

**THE CONTOURS OF POST-COLD WAR TURKISH-AMERICAN
RELATIONS, (1990-2001)**

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ABSTRACT

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Tekdemir, Sevinç

MIR in International Relations

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The nature of post-Cold War decade Turkish-American relations has largely been determined by the new strategic circumstances that also have started to frame world politics. In this decade, new challenges and opportunities brought together new areas of cooperation for the U.S. and Turkey by strengthening their alliance within NATO. Hence, the mutual importance attributed to the relationship has flourished as a result of the essentiality of their alliance. Neither the U.S. nor Turkey could afford to lose a significant ally with whom they share common interests in the region. Furthermore, it could be argued that these allies will need each other in the future to realize their foreign policy objectives concerning the relations with the neighboring countries. Thus, the simpler approach to the thesis is analyzing the exogenous and indigenous factors that affect the character of Turkish-American relations in the post-Cold War era.

Keywords: The nature of Turkish-American relations, post-Cold War period, globalization, strategic partnership, the Middle East, Balkans, ‘special relationship’, Equal footing, interdependence

ÖZET

SOĞUK SAVAŞ SONRASI TÜRK-AMERİKAN İLİŞKİLERİNİN DIŞ HATLARI, (1990-2001)

Tekdemir, Sevinç

Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans

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Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin tabiatını dünya siyasetini de şekillendirmeye başlayan yeni stratejik şartlar büyük ölçüde belirlemiştir. Bu dönem, Türkiye'nin ve ABD'nin NATO'daki ortaklığını sağlamlaştırırken yeni meydan okuyuşlar ve fırsatlar onlar için yeni işbirliği alanları oluşturdu. Bu yüzden, bu ilişkiye verilen karşılıklı önem ortaklığın gerekliliğini de arttırdı. Bölgede paylaştıkları ortak çıkarlardan dolayı ne ABD ne de Türkiye bu önemli müttefiğini kaybetmeye katlanabilirdi. Bu nedenle, komşu devletlerle olan ilişkileri konusunda bu iki müttefiğin gelecekte de dış politika hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek için birbirine ihtiyaç duyacakları söylenebilir. Bunun için, bu tezin temel yaklaşımı Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin niteliğini etkileyen dışsal ve içsel faktörleri analiz etmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin tabiatı, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem, küreselleşme, stratejik ortaklık, Orta Doğu, Balkanlar, “özel ilişki”, eşit koşullar, karşılıklı bağımlılık

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After World War II ended in 1945, the international order was organized in accordance with the bipolar division of the West and East. Relations among states were primarily shaped according to the camp to which they belonged. Relations between two states belonging to or supporting different blocs were usually minimal. Each bloc viewed the other as an existential threat. However, starting in the early eighties and reaching to a peak in late eighties, Cold War orientations began to lose their effectiveness and even to lose their meaning. The fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 became the major sign pointing to dissolution of the bipolar world. Thus, the Cold War period ended and the last decade of the 20th century arose as an important period of transition in which a new world order was to emerge.

Cold-War circumstances had a deep impact on the nature of U.S-Turkish relations. In this regard, the end of the Cold War led to new circumstances, which presented many challenges and opportunities. Therefore, it would be necessary to analyze the relations between Turkey and the United States, which not only intensified but also diversified. The changing nature of the international order has introduced new exogenous factors, which were latent or did not exist during the Cold War. These exogenous factors could be associated with the problems facing Turkey in geopolitical terms. It would be essential to view how Washington and Ankara would continue their relations in the absence of Cold War considerations, which closely tied Turkey and the U.S.

The primary concern of the thesis is to look at the nature of post-Cold War U.S.-Turkish relations and to understand what major issues have caused a reorientation. It is noteworthy to cite the main characteristics that have shaped Turkish-American relations in a period of change that may lead to the emergence of a new world order mainly dominated by the U.S., the only remaining superpower.

Throughout the analysis, rather than recounting the events that Washington and Ankara experienced in the nineties concerning bilateral ties, the focus will be on major contours that shaped the characteristics of U.S.-Turkish relations. It is important to analyze post-Cold War ties for Ankara to be able to prepare itself for the new millennium since this decade, as a transition and preparation for the 21st century would give clues about the content of the relations in the future. Different from Cold War conditions, new regions and opportunities would be influencing Turkish-U.S. relations, and this might bring another dimension to their bilateral ties. The impact of global and regional developments might lead to a change in the nature of U.S.-Turkish relations.

The period, in which the U.S.-Turkish relations, is to be examined is the decade between the end of the Cold War and September 11, 2001. Here it is important to explain why this decade is selected for the purposes of this thesis. Many scholars have already examined different periods of U.S.-Turkish relations.¹ Among different periods in U.S.-Turkish relations, the nineties has been the less analyzed period; however, this period requires specific attention. Two major turning points have marked this decade. With the collapse of communist ideology following the fall of the Berlin Wall and appearance of new independent states this decade distanced

¹ For details on U.S.-Turkish relations see Ferenc A. Vali, Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1971), Nasuh Uslu, Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri, (Ankara: 21. Yüzyıl Yayınları, 2000), and Baskın Oran, Türk Dış Politikası:

itself from the Cold War period. On the other side, with the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, this decade was also distanced from the post-September 11-period, which could be accepted as a new era. Therefore, with regard to the evaluation of U.S.-Turkish relations this decade between two significant processes influencing the fate of world politics is worthwhile in terms of examining U.S.-Turkish relations.

In this period, the newly emerging global and regional changes during the nineties caused a reexamination of the basic characteristics that formed U.S.-Turkish chain of relations. Mainly security oriented U.S.-Turkish relations might have lost their significance in the post-Cold War era after the demise of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Turkey's role as a NATO ally might have decreased in a period when no need was felt for NATO. However, U.S. efforts to transform NATO into a collective security organization would necessitate different analyses of the nature of U.S.-Turkish relations. Therefore, the major issues debated in this period redefining the U.S.-Turkish relations would be crucial. During the nineties, both Washington and Ankara used the concept of partnership frequently; however, there was never an official agreement recognizing Turkey as the strategic partner of the U.S. Moreover, most probably there was even a gap in the understanding of the U.S. and Turkey as to what it meant to be a strategic partner.

In this context, this study intends to contribute to the debate over whether Turkey and the U.S. are strategic partners or not, and also it aims at bringing a compact analysis of whether the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. qualifies as a partnership or not by emphasizing the conditions on which this relationship is based.

In this period of examination, in the changing and at the same time evolving world politics, U.S.-Turkish relations have acquired a new pace different from the Cold War. With this fact in mind, the initial question that guided the study was to view and analyze the fundamentals of U.S.-Turkish relations in the post-Cold War era. It will be necessary to examine the basic global and regional factors that influenced U.S.-Turkish relations in this decade before drawing a conclusion of what really characterized the nature of this relationship.

Along the study, how and why Turkey and the U.S. are significant to each other will be explored. Whether being allies in NATO is the main force that brings them together in many areas of regional confrontation or cooperation will be discussed. Besides this, another debate of the study will be focusing on to what extent Turkey is essential for the U.S. and its global and regional interests in the world, and to what extent the U.S. is important for Turkey and its regional interests. It is significant to investigate under which conditions the U.S., as the only global power in the beginning of the decade, and Turkey, as an emerging regional power in the nineties, were brought together.

It could be argued that in a world where globalization was spreading rapidly and bringing all countries within the scope of its rules, the areas in which the interests of Turkey and the U.S. would intersect increased in the post-Cold War era. New opportunities for cooperation in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia arose for Turkey and the U.S. The guiding principle of cooperation in these fields was one of common interest. Therefore, for the U.S., Turkey's significance should be evaluated in terms of Ankara's contribution to U.S. interests and vice versa in order to meaningfully identify their bilateral ties.

Here it is important to mention some major difficulties faced during the preparation of this study. With regard to the analysis of the post-Cold War Turkish-American relations, a crucial difficulty has been the afore-mentioned fact that the number of exogenous factors increased and further complicated the relations. While the level of analysis was once the existence of a single enemy, now the levels of analysis have increased geometrically after the end of the Cold War. This difficulty of analysis also lives in the boundaries of the topic. The exogenous nature of the factors directly influencing the relations between the two countries makes the analysis multi-faceted and more complicated. Hence, it is important first to examine these exogenous factors in order to simplify the evaluation. In general, the relations between any combinations of two countries are basically determined by indigenous factors, which can be examined by considering internal factors associated with the country in question. And basically these factors are generally more manageable in designing foreign relations. However, with regard to the relations of Turkey with the U.S., the indigenous factors are secondary to those exogenous factors and the existing domestic factors that shape the relations are directly influenced by outside factors.

