<sup>162</sup> "Head of Russia's Transneft Says Samsun-Ceyhan Pipeline Project Halted," *Anatolia*, September 15, 2010.

<sup>163</sup> Joshua Kucera, "Caspian Energy: Washington Trying New Tack on Nabucco Project," *Eurasia Insight*, February 1, 2010.

<sup>164</sup> Fatma Demirelli, "US Welcomes Kurdish Gas in Europe-Bound Energy Project," *Sunday's Zaman Online*, October 3, 2010.

<sup>165</sup> Marc Grossman and Simon Henderson, "Foreign Pipeline Plan Matters," *Dallas Morning News*, July 21, 2009..

<sup>166</sup> Demirelli, op. cit.

<sup>167</sup> "EU Gas Projects Should not Tap Iran Yet," Reuters, November 18, 2009.

<sup>168</sup> "Turkey to Allow Gas Transit to Europe from Any Country," ITAR-TASS, December 3, 2009, OSC Document CEP20091203950088.

politically. It is hard to answer whether these projects will be complementary or competitive since the initial gas is coming from the Caspian.” He added, “We want to be a helpful bystander.”<sup>169</sup>

## **Nuclear Energy**

Russia won a tender to construct Turkey’s first nuclear energy plant for civilian use at Akkuyu near Mersin on the Mediterranean. Other countries declined to bid because the site is controversially located in an earthquake zone. In May 2010, Turkey agreed to let the Russian state nuclear corporation (Rosatom) build and own the \$20 billion, 4,800 megawatt power plant. The head of Rosatom said that his company would offer 49% of the venture to investors in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe. In all, Russia is supposed to build four nuclear reactors on Turkey’s Mediterranean coast and will sell 50% of the electricity produced to the Turkish state energy company at a fixed price. The Turkish government will receive 20% of the profit, if any.<sup>170</sup> Only the contract for Akkuyu has been signed. As talks with South Korea to build another \$20 million reactor at Sinop near the Black Sea appeared to hit obstacles in November 2010, Minister Yildiz said that talks would begin with a Japanese company.

## **China**

Not yet on Congress’s radar, the warming of Turkish-Chinese relations is a relatively new development that is likely to advance even more in the future. President Gul’s June 2009 trip to China was supposed to signal a new era in bilateral ties. He signed agreements for cooperation in infrastructure, power, mining, agriculture, and other fields, and was the first Turkish president to visit Urumqi, capital of China’s far northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), home of many Uighur, a Chinese Muslim group who speak a Turkic language and are considered ethnic kin of the Turks. In July, however, bilateral ties were disturbed briefly due to Turkish sympathies for the Uighur. Prime Minister Erdogan described as “a kind of genocide” and “savagery” the Chinese security forces’ suppression of Uighur riots in Urumqi sparked by tensions with Han Chinese, and he called for a U.N. Security Council discussion of the events.<sup>171</sup> President Gul labeled the events a “massacre.”<sup>172</sup> The disturbances left 197 dead and more than 1,700 injured. Yet, Erdogan’s public anger receded rapidly as his government gave a higher priority to trade and military ties than to ethnic affinities. High level visits resumed uninterruptedly. State Minister for Foreign Trade Zafer Caglayan visited Beijing in August to smooth out problems that the prime minister’s remarks may have caused, and he reportedly carried an accommodating message from Erdogan.<sup>173</sup> According to Chinese state media, the Minister stated, “Turkey understands the measures China took to deal with the July 5 incidents.”<sup>174</sup> On the other hand, Turkish state media reported that Caglayan had voiced Turkey’s

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<sup>169</sup> Koker and Ozerkan, op. cit.

<sup>170</sup> “Medvedev Lands \$20Bln Nuclear Deal in Turkey,” *The Moscow Times Online*, May 13, 2010.

<sup>171</sup> For more, see CRS Report RL34729, *Human Rights in China: Trends and Policy Implications*, by Thomas Lum and Hannah Fischer.

<sup>172</sup> “Turkey’s President Urges China to Prosecute Perpetrators of Xinjiang ‘Massacre,’” *Anatolia*, July 10, 2009.

