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Turkish-American Strategic Partnership versus Turkish-Russian Partnership without Strategy

von

Eugene Kogan

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“Russian UAVs making a comeback” in the International Relations and Security Network (March 2006), online <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?id=15032>

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“Under the cloak of the OAK” in *Military Technology*, no. 4 (2007), pp. 61-65

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“United States’ and NATO’s role in Georgia’s territorial conflicts August 1992-July 2008” (coming)

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Turkish-American Strategic Partnership versus Turkish-Russian Partnership without Strategy

Key Points

- It is important to emphasise that since President George Bush's first administration the Turkish-American strategic partnership, often called the strategic co-operation was kept within the parameters of narrow and limited military and national security. As a result, these narrow and limited military and national security interests have come under immense pressure, which they have barely withstood. This report presents a detail picture of what has recently occurred. One could also say that one result of the pressure has been the reassessment of the strategic partnership. In addition, it has led to the formulation of new ideas and suggestions of how and where to expand the strategic partnership beyond its military and national security scope. Implementation of these new ideas and suggestions is a must because the current framework of the strategic partnership will not survive into the foreseeable future.
- Whether Washington, despite its cooling and strained relationship with Ankara, will remain Ankara's key security partner for the foreseeable future remains to be seen. The recent visit of President Barack Obama to Turkey and his statements on the issue appears to provide an answer – Obama's administration is looking to Turkey as a 'strategic partner.' However we need to remember that Obama's visit to Turkey was only the first step on a long road to rebuilding a frayed alliance. The road ahead remains uncertain and unpredictable.
- On the other hand, the Turkish-Russian partnership lacks a strategic depth and strategic thinking. It is based on gains for Russia and the continued economic dependence of Turkey on Russia. The economic dependence in general and the energy dependence in particular, poses the greatest dilemma for the Turkish government and for the time being remains Turkey's Achilles' heel. The Turkish government lacks a strategic perspective when it comes to its dealings with Russia. As Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar noted 'this is a partnership that, for now, is more rooted in prevailing anxieties than in future hopes.' Suat Kiniklioglu added an additional aspect of the partnership: 'Ultimately, what will determine the course of Turkish-Russian relations is the quality of their relationship with the West. Their sense of alienation from the West brought them closer. Their relationship with the West will determine how they will fare together.'

Turkish-American Strategic Partnership

Introduction

Starting Point – Back to the 1990s

Since so much of the US-Turkish relationship was based on the situation of the Cold War years, their partnership has undergone important changes in the new era. By focusing on different issues and emphases, however, their association has adjusted quite well, despite continuing divergences on several issues.¹ During the ensuing Cold War decades, the two countries developed an intimate strategic relationship. Turkey provided critical base facilities for the United States' (US) military while, in turn, the United States provided extensive economic and military aid to Turkey. With the end of the Cold War the United States dismantled most of its military bases in Turkey. The only remaining major US/North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) military base of strategic and military

significance is the one in Incirlik, not far from the Syrian border. The co-operation between Turkey and the United States over the use of this base will be very much a function of Turkish domestic politics and Turkish the decision-makers' perception of their own security needs. Most important, in the back of their minds there will be the concern of *how to balance the need to have US support for Turkish security but not get drawn into a situation where the base is used by the United States for a regional intervention which Turkey is not ready to support* (author's italics).² This was written in 1998 and signalled a clear warning to the United States, which somehow it failed to register or decided to ignore altogether. 'Use of base or rather territory of Turkey at large for a regional intervention that Turkey is

not ready to support' poses a difficult dilemma for both countries. For the time being no solution has been found to this.

On the strategic level, the two countries share common objectives on many issues as varied as expanding NATO's membership, Turkish accession to the European Union (EU), and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or missiles, to the opening of new oil pipeline routes from the Caspian Sea basin to the West, avoiding both Russian and Iranian territory.³ Although the preferred American and Turkish policies seem to overlap considerably in regard to geostrategic interests in Europe, the Middle East seems to offer a mixture of co-operative as well as conflicting views.⁴ Turkey participated in NATO sanctions' enforcement operation during the war in Yugoslavia and maintained a military unit as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia. This unit subsequently became part of the NATO forces deployed in Bosnia to implement the Dayton Peace Accords. Turkish units also participated in NATO exercises along the Albanian-Serbian border in a Western effort to deter Serbia from using force against refugees displaced as a result of the violence in Kosovo.⁵ These kinds of operations will probably remain an important area of co-operation between Turkey and the United States, though it is unlikely that Turkey will consent to operate outside its immediate region.

At the same time, important areas of disagreement based on differing interests still exist over the status of northern Iraq's Kurdish region, sanctions over Iraq and relations with Iran. In other cases, friction partly arose from the way Turkish political and bureaucratic

culture perceives US policies on Turkish human rights violations and weapons' acquisition programmes.⁶ There were also considerable differences between Turkey and the United States over their approaches to dealing with Iran, Iraq and Syria.⁷

In spite of the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communism, and the disintegration of the USSR there continues to be a strong basis for strategic co-operation between the United States and Turkey. Turkey's geopolitical location and Western, secular credentials are factors supporting strategic co-operation. In turn, Turkey highly values co-operation with the United States in dealing with partly adversarial relationships with Russia, Iran, Iraq and Syria, all possessing military arsenals that Turkey is unable to deter on its own. Further, Turkey's own economy, combined with its access to the EU, Central Asian oil, and the Middle East is making Turkey increasingly attractive to the US government and companies. Lastly, a half-century of strategic co-operation especially through NATO provides an important experience of working together, as manifested by US enthusiasm for Turkish military units in the United Nations (UN) and NATO peacekeeping operations. There are clearly important forces that will push both countries towards continued co-operation at the bi-lateral as well as regional level.⁸ We need to remember that Kirisci's article was written in 1998, four years before the Turkish-American strategic co-operation or strategic partnership was tested under severe conditions as described below. As was noted above, Kirisci's article warned of a potential danger in Turkish-American relations and emphasised the divergence of interests. It appears, however, that the warning was not taken seriously.

Unforeseen Problems Looming Ahead – November 2002

According to Barak Salmoni, conditions in November 2002 appeared optimal for Turkish-American co-operation in the Middle East. The Bush administration's defence and foreign policy principals were extremely enamoured of a Turkish-American strategic partnership, however defined in the previous Clinton administration; they had secured Turkey continuing Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and had a strong rapport with the Kenan Evren and Turgut Ozal governments (1980-1991), culminating in the latter's active support of the United States in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Policy-makers such as Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Secretary of State Marc Grossman felt that they grasped Turkish politics. On Turkey's part, the time for co-operation likewise seemed propitious. After decades of reluctance to operate beyond Turkey's borders, the senior

military echelon had enthusiastically advocated co-operation. In 2002 Turkish forces led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan at American urging, demonstrating Ankara's commitment to co-operation with the United States in the War on Terror. With the promotion of Hilmi Ozkok to Chief of General Staff-Turkish Armed Forces (CGS-TAF), it appeared that America had gained an influential ally among Turkish decision-makers.