Another difficulty regarding this thesis is the fact that academic resources such as articles, books, and Internet documents are mainly of American origin and generally reflect the perspectives of American experts. The number of studies by Turkish academics and experts is limited and their studies are also generally based on the views distilled from U.S. research. In order not to be lost in American point of view, the thesis tried to protect its objectivity by taking into account every bit of analysis related to the topic.

In order to be more specific about the entire study and the above-mentioned purposes, the project was divided into five chapters. After the introduction, there are four chapters in which the subject and the main arguments are examined in further detail. The second chapter focuses on the impact of global and regional developments on U.S.-Turkish relations in the post-Cold War era. First of all, the major changes that led to the new decade were discussed to see how the post-Cold War decade differed from the Cold War. Later the search for a “new world order” was identified. Following came the sections in which the last decade of the 20th century was depicted as a period of transition in world politics, and later some rising powers that might become partners for the U.S. in this decade were listed. Finally, Turkey’s preparedness to encounter all these developments in world politics was discussed by emphasizing areas on which U.S.-Turkish relations would be concentrated during this decade.

The third chapter focuses on U.S.-Turkish relations by pointing to different factors affecting their bilateral ties. The first concern to be discussed was the main characteristics of the relationship and later what the requirements of a strategic partnership are. In this respect, U.S.-Turkish relations regarding areas of cooperation in the Balkans were taken up first. Secondly, common objectives but different policies regarding the Middle Eastern countries’ impact on U.S.-Turkish relations are examined. Thirdly, Armenian and Greek problems have been two areas with real conflicts and confrontations. Fourthly, comes the section of major compromise about the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline route between Turkey and the U.S. because of the common interests in the region; however, which has not reached a conclusion. The fifth section deals with Turkish foreign initiatives, namely, military cooperation with Israel; the Arab-Israeli peace process; Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone;

South-Eastern European Brigade; and Turkey's EU membership supported by the U.S. The sixth and seventh sections are concerned with U.S. reservations about Turkey and Turkish reservations about U.S. in the region. All these issues helped characterize the nature of their relationship.

The fourth chapter starts with the mutual importance of the U.S.-Turkish relationship. Although the significance of Turkey is highlighted by the U.S., Washington also had doubts about a "new Turkey" emerging in the nineties. Following comes the section in which U.S. policies toward Turkey are discussed. Later, starting with the Clinton administration and continuing with the Bush administration, some major policy changes are described. In the following three sections the concept of strategic partnership is put forward concerning Turkey's partnership with the U.S. Finally, the fifth chapter is the conclusion and there, the final outcomes of the analyses are presented.

As a result of the analyses made on the contours of U.S.-Turkish relations, it could be claimed that the new opportunities and challenges of the post-Cold War era strengthened the mutual importance of their relationship. During this decade, Turkey and the U.S. cooperated in new areas such as the Balkans, Middle East, and Caucasus in addition to the already existing bilateral ties between these two NATO allies. Thus, the areas of cooperation widened the horizons of U.S.-Turkish relationship, and also diversified the characteristics of U.S.-Turkish alliance. The improved significance of NATO increased the essentiality of U.S.-Turkish alliance within NATO, since as loyal and reliable allies, the U.S. and Turkey worked hard together to preserve stability and peace in the Balkans and Middle East. Hence this contribution of the U.S. and Turkey accelerated NATO's role and duty in world politics as an organization concerned with collective security.

On the other hand, the post-Cold war years brought onto the agenda the concept of strategic partnership between the U.S. and Turkey by focusing on the developing character of their relationship. Whether to call Turkey a strategic partner for the U.S. or not was debated for a long time, and the debate continues. However, the most significant debate should focus on whether it has been desirable for Turkey to be a strategic partner of the U.S. When compared to the U.S. “special” relationship with UK or Israel, it was explicitly viewed that there was a difference from that of the relationship of the U.S. and Turkey. Moreover, the requirements of being a strategic partner did not suit Turkey’s role well in its region. Hence, it was also seen that there was not a necessity to categorize the U.S.-Turkish relations within a strategic partnership since for decades they have already been allies through NATO.

Nonetheless, it was also noteworthy that the U.S. could not afford to lose Turkey and its support in the region. On the other side, Turkey could not really afford to lose U.S. support if it wanted to become more powerful in the region and to realize its foreign policy objectives, either. Hence, it was seen that these two states needed each other’s support in regional policies, and it could be concluded that during the nineties the U.S.-Turkish relationship has flourished and demonstrated to the world that this alliance will continue as long as their interests overlap in the following periods.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS ON U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR

2.1 The Initial Changes of the New Decade

With the Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev coming into power in 1985 the Soviet Union started to give signals that it would end the rivalry between the Soviets and Americans that damaged the two sides. Thus, Gorbachev himself announced the economic reforms called “Perestroika” and political reforms called “Glasnost” to restructure and modernize the Communist-based Soviet system. These initiatives of Gorbachev were welcomed by the world and especially by its main rival, the U.S. Furthermore, the continuing Soviet efforts to decrease international tensions caused by the bipolar division of the world reduced the historic Soviet horrors in the eyes of the American people by bringing an end to the Cold War era.²

Historians like Mary Beth Norton have pointed out four trends that led to the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, first the cost of the Cold War accelerated to such a high level that this decreased the domestic expenditures both in the Soviet Union and the U.S. leading to the dissatisfaction of their people. The second trend was the challenge to two major powers from their own spheres of influence. While France was distancing itself from the USA by its withdrawal from the military wing of NATO in 1967, the Czech and Hungarian uprisings decreased the unity among the communist states, and this increased the necessity of détente. Thirdly, the increasing

² Mary Beth Norton et al, A People and A Nation: A History of the United States. Fourth edition, Vol. II. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), p. 914.

power of the Third World as a strong rival and an alternative to both the capitalist West and Communist East brought the U.S. and Soviets closer to détente. Finally, international pressure to stop the nuclear rivalry between the Soviet Union and the U.S. was followed by a period of declining tension on arms race.³

One of the very first signs that pointed to the end of the Cold War between the capitalist West and the communist East came with the collapse of the Berlin Wall on October 2, 1989. This wall was an important symbol of the East-West division of the world. Hence, after the collapse of the wall, the two German states were reunified. Furthermore, the Soviet president declared that his country would not interfere with the other Eastern European countries' regimes and governments. Such a declaration increased independence movements in the Baltic States, and later in the Caucasian and Central Asian states by leading to the break-up of the Soviet empire.⁴

The Soviet Union was dissolved after the former Soviet republics got their independence one after another especially following Gorbachev's denouncement of Communist ideology. The Central Asian and Caucasian republics followed the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and the legal successor of the union became the Russian Federation.⁵ Nevertheless, these newly independent states became new actors of the post-Cold War era and their contribution to world politics would be measured according to the role they would take in international politics in the following years. Especially the Caucasian states with their natural resources would gain a significant role in the relations between the great powers, and between the U.S. and Turkey, both of whom wanted to prevent Russian dominance over the region.

³ Mary Beth Norton et al, p. 915.

⁴ Mary Beth Norton et al, p. 914.

⁵ Ibid.

On the other side of Europe, in the Balkans, the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the following wars among the independent states created another “powder keg” in Europe by threatening stability and peace all over the continent and even in the neighboring regions. Serbian aggression came with the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic, who declared Serbia the legal successor of Yugoslavia. However, he misused his power and initiated “ethnic cleansing” towards the Muslim population of the independent state of Bosnia Herzegovina and later towards Albanians in autonomous Kosovo.⁶ Nonetheless, not only the geographic location of these Balkan wars but also the human rights issue attracted the attention first of Turkey, because of its historic ties, and later of the U.S., anxious about peace in Europe. Thus, under the guidance of the U.S., the Serbian aggression came to an end with Dayton Peace Accord in 1995 in Bosnia. Later in 1999, NATO air strikes stopped Milosevic in Kosovo and Kosovo returned to the pre-war circumstances under the protection of Kosovo Force (KFOR).⁷

In these two operations of crisis management, Turkey pointed out to its allies and especially to the U.S. that Ankara was a reliable ally. Moreover, Turkey demonstrated its military power and how useful it was and it would be in such crises. For the Western countries and especially for the Europeans having Turkey on their side in European conflicts would be beneficial. Hence, this was a clear message sent to the world and especially to the European Union that Turkey possessed the commitment to counter aggression if necessary. Though it cannot be argued that the acceptance of Turkey’s candidacy to the EU in Helsinki Summit at the very end of 1999 was a direct result of Turkey’s role in Kosovo, this could be acknowledged as

⁶ Richard N. Haass, Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World, Revised Edition, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), pp. 37-43.