<sup>173</sup> “Turkey Vows to Stamp Out Activity Detrimental to China,” Xinhua News Agency, September 1, 2009.

<sup>174</sup> “China, Turkey Look to Tap Cooperation Potential Despite Trade Frictions,” Xinhua News Agency, September 27, 2009.

concerns about events in Urumqi.<sup>175</sup> Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek visited in September to invite Chinese investment in Turkey.

Both countries' foreign policies have a considerable mercantilist component, providing a great motivation to overcome differences and an avenue for sharing views. In October 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao visited Turkey, where he signed several agreements, including one to transform the ancient Silk Road into a "Silk Railway," linking Turkey and China. China will grant loans to Turkey to finance more than half the cost of constructing high speed train lines in Turkey that would be part of the railway. In the same month, Chinese military jets participated in the joint Anatolian Eagle exercise in Turkey, controversially using Iranian air space to reach their destination and replacing former U.S. and Israeli participants in the drill. Turkey's F-16 jets did not take part, but Turkish forces tested China's Russian-built MiG-29 and Su-27 warplanes. Also in October, Interior Minister Besir Atalay visited China to praise the intense cooperation between police departments, especially in the fight against illicit drug-trafficking. In November, Foreign Minister Davutoglu and State Minister for Foreign Trade Caglayan separately visited China. Davutoglu called for enhancing strategic cooperation between the two countries and visited the XUAR, but did not meet dissidents there.<sup>176</sup> Also in November, Chinese and Turkish army special operations forces trained together in Turkey. It was the first time that the People's Liberation Army sent troops to train in a NATO country.

As with other countries, Turkey's desire to develop trade is the major impetus for improving ties and bilateral trade is growing rapidly. There is severe trade imbalance. In 2009, Turkey imported \$21.7 billion in goods from China and exported \$1.6 billion in goods, most from the mining sector, to China. Prime Minister Erdogan said that they aim to increase bilateral trade to \$50 billion a year by 2015 and \$100 billion a year by 2020.<sup>177</sup> Turkey would like to correct the trade imbalance with Chinese investments in Turkey, tourism, joint ventures in third countries (like the oil deals in Iraq), and more access for Turkish goods in China.

## **U.S.-Turkish Relations**

### **Policy Overview**

From the outset, the Obama Administration has indicated an appreciation for the importance of U.S.-Turkish relations and has sought to illuminate ties that were clouded during the Bush Administration by the Turkish parliament's March 2003 decision not to allow U.S. forces to use Turkish territory to open a northern front in the war against Iraq and by Ankara's questions about the effects of the war. Signaling a change in the U.S. policy toward Turkey, both Secretary of State Clinton and President Obama visited Turkey on their first overseas trips and sought to warm relations. In a speech to the Turkish parliament on April 6, 2009, President Obama hailed the United States' "model partnership" with Turkey in efforts to overcome "the challenges of our time."<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> "Turkish Minister Voices Concerns over China's Urumqi Incidents," *Anatolia*, September 1, 2009.

<sup>176</sup> "Turkish FM Stresses Need to Free Turkish-PRC Ties of 'Cold War' Paradigm," *Anatolia*, November 1, 2010.

<sup>177</sup> "Turkey's Babacan: Need to Talk to China on Currency," *Financial Mirror*, October 20, 2010.

<sup>178</sup> Remarks by the President to the Turkish parliament, accessible at <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

In December 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan visited the White House for a meeting with President Obama. The President did not succeed in getting Turkey to lift the caveats preventing Turkish forces from engaging in combat in Afghanistan or to change its views regarding Iran. (It was widely assumed that these were the President's goals, although Administration officials publicly denied that they were pressing Turkey to do anything specific in Afghanistan.)<sup>179</sup>

On March 17, 2010, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Gordon summarized the bilateral relationship at that point in time in a speech at the Brookings Institution.<sup>180</sup> As had been the tradition in prior administrations, he noted Turkey's geographic location and the critical importance of bilateral cooperation regarding all of the countries surrounding around it. He asserted that the Administration views Turkey as continuing to be firmly rooted in the Euro-Atlantic alliance and opined that it is not turning away from the West as some observers contend.<sup>181</sup> Gordon highlighted Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey's continuing negotiations with the European Union that the United States supports, and Turkey's crucial role as a transit hub for energy to the rest of Europe, and noted the challenges of normalizing relations with Armenia and in reaching a Cyprus settlement.