While the 1999-2002 Bulent Ecevit government had repeatedly expressed apprehension about Iraqi regime change, the victor's of Turkey's 3 November 2002 election were the new politicians of the Justice and Development Party (known by its Turkish acronym as *AKP* or *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*). *AKP* supporters in Europe and the United States presented it as combining Islam, sincere Westernism, and

democracy with enthusiasm *for close relations with the United States* (author's italics).⁹ The question related to 'enthusiasm for close relations', namely 'how close', remains unanswered. Could it have been that the United States misperceived AKP's enthusiasm for a lone cheer or just a gesture of a good will? There is a very interesting note that may explain this American misperception. Overall, the lack of accurate knowledge about Turkey [in the United States] and the relative paucity of 'people-to-people' contacts meant that bilateral affinity was underdeveloped and was not commensurate with Turkey's importance in foreign policy terms. This reality contrasts with the increasingly active specialist debate about Turkish affairs in the United States, and an increase in the coverage of Turkish topics in leading American newspapers in the second half of the 1990s.¹⁰ In addition, US policy-makers may have listened to the wrong Turkish experts, who *advocated for AKP* (author's italics) and who *downplayed real disagreements* (author's italics). US officials *did not alter initial assumptions* (author's italics), though on both the civilian and military level *new dynamics required re-evaluation* (author's italics).

At first glance, failure to operationalise the US-Turkish alliance occurred when circumstances augured best for success. Other factors, however, generated suboptimal conditions:

- Large sectors of the Turkish population felt Turkey's economy and security had been undermined by American approaches to Iraq since 1990.
- A consensus of Turkey's political elite looked upon a new US invasion with distaste.
- The AKP government had run on anti-establishment platform and was quite new to power. Without a team of foreign policy professionals who were comfortable with their own bureaucracy, AKP officials were confronted an exceedingly congested agenda, involving a bleeding economy, negotiations over EU entrance, and Cyprus reconciliation, while European and Middle Eastern countries were sending Ankara discouraging signals on Iraq.
- The AKP government itself was not fully-formed. The party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan was manoeuvring between the president, the court system, and the military to remove a ban preventing him from entering parliament. AKP Prime Minister Abdullah Gul and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Yasar Yakis were stand-ins with ambiguous decision-making authority.
- The TAF distrusted the AKP, and did not welcome it receiving support in Washington. Turkish generals would have preferred the

AKP to lose face either as the result of an unpopular decision to co-operate with the United States, or for rejecting the American overture and forfeiting diplomatic-financial rewards.

- Ankara's security elite is extraordinarily exercised about Northern Iraq and its Kurds. After a ten-year war against the Turkish Kurdish Workers Party (known as PKK or Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan) during which the latter found refuge in Northern Iraq, the TAF's single most important priority was to prevent regional destabilisation affecting southern Anatolia – the war against the PKK was Turkey's own 'war on terror', trumping other considerations.

Thus, repeatedly expressed Turkish misgivings, AKP perceptions of basic domestic political needs vis-à-vis the electorate and levers of bureaucratic and military power, and the TAF attitude to AKP and Northern Iraq rendered the United States' request to deploy between 50,000 and 95,000 personnel in Turkey to invade a neighbour that had no hostile intent towards Ankara nearly impossible for the civilian government to deliver, based on a calculus that did not grasp the importance of regime-change in Iraq to the post-9/11 2001 American administration.¹¹

Even if the Turkish government was capable of grasping the importance, it does not necessarily mean that it was going to change its mind regarding the US request to deploy forces in Turkey for invading Iraq. The AKP government did not want to be involved in *any* war-related operations, whether we refer to giving the green light to the deployment of the US forces in Turkey or any other activity. Thus, the US assumption that Turkey would remain a loyal ally was based on a wrong premise. Ian Lesser noted that elements within the American strategic community tended to regard the breakdown of bilateral co-operation *in advance of the Iraqi War as a watershed event* (author's italics), casting grave doubt on the predictability of US-Turkish defence co-operation in regional crises. In reality, successive Turkish governments have been unwilling to allow the use of Incirlik for anything other than the most limited, non-strategic operations in Iraq since the end of the first Iraq War in 1991.¹² F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser reinforced further the author's argument by saying that the use of Turkish assets by the United States and NATO in the future cannot be automatically taken for granted.¹³ Whether American officials pay attention to Lesser's, Flanagan's and Brannen's assertions remains to be seen. Hopefully they learned lessons from the early warning provided by Kemal Kirisci, otherwise the same mistakes are likely to be repeated.

Given the expedited military timetable, the new Ankara government viewed subsequent US negotiating intensity alternatively as hardball that was inappropriate to 'strategic partnership', or as proof that Turkey was so indispensable to US plans that the AKP could hold out for the most optimal terms. This led to the semi-official American accusation of Turkey being an unfriendly haggler; thus strengthening the rejectionist faction within the AKP, who could refer to intense popular opposition to the impending war as justification for refusing to cooperate.

Further, by requiring the TAF to curtail its own Northern Iraq operations so as to secure Iraqi Kurdistan co-operation during and after the war, American diplomats made it quite difficult for the army to forthrightly support co-operation with the United States. Rather, American concerns to balance commitments to disparate regional allies reinforced Turkish suspicions that went back to 1991 about American goals, so that the army came to see alliance with America as merely the least injurious step on an ill-advised path.¹⁴ Although successive American administrations have made clear that the United States does not favour a break-up of Iraq, or [creation] of an independent Kurdish state, and certainly not one that might threaten the integrity and security of a NATO-state, repeated assurances on this score have done little to reduce the now widespread Turkish suspicion regarding American policy in northern Iraq.¹⁵ We can observe the step-by-step creation of an atmosphere in which relations between the two allies have deteriorated, reaching their nadir on 1 March 2003.

On 25 February 2003, Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) forwarded a bill of co-operation to the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), but with no endorsement. This bill authorised 62,000 US troops to enter Turkey. On 1 March 2003 the bill earned a plurality of parliament members' support, but not an absolute majority. American-Turkish strategic co-operation failed to materialise by four votes.¹⁶ The missing four votes exposed further cracks in Turkish-American strategic co-operation and can be perceived as an additional contribution to already strained relations. During and after the US-Turkish negotiations, American officials articulated several criticisms regarding their counterparts in Ankara:

1 AKP inexperience. AKP's excessive party political focus prevented them from seeing the domestic force multiplier effect of foreign policy success.

2 Military inaction. The military-dominated NSC did not live up to its role as supreme arbiter on matters of national security broadly

interpreted. TAF abdicated the responsibility of dictating to AKP neophytes the strategic interests of the country.

3 Failure to act as an ally. A consistent American complaint has been that Turkey failed to reciprocate for fifty years of US support. Strategic partnership requires active assistance when the US was offering Turkey great rewards. Rather, Turkey responded with conditions indicating a lack of trust, materially complicating the latest American initiative in the war on terror. There are three related issues here:

- a) While US vessels were offshore, the AKP kept upping their price (namely, Turks being hagglers), thus changing the spirit of the process, which America viewed as Turkey doing its utmost in the War on Terror.
- b) AKP insistence on the Turkish constitution requiring United Nations (UN)/International legal sanction or a parliamentary vote was a negotiating smokescreen. These 'requirements' could have been finessed. Rather, AKP used it to avoid making a tough decision.
- c) By travelling around in fruitless summitry and inviting senior Iraqi officials to Ankara for consultations, Prime Minister Gul wasted precious time – even when US intent was clear.

These criticisms reflect profound disappointment at the highest echelons of US government. Going into the negotiating process in November 2002, US diplomats *assumed* (author's italics) Turkish compliance. Given the total opposition to war in Iraq by the Turkish public, a TAF or NSC *diktat* to the AKP would have undermined the army's prestige, and may have increased the popularity of the Islamic ruling party. Conversely, a yes vote without military pressure could have injured the AKP, a goal of the secularist army. So even here, domestic politics formed foreign policy judgements.¹⁷ Many US policy-makers have continually failed to recognise that for Turkey the question of regime change in Iraq centres on Turkey's own Kurdish question. The Turkish fear of national dismemberment is palpable in Turkish political discourse today.¹⁸

To put it succinctly, US diplomats failed to listen carefully to Turkey's total opposition to the war in Iraq and wrongly assumed that the military in Turkey would side with the US.