⁷ Ibid, pp. 164-67.

one of the influential reasons lying behind the response given for Turkey's contribution to the Kosovar crisis.

Finally, the Gulf War of 1991 between the Iraqi forces and the coalition forces under the leadership of the U.S. military was another sign that the Cold War ended and a new world order was emerging. With this war, the U.S. confirmed its rising hegemonic power all over the world while it was also celebrating the demise of its main enemy and rival, the Soviet Union. The Bush administration was very much aware of the threat that might be posed by Iraq if it possessed the entire control of the Persian Gulf oil routes. Hence, the U.S. initiated Operation Desert Storm on January 16, 1991 to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and liberate the Kuwaiti people from Iraqi invasion. This success was a good opportunity to overcome the Vietnam syndrome of the American people and also make them forget domestic economic problems.⁸ Nevertheless, leaving Saddam in power -although liberating Kuwait was the main objective in the Gulf War not ousting Saddam- might have been the most significant shortcoming of George Bush that would reoccur on the U.S. agenda in the following years. Moreover, Iraq would become one of the major conflicts in the Middle East disturbing the U.S. national interests; thus, the successor of Bush, Bill Clinton, would become involved in the region. Contrary to his predecessor, Clinton would not directly enter into a war with Saddam Hussein; yet, he would be strict towards him in different ways. He would employ economic sanctions and he would demand Saddam accept UN specialists' in Iraq, who would monitor "potential" Iraqi reactors in case that they might be producing nuclear energy or military arsenal.

⁸ Mary Beth Norton and et al, pp. 1068-69.

Turkey also followed a more assertive foreign policy toward Iraq with the Gulf War since it sided with the U.S. in the war. As Burcu Bostanoğlu pointed out, Turkey had to formulate a more active foreign policy in the region despite the fact that Turgut Özal received a lot of criticism on the issue. Turkey had only two alternatives: either to side with the U.S. and the coalition powers or to remain inactive, which would amount to support Saddam Hussein, who was depicted as an aggressor by all the countries. Hence, despite slight domestic opposition that did not offer any alternative political propositions, Özal's pro-active foreign policy seemed to be the best choice. In addition to this, as a requirement of "realist" politics, Özal wanted to demonstrate with this war that Turkey did not lose its significance and also that Turkey would exert its weight over regional disputes as a rising regional power. Thus, by producing a decisive and more active foreign policy, Özal evaluated the costs and benefits of the war, and decided that siding with the coalition forces was the most convenient option because of promised Western economic support. Nevertheless, after the war Turkey suffered a lot economically as the promises given by the U.S. and the other Western countries were not kept.⁹ Finally and more crucially, after the war ended, Turkey had to face one of the biggest problems of the region that occupied and still occupies the agenda of the Turkish government: the Kurdish issue in the northern part of Iraq threatening Turkey's territorial integrity by becoming a legacy of the Gulf War.

To summarize the initial changes of the new decade, it could be claimed that no state was really ready to encounter such revolutionary changes, yet it was also clear that some countries at least were politically and economically strong enough to decrease the threats that might come as a result of changing dynamics of world

⁹ Burcu Bostanoğlu, *Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinin Politikası (The Politics of U.S.-Turkish Relations)*. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1999), pp. 404-07.

politics. Hence in an atmosphere of declining Soviet power and Communism, the U.S. benefited from the situation and without a major rival as it had during the Cold War the U.S. intervened in Middle East conflicts to improve its power in world politics. Therefore, all incidents that occurred at the beginning of the decade, starting with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and following with the Gulf war, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the dissolution of Yugoslavia served U.S. interests since it was left as a single superpower. Hence, this superpower initiated a search for establishing a new world order based mainly on U.S. rules.

2.2 Search for a New World Order

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which had been one of the major signs of the two bloc-world order during the Cold War era, the world entered a new period with many other changes and developments which were to shape world politics. This new period was named the “post-Cold War era” because it not only ended the bipolar world order, but it was also the beginning of another world order based on unipolarity according to some and multi-polarity according to others. Moreover, all the vital changes of world politics at the beginning of the decade left the United States as the sole superpower. Thus, the U.S. administration under the presidency of George Bush, Sr. appreciated the historical opportunity of being the only superpower of the world and initiated the Gulf War against the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, with the objective of liberating Kuwait under Iraqi occupation. During this war, the U.S. and especially President Bush gained confidence in their military as well as economic and political power so that George Bush declared in a speech at the U.S. Congress that the world was about to face a “New World Order”.¹⁰

¹⁰ Baskın Oran (ed.), “1990-2001: Küreselleşme Ekseninde Türkiye (Turkey at the Axis of Globalization)” in Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, 1980-2001, Vol. 2. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p. 210.

The concept of a “New World Order” was not really new because it was also used after the First and Second World Wars while creating the League of Nations and the United Nations respectively. Contrary to this notion, according to some realists, the international order is full of anarchy and disorder rather than order.¹¹ Hence, Baskin Oran taking off from neo-realists, talked about the post-Cold War era as a “New World Disorder”.¹² Nevertheless, the most significant part here was that the U.S. started to make its power felt by focusing on the fact that it was after leadership of the world since Washington understood that it was the single country which was capable of framing new rules for the global world.

Moreover, like his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, Bush believed in the “‘American moral responsibility’ and its right to intervene, by force if necessary, whenever and wherever a member of the international system violates its set rules, functions, and procedures. More unacceptable yet, the president has claimed that the United States was the *only* country on earth that has the means to back it up.”¹³ Hence, the U.S. quest for world leadership became one of the primary reasons to be involved in the war against Iraq. By defeating Iraq, the U.S. wanted to reduce the Iraqi threat of gaining power in the Middle East. Iraq was threatening the security and the balance in the region in general, and threatening the existence and security of Israel in particular. Thus the U.S., in the name of protecting the interests of its

¹¹ Neo-Realists argued that international structure is composed of an anarchic system. It brings out the notion that anarchy is the absence of political authority. Neo-Realists like Kenneth Waltz developed “structural realism” in which they dealt about the anarchic structure of the international system. In the post-Cold War era, within this framework, the concept of “New World Disorder” was developed. For details on Waltz’s ideas see his book Theory of International Politics, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979). Also see Hedley Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics, (London: Macmillan, 1977).

¹² Baskin Oran, “Effects of Globalization on Turkey”, (ed.) Mustafa Aydın in TURKEY at the Threshold of the 21st Century: Global Encounters and /vs Regional Alternatives, (Ankara: International Relations Foundation, 1998), pp. 184-86.

¹³ Hooshang Amirahmadi, (ed.) “Global Restructuring, The Persian Gulf War, and the U.S. Quest for World Leadership”, in The United States and the Middle East: A Search for New Perspectives, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 415. Also quoted from “Lunging for War”, *New York Times* (May, 5 1991) (editorial).

Western allies, the free flow of oil, and petro-capital,¹⁴ activated some Western countries. Under UN mandate, a coalition of Western forces was formed, and this coalition with the leadership of the U.S. fought the troops of Saddam Hussein, who refused to surrender at first but retreated from Kuwait later, when he understood that he could not defeat the coalition forces.

The initial success in the Persian Gulf would increase U.S. prospects of continuing its leadership role wherever the U.S. interests were at stake. The U.S. administration and President Bush followed a more traditional foreign policy unlike Ronald Reagan (who was deeply influenced by the neo-conservatives); however, the Persian Gulf War seemed to be in harmony with the Neo-Conservatives' ideas that the U.S. should use its global military power to spread its values.¹⁵ Thus when George Bush released the speech on the *new world order* he knew that he could benefit from this speech in terms of justifying U.S. foreign policy both at home and abroad. Its tone was impressive and persuasive for people at home and abroad. Bush even could "end the rising criticism against [his] administration for not developing a clear-cut new American paradigm of world leadership and for supposedly assuming an anti-Israeli stand in the Arab-Israeli Conflict".¹⁶ According to Bush, the *new world order* he proposed to everybody was "a world order in which the principles of justice and fair play protect the weak against the strong; a world where the United Nations freed from Cold War stalemate is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders; a world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among

¹⁴ Hooshang Amirahmadi, pp. 364-65.

¹⁵ James J. Zogby, "How the Neo-Conservatives Operate", Yurica Report, July 02, 2003. [www.yuricareport.com/PoliticalAnalysis\(ZogbyHowNeoConsOperate.html](http://www.yuricareport.com/PoliticalAnalysis(ZogbyHowNeoConsOperate.html) For more additional information on neo-conservatives and their ideas see <http://straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/>, www.counterpunch.org/barry1115.html, www.10brinster.com/roderoos/news/news.item.asp?NewsID=345, Thomas DiLorenzo, "The Political Economy of World Domination" from <http://www.lewrockwell.com/dilorenzo/dilorenzo47.html>.