In a mild warning, Gordon called on Turkey to "avoid actions that could potentially undermine or complicate our shared goal of a peaceful diplomatic resolution" of the issue of Iran's nuclear program. He said that the Administration did not believe that Turkey's abstention in the IAEA vote on Iran in November 2009 "helped" and expressed hope that "Turkey will join the broad group of nations in the U.N. Security Council who are seeking to hold Iran to its IAEA and Security Council obligations." And in another cautionary phrase, he also hoped that "improved relations with Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbors" would not "come at the expense of its historic allies such as Israel."

In the question and answer period, reflecting the Administration's focus on Armenian-Turkish relations as seen in Secretary Clinton's efforts on the Protocols to further normalization of relations, the Assistant Secretary suggested that normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, the Nagorno Karabakh issue, and pipelines through the Caucasus should not be linked because it complicates matters. He said that the Protocols should not be held up until other problems are solved. Gordon did not think that normalization would negatively affect the energy corridor (Nabucco) despite Azerbaijan's threat to impede it if Turkey opens its border with Armenia. Some critics suggest that the Administration's denial of linkage conveys a certain naïveté regarding the situation in the Caucasus.

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<sup>179</sup> Background Briefing by Senior Officials on Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's Trip to D.C., December 4, 2009, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2009/133233.htm> For assumptions, see for example, Ian O. Lesser, "Decoding the Erdogan Visit," *On Turkey*, GMFUS, December 15, 2009.

<sup>180</sup> "The United States and Turkey: The View from the Obama Administration," accessible at <http://www.brookings.edu>.

<sup>181</sup> Such observations emanate from Turkey's relations with Iran and Syria, and from some of Prime Minister Erdogan's statements. In November 2009, Erdogan said, "It's not possible for a Muslim to commit genocide. That's why we are comfortable (with a planned visit of Al Bashir)." The Prime Minister also said that he did not observe genocide during his visit to Darfur. Al Bashir visited Turkey twice, but Turkish officials reportedly dissuaded him from attending the Organization the Islamic Conference summit in Istanbul in November 2009. "Erdogan: 'A Muslim Can Never Commit Genocide,'" *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, November 8, 2009.

After the crisis over Israel's interception of a Turkish ship intending to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip in May and Turkey's vote against increased U.N. Security Council sanctions on Iran in June, Gordon admonished Turkey via an Associated Press interview. He stated,

We think Turkey remains committed to NATO, Europe, and the United States, but that needs to be demonstrated.... There are people asking questions about it in a way that is new, and that in itself is a bad thing that makes it harder for the United States to support some of the things that Turkey would like to see us support....

Perhaps referring to a barrage of commentary questioning whether Turkey has "shifted its axis" especially with the U.N. vote, he concluded, "There is a lot of questioning going on about Turkey's orientation and its ongoing commitment to strategic partnership with the United States. Turkey, as a NATO ally and a strong partner of the United States not only didn't abstain but voted no, and I think Americans haven't understood why."<sup>182</sup>

After the U.N. vote, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates blamed Europe for Turkey's actions, saying,

if there's anything to the notion that Turkey is moving eastward, it is in no small part because it was pushed by some in Europe refusing to give Turkey the kind of organic link to the West that Turkey sought.... We have to think long and about why these developments in Turkey (are occurring) and what we might be able to do to counter them and make the stronger linkages with the West more apparently of interest and value to Turkey's leaders.<sup>183</sup>

Probably taking into account Turkey's valued roles in Iraq and Afghanistan, Gates also acknowledged that "Turkey is a decades-long ally of the United States ....(It) continues to play a critical part in the alliance. We have a strong military-to-military relationship with Turkey.... So allies don't always agree on things."<sup>184</sup>