It can be clearly stated that the conclusions of the 1 March 2003 TGNA's decision were as follows: policy-makers in Ankara and Washington

continued to seek, with some success, a more diverse relationship featuring increased economic and other forms of co-operation outside the security realm. However the primacy of security issues in Turkish-US relations is likely to endure for structural reasons. These reasons include the favour of Turkish and American policy concerns, persistent instability in adjacent

regions, the impetus of decades of security co-operation, uncertainties regarding Russia, and, not least, the existence of other more natural economic partners for Turkish business. It is notable that in the midst of Turkey's economic crisis, Turkey's advocates – including the Turkish private sector – have made the case for support in strategic rather than economic terms.¹⁹

Three Years after the 1 March 2003 Debacle: Changes in the Foreign Policy Debate

In 2006 Ian Lesser noted that although for decades the relationship between Ankara and Washington has been described as 'strategic' – sustained and supportive of the most important international objectives on both sides, today, the strategic quality of the relationship can no longer be taken for granted. This is a result of divergent perceptions of the Iraqi War and, more significantly, new international priorities on both sides. As a result, a bilateral relationship of great geopolitical significance, but one that has operated without fundamental *reassessment* (author's italics) since the early years of the Cold War, is now in question. A reinvigorated strategic relationship is possible, and will be in the interest of both countries. But it is likely to have quite different contours, with new forms of engagement – and more realistic expectations.²⁰ A strategic relationship means that both parties find ways of managing lesser differences in order to maintain effective co-operation in the advancement of their long-term national interests. Instead, today's relationship is tactical and transactional, with neither side able to look beyond recent betrayals or clearly articulate what they want and what they can contribute strategically to the partnership.²¹ Reassessment and realistic expectations are the key words for understanding the nature of strategic partnership and the way ahead.

Only against a background of vastly heightened regional risk, against which American deterrence and reassurance would be essential, a return to closer strategic co-operation with the United States would be the natural outcome. Scenarios that could trigger this response include renewed competition with a more assertive Russia, or friction with a nuclear-armed or nuclear-ready Iran.²² Although Russia has certainly become more assertive and, this issue in particular is dealt with in due course, this has still not led to closer strategic co-operation with the United States and may not lead to such co-operation. As for the second assumption, this remains to be seen, although Turkish government officials and the military remain very cautious and often tight-lipped. Therefore, it is very difficult to ascertain Turkey's position regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. Lesser did not mention other scenarios, for instance, rapid deterioration of relations between Turkey and Iraq or the potential development of weapons of mass

destruction by Syria and its immediate impact on Turkey.

At the same time, Lesser highlighted a very important shift in relations between the two countries. Over the last decade, and most dramatically since 9/11 2001, American foreign and security policy has been transformed in ways that have changed the nature of the United States as a partner for Turkey.²³ He continued, if Turkey (or other NATO allies) can offer active assistance, the way is clear to closer co-operation. If not – as with Turkey in Iraq – the perceived 'strategic' utility of the relationship will decline. The current environment is one of sharper requirements and sharper judgements in terms of bilateral relations, at least in security terms. The traditional 'fly wheel' of Alliance commitments and cohesion has lost a good deal of its momentum, and will be less effective in sustaining the relationship in times of disagreements. For decades, the US-Turkish strategic relationship was based largely on the defence of the regional status quo, territorial and political – an approach well suited to Turkey's essentially conservative foreign-policy outlook. Today, Turkey faces an American partner with more dynamic, even revolutionary objectives in areas of shared interest.²⁴ This change in relations poses a grave dilemma for the AKP governing party. Finally, the critical transatlantic context for the bilateral relationship is in flux – to say the least. Over time, there will be real potential for a structural shift of American attention to China and the Asia-Pacific region. From the Turkish perspective, this could mean a world in which the American presence as a regional actor is less predictable. In some areas, such as the Gulf, there may be too much American influence for Turkish taste. In other areas of Turkish interests, such as the Balkans or Cyprus, there may well be *too little* American engagement.

Changes in the foreign-policy debate on both sides, against the backdrop of developments in the geopolitical environment, make clear that the bilateral relationship can no longer be guided by traditional patterns. Failure to explore a new approach, especially under conditions of troubled alliance relations, could spell further deterioration in the outlook for co-operation. It is essential to acknowledge that a strategic

relationship conceived essentially in bilateral terms is unsustainable. The most important external element in the future of the relationship is undoubtedly the evolving nature of transatlantic co-operation as a whole. Both sides have an interest in assuring that Euro-Atlantic relations are set on a new and positive course. A dysfunctional transatlantic relationship, including a diminished role for NATO, would place even greater pressure on Turkish-US relations, and would force Ankara into a succession of uncomfortable policy choices in the coming years.²⁵ What does this mean and entail? (Lesser has not spelled out on the meaning of 'uncomfortable policy choices in the coming years'.)

After a decade of awareness, Turkish and American policy-makers still need to address the challenge of developing a more diverse, broad-based relationship. With Turkey, the strategic relationship is longstanding, but the economic and cultural dimensions remain underdeveloped. The quality of the bilateral relationship continues to be measured, overwhelmingly, by the quality of interaction at the high political level, with too little in the way of an underlying society-to-society relationship. If, in a few years' time, there is less attention to the use of Incirlik air base and more attention to economic and cultural engagement, the relationship will benefit.²⁶ There is a good chance that attention paid to economic and cultural engagement would shed more light and contribute to more knowledge about and understanding of Turkey in the United States. This issue is discussed in note 10. Development of this relationship would provide an extra cushion to the strategic relationship and may assist in reducing the severity of strained relations under pressure as described above.

According to Matthew Bryza, the November 2007 Oval Office meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Erdogan marked a decisive turning point. President Bush's designation of the PKK as 'an enemy of Turkey, an enemy of Iraq, and therefore an enemy of the United States,' signalled a new approach by Washington. The intensive information sharing authorised by President Bush has opened a new chapter in security co-operation between the United States, Turkey, and Iraq. It has also cleared the way for deeper co-operation not only on security, but on energy and democracy as well.²⁷

Such a strategic [co-operation] framework, namely US initiative to articulate a clear strategic vision, may require new official and unofficial mechanisms to manage bilateral relations and give them clear direction. The security relationship has received a recent boost from the establishment of the Ankara Coordination

Centre and the reinvigoration of the High-Level Defense Group (HLDG). But this rediscovery of bilateral mechanism was driven again by crisis and not by a forward-looking, strategic approach to deepen ties. A better model for going forward is the joint 'US-Turkey Shared Vision Statement,' issued by the two governments in July 2006, which included bilateral dialogue on mutual regional and global concerns and yielded some progress in policy coordination, notably with respect to assistance to Central Asia. Similarly, a Turkish-American Business Dialogue, akin to the Transatlantic Business Dialogue of the 1990s could help bring together non-governmental groups interested in promoting bilateral trade and investment, which has untapped potential. This could build from existing efforts such as the Economic Co-operation Partnership Council (ECPC), the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), and the US-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission (EPC).

A new strategic framework for US-Turkey relations would reflect the changing geopolitical dynamics and allow for both a more effective pursuit of enduring common interests and management of areas where policy preferences and interests diverge. Such a strategic framework could set the course for US-Turkey relations over the coming debate.²⁸

Soner Cagaptay suggested six concrete steps that Washington should undertake to prevent Turkey's slide away from the West and to rebuild bilateral ties. *First*, President Obama should maintain strong co-operation against the PKK, including ongoing discussions with Turkey, Baghdad, and the Iraqi Kurds to this end. This issue is presented in note 27.