¹⁶ Hooshang Amirahmadi, p. 365.

all nations. The Gulf war put this new world to its first test. My fellow Americans, we passed the test.”¹⁷

When we look at world politics during 1990-2001, it may be concluded that the U.S. did everything to “justify” its global existence and power at least in the eyes of its people by intervening in most important incidents around the world. The world had seen the U.S. in Somalia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, and many other places after the Persian Gulf War of 1991, sometimes emphasizing the issue of ending ethnic cleansing, stopping tribal disputes, or preventing a country going nuclear. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the U.S. was interfering in different areas, it could not be claimed that Washington had no objective in its foreign policy. Furthermore, just after the Gulf War in August 1991, the U.S. administration prepared the U.S. National Security Strategy in which it was clearly seen that the U.S. would aid countries which required help, but they would be involved only in issues that were directly related to U.S. interests.

Making such a division could be interpreted as a U.S. awakening to the fact that as the single superpower the most important issue was security of the state itself, and the regions in which U.S. interests were at stake.¹⁸ Hence the U.S. did not intervene in most of the African wars, in which thousands of people died, because the U.S. did not see any gain, but intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo wars because these wars threatened the stability and peace of Western Europe, which was significant for U.S. economic and political relations with the Western allies. Thus it was understood that in the post-Cold War world there was a double standard in the

¹⁷ Hooshang Amirahmadi, pp. 366-67. The author also quotes from *New York Times* (March 7, 1991), p. A8.

¹⁸ Çağrı Erhan, “Soğuk Savaş Sonrası ABD’nin Güvenlik Algılamaları (Post Cold War U.S. Security Perceptions)”, (eds.) Refet Yinanç & Hakan Taşdemir in Uluslararası Güvenlik Sorunları ve Türkiye (International Security Problems and Turkey), (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2002), pp. 64-65. For the

use of American military force, since the U.S. did not keep the promise it gave as a global power when it was introducing the *new world order* to the world. The U.S. did not assist the weak in Africa who were suffering from the inequalities of globalization, which increased enormously after the recent developments in new technologies.

2.3 A Decade of Transition

When the period from 1990 to 2001 is analyzed thoroughly, one can conclude that there have been real changes and developments in world politics after the Cold War. Moreover, the appearance of significant issues such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Persian Gulf War, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the dissolution of Yugoslavia following each other like the domino effect, left the U.S. as the only global power that did not really have time to deal with abstractions but to take control over concrete issues such as dealing with the new political order, itself.

Despite the lack of special conceptualization of the post-Cold war years, it would not be an exaggeration to state that some politicians and academics depicted the aftermath up until the turning point of September 11, 2001 as a “Decade of Transition and Preparation”. Throughout the 1990s, it was seen that the U.S. increased its military, economic and political power by benefiting from the post-Cold War circumstances and by introducing globalization¹⁹ to the world, which was mostly in the service of U.S. interests. However, even the U.S. was aware of the fact

original text of the U.S. National Security Strategy see the document from <http://www.fas.org/man/docs/918015-nss.htm>

¹⁹ Globalization: Although there are many ways to define globalization, it could be accepted that globalization is a combination of different variables. Within the text, globalization in politics and economics is referred. Hence, democratization and liberalization, are two fundamental issues forming globalization. For a more compact definition Baskin Oran proposes that “globalization is the spread of Western subculture, which includes international capitalism, and the Western superstructure, which involves rationalism, democracy, human and minority rights to the whole world”, “1980-1990: Bati

that nations and their people needed some transitional time to get accustomed to the new international order in which the U.S. would reign. Thus, this new period, which was also the last decade of the 20th century, became, as Paul Kennedy named it, “a preparatory period for the 21st century”.²⁰ The U.S. was very determined to define the political parameters of the *new world order* such that every event in international politics became another step for the United States to reach its foreign policy objectives. The U.S. could get closer to its objectives through globalization and military power as it had been in the Gulf War and Balkan Crises. Furthermore, the U.S. used even the smallest issue in this period of transition to help meet its ideal of becoming a hegemonic power.

The post-Cold War years were a part of transition the world was not experiencing for the first time, yet the rules of the order were not decided yet. There were different wars in human history that gave clues about how new world orders were established in the previous centuries. For instance after the Thirty-Years war, the Westphalia Peace System was built (1648), the League of Nations followed World War I (1918), and finally the United Nations system came as a result of the Second World War (1945).²¹ In such a sequence of diplomatic history, it was reasonable to wait for a new order after the Cold War ended. Nevertheless, this time there was a common understanding between the countries that there was great necessity for a transition period. Hence, all states needed time to get accustomed to the new circumstances that would affect all of them in different ways. All nations

Bloku Ekseninde Türkiye-2”, in *Türk Dış Politikası...*, p. 10. For details see also *Küreselleşme ve Azınlıklar*, (Globalization and Minorities), (Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2001).

²⁰ Çağrı Erhan, p. 57.

²¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Editör*, CNN Türk, 17.02.2004. The TV program entitled *Editör* at CNN Türk is prepared as a live program during the week at 19 00 p.m. This Program usually deals with the issues on the agenda of domestic and foreign affairs.

would be influenced by this change in the global world politically, militarily, socially or economically.

One of the most significant properties that shaped the decade was that it sometimes included and even celebrated opposing ideas and processes. In this decade of transition full of vital political incidents, the international scene witnessed both integration and disintegration at the same time in Europe. On the one hand, Western European countries were preparing to increase the level of integration and to increase solidarity among the members in terms of politics, military and security issues beside economics in order to create a real sense of a strong European Union functioning as protector of all the rights of its members.

A crucial example of disintegration that affected the fate of almost all nations in the world occurred in the Soviet Union. On this occasion, the world was lucky since the former Soviet republics got their independence without war. Not only the European republics but also those in the Caucasus and Central Asia got their political independence from the former Soviet Union peacefully, which then became the Russian Federation.

On the other hand, the Balkans experienced the calamity of ethnic nationalism and independence. These states were driven into real wars between and among each other because they could not resolve their problems by negotiation. Thus the international community had to be involved in these conflicts as mediators or even as active participants in the war against Slobodan Milosevic, then president of the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia.

All these movements of integration and disintegration were very influential in international politics. Nonetheless, their significance played and would play a great role in relations between the U.S. as a main actor of world politics and Turkey,

which not only had historical and cultural ties with the newly independent states, but also wanted to establish economic relations. Hence, during the 1990s the U.S.-Turkish interests converged most of the time in the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, Europe and Middle East because the U.S. as a hegemonic power was also interested in all these areas, which had economic and political prospects for a country like the U.S.

Another characteristic of the 1990s and the international structure was that the international community observed a decade of peace agreements compared to Cold War circumstances because of the ethnic strife in the Balkans.²² The ethnic war in Bosnia Herzegovina, where Serbs slaughtered thousands of Muslim Bosniaks, was one of the major incidents that drew worldwide attention. There was a widespread support to stop the crimes and genocide perpetrated by the Serbs, yet the Europeans were not successful in ending violence until the U.S. got involved. The Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 concluded the fight and sufferings of the people. U.S. efforts among the international community, especially U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's efforts to provide peace between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina deserved special applause. Later in 1998, Holbrooke was there again with the intention of ending Serbian aggression towards Kosovo diplomatically. However, he and the Contact Group were not successful in stopping Milosevic. NATO, under the leadership of the U.S., initiated air strikes to end Serbian attacks and the Serbian dictator had to surrender in the aftermath. Peace in Kosovo came under the protection of KFOR, which was part of the Peace Enforcement, while IFOR (Implementation Force) and SFOR (Stabilization Force) brought peace to Kosovo.²³

²² Ahmet Davutoglu, *Editör*, CNN Türk, 17.02.2004.

²³ İlhan Uzgel, "1990-2001: Küreselleşme Ekseninde Türkiye: ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler", ed. Baskın Oran in Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, 1980-2001, Vol. 2, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), pp. 274-75.

In this new decade, it could be argued that the international community and especially the U.S. were more determined to protect peace in the world. After experiencing two World Wars and a larger period of Cold War, the international community did not want to lose the tranquility again with regional wars in the Balkans or any other area. Hence, with this notion in mind most of the nations including Turkey got involved in the process of ending war in the Balkans diplomatically, politically, or militarily. In this period, peace and stability were immediate demands of the international community, tired of wars.