For his part, President Obama voiced the same opinion when he told an Italian newspaper that the

democratic confrontation inside Turkey ... is inevitably destined to impact on the way Turkish people see Europe. If they do not feel part of the European family, then obviously they're going to look elsewhere for alliances and affiliations. Some of the things we have seen, such as the attempt to mediate an agreement with Iran on the nuclear issue, have been unfortunate. I believe they were motivated by the fact that Turkey has a long border with Iran and does not want any conflicts in the area. Muscle-flexing may also have come into it.... What we can do with Ankara is to continue to engage, and to point out the benefits of integration with the West while respecting, not acting out of fear, Turkey's specific nature as a great Muslim democracy. It is potentially very good for us if they embody a kind of Islam that respects universal rights and the secularity of the state, and can have a positive influence on the Muslim World.<sup>185</sup>

Nonetheless, bilateral relations cooled somewhat after the Security Council vote. The President and Prime Minister met on June 25, 2010 at the G-20 summit in Toronto. The

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<sup>182</sup> Desmond Butler, "US: Turkey Must Demonstrate Commitment to West," Associated Press, June 26, 2010.

<sup>183</sup> "Spurned by EU, Turkey Goes it Alone as Regional Power Broker," *Irish Times*, June 15, 2010.

<sup>184</sup> Rowan Scarborough, Turkey's Shift Spurs Concern on Hill, *Washington Times*, June 14, 2010.

<sup>185</sup> Quoted in Yavuz Baydar, "Obama and the Alliance for a Meek Turkey," *Today's Zaman*, July 12, 2010.

White House issued a “candid discussion between allies” with Iran’s nuclear program listed as the first item discussed and provided no photo opportunity. It did not describe Turkey as a “strategic” ally.<sup>186</sup> Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Erdogan accused the President of not showing interest in the Turkish American killed in the flotilla incident on May 31. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey James Jeffrey responded immediately, saying that the remarks were “offensive” and claiming that the United States had difficulty understanding why it could not obtain the official autopsy reports.<sup>187</sup> This was one of the very few times that U.S. officials have publicly reacted strongly to the Prime Minister’s rhetoric.

A high-level Turkish parliamentary delegation led by AKP Deputy Chairman Omer Celik and including Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Murat Mercan and Prime Minister Erdogan’s chief advisor Ibrahim Kalin visited Washington without gaining a meeting with Secretary Clinton, although at that time she did meet the head of an important Turkish non-governmental business organization. In various public fora, the delegation conveyed a sense of supreme self-confidence in advising the United States to recognize that the world has changed.<sup>188</sup> It was not deemed a success in the U.S. capital. Turkish Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioglu then made two visits to Washington without a reciprocal U.S. delegation visiting Ankara. His argument that Turkey’s policy of toward Iran is one of regional containment may not have convinced his audience and his statement that Turkey is not taking sides between the United States and Iran raised questions among some interlocutors concerning which of those two countries was Turkey’s long time ally. Finally, Senator Sam Brownback put a hold on Senate consideration of confirmation of new U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Francis J. Ricciardone out of concern, resulting from the Senator’s view of Ricciardone’s performance in Egypt, that he might be biased toward the AKP at a time when a different approach might be needed.<sup>189</sup>

On September 15, Assistant Secretary Gordon summarized U.S. differences with Turkey over Iran and Hamas, but also said “There’s not a government in Europe with which we have more ongoing and open dialogue than with the government of Turkey.”<sup>190</sup> In other words, the Administration remains committed to engagement with Ankara and some push back may be occurring in private talks.

Prime Minister Erdogan is not making it easy to sustain engagement. In mid-October, a Pakistani journalist quoted him as saying that Turkey had suffered from military dictators who were “always supported by the USA.” Furthermore, referring to the Mavi Marmara incident, the Prime Minister claimed, “Washington is not ready to condemn the state terrorism of Israel against Turkey which means that the USA is supporting an international terrorist who killed our citizens in international waters.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Deniz Zeyrek, “‘To Go Back to Reality’ in Ties with United States,” *Radikal* Online, June 29, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100629742007.

<sup>187</sup> Cuneyt Ulsever, “Where are Turkey-US Ties Going to?” *Hurriyet* Online, July 14, 2010, OSC Document, GMP20010715725002.