Second, the US administration should rebuild bilateral military co-operation and emphasise NATO's role in US-Turkish ties. If the Obama administration cannot win the hearts and minds of mid-level Turkish officers, Washington cannot sustain military ties with Turkey in the long term. NATO also provides a gauge with which to check Turkish foreign policy's slip away from the United States. Once Obama builds a consensus in NATO, such as a common stance on Iran, he should expect to find Turkey onboard.²⁹ One Turkish defence official said that the planned closer co-operation would be tested first in the military field by a US decision, expected soon, on whether to sell sophisticated armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to the Turkish military.³⁰

The issue of transatlantic co-operation is discussed in note 25. A common stance on Iran has thus far eluded American presidents from Clinton to Obama and the expectation of finding Turkey onboard may be perceived as a potential American blunder. Turkey may decide

not to take sides. Whether such a decision will be perceived by the US as betrayal of the strategic partnership remains to be seen. Perhaps next time around Turkey's decision to avoid taking sides would be better understood by the US government officials. We may expect that the lessons of the US campaign in Iraq and Turkey's opposition to the war have been learned. This policy recommendation offered by Stephen Flanagan *et al.* (namely that Ankara should indicate a willingness to support additional coercive measures against Iran, beginning with tougher sanctions on the UNSC, should further diplomatic engagement fail to halt Tehran's pursuit of nuclear weapons³¹) will be considered and then perhaps pursued by Ankara should not be taken for granted by the United States. We need to remember the earlier warning highlighted by Kemal Kirisci and the notion of not being taken for granted emphasised in note 13.

The *third step* is to counter the new anti-Western paradigm of Turkish foreign policy. This is where the Turkish leadership has to step up to the plate. Turkey sits on the fence between the Middle East and the West; pro-Western and anti-Western statements carry equal weight in shaping public opinion toward the West. Accordingly, to improve the image of the US in Turkey, the Turkish government needs to draw the public's attention to the two countries' commonalities, including institutions such as NATO, values such as democracy and free markets, and regional interests such as a stable Iraq. [That may no longer be enough. New elements should be thought through and fused into old commonalities (author's comment).]

Fourth, President Obama, while renewing transatlantic links, must convince the French president to move ahead with Turkey's EU candidacy. *Fifth*, economic ties and energy co-operation should be promoted to provide a 'shock absorber' to the US-Turkey relationship. The *last step* is to avoid an inactive US policy; 2009 is the wrong year to make it appear as if Washington rejects Turkey.³² Thus far, the last step proved to be the easiest to deal with.

Although the election of President Barack Obama has created euphoria around the world and high expectations in Turkey in particular, we need to monitor Turkish-American relations as carefully and cautiously as possible before stating that they moved into the new phase. This new phase should also be clearly articulated and not just described as the new phase.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Ankara on 8 March 2009 reinforced the joint declaration stated that the two parties 'reaffirmed the strong bonds of alliance, solidarity, and strategic partnership...as well as

the commitment of both countries to the principles of peace, democracy, freedom, and prosperity enshrined in the Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue document agreed to in July 2006'. Clinton capitalised on Obama's vision of change to emphasise that Turkish-American relations were entering a new phase (without elaborating on the meaning of 'entering a new phase'). Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan said that 'Turkish-American relations have entered a new phase...Our foreign policy priorities are completely in line with each other. In the new phase, the focus is on consultation and co-operation.' Underlying Turkey's willingness to work together with the United States as partners, Babacan added, 'Clinton emphasised Turkey as a strategic partner. She accentuated this more powerfully than the previous administration, and the new administration is aware of Turkey's importance.'³³ As a result, it can be stated that Ankara would like fuller consultation with Washington on major US policies and initiatives vis-à-vis the Middle East, Russia, and the Caucasus. The worst surprise that the United States could foist on Turkey would be to undertake a major move in the region without first consulting Turkey. Turkey also wants to be treated as a trusted ally even as it pursues distinct policies in advancing its interests. Washington wants Ankara to be a reliable regional and global partner, at peace with its neighbours but not overly close to undemocratic regimes, and able to exert influence with its Muslim neighbours through its leadership and example.³⁴ The differences in what each side expect from the other are stark, to say the least. Whether these differences can be bridged remain to be seen.

It is certainly correct to say that Obama may need the co-operation of Turkey for the smooth withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq in the next 18 months; however, this is not the only option that the US may consider. Americans may also withdraw their forces via Kuwait and Jordan.³⁵ It is, however, also important to stress that Turkey needs Obama's assistance to persuade the EU to accept Turkey into the Union in order to keep Turkey inside the Western camp and prevent it from sliding into the Eastern or Russian camps.³⁶ It should be remembered that Obama's assistance in persuading the EU may be counterproductive, namely EU politicians could tell President Obama 'Mind your business and don't tell us how to handle accession of Turkey into the Union.'

Obama said that relations between the two countries had for too long been defined on mostly military and national security terms but that they must also work together on the global economic crisis. Obama recognised past

tensions in the US-Turkish relationship, but said things were on the right track now because both countries share common interests and are diverse nations. Obama said of the United States that 'We do not consider ourselves Christians, Jewish, Muslim. We consider ourselves a nation bound by a set of ideals and values.' 'Turkey has similar principles.'³⁷ In addition it can be further emphasised that Obama made it clear that his administration is not looking at Turkey as a 'moderate Islamic country' like the previous Bush administration, but rather as a 'strategic partner' situated in a difficult geography and a secular and democratic republic. Obama's visit also marked a strong message to Turks that the US valued relations with Turkey and wanted them to be brought to a strategic dimension.³⁸

In the words of Bulent Aliriza, director of the Turkey Project at the CSIS, 'By including Turkey in one of his first trips abroad, Obama is showing the importance he attaches to relations with Turkey.' 'But success is not a done deal; we need to see the visit's result'³⁹ and not just hollow and euphoric statements published in the open press. Aliriza was blunter in his recent assessment related to the President Obama's trip to Turkey. He said that Obama's talks with Turkish leaders were long on 'atmospheric' and short on specifics. While extremely successful by any measure, the trip *will not* (author's italics) ensure a smooth ride in the important but complicated alliance between Washington and Ankara during the remainder of Obama's

presidency. Nevertheless, his recognition of Turkey's geopolitical significance has helped immeasurably in eradicating the negative legacy of the previous administration and in opening a new chapter in relations.

Obama declared in his speech to the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 6 April 2009 that Turkey and the United States had to 'stand and work together to overcome the challenges of our time.' Obama argued that Turkey and the United States could 'build a model partnership in which a majority of Christian and a majority of Muslim nation, a Western nation ... can create a modern international community that is respectful, secure and prosperous.'⁴⁰ Turkey is uncertain what the US president referred to when describing the relationship as a 'model partnership.' The Ministry of Foreign Affairs penned a wide-ranging memo on the outcomes of Obama's visit that stated 'no information on the substance of a model partnership'⁴¹ was found.

Although there are many positive signs, analysts warn that Obama's visit to Turkey is only the first step in a necessary process of rebuilding a frayed alliance. Lesser noted that 'A golden age would be terrific and who can argue with that as a goal.' 'But for those of us who watch this stuff, we will be satisfied with a partnership when there is less mutual suspicion and a lot more co-operation on key issues.'⁴²

Potential minefield in Turkish-American relations

Ian Lesser noted that the state of play between Turkey and the United States under President Barack Obama will depend heavily on Ankara's perception of the transatlantic alliance. While pointing to Turkey's temporary seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as an important asset in transatlantic co-operation, Lesser implied that possible developments in Iran would serve as a litmus test for Turkey's direction. He added that 'There will be serious questions of what Turkey will do on major security issues and the most important one is Iran. If there is a security action on Iran's nuclear programme then Turkey will have to

make tough choices. I am not sure it will be a problem but Turkey and the United States will have to work much closer.' The second major issue for Turkey during Obama's term will be the future of Iraq. Despite the common tendency to link this with the fight against the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party organisation, Lesser said that Turkey's interest should be assessed in a wider, longer-term perspective in relation to US disengagement.⁴³ Lesser has not elaborated further and the newspaper has not expanded on the issue. There is no sense in speculating on what Lesser implied.