Briefly, it could be argued that this post-Cold war decade brought together newly emerging opportunities and challenges to the international order. The political and economic opportunities of the Caucasus, Balkans, and Eastern Europe became important, while the European Union increased its strength as an economic challenge to the U.S. However, it was clearly understood that first of all, world politics had to be freed from the legacy of the Cold War. Hence, the immediate years of the post-Cold war became a period of preparation and transition in which new rules in international politics were taking shape. Every incident that occurred during the 1990s had a crucial influence over the structure of the new world order since all the local or regional issues affected the whole world, which was steadily becoming smaller as a result of the technological developments stemming from globalization. Hence as a result of rapid global developments in the world, new actors arose in the post-cold war era with the strength to challenge the already existing powers because they gained economic, political or military power to have right to “speak louder”.

2.4 A Decade of Rising Powers

At the very beginning of the decade, it could be argued that rivalry between the two camps ended with the triumph of capitalism over communism. It was explicitly seen that the race resulted in the collapse of communism, yet it also demonstrated to the world that the only benefit of this rivalry was technological innovations. Thus, after the Soviet demise the U.S. was more enthusiastic to benefit from the technological developments to accelerate its global power without a major rival. Nonetheless, when the U.S. started its search for global leadership, it had to face some other competitors, because while the U.S. and Soviet Union were struggling to expand their respective spheres of influence all over the world, these new competitors gained economic strength and developed their countries. Among these newly rising economic powers, Germany became prominent immediately at the very beginning of the decade, while the European Union and some of the Far Eastern countries were about to rise up as potential economic rivals.

The U.S. was aware of the fact that it should not lose the control of oil supplies in the world since Germany and Japan to some extent were economically strong to compete in the areas where there were large oil supplies.²⁴ However, the U.S. knew that Germany and Japan were not the only competitors. Therefore, it had to preserve control over all the possible competitors both in Europe and the Far East to be able to continue with its global objectives. Hence, preserving its economic interests; having control over oil-rich regions such as Caucasus, Middle East, and Latin America; containing Russian influence in its “near abroad”; and protecting its allies and their interests related to its own interests were among the major U.S. global objectives.

In the post-Cold war decade, the Wilsonian principles of idealism, which celebrated democracy, liberalism, peace and free trade, reemerged in the U.S. and it was argued that these principles started to influence U.S. foreign policy objectives.²⁵ However, this time in the post-Cold War era, the U.S. as the sole superpower had taken more responsibilities so it had to formulate its foreign policy according to the credentials of the day. Some of the main U.S. global objectives as mentioned above could be recounted as follows: taking control over the main energy routes (the Middle East and Caucasus) to provide the free flow of oil from these regions to the world; preserving U.S. and its allies interests in the world; and preserving peace and stability in all regions where U.S. interests were at stake (the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia) in order to be able to continue its superiority.

On the one side, while supporting EU integration, the U.S. had to be cautious about French intentions of gaining more power since France has been one of the major opponents of U.S. policies in the world. Additionally, the U.S. had to be always aware of the fact that a politically, economically and militarily stronger EU would be more interested in pursuing independent policies. On the other side, China is a rising East Asian country with its great economic and demographic potential.²⁶

After realizing the importance of the rising powers both in Europe and the Far East, the U.S. increased its focus on these regions in order not to lose influence over them. As a global power trying to augment its hegemony all over the world, the U.S. should not irritate or annoy them but it should gradually win them by increasing cooperation in different fields. In this respect the U.S. gave support to Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in order to strengthen economic cooperation and to

²⁴ Hooshang Amirahmadi, p. 371.

²⁵ This idea was stated by Seyfi Taşhan at the Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara in an interview on U.S.-Turkish Relations with the author of the thesis. (14.04.2004.)

²⁶ Burcu Bostanoğlu, pp. 310-11.

increase trade and investment among member countries. As a member of this forum, the U.S. enhanced its role and efficiency in important regional developments. Furthermore, being part of the forum provided the U.S. the ability and strength to have full control over the issues.²⁷

On the other hand, as İlhan Uzgel has summarized, the Soviet demise did not really eliminate U.S. interest in the Russian Federation. On the contrary, the U.S. wanted to gain the Russian Federation by bringing it into the Western realm and by restructuring it according to the western values of democracy, human rights and liberal economy. Thus the U.S. proposed cooperation to Russia in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Other issues used by the U.S. to indicate that it really wanted to increase its hegemonic power could be counted as: making China part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and forming North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA) with the Latin American states to legitimate U.S. control over these countries. In addition to these efforts, the U.S. did not want to lose its superiority and leadership over the EU, Japan, or China so once more it decided to take a leading role in important conflicts in the world. In Europe, the U.S. intervened in the conflicts in Kosovo, in North Ireland, and in Turkish-Greek disputes; in Far East, the U.S. intervened in the conflict between North and South Korea, and in the Taiwan- China dispute, while in the Middle East the U.S. worked to establish peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hence the significant part is that during the 1990s the U.S. and Turkey cooperated in the Balkans, Middle East, and Caucasus since Turkey was at the crossroads of these regions, which were very crucial for the U.S. and its global interests.²⁸ Thus, it could be argued that the U.S. had established different networks

²⁷ İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler (Relations with the U.S. and NATO)", (ed.) Baskın Oran, Türk Dış Politikası:..., pp. 249-50.

²⁸ Ibid.

of allies to make it easier to realize its foreign objectives. Turkey or Mexico, there was always an ally to help the U.S. confirm its superiority.

In conclusion, it was seen that throughout the 1990s the U.S. strived to establish its hegemony all over the world with different methods. It was not really easy for the U.S. to declare its hegemony since there were many economically strong powers. Hence it applied many successful ways to cope with all these new rivals such as Germany in EU, Japan and China in the Far East. Moreover, the U.S. knew the most convenient methods of coercing. Rather than antagonizing its rivals and fighting against them, the U.S. preferred to win them through alliances. Most of the potential antagonists sided with the U.S., since it was not reasonable to confront the major power in the world. Thus, the U.S. persuaded most of its potential rivals to play the game according to the rules of the sole superpower, which proposed liberalism, democracy, and globalization as the requirements of the new world order. Under these global conditions, Turkey had to find its place in world politics and formulate its foreign policy objectives.

2.5 Turkey at the Beginning of the New Decade

During the emerging post-Cold War era, Turkey initially had to reorient its national interests and security requirements in order to successfully meet significant new challenges including both opportunities to exploit and problems to solve. On the one hand, it was clear that Turkey had to expand its foreign policy horizons, as the end of the Cold War era changed Turkey's "strategic environment and strategic agenda".²⁹ Nevertheless, on the other hand, it would not be incorrect to argue that it would be difficult for Turkey to adapt to the new conditions, since as Heinz Kramer and

²⁹ F. Stephen Larrabee, "U.S. and European Policy toward Turkey and the Caspian Basin", in Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East, (eds). Robert D. Blackwill & Michael Stürmer. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), p. 145.

Friedemann Müller have stated, Turkey was unprepared to meet the outcomes of “a radically transformed international environment”.³⁰ Nevertheless, Turkey was unprepared as any other country at the beginning of the decade, not less or much. Hence, this unprepared Turkey had to deal with many important issues at the same time in a region very important to U.S., even though its foreign policy was not ready to encounter them altogether.

While with the Gulf War Turkey had to deal with Iraq by getting into a Middle Eastern conflict after a very long time, with the Soviet dissolution and the emergence of the newly independent states (NIS) involved Ankara in the Caspian Basin and Central Asian affairs. And finally with the demise of Yugoslavia, Turkey became a crucial security element for Balkan stability, which was threatened by wars among the former Yugoslav republics immediately after they declared their independence.

Some of the main strategic opportunities that Turkey encountered at the very beginning of the post-Cold War era that were to affect its strategic position as a “pivotal state” or as a “model state” came one after another. First, the end of the Cold War brought an end to the Soviet threat. Nevertheless, this change in Turkish threat perceptions and security concerns did not really eliminate the threats Turkey might be exposed to, but only changed the direction of the probable hostile powers by bringing Iraq, Syria and even Iran into the picture.³¹ For the first time after many decades, the new Russian Federation did not directly pose an existential threat for the security of Turkey.³² Although this did not end Turkish worries, increasing relations with the Russian Federation were more promising than with Iraq, Syria and Iran.

³⁰ Heinz Kramer and Friedemann Müller, “Relations with Turkey and the Caspian Basin Countries”, in Allies Divided: Transatlantic Policies for the Greater Middle East, p. 180.

³¹ F. Stephen Larrabee, “U.S. and European Policy toward Turkey and the Caspian Basin”, pp. 145-46.

Thus, Turkey concentrated more on countering any threat that might come from its southern and eastern neighbors rather than from the Russian Federation.