<sup>188</sup> For example, speeches at the Conference on Turkey’s New Geopolitics, June 29, 2010, sponsored by the Center for Turkish Studies at the Middle East Institute, [www.mei.edu/TurkishCenter/AnnualConferenceonTurkey](http://www.mei.edu/TurkishCenter/AnnualConferenceonTurkey), and session at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<sup>189</sup> Brownback Letter to State Department Re: Nomination of Ricciardone, August 16, 2010.

<sup>190</sup> Comments at GMFUS event.

<sup>191</sup> Hamid Mir, “U.S. Backing International Terrorists: Turkish PM,” *The News Website* (Islamabad), October 15, (continued...)

## Missile Defense

In November 2010, NATO's Lisbon Summit decided on a new strategic concept and missile defense architecture for Europe. NATO decisions are made by consensus or unanimity and not by vote. Before the meeting Turkey's agreement to the overall system and, in particular, its response to a NATO request to support installations and capabilities, e.g., X-Band radars, on Turkish territory, was considered a key to answering questions about Turkey's reliability as a U.S. partner.<sup>192</sup> The radars are intended to provide early warning of Iranian missile launches and their placement is the last unresolved element in the first phase of the defense shield. U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ISA) Alexander Vershbow stated that missile defense is increasingly important "in deterring Iran, trying to deny it potential to threaten and blackmail its neighbors, and to protect U.S. forces deployed in the region.... Turkey is geographically closest to some of the threats that we are concerned about."<sup>193</sup>

U.S. officials endeavored to embed the system within a broader NATO framework in order to make it more acceptable to Turkey and other allies. On October 18, Secretary of Defense Gates told the American-Turkish Council annual conference, "Territorial missile defense offers NATO a unique defensive capability and an opportunity to ensure the future credibility of Article 5 and to uphold the principle of the indivisibility of allied security."<sup>194</sup> His emphasis on Article 5 and the "indivisibility of allied security," core principles of the alliance, defines the missile defense decision as a member state obligation, not as a U.S. national objective, and may make it harder for Turkey to oppose the initiative. The Secretary suggested a role for Turkey and others: "(A)llied nations could participate with systems of their own and would collaborate in developing rules of engagement and other key decisions that implement missile defense." Gates said that, "The U.S. has engaged Turkey in political and military dialogue on its potential technical and operational contributions should NATO adopt this approach. Contrary to some press reports, we are not pressuring Turkey to make a contribution. But we do look to Turkey to support NATO's adoption at the Lisbon Summit of a territorial missile defense capability."

In conclusion, Secretary Gates stated,

I would like to close by returning to an old Turkish proverb that we should keep in mind as our two nations face together a variety of common challenges in the years ahead. That saying is, "a wise man remembers his friends at all times, a fool, only when he has need of them." The United States and Turkey have wisely remembered our friendship, during times of agreement and disagreement, and it is incumbent for us to continue to do so. There is too much at stake—for our prosperity, for our security, and for the credibility of our alliance.

As an added inducement for Turkey, Gates also indicated that he favors retaining the NATO air command at Izmir, Turkey, despite NATO plans to cut its staff and number of bases.

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(...continued)

2010. The Turkish Embassy in Washington issued a statement the same day, denying that Erdogan had made such comments or gave any exclusive interviews while in Pakistan. The journalist did not back down.

<sup>192</sup> Discussions are ongoing with Bulgaria in case Turkey refuses.

<sup>193</sup> US Missile Defense Plan Faces Resistance in Ankara," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, February 19, 2010.