Turkish-Russian Partnership without Strategy

In contrast to close but rather loose military and national security co-operation between Turkey and the United States, Turkish-Russian co-operation has thus far been focused on the countries' economic ties. Over the last decade the trade volume reached US\$ 32 billion making Russia Turkey's number one partner. Co-operation in energy is the major area of mutual economic activity. Russia is one of the main customers for Turkish construction firms. Nonetheless, a huge trade imbalance in Russia's favour due to Turkey's heavy dependence on Russian gas and oil continues to be a major concern for the Turks. Despite commitments to fix the trade imbalance made during President Vladimir Putin's 2004 visit, the gap is still there.

Economic dependence on Russia, however, reduces Ankara's autonomy and options with regard to Russia in diplomatic affairs.⁴⁴ Turkey and the United States are united in concern over Russia's meddling in the internal politics of Georgia and Azerbaijan. In Georgia, Turkey is concerned with the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Still, Turkey has been subdued in its overt response to the growing Russian support for Abkhazia, and this leads some to wonder what that may indicate about Turkey's overall tolerance of resurgent Russia.⁴⁵ During the Russian-Georgian war, the economic asymmetric dependence forced Turkey to follow an acquiescent policy towards Moscow.⁴⁶

The policy of pipeline bypassing Russia puts Turkey and the United States in direct competition with Russia. US policy on the matter is clear: 'the US, Azerbaijan, and Turkey [are] working together to attract gas from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.'⁴⁷ At the same time, energy dependence on Russia makes Turkey vulnerable and uneasy in its relations with Russia. Prime Minister Tayyip Recep Erdogan clearly articulated Turkey's views, 'If the deliveries of gas are disrupted we would be kept in the dark.' 'We cannot ignore this.'⁴⁸ Should current trends continue Turkish dependence on Russian gas may reach up to 80 per cent in coming years. In addition, Turkey pays an excessive price for 1000 cubic meter. While, for instance, the average European price for 1000 cubic meter is US\$ 235 Turkey's natural gas rate has been announced as US\$ 260 by Alexei Miller, chief executive of Gazprom, on 4 January 2006.⁴⁹ Although Turkey likes to portray itself as an energy transit country and an energy hub for Europe, the reality is very different. Thus far, Turkey has not found an alternative to gas supplies from Russia and has neither turned into an energy transit country nor into energy hub.⁵⁰ Therefore, it can be said that both economic and energy dependence of

Turkey on Russia remains Turkey's Achilles heel. Russia will continue to pursue its policy of tightening economic knots around the Turkish Gulliver.

There is definitely a debate underway in Turkish political thought that Russia may be a viable and even a major partner for Turkey in the twenty-first century. Russia is using a variety of soft power tools to woo Turkey. Other observers feel that Russia is just playing with Turkey and that there is ample room for Russo-Turkish competition in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Black Sea.⁵¹

A resurgent and assertive Russia would find more room for manoeuvre in peripheral areas, adjacent to Turkey, from the Balkans to the Caucasus. In short, the risks over the longer term in Turkish-Russian relations are high, and the need for deterrence and reassurance vis-à-vis Moscow will continue to drive a cautious and Western-oriented approach in Ankara.⁵² Turkish concerns about Russia mirror those in the United States, and the American connection will remain the cornerstone of Turkey's deterrent posture vis-à-vis Russia. For these reasons, dialogue on the management of relations with Moscow should be a prominent item on the bilateral agenda for the future.⁵³ Another suggestion is that perhaps the United States together with Turkey would invite other countries around the Black Sea area such as Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, and Ukraine to join in to the dialogue.⁵⁴ Evidently, Russia will object to such a dialogue because it perceives dialogue with Georgia and Ukraine in particular, as meddling in Russia's sphere of influence.

Russia has no interest in seeing Turkey realise Turgut Ozal's vision of becoming the leader of a group of modernising, market-oriented democracies in the Caucasus and Central Asia and a bridge between those regions and the West. Turkey's good relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan, including support for Azeri Turks in Nagorno-Karabakh, reflect divergent interests in the Caucasus. However, most Turks also want to avoid again becoming the frontline of a new Cold War between Russia and the West. The two governments have increased their co-operation in the Black Sea economic, energy, and security issues and have resisted efforts by the United States, Bulgaria and Romania, to extend NATO's maritime surveillance under *Operation Active Endeavour* into the Black Sea.⁵⁵ Therefore, it can be said that, despite the pragmatic approach, Russian-Turkish relations are based upon the balance of power and division of spheres of influence with certain contradictions. Gokhan Bacyk from the Fatih

University in Istanbul noted that such a relationship take into consideration not only co-operation but also competition as well as a hard 'fight for the sphere of influence'.⁵⁶ For the time being, the author cannot provide even one example of a hard fought campaign for the sphere of influence. There is more acquiescence of Turkey to Russia (see note 46) and this point should raise an alarm bell within the circle of Turkish foreign and security policy experts.

Although, Turkey is increasingly seen as a friendly actor in the region, as explained by a senior Turkish diplomat, the Russians 'are not quite sure to what degree a NATO member country can be trusted'.⁵⁷ There is also a lingering suspicion about Russia's intentions in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moscow, too, is trying to exploit Turkey's dissatisfaction with the United States to its own advantage, rather than see what it can build from the new relationship.⁵⁸ Exploiting dissatisfaction with and taking advantage of Turkey or any other potential partner are the basic tenets of Russian diplomacy. Increase in the volume of trade between the two countries and an influx of Russian tourists to Turkey – factors that are often highlighted in the open press are not sufficient reasons to turn Turkey away from the United States.

One of the areas where even US war in Iraq has not been able to produce tangible results between Turkey and Russia is defence co-operation. Despite Moscow's repeated pleas to develop the defence relationship, not much has been accomplished. Sergei Ivanov, Russian

Minister of Defence, issued a rare public statement in the autumn of 2005. Referring to Turkey as a 'Eurasian power' Ivanov said 'I must say that Turkey's adoption of NATO standards as well as the tough competition by western countries limits our defence co-operation. One must also admit that some political and military circles [in Turkey] are sympathetic to these [western] countries.'⁵⁹

To conclude, the main driving factor in the Turkish-Russian rapprochement is a shared desire to maintain the status quo. While Turkey fears destabilisation on its borders and the ramifications of this for its own territorial integrity, Russia is more concerned about American and European infiltration in its traditional sphere of imperial influence, and is trying to see what political and economic advantage it can exploit from Turkey's fears and dissatisfaction with the US and the EU. This is, therefore, a partnership that, for now, is more rooted in prevailing anxieties than in future hopes⁶⁰ or, as to paraphrase Igor Torbakov, 'The Russo-Turkish 'honeymoon' remain a pretty precarious affair'.⁶¹ Thick sweet Turkish honey is not the right ingredient for the Russian home-made grisly moonshine. They can balance each other but they certainly do not mix.

Ultimately, what will determine the course of Turkish-Russian relations is the quality of their relationship with the West. Their sense of alienation from the West has brought them closer. Their relationships with the West will determine how they will fare together.⁶²

Conclusion

It is evident that in the era of a new American president, Barack Obama's belated reassessment of Turkish-American strategic partnership is a must. It is also evident that a narrow military strategic partnership has a small chance of withstanding further strains in relations. Therefore, suggestions to incorporate expanded economic and cultural dimensions into a strategic partnership are very important and can be of use to both countries.