Conflictual issues between Turkey and Syria, for instance, were Syrian support for the terrorist PKK (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan-Kurdish Workers Party) and water rights.³³ Turkey had to be more determined to end Syrian support of the Kurdish separatist movement if it wanted to get rid of the PKK problem and even use the water issue as an incentive to end Syrian support. However, Ankara could not play this card successfully against Syria until 1998, when a more assertive Turkish foreign policy toward Damascus resulted in Abdullah Öcalan's (the PKK leader) expulsion from Syria. According to Alan Makovsky, Özal's legacy of pursuing an activist Turkish foreign policy, which required it to be prepared to "use or to threaten to use force", guided Ankara in the 1998 crisis with Syria. There were many reasons for Turkey's newfound assertiveness: "more prosperity; a better-equipped and more experienced military; the decline of neighboring states; greater regional opportunity; and a greater sense of policy independence marked by the ending of restraints imposed by the Cold War."³⁴

On the other side, the emergence of Caspian and Central Asian countries with rich resources of oil and gas, created possible disputes between Turkey and Iran to increase their influence over these states. Thus, according to Graham Fuller, it was strongly possible that this rivalry might destroy their bilateral ties. However, Fuller disregarded the fact that Turkey and Iran have lived in peace and preserved their relations for centuries. There is a strong and long lasting state tradition between

³² Ibid, p. 146.

³³ Graham E. Fuller, "Conclusions: The Growing Role of Turkey in the World" in Turkey's New Geopolitics From the Balkans to Western China. (eds.) Graham E Fuller & Ian Lesser, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993, p. 166.

³⁴ Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy", *SAIS Review*, (Winter-Spring 1999), pp. 92-113.

Turkey and Iran and possibly they would not let the U.S. circumvent these bilateral relations. This would be seen in the Turkish initiative to make agreements with Iran on obtaining Iranian gas in 1996 despite U.S. disapproval. On the Iraqi side, the emergence of an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq threatened Turkey's integrity since the Kurdish tribal leaderships in Iraq supported or at least remained indifferent towards PKK attacks on Turkey. Any increasing support might cause a real struggle for Turkey to preserve the unity of its territory.³⁵ The U.S. used the possibility of Iraqi Kurdish support for PKK as an idea to demonstrate to Ankara that Turkey needed U.S. support in the region and made sure that Ankara would not act independently.

Second, the dissolution of the Soviet Union brought new independent actors in the Caucasus and Central Asia; however, with primordial historical and cultural ties to Turkey. Turkey, according to RAND Corporation, appeared as a model for these states with its secular and democratic structure.³⁶ Nonetheless, even though Turkey was very enthusiastic in embracing its long-lost relatives from the Caucasus and Central Asia, the Turkish governments in the early 1990s were not economically and politically powerful enough to establish meaningful relations with the "Turkic world". Although Turkey was not ready to accommodate these states, it was well known that the natural resources of this newly independent region increased the geopolitical importance of Turkey as a country that might play a vital role in the transportation of oil and gas of the Caucasus in subsequent years. However, very soon the United States realized that Turkey was not well equipped to fulfill the requirements once the Soviet Union had, and to apply policies parallel to U.S. interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Furthermore, it was clear that these states

³⁵ Graham E. Fuller, "Conclusions: ...", p. 166.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 163-65.

did not really want another country as a “big brother” and they were not enthusiastic about ending their relations with the Russian Federation. This common attitude of NIS disappointed Turkey and Turkey’s failure of establishing closer relations with NIS frustrated the U.S., which aimed at increasing influence in these countries through Turkey.³⁷ It was seen that Russia would continue its political and economic relations with its “near abroad”. In short, Turkey had the political willingness but not the capability to respond to the demands of the Caucasian and Central Asian States. Turkish governments in the second half of the 1990s started to face Turkey’s potential realistically.

Thirdly, new horizons were opened in the Balkans for Turkey to merge as a militarily and politically powerful country after the collapse of the Communist regimes there. During the Cold War, relations between Turkey and the Balkan states were minimal because they were part of Communist East or non-aligned such as Yugoslavia and Albania, while Turkey sided with the capitalist West. However, Turkish Foreign Ministry envisaged a significant role for Turkey to play in the Balkans, where old regimes were collapsing and new states were being formed. Hence in such a complicated environment Turkey could not abstain from pursuing more active policies for the sake of preserving its historical ties with the Muslim as well as Christian populations in different states in the Balkans.³⁸ In addition to the importance of historical ties, the Balkans was significant for Turkey because this area is an air and land corridor of Turkey to Europe. Hence peace and stability of the region would benefit all the parties as well as Turkey. Nonetheless, this activism in Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans annoyed the Greek government that was worried about being encircled by a “Muslim arc” and the increasing importance of

³⁷ Obrad Kesic, “American-Turkish Relations at a Crossroads”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Winter 1995), pp. 97-108, on pp. 100-101.

Turkey in the Balkans as a provider of security and peace. Hence this fear increased the level of the existing competition between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean and Cyprus disputes during the 1990s.³⁹

Fourth, at the beginning of the new era, Turkey had to face some problems in Europe, which did not really accept Turkey as part of the European architecture. The Europeans, after being liberated from the Soviet threat, began to talk about the different character of the Turkish state. Most of them believed that Turkey did not really belong to the newly emerging security order in Europe and tried to alienate Turkey.⁴⁰ Furthermore, by refusing the Turkish application for candidacy to the European Union while at the same time establishing relations with the Eastern European countries, the European Union disappointed the Turkish people, who were inclined to Western values long before the Eastern Europeans were. This was a clear sign that the Western European countries wanted to keep the EU and WEU structures confined to the “Christian club” members.⁴¹ In the Luxembourg Summit of 1997, the EU explicitly demonstrated its reluctance to admit Turkey as a candidate, though Turkey could become a security provider for the EU members with its powerful army and experience in NATO. Hence from the Turkish perspective this rejection was connected to being a Muslim country since there was not another valid reason for the alienation of Turkey from EU in general and from WEU in particular, when Europe was taking much more concrete decisions about formulating Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the union. The EU members must have been aware that the associate member status in WEU would not really meet the needs and

³⁸ Graham E. Fuller, “Conclusions:...”, p. 165.

³⁹ Ibid and F. Stephen Larrabee, “U.S. and European...”, pp. 146-47.

⁴⁰ F. Stephen Larrabee, “U.S and European...”, p. 147.

⁴¹ Graham E. Fuller, “Conclusions:...”, p. 167.

expectations of Turkey, which aimed at being a full member of all European structures.

Finally, Turkey had to counter the threat posed by neighboring countries possessing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). During the Gulf War, it was seen clearly that Turkish lands were vulnerable to Iraqi missiles since the Iraqis had launched missiles at Israel.⁴² Thus, after the Gulf War Turkey had to be very cautious in its relations with Iraq in order to avoid any unwanted attack from its neighbor. Furthermore, to be prepared for any missile attack, Turkey also increased military cooperation with Israel. Thus, this cooperation would deter not only Iraq but also Syria, since with the military cooperation agreement between Israel and Turkey in 1996; Turkey gained access to the advanced military technology of Israeli arms industry and also had some hopes for Israeli lobbying in the U.S. on behalf of Turkey.⁴³

Within the context of being part of the European security architecture and avoiding threats from WMD, the continuation and enlargement of NATO became crucial milestones in Turkish foreign policy at the very beginning of the post-Cold war era. Turkey supported the U.S. stand of transforming NATO into a larger collective security alliance⁴⁴. Subsequently, Turkey by trying to bring peace and stability to the Balkans and even to the continent, continued its backing of NATO. The UN failure to end Serbian crimes in former Yugoslavia increased Turkey's expectation that NATO could provide "the new instruments for peace-keeping". Nevertheless, the issue of NATO expansion, coming after establishing cooperation with the former Warsaw Pact countries and the former republics of Soviet Union

⁴² F. Stephen Larrabee, "U.S. and European...", p. 147.

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 147-48.

through Partnership for Peace (PfP), caused anxiety for Turkey. Ankara both feared losing its significance in the alliance and annoying the Russian Federation, which had some real reservations about the enlargement of NATO.⁴⁵

On the other side, Turkey had reservations about whether the new role of NATO would cover all the relevant threat perceptions of Turkey. Turkey was anxious about the issue since it did not want to lose its significance in an enlarged alliance. Additionally, Turkey demanded that expansion should be made in stages and should not be directed against any third country, especially the Russian Federation.⁴⁶ From the Turkish perspective, it was vitally significant to preserve good relations with the Russian Federation in order to live in peace in the neighboring regions, which were still under Russian sphere of influence.

Officially, this issue of enlargement implicating the Russian Federation did not steer Turkey away from the U.S. since the U.S. had already been interested in bringing the Russian Federation into all Western structures.