<sup>194</sup> For text of speech, see <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1513>.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Policy James Townsend noted with some understanding Turkish officials' "attempt to balance what is known is important for European, transatlantic, and Turkish security and how this fits in with Turkey's political calculations in the region."<sup>195</sup> Townsend also said, "When we look at from where the ballistic missile threats might come from, Turkey is very much on the front lines. Consequently, Turkey could be a suitable place to host some portions of the system."<sup>196</sup> Turkish officials responded that their country is not on the front lines. They insisted that NATO's official documents on the defense shield not cite Iran or Syria as "threats," that the shield cover the entire territory of Turkey, that Turkey have some control over the decision to fire, and that non-NATO members (i.e., Israel) not have access to intelligence.<sup>197</sup> Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated, "We do not perceive any threat from any neighbor countries and we do not think our neighbors form a threat to NATO" and that Turkey "does not want to be perceived as if it were a flank or front-line country."<sup>198</sup>

NATO is not know to name specific countries as threats. After NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that, because more than 30 countries have or are aspiring to get missile technology, "There is no reason to name specific countries...,"<sup>199</sup> it became clear that Turkey's most important demand would be met. NATO's new strategic concept, adopted on November 19, 2010, states, "The alliance does not consider any country to be an adversary."<sup>200</sup> Prime Minister Erdogan considered the decisions reached at the summit "fairly satisfactory" for Turkey because it had influenced the shaping of the strategic concept.<sup>201</sup> There has been some debate in Turkey about how much success the government achieved in Lisbon. NATO members still view Iran as their predominant threat, even if that is not stated outright in the summit's official statements; therefore, Turkey is a new front-line. It also may be concluded that Turkey shares that threat perception despite its outreach to Tehran. Where the missile defense system will be deployed in Turkey and the fate of the Izmir air command, ensnared in NATO budget cutting, will be negotiated later and perhaps with some difficulty.

## **Incirlik Air Base**

Turkey's geostrategic importance for the United States depends partly on Incirlik Air Base, located about 7 miles east of Adana in southeast Turkey.<sup>202</sup> The United States constructed the base and the U.S. Air Force began using it during the height of the Cold War in 1954. The Turkish government transferred control of the base to its military in 1975 in response to an arms embargo

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<sup>195</sup> "Turkey to Seek NATO Consensus on Missiles," *Today's Zaman* Online, October 14, 2010.

<sup>196</sup> Cengiz Aktar, "US Moves Puts Squeeze on Government," *Vatan* Online, October 18, 2010, OSC Document GMP20100118788005.

<sup>197</sup> Sevil Kocukkocum, "Turkey Conditionally Approves NATO Missile Shield," *Hurriyet Daily News.com*, October 15, 2010, Marc Champion, "Turkey Faces Delicate Choice on NATO Shield," *Wall Street Journal*, October 27, 2010.

<sup>198</sup> "Turkey: NATO's Anti-Missile System Should Not Single Out Iran," Reuters, October 18, 2010, Ali H. Aslan, "For Whom are the Pots Boiling?" *Zaman* Online, October 10, 2010, OSC Document GMP20101018006002.

<sup>199</sup> Ben Nimmo, "'No Need' for NATO Missile Shield to Name Enemies," Rasmussen Says," *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*, November 16, 2010.

<sup>200</sup> For text, see <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>.

<sup>201</sup> "Premier Says NATO Summit 'Fairly Satisfactory' for Turkey," *Anatolia*, November 23, 2010.

<sup>202</sup> The U.S. State Department Turkey desk, after coordination with the Defense Department, provided some of the information on the use of Incirlik to CRS in February 2007. See also, <http://www.incirlik.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=5344>.

that Congress imposed on Turkey in reaction to Turkey's intervention/invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The base continued to fulfill its NATO missions. After the embargo ended, the United States and Turkey signed a bilateral Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) in 1980 to govern U.S. use of the base and a DECA, under a NATO umbrella, continues to allow the U.S. air force to use it for training purposes. As an executive agreement, the DECA does not require congressional or Turkish parliamentary approval. However, U.S. requests to use of the base for other purposes are made separately and may require Turkish parliamentary authorization.