The evolving nature of transatlantic co-operation is important but should not be exaggerated. Prime Minister Erdogan's hard ball play in the April 2009 decision against the nomination of a new Secretary-General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen did not help to assuage the grievances of Turkey, but only irritated EU NATO leaders' and contributed to the already strained relations between the EU NATO member states and Turkey. It can be said that Turkey feels slightly alienated from NATO and has not yet found its new place within the expanded Alliance. As in the case of a reassessment of the Turkish-American strategic

partnership, Turkey and the rest of the NATO member states need to reassess the place and role of Turkey within expanded Alliance and NATO's role in Turkish-American relations.

Words of President Obama that 'things were on the right track now' should be assessed very carefully and not assumed or taken for granted. Although these words are short on specifics as underlined by Bulent Aliriza, they are not only important but crucial in rebuilding the strategic partnership that has barely survived the eight years of the Bush administration. The strategic partnership is in need of content and substance and not merely a variety of niceties. The phrase 'strategic partnership requires active assistance' may be rejected by Turkish politicians and military. The case of a nuclear-armed or nuclear-ready Iran may prove to be the hardest to bridge between Turkey and the United States because the interests of both countries do not coincide. Therefore, we may expect further damage to the already strained strategic partnership if both countries are not ready to discuss frankly their disagreements and have more realistic expectations of each other.

As was noted in the text, analysts warned that Obama's visit to Turkey was only the first step in the necessary process of rebuilding a frayed alliance. The way ahead is long and hard, however, it appears that rays of hope are welcome by President Obama and there are also good wishes on both sides to repair strategic relationship.

The other set of relationship is not only different in nature, but also of different expectations. Russia is not the real partner of Turkey - although Russian and certain Turkish officials might dismiss this statement by the author out of hand. There is a lack of strategic depth and strategic thinking in the Turkish-Russian partnership. Exploiting Turkey's dissatisfaction with the US and taking advantage

of Turkey are the basic tenets of Russian diplomacy. There are lingering suspicions in both countries as to each other's intention. As both sides will admit, there is not yet much political substance to their relations. Rapprochement has not yet extended much beyond the persons of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Minister and Vladimir Putin, the President.⁶³ Well, this is certainly an inadequate foundation for a true partnership of the kind discussed very often in the open sources.

An increase in the volume of trade between the two countries and an influx of Russian tourists to Turkey are insufficient reasons to turn Turkey from the US. Finally, Russia's attempt to sell weapon systems to Turkey has been marginal despite Russia's efforts to do so.

Notes:

- 1 Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the United States: Ambivalent Allies" in *the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)* vol. 2, no. 4 (December 1998) online: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1998/issue4/kirisci.pdf>; p. 18. Hereafter cited as Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the United States".
- 2 *Ibid*; p. 19. A very similar line of thought was expressed by Ian Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the delusion of geopolitics" in *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 3 (Autumn 2006); p. 91. Hereafter cited as Ian Lesser, "Turkey, the United States".
- 3 Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the United States"; pp. 19-20.
- 4 *Ibid*; p. 21.
- 5 *Ibid*; pp. 22-23.
- 6 *Ibid*; p. 23. See also p. 24. See note 9 for a lukewarm reaction of the AKP leadership toward Turkey's military contribution to operations in Afghanistan.
- 7 *Ibid*; p. 24. For differences regarding Iran in particular, see *Ibid*; pp. 24-25. On the differences between Turkey and the United States on the issue of Iran and Iraq, see F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy in an age of uncertainty*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2003 online: http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1612/; p. XII and p. 183. Hereafter cited as F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, Turkish foreign policy. See also Ian Lesser, "Turkey, the United States"; p. 89 and pp. 91-92. See also Stephen Flanagan, Samuel Brannen, Kaley Levitt, Bryan Shea and Cassandra Smith, "Turkey's shifting dynamics: Implications for US-Turkey relations". A report on the US-Turkey Strategic Initiative. Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), (June 2008) online: http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080606_turkeyshiftingdyn.pdf; pp. 13-15. Hereafter cited as Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's shifting". See also Stephen Flanagan, Samuel Brannen, Bulent Aliriza, Edward Chow, Andrew Kuchins, Haim Malka, Julianne Smith, Ian Lesser, Eric Palomaa, Alexandros Petersen and Kaley Levitt, "Turkey's evolving dynamics: Strategic choices for US-Turkish relations". Final report of the CSIS US-Turkey Strategic Initiative. Washington: CSIS (March 2009) online: http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/090408_flanagan_turkeyreport_web.pdf; p. 58. Hereafter cited as Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's evolving".
- 8 Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the United States"; p. 26.
- 9 "Strategic partners or estranged allies: Turkey, the United States, and Operation Iraqi Freedom" in *Strategic Insights*, vol. 2, no. 7 (July 2003) online: <http://www.ccc.navy.mil/si/july03/middleEast.asp>. Hereafter cited as Barak Salmoni, "Strategic partners". For military co-operation beyond Turkey's borders, see note 5. The sense of being eager to engage American policymakers and observers expressed by Turkey's mainstream Islamists was noted by F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser. At the same time they noted that the mainstream Islamists have been less supportive of the idea of Turkish military contributions to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 181. In addition, Ankara is adamant that despite Turkish soldiers' participation in the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) *they are not combat troops* (author's italics). *Financial Times*, 9 April 2009; p. 1. Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug reiterated this statement and noted that Turkish soldiers did not and would not take part in security operations against Islamic insurgents or drug traffickers. He added that 'Our mission will be strictly the same: to ensure security in Kabul and its environs.' For a complete article, see:

http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11544698_p.asp?scr=1 – online on 30 April 2009. Interestingly enough, Stephen Flanagan *et al.* were reticent in their assessment and noted that the AKP leaders have maintained generally co-operative relations with the United States and Europe. “*Turkey’s shifting*”; p. 4.