While Turkey was facing these issues, it also had to deal with domestic hardships. Economic losses resulting from the closure of Yumurtalık Oil Pipeline in 1990 and the end of trade relations with Iraq brought unbearable domestic hardships to Turkish governments. The ANAP (Motherland Party) paid the price of entering into alliance with the U.S. in the Gulf War without receiving compensation by losing the general elections. The new coalition government under Süleyman Demirel's DYP (True Path Party) and Ercan Ersoy's SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) had to strive for an economically and politically powerful Turkey. Nevertheless, these

⁴⁴ For a detailed work on NATO's changing character from collective defense to collective security see Gülnur Aybet, *NATO's Developing Role in Collective Security*, (Ankara: SAM Papers 4/99, 1999).

⁴⁵ Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "NATO Enlargement and the South: A Turkish Perspective", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (June 1999), pp. 213-224 and Strobe Talbott, *Why NATO Should Grow*, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1826>

traditional mainstream parties' inability to end the social and economic problems of the country led the pro-Islamist party of Necmettin Erbakan, Refah (Welfare Party), to come to power as a coalition partner with DYP in 1996.⁴⁷ Such a change in political orientation increased fear both at home and abroad, especially in the U.S. Nevertheless, despite some disturbing applications of Prime Minister Erbakan, he had to follow the mainstream Turkish foreign policy most of the time.⁴⁸

In conclusion, it could be argued that at the very beginning of the new decade after the end of the Cold War, Turkey faced new opportunities; however, it was not really prepared to encounter such revolutionary changes economically, socially and politically. Turkey's exposure to new horizons altogether immediately after the collapse of the bipolar world left it frustrated. Ankara could not easily formulate its foreign policy objectives according to its priorities and national interests, but was dragged into different directions. Moreover, the lack of certain and concrete foreign objectives caused serious damage to Turkish interests in neighboring regions such as the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. Rather than being involved in almost all regional conflicts, Ankara had to pick the most significant issues and apply its policy accordingly. Neither U.S. interests nor the Western European interests benefited Turkey; thus, it had to take into account only its national interests before formulating its foreign objectives if it really wanted to become a pivotal state, in order to balance its relations with Washington in the post-Cold war era. Therefore, it is significant to analyze what major incidents determined the nature of U.S.-Turkish relations in this era before drawing conclusions on the relationship between Turkey and the U.S.

⁴⁶ Nasuh Uslu, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, (Ankara: 21.Yüzyıl Yayınları, 2000), p. 384.

⁴⁷ F. Stephen Larrabee, "U.S. and European...", p. 149.

⁴⁸ For detailed analyses on the Erbakan government and its foreign and domestic policy applications between 1996-1997 see Gencer Özcan, (ed.), *Onbir Aylık Saltanat: Siyaset Ekonomi ve Dış Politikada Refahyol Dönemi (Eleven-Month Sultanate: Welfare and True Path Coalition Period in Politics, Economics and Foreign Policy)*, (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1998).

CHAPTER 3

REDEFINING U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS

3.1 The Main Characteristics of the Relationship between U.S. and Turkey

Although relations between Americans and Turks go back to the 19th century Ottoman times and continued in the 20th century, the closest relationship only emerged after World War II with the bipolar division of the world. Subsequently, the most significant development that increased the strategic nature of the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. was Turkey's membership in NATO. Beside traditional threats resulting from Soviet demands, Westernization of Turkish institutions required Turkey to become an ally of NATO. Turkey interpreted this choice as a question of identity and decided its place in the bipolar world by siding with the Western camp, especially by taking into consideration USSR's demands of renegotiating the Montreaux Convention for larger rights vis-à-vis the Turkish straits and demanding Kars and Ardahan indirectly through Georgia. Hence these demands distanced Turkey from the USSR and brought it closer to the Western camp.⁴⁹

Turkey wanted to be an equal partner of the Western alliance, and NATO became its option. After NATO accepted Turkey as a member in 1952, relations between Turkey and the U.S. developed in many areas despite many "ups and

⁴⁹ Turkey's options were not limited only with the Western camp or choosing the Soviet bloc. The other option Turkey had was non-alignment as the Third world chose. Turkey also could deter the Soviet threat by remaining neutral, however Turkey insisted on NATO membership since it was a matter of identification with the West and being under the Western security arrangements.

downs” in their bilateral ties at different times.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the closeness of U.S.-Turkish relationship, which would continue its influence during the 1990s, began especially after the two states signed the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) in 1980. The revolution in Iran and USSR’s occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 directly affected U.S. interests in the region. With this agreement, which was renewed every year, the U.S. tied Turkey to its own interests and, despite some Turkish requests for revision⁵¹, the agreement continued unchanged.⁵² Renewal of the revised agreement would have indicated that the U.S. did not want to lose Turkey in the post-Cold War era, in a period in which the significance of Turkey would increase. However, by not revising the agreement, as Ankara requested, it may be argued that the U.S. declared its power and superiority as a superpower over Turkey at the very beginning of the decade.

Other primary elements that determined the character and the structure of post-Cold War Turkish-American relations were continuity and change in Turkish foreign policy. Hence in the post-Cold War period, it was seen that Turkey continued its strategic and political cooperation with the U.S. both by continuing its bilateral

⁵⁰ In International Relations literature there are many sources dealing with the Cold War relations between Turkey and the U.S. They point out in detail to times of convergence and divergence in bilateral ties. The main origins of a strategic partnership started with the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and followed with Marshall Plan of 1948 and NATO membership. On the other side, the major issues that damaged the trust between these two states were counted as follows: Jupiter missile crisis of 1962, Johnson Letter of 1964, and U.S. embargo of 1975-1978. For details see Ferenc A. Vali, Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1971); George S. Harris, Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1972) & TURKEY: Coping with Crisis, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Nasuh Uslu, Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri (Turkish-American Relations), (Ankara: 21. Yüzyıl Yayınları, 2000); and Baskın Oran (ed.), Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

⁵¹ Mahmut Bali Aykan, “Turkish Perspectives...”, pp. 345-47. The basic changes Turkey wanted in the agreement were: Turkey wanted U.S. guarantee for its security and that the U.S. should provide it with military equipment. It also requested U.S. support in developing its defense industry by increasing the transfer of military technology. Moreover, Turkey demanded political support for its fight against terrorism and its aggressive neighbors such as Syria and Iraq. Finally, Turkey requested that Operation Provide Comfort 2 be incorporated into the DECA by bringing new regulations for the usage of the Turkish air bases in non-NATO operations.

⁵² İlhan Uzgel, “ABD ve NATO’yla İlişkiler”, pp. 283-84.

relations and its NATO membership. In addition to this, Turkish-American relations continued over issues such as the Cyprus problem, economic and military assistance, U.S. approach to the Kurdish problem, and developments in northern Iraq. In the post-Cold War period there emerged other areas of cooperation between Turkey and the U.S. The new areas of cooperation were Europe-Balkans, Caucasus-Central Asia, and the Middle East. In this period Turkey always took into consideration that the U.S. as the single superpower was too important to ignore. Finally, in this period, U.S. insistence on democracy and human rights determined the character of Turkish-American relations.⁵³

During the 1990s, the U.S.-Turkish strategic relationship (to some, even, a partnership) flourished especially after Turkey's contribution to the Gulf War in terms of opening its bases to the coalition powers and participation in the economic sanctions against Iraq. Hence as an outcome of this support, the U.S. administration promoted Turkey's role in Central Asia and Balkans. U.S. support for Turkey was especially pronounced on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which was not economically feasible according to some. Therefore, it could be argued that the U.S. could not really afford to lose Turkey.

Turkey as a NATO ally preserves its significance in the alliance not only because of its geopolitical location but also because of its military potential in this specific period when NATO enlargement is on U.S. agenda. Additionally, even in its bilateral relations with the U.S., Turkey usually served best for American interests in its own region and in its neighborhood since Ankara sided with the Western bloc and especially because U.S. interests did not really challenge Turkish national interests. Moreover, it could be debated that there is a reciprocal necessity between Turkey and

⁵³ İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler", pp. 243-44.

the U.S. that ties them very closely to each other. Neither Turkey, despite some opposition to U.S. policies, nor the U.S., in spite of human rights and democracy concerns on Turkey, could easily give up the strategic relationship.