Incirlik is an invaluable instrument for the execution of NATO and U.S. policies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the Middle East. Some 1,500 U.S. airmen are stationed there as Incirlik offers a 10,000-foot main runway and a 9,000 foot alternate runway able to service large cargo planes. The entire U.S. community, including civilians, dependents, and contractors is 5,000 strong. Some 74% of all air cargo into Iraq has transited Incirlik, which also is a primary refueling stop for flights to Afghanistan. The U.S. Air Force prizes the efficiency of the use of the base: six C-17 aircraft based at Incirlik move the same amount of cargo that 9 to 10 aircraft used to carry from Rhein-Main Air Base in Germany, saving about \$160 million a year. In addition, thousands of U.S. soldiers have rotated out of Iraq via Incirlik for transit. KC-135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have delivered fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. On more than one occasion, Turkey has authorized the temporary deployment of U.S. Air Force F-16's from Germany to Incirlik for training. In addition, in 2005, Incirlik served as an air-bridge for the Pakistan Earthquake Relief Effort of seven NATO countries and, in 2006, U.S. forces from Incirlik helped with the evacuation of some 1,700 Americans from Lebanon during the Israeli-Hezbollah war.

Adding to Turkey's strategic importance to the United States is its willingness to house U.S. nuclear weapons at the Incirlik Air Base. According to a 2005 report, about 90 U.S. nuclear weapons were stored there, although a different group estimated in 2008 that the number of weapons is 50 to 90--still the most at any base in Europe.<sup>203</sup> The future of these weapons, which Turkey has viewed as part of its own deterrence, has been raised in the context of Prime Minister Erdogan's calls for a nuclear-free region. Yet, Turkish officials have not commented on the weapons at Incirlik as part of their arguments.

S.Res. 358, introduced on October 29, 2007, would have acknowledged the importance of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Turkey. Incirlik is among the examples of the cooperation listed in the resolution.

## **Trade**

The United States and Turkey are not major trading partners. According to the Department of Commerce, Turkey is ranks 28<sup>th</sup> among countries to which the United States exports merchandise and 48<sup>th</sup> among countries from which it imports goods. The balance of trade favors the United States.

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<sup>203</sup> Natural Resources Defense Council, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, February 2005, and "Incirlik Becomes Major Host for American Nuclear Weapons," *Turkish Daily News*, June 30, 2008, citing a Federation of American Scientists report of June 26, 2008.

**Table 2. U.S. Merchandise Trade with Turkey**

(\$ in Millions)

|         | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  | 2010<br>(thru<br>June) |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Exports | 6,499 | 9,959 | 7,089 | 4,909                  |
| Imports | 4,601 | 4,642 | 3,662 | 2,006                  |

**Source:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Foreign Trade Division, U.S. Bureau of Census

Nonetheless, both governments repeatedly state their desire to enhance bilateral trade and investment ties. The United States and Turkey signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) in 1999. On October 19, 2010, the first meeting of the U.S.-Turkey Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation was held in Washington, with Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, State Minister for Foreign Trade Zafer Caglayan and Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan attending. The goal of the Framework is to intensify bilateral economic relations in a wide range of areas. The ministers will establish a Turkey-U.S. Business Council with representatives of U.S. businesses and Turkish business organizations to develop policy recommendations. The Framework's other components include the pre-existing Trade and Investment Council, the Economic Partnership Commission, and the Energy Working Group.

## U.S. Aid

Turkey has not been a major recipient of U.S. foreign aid since the late 1990s and there is a pronounced downward trend in assistance. Nonetheless, it is still receiving some assistance in the following categories:

**Table 3. U.S. Foreign Assistance**

(\$ Thousands)

| Account  | FY2009<br>Actual | FY2010<br>Estimate | FY2011<br>Request | Change |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Economic Support Funds (ESF)   | 7,500            | 0                  | 0                 | 0      |
| Foreign Military Financing (FMF)                                       | 1,000            | 0                  | 0                 | 0      |
| International Military Education and Training (IMET)                   | 3,208            | 5,000              | 4,000             | -1,000 |
| International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)            | 300              | 0                  | 500               | 500    |
| Nonproliferation, Antiterrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) | 3,410            | 2,995              | 1,42              | -1,570 |

**Source:** U.S. Department of State, Fiscal Year 2011 Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2011>.

## Conclusions

The Justice and Development Party government's foreign policy approach that Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu developed and largely implemented does not lead to easy conclusions as to its success, its future course, or consequences for Turkish-U.S. relations.