- ¹⁰ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 179. For the Turkish images of the United States, namely the anti-American instincts of both the nationalist right and the Turkish left, suspicion of American aims among elites and diplomats and the military establishment sensitivity to sovereignty questions, see *Ibid*; pp. 179-180. During eight years of Bush administration, Turkish public opinion of America reached new lows: a 2007 survey found that only 9 per cent of Turks held a favourable view of the United States, down from 52 per cent in 2002. Ian Lesser said that ‘I would say that we have had a very rough eight years – rough at the policy level, but also rough at the level of public opinion.’ Yigal Schleifer, “*Turkey: Obama visit sparks hope of reinvigorated US-Turkish strategic partnership*” in *Eurasia Insight*, 3 April 2009 online: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav040309a.shtml>. Hereafter cited as Yigal Schleifer, “*Turkey: Obama visit*”. To the Turkish public opinion must be added the tendency of some American foreign- and security-policy elites to ignore the changes that have taken place on the Turkish scene over the last decade. But even the traditional partners, such as the Turkish military and security establishment, appear ambivalent regarding strategic co-operation with the United States. Ian Lesser, “*Turkey, the United States*”; p. 85. Stephen Flanagan *et al.* also noted that many US officials and foreign policy experts still lack a deep understanding of Turkey’s evolving course, and there is no consensus on the strategic foundation needed to carry the US-Turkish relationship through these tempestuous waters. As former US ambassador to Turkey Morton Abramowitz cautioned, ‘One term frequently gets bandied about...and has been much used in recent years by both US and Turkish officials: a strategic partnership...Despite the rhetoric of senior officials, the United States has never shown interest in pursuing this concept except when trouble arises, as it has twice been in Iraq.’ “*Turkey’s shifting*”; p. 3. Given the crisis mentality in Turkey at present, a US initiative to articulate a clear strategic vision could help to focus Turkish decision-makers to do the same. A strategic dialogue is only likely to yield results once a degree of consensus and trust is forged on both sides. Failure to make meaningful repairs and adjustments now would result in serious long term structural instability in the US-Turkish relationships. *Ibid*; p. 21. A very similar statement was made by Soner Cagaptay, senior fellow and director of the Turkish Research Programme at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He said that sooner or later, the anti-Western views will cripple Turkey’s foreign policy partnership with the West. Therefore, as Ian Lesser continued, convergence between Turkey and its Western partners is desirable, but Turkey should not expect miracles from the Obama administration regarding its ability to change the EU’s stance on Turkey. “*An Obama policy toward Turkey: Continuity or change?*” in *Policy Watch 1480: Special Forum Report*, 23 February 2009, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy online: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC05.php?CID=3016>. Hereafter cited “*An Obama policy*”. The author was convinced that at the present as also in the past Turkey did not expect miracles from the US administration regarding its ability to change the EU’s stance on Turkey. It should be remembered that after all the US administration has a limited leverage on the EU. In addition, the EU perceives any involvement of the US administration on behalf of Turkey to join the Union with great displeasure and irritation. Both President Nicolas Sarkozy and Chancellor Angela Merkel represent such a point of view. Any further discussion on the issue of Turkish membership in the EU is beyond the scope of this report.
- ¹¹ Barak Salmoni, “*Strategic partners*”.
- ¹² “*Turkey, the United States*”; p. 91. See also Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, “*Turkey’s shifting*”; p. 1 and p. 9. See also Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, “*Turkey’s evolving*”; p. 85.
- ¹³ *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 199.
- ¹⁴ Barak Salmoni, “*Strategic partners*”. It appears that the domestic opposition to the impending war was the crucial factor in Turkey’s calculus, to which the United States have not been paid enough attention. The economic and political costs of Turkish support for the Gulf War and the subsequent sanctions and isolation of Ba’athist Iraq led a 2002 Turkish General Staff report to conclude that Turkey had come out behind and that, in the future, ‘the activities of the United States should be followed with scepticism’. Today the relationship is plagued by mutual suspicion. Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, “*Turkey’s shifting*”; p. 2 and p. 21. This statement is correct, although overall Turkish-US relations have improved since November 2007. For further information, see note 27.
- ¹⁵ Ian Lesser, “*Turkey, the United States*”; p. 88 and pp. 93-94. See also Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, “*Turkey’s shifting*”; pp. 9-10; “*Ninth Turgut Ozal memorial lecture: Invigorating the US-Turkish strategic partnership*”, 24 June 2008, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy online: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC07.php?CID=406>. Hereafter cited as “*Ninth Turgut Ozal*”. See also Suat Kiniklioglu, “*The Anatomy of Turkish-Russian Relations*”, Sakip Sabanci International Research Award Essay (May 2006), Brookings Institution online:

http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20060523sabanci_3a.pdf. Hereafter cited as Suat Kiniklioglu, "The Anatomy".

- ¹⁶ Barak Salmoni, "Strategic partners". According to Matthew Bryza, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, the 1 March 2003 decision 'set US-Turkey relations into a tailspin and shattered our concept of strategic partnership'. "Ninth Turgut Ozal". For a comprehensive analysis of the 1 March 2003 vote, see James Kapsis, "The failure of US-Turkish pre-war negotiations: An overconfident United States, political mismanagement, and a conflicted military" in *MERLA* vol. 10, no. 3 (September 2006) online: <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue3/jv10no3a3.html>.
- ¹⁷ Barak Salmoni, "Strategic partners".
- ¹⁸ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's shifting"; p. 10. For further details on the emergence of a semi-autonomous Kurdish state, see *Ibid*; p. 10. See also note 15. See also Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's evolving"; pp. 41-43.
- ¹⁹ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 185 and p. 198.
- ²⁰ "Turkey, the United States"; p. 83. For re-evaluation, see text on page 4. It can be said that in many ways, the relationship – a pragmatic alliance born out of mutual needs and threats faced in the wake of the Cold War – has been struggling to find new meaning since the fall of the Soviet Union. Bulent Aliriza said that 'Turkey and the United States are still working on redefining their relationship since the end of the Cold War. It is a work in progress.' But Aliriza cautioned, 'There is not yet a thought through blueprint for the US-Turkish relationship.' Yigal Schleifer, "Turkey: Obama visit". As for the notion taken for granted, see note 13.
- ²¹ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's shifting"; p. 3 and p. 21.
- ²² "Turkey, the United States"; p. 87.
- ²³ *Ibid*; p. 90.
- ²⁴ *Ibid*; p. 91.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*; pp. 92-93. A very similar notion was expressed by Stephen Flanagan *et al.* They wrote that avoiding further strains and revitalising US-Turkish relations requires a new strategic framework that reflects the changing geopolitical dynamics and allows both more effective pursuit of enduring common interests and management of areas where policy preferences and interests diverge. The framework should also bolster Turkey's ties with the United States and Europe, including in the context of NATO and the EU. "Turkey's shifting"; p. 1. Flanagan *et al.* have not, however, spelled out the context of the new strategic relations. What is evident, however, is that Turkish-American relations require a serious and thorough evaluation as well as a new accentuation and input; otherwise the strained relations will deteriorate further. For reiteration of the author's view, see *Ibid*; p. 21. For an emphasis on the US clear strategic vision, see note 10.
- ²⁶ Ian Lesser, "Turkey, the United States"; p. 93. For a search of a more diverse Turkish-American relationship, see note 19. For neglected Turkish-American economic agenda, see "Rebuilding a partnership: Turkish-American relations for a new era. A Turkish perspective" in *TUSIAD* Publication No-T/2009-04/490; pp. 81-85. Hereafter cited as "Rebuilding a partnership".
- ²⁷ "Ninth Turgut Ozal". Despite improvements of Turkish-American relations in 2007, it has been conceded that the post-Iraq invasion concerns and resulting tensions in the Turkish society against the US policies in the region are continued to linger. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/opinion/11154118_p.asp - online on 7 March 2009.
- ²⁸ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's shifting"; p. 21. According to Matthew Bryza, having weathered some serious difficulties, the US-Turkish strategic partnership is broader and richer than any time in the past. "Ninth Turgut Ozal". Bryza's statement is not only incorrect but also detached from reality. For a view supporting Matthew Bryza's assertion, see Richard Weitz, "Ankara makes Caucasus and Central Asia a diplomatic priority – Turkish President" in *Eurasia Insight*, 9 January 2008 online: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav010908aa.shtml>. The Ankara Co-ordination Centre for collaboration and sharing information to pursue the PKK was established in late February 2009 (For a complete article, see *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 18 March 2009, p. 20) and not as was cited by Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's evolving"; p. 85.
- ²⁹ "An Obama policy".
- ³⁰ For a complete article, see *Defense News*, 13 April 2009, p. 8.
- ³¹ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, "Turkey's evolving"; p. 93. According to a recent report published by TUSIAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), which cited Sinan Ulgen's report 'Ankara cannot stay neutral in a game where the stakes are being raised. Ankara (as a member of the UNSC) would eventually face the unpalatable choice between supporting international sanctions and alienating the

regime in Tehran or siding with Iran and risk disavowal from the West.' The authors of the report state unequivocally that 'We believe that if Turkey ever comes to such a crossroad and must choose, it will choose the path of its allies.' *"Rebuilding a partnership"*; p. 56. The current author has a different opinion.