Especially, now, in the 21st century, there are more common policies and interests toward the stability and peace in the Balkans, in Caucasus and Central Asia, and Middle East that bring the U.S. and Turkey together. “Energy Security, the threats of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), ‘conquering’ Russia, deepening Turkey’s integration in the West” seemed to become the primary concerns of the Western alliance in general and the U.S. in particular.⁵⁴ Although these issues are also very crucial for Turkey, the priorities of the Turkish Republic are not exactly the same with its Western allies. For Turkey, the security of energy routes is important, yet EU membership is more significant. Furthermore, Ankara is concerned with the issue of WMD; however there is no clear threat posed to Turkey by its neighbors. Nevertheless, all these different points of view did not change the main issue that there are common interests between the U.S. and Turkey, and their relationship necessitates a special study.

3.2 Fundamental Characteristics of a Strategic Partnership

In order to make meaningful analyses and to come to more concrete conclusions as how to define the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey, it is vitally necessary to define and analyze the concept of partnership. The dictionary definition of partnership is “a business which has more than one owner but is not incorporated, the individual partners remaining fully responsible for its debts”.⁵⁵ The requirements of a partnership are: “partners need not all be equal: in professional partnership it is

⁵⁴ Zalmay Khalilzad, “A Strategic Plan for Western-Turkish Relations”, pp.79-96.

common for senior partners to get a larger share of the rewards and do a smaller share of the routine work than junior partners.”⁵⁶

According to Seyfi Taşhan, Director of the Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara, this definition of a partnership describes the “senior brother, junior brother” (Ağabey, küçük kardeş) relationship⁵⁷ between the U.S. and Turkey well. Nevertheless, debate arises when we accept Turkey as a strategic partner of the U.S. at a level equivalent to those of the United Kingdom, Canada, and Israel. The concept of Turkey’s strategic partnership with the U.S. is not similar to the relationship between the U.S. and UK, Canada, or Israel. If it is accepted that UK, Israel and Canada are strategic partners of the U.S.⁵⁸, there should be a clear delineation of the U.S.-Turkish partnership. Friction arose because neither the U.S. nor Turkey has clearly defined what strategic partnership means in their respective contexts.⁵⁹

“Partnership” in U.S.-Turkish relations refers only to the closeness of these states so “strategic partnership” points to the “military closeness” of one another.⁶⁰ Similar to Seyfi Taşhan’s description, Şükrü Elekdag also points to strategic partnership as “special importance Washington is attributing to another country and the privileged allied relations it maintains with that country.”⁶¹ According to Elekdag, a strategic partnership should cover cooperation in all fields, and each partner should fulfill its obligations and should sustain the interests of the other. When looked at it from this point of view, it is hard to accept that there is an exact

⁵⁵ John Black, *Oxford Dictionary of Economics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 343.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Seyfi Taşhan, Author’s interview on 14.04.2004.

⁵⁸ Şükrü Elekdag, *Sabah*, Turkish Press Review, www.hri.org/news/turkey/trkpr/2002/02-01-07.trkpr.html.

⁵⁹ Yalın Eralp, “An Insider’s View of Turkey’s Foreign Policy and Its American Connection”, in Morton Abramowitz, (ed.) *The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need*, (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2003), p. 118.

⁶⁰ Seyfi Taşhan, interview on 14.04.2004.

resemblance between the U.S.-Turkish “partnership” and U.S.-UK or Israel partnership.

The basic elements of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and the UK, Israel, Canada are “human, ethnic, social and historical ties”⁶² as well as common interests, while the U.S.-Turkish partnership depends only on “common interests, protection by the U.S. of Turkey’s interests in return for the protection by Turkey of the interests of the U.S.”⁶³ Therefore, the strategic relationship between Turkey and U.S. will remain only as long as common interests are shared, that is, there will always be a question mark about what if common interests disappear. Most probably the answer to this question and many similar ones may easily point that the U.S.-Turkish relations are based on reciprocal interests unlike the relations with the UK, Israel, or Canada in which the second pillar, that of human, ethnic, social and historical ties are as significant as the common interests. Hence, the continuation of the partnership between the U.S. and Turkey is directly related to the continuation of common interests.

Moreover, Seyfi Taşhan has put forward that the concept of partnership between the U.S. and Turkey is “only an empty rhetoric” (boş bir ifade), nothing more than a popular term used by the U.S. to describe cooperation and friendly relations between the two states.⁶⁴ However, the notion of strategic relationship, despite the lack of any official agreement made by the U.S. and Turkey, became a widely used term in describing U.S.-Turkish relations during the last decade of the

⁶¹ Şükrü Elekdağ, *Sabah*, Turkish Press Review.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Eyüp Can, “The Current State of Turkish-U.S. Relations”, *Zaman Online*, www.zaman.com/include/yazdir.php?bl=columnist&trh=20040329&hn=...

⁶⁴ Seyfi Taşhan, interview on 14.04.2004.

20th century; “[the strategic partnership] has continued to characterize the nature of Turkish-U.S. relations, even if it was only a matter of words.”⁶⁵

Nevertheless, even if Turkey is not as equal as UK, Israel, or Canada to the U.S. in terms of its strategic importance, it is a well-known fact that the U.S. usually used the term “strategic partner” when referring to its relations with Turkey. Many leading officials like Strobe Talbott, Richard Holbrooke, and Marc Grossman emphasized Turkey’s importance and Washington strongly promoted the idea that Turkey was among “markets deserving U.S. investment.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the increasing Turkish role as a country at the crossroads of regions directly related to U.S. interests, and Washington’s backing of Turkey’s significance, were elevated to the presidential level. In 1999, when President Bill Clinton visited Turkey and spoke in the parliament, he once more put forward the strategic importance U.S. attributed to Turkey when he referred to Turkey as “a strategic partner”.⁶⁷

In conclusion, it could be stated that whether it is labeled as a strategic relationship or as a strategic partnership, it is clear that during the 1990s U.S.-Turkish relations continued in different areas. The most crucial part is that Turkey and the U.S. continued their relationship and even increased their cooperation in many new regions where their interests overlapped while Turkey fulfilled the obligations of partnership. Hence, even though Turkey did not reach and most probably will not reach the level of UK or Israel in terms of its relations with the U.S. based on common ethnicity or historical solidarity, it was clear that the U.S. could not neglect its relations with Turkey. On the contrary, bilateral ties increased as

⁶⁵ Eyüp Can, “The Current State...”, *Zaman Online*.

⁶⁶ Kemal Kirişçi, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership” in Barry Rubin & Kemal Kirişçi (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 134.

⁶⁷ Mark Parris, “Starting Over: U.S.-Turkey’s Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, April 2003, www.washingtoninstitute.org/media/parris/parris0403.htm. Different sources

a result of Turkey emerging as a multidimensional regional power. It will be useful to look at U.S.-Turkish areas of convergence and divergence concerning the regional developments in order to make concrete analyses of what major points characterized U.S.-Turkish relations in the last decade of the 20th century.

3.3 Areas of Cooperation in U.S.-Turkish Relations

3.3.1 Bosnia

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, both the U.S. and Turkey supported the idea of preserving the integrity of the state since these two countries were anxious about the stability and order of the region. Nevertheless, disintegration continued and the following ethno-nationalistic conflicts in Bosnia demonstrated that the former Yugoslav republics could not get along with each other peacefully. Moreover, Serbian aggression increased to the level of atrocities that neither Turkey nor the U.S. could ignore after seeing the insufficiency of European countries in dealing with this “European conflict”.

From the very beginning, Turkey demanded that Western countries should use adequate force to stop Serbian aggression toward Bosnia, yet France and Britain did not share the same policy toward Serbia, ignoring Milosevic in the beginning.⁶⁸ Ankara, alarmed by increasing Serbian atrocities, promoted the idea of military intervention by NATO and demanded that sanctions should be applied against Belgrade.⁶⁹ Seeing that the Bosnian crisis had turned into a civilian massacre because of the ineffective EU and UN policies, the U.S. realized that it needed to take

focused on the fact that President Clinton referred to Turkey as a strategic partner in his speech made in front of the representatives in the Turkish parliament.

⁶⁸ İlhan Uzgel, “Doksanlarda Türkiye İçin Bir İşbirliği ve Rekabet Alanı Olarak Balkanlar (Balkans as an Area of Cooperation and Competition for Turkey during the 1990s)”, in En Uzun Onyıl: Türkiye’nin Ulusal Güvenlik ve Dış Politika Gündeminde Doksanlı Yıllar (The Longest Decade: 1990s on Turkey’s National Security and Foreign Policy Agenda), (eds.) Gencer Özcan & Şule Kut, (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1998), p. 410.

responsibility on the issue. Relying on the claims that this Balkan dispute was threatening the new order the U.S. wished to create, and that the U.S. was interested in the stability of the Balkans and Europe, Washington took initiative.⁷⁰ Thus, in such an atmosphere of common interests and policies, there emerged cooperation between Turkey and the U.S. over Bosnia.

Guided by the primary concern of ending the war immediately, Turkey started to follow an