As architect of the AKP's ambition to assert Turkey's power on the international scene, Foreign Minister Davutoglu's "zero problems" guidelines have resulted more accurately in fewer problems than in the past with neighboring countries that are predominantly Muslim, including Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. The Foreign Minister's means to improve relations have included the establishment of several high-level, bilateral strategic cooperation councils, with more planned and economic interdependence with nearby partners via enhanced trade and investment as well as with visa-free travel regimes. Energy links serve simultaneously to provide for Turkey's domestic needs and to reinforce the growing network of ties.

However, the AKP's approach to the Palestinian issue has complicated Turkey's relations with the Palestinian Authority and Israel and perhaps with the United States and European Union. The party has nurtured good relations with the Islamist Hamas, which the United States and EU consider a terrorist group and which the Western-favored Palestinian Authority government of President Mahmud Abbas views as a rival for power. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Erdogan's vocal sympathies for the Palestinian people and denunciations of Israel have made him very popular with many Arabs and Muslims.

The AKP's foreign policy has not been successful with non-Muslim neighbors such as Armenia, Cyprus, and Israel. Optimism for normalization of relations between Ankara and Yerevan was high in 2009, but, largely because the Turkish government accords a far higher priority to relations with Baku, the trend toward improvement in ties has stagnated. Ankara has no bilateral ties with Nicosia as the settlement process on Cyprus has not borne fruit and Turkey has done little to assist it since 2004. Although the Greek Cypriots who control the internationally recognized government on the island also have failed to be proactive, Turkey is the most powerful of the countries involved. Therefore, its demurral is significant. Under the AKP, Turkey's relations with Israel have deteriorated to such an extent that they may be irreparable. Israel's actions may have prompted the decline, but Turkish leaders' harsh, unrelenting anti-Israel rhetoric has aggravated the downward spiral and made it harder to reverse. The AKP government has made slow progress toward membership in the European Union as it has been noticeably selective in adopting EU political reforms, mainly taking on those that contribute to the party's consolidation of power at home. It might not surprise if the AKP abandoned the quest for accession in the medium term. Nonetheless, some EU member states are as responsible for the sluggish advance and the current situation as the AKP because of their inability to envision Turkey as an EU member.

Ankara and Washington have found common cause in seeking stability and peace in Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. officials undoubtedly are relieved that the AKP increasingly has emphasized diplomatic outreach to all Iraqi groups, including the Kurds, and somewhat downplayed its use of the military means against the continuing Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) threat to Turkey from northern Iraq. They do not appear to view Turkey as a potentially destabilizing actor in Iraq any longer. Turkey also is a major aid donor to Afghanistan and has played a constructive role in training Afghan police and military forces. Turkey's caveats regarding the use of its troops in combat do not differ from those of several other NATO allies. Moreover, Turkey continues to

make valuable contributions to the war effort in both countries by allowing U.S. forces to use its air base at Incirlik for the transshipment of cargo to U.S. and coalition forces.

Nevertheless, the AKP's foreign policy independence and ambitions have made Turkey a less predictable, and perhaps less dependable, U.S. ally than in the past. While AKP's champions at home welcome the change, it has created difficulties for U.S. policy. Turkey's foreign policy transformation was evident in the unexpected Tehran Declaration concerning Iran's nuclear program in May 2010. The timing of the Declaration seemed to undermine a U.S. drive for enhanced U.N. Security Council sanctions against Iran. Then, Turkey chose to vote against the resolution that included the sanctions, and not abstain as an ally would at least have been expected to do on an issue that U.S. officials view as a primary national security interest. The change also was on view in the weeks before NATO's November 2010 summit in Lisbon, a period during which Turkey kept observers uncertain of its support for the alliance's new strategic concept and the missile defense architecture that the United States had conceived. In the end, Turkey disproved naysayers by agreeing with the NATO consensus—only after enabling the AKP to claim victory because NATO did not designate Iran a “threat”—even though Iran's missile program is the main reason for the new system. The AKP apparently realized that a multidirectional approach to foreign affairs requires an anchor in the West and a link to the United States, especially if it may abandon the EU course. The AKP may also have realized that Iran could in fact pose a threat to Turkey in the future.

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