³² *"An Obama policy"*. For support of the first point raised by Soner Cagaptay, see A. Gur'yev, *"Situatsiya v Turtsii: dekabr' 2008 goda"* ("Situation in Turkey as of December 2008") in *the Institute of Near East* online <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2009/18-01-09.htm>.

³³ For a complete article, see Saban Kardas, *"Turkish-American 'strategic partnership': On the way to rejuvenation?"* in *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 6, issue 45 (9 March 2009) online: http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34681. See also I. Svistunova, *"Turetsko-Amerikanskiye otnosheniya posle prikhoda k vlasti Prezidenta B. Obamy"* ("Turkish-American relations after President B. Obama coming to power") in *the Institute of Near East* online <http://www.iimes.ru/rus/stat/2009/17-03-09a.htm>. Ilter Turan from the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University reiterated Babacan's notion of consultation. Turan said that 'I think there are quite a significant number of common interests, and if we can reach an understanding that things will be managed by mutual consultation, and there will be moments when differences of opinion will prevail, then I think we can go into a period of healthy co-operation.' Yigal Schleifer, *"Turkey: Obama visit"*.

³⁴ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *"Turkey's evolving"*; p. 82. The case of Iran as discussed in note 31 should be remembered. See also note 43.

³⁵ For a complete article, see *Defense News*, 30 March 2009; p. 11.

³⁶ http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/opinion/11214831_p.asp - online on 16 March 2009. For assistance of Obama on behalf of Turkey to join the EU, see note 10.

³⁷ <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1238562922110&pagename=JPost%2FJPost> - online on 6 April 2009. See also: http://hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11386554_p.asp - online on 8 April 2009.

³⁸ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/opinion/11377571.asp?yazarid=3118gid=260> - online on 7 April 2009.

³⁹ *Defense News*, 16 March 2009; p. 18. A very similar statement was issued by Faruk Logoglu, former Turkish Ambassador to Washington. Logoglu said 'That was a nice visit but must not be exaggerated. We need to keep our feet on the ground. It can be considered a useful start for Turkish-American relations.' http://hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11386554_p.asp - online on 8 April 2009.

⁴⁰ For a complete article, see *"President Obama's trip to Turkey: Building a 'Model of Partnership'"* in *Turkey Update*, 8 April 2009, CSIS online: http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/090408_turkey_update.pdf. See also *Defense News*, 13 April 2009, p. 4.

⁴¹ For a complete article see http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11458147_p.asp - online on 18 April 2009.

⁴² Yigal Schleifer, *"Turkey: Obama visit"*.

⁴³ http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/10803066_p.asp - online on 19 January 2009. For potential Turkish problem related to the Iran's nuclear programme, see Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *"Turkey's evolving"*; p. 45.

⁴⁴ Saban Kardas, *"Turkey and Russia developing a new economic and strategic partnership"* in *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, vol. 6, issue 31 (17 February 2009) online: http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34515. Hereafter cited as Saban Kardas, "Turkey and Russia". See also: http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/2009/02/16_a_2943072.shtml. For the increased dialogue on softer areas such as trade, culture and tourism, and for the Section *The Economics: The Sky is their Limit* in particular, see Suat Kiniklioglu, *"The Anatomy"*. For the disparate economic relations, see Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *"Turkey's evolving"*; p. XVII; p. 61 and pp. 64-65.

⁴⁵ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *"Turkey's shifting"*; p. 17.

⁴⁶ Saban Kardas, *"Turkey and Russia"*. See also: http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/2009/02/16_a_2943072.shtml. There is one exceptionally well written paper by Igor Torbakov, *"The Georgia crisis and Russia-Turkey relations"* in *Jamestown Foundation*, 26 November 2008 online: http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Torbakov_Russia_Turkey.pdf; pp. 1-33.

⁴⁷ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *"Turkey's shifting"*; p. 17.

⁴⁸ For a complete article, see *Turkish Daily News*, 1 September 2008. Julia Nanay, senior director at the Washington-based PFC Energy, speaking at the Istanbul Forum said that Turkey's dependence on energy

from Russia will complicate the government's aspirations to become an alternative energy corridor to the West. <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=102900> – online on 26 April 2008.

- ⁴⁹ Suat Kiniklioglu, *The Anatomy*. Figures cited by Suat Kiniklioglu are not entirely correct. For instance, in 2005, Turkey paid Russia US\$ 243 per MCM (should read 1000 m³, obvious mistake by the newspaper) – whereas Germany paid US\$ 217, and Austria US\$ 221 – making it known as the highest price for natural gas in the world. *Turks.us Daily News*, 1 February 2006. <http://www.turks.us/article.php?story=20060201103922408>.
- ⁵⁰ In support of the author's assertion that Turkey has not turned into an energy hub, see http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/opinion/11533899_p.asp?yazarid=3348gid=260 – online on 29 April 2009. See also Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's evolving*; p. 72.
- ⁵¹ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's shifting*; p. 17.
- ⁵² F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 193. A very similar idea was expressed by Ian Lesser, *Turkey, the United States*; p. 90. Turkey's relations with Russia have warmed, though they remain tempered by concerns about Moscow's reassertiveness and role in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's shifting*; p. 1 and pp. 15-16.
- ⁵³ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian Lesser, *Turkish foreign policy*; p. 184.
- ⁵⁴ A similar idea was proposed by Andrew Kuchins and Alexandros Petersen in Chapter 4: Turkey, Russia, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and the Central Asia in Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's evolving*; p. 72.
- ⁵⁵ Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's shifting*; p. 16. For convergence of interests on the Black Sea and Caucasus, see Suat Kiniklioglu, *The Anatomy*. Kiniklioglu's focus is rather one-sided and does not present divergence of interests. Russia and Iran continue to regard Turkey's policy of promoting peace and stability in the Caucasus and Central Asia with suspicion and challenge them. Whether it will lead to any confrontation is hard to say at the moment, however, we should not reject such a possibility out of hand. For the reluctance of Turkey to choose the sides – US or Russia, see Stephen Flanagan *et al.*, *Turkey's evolving*; p. 72. See also *Rebuilding a partnership*; p. 70 and p. 74.
- ⁵⁶ http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/2009/02/16_a_2943072.shtml.
- ⁵⁷ Suat Kiniklioglu, *The Anatomy*.
- ⁵⁸ Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Turkey and Russia: Axis of the excluded?* in *Survival*, vol. 48, no. 1 (March 2006); p. 90. Hereafter cited as Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Turkey and Russia*.
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- ⁶⁰ Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Russia and Turkey in the Caucasus: Moving together to preserve the status quo?* in *Russie.Nei.Visions* no. 8 (January 2006), Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI) online: http://www.ifri.org/files/Russie/hilltaspinar_anglais.pdf; p. 19.
- ⁶¹ *Making sense of the current phase of Turkish-Russian relations* in *Occasional Paper* (October 2007), Jamestown Foundation online: <http://www.jamestown.org/docs/Jamestown-Torbakov/Turkey/Russia.pdf>; pp. 4-5.
- ⁶² Suat Kiniklioglu, *The Anatomy*. A very similar point was made by Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar. See *Turkey and Russia*; p. 81.
- ⁶³ Fiona Hill and Omer Taspinar, *Turkey and Russia*; p. 81.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi/Justice and Development Party
CGS-TAF	Chief of General Staff-Turkish Armed Forces
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
ECPC	Economic Co-operation Partnership Council
EPC	US-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission
EU	European Union
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
HLDG	High-Level Defense Group
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISF	International Stabilisation Force
MCM	million cubic metres
MERIA	Middle East Review of International Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSC	National Security Council
PKK	Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan/Kurdistan Workers' Party
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TIFA	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
TUSIAD	Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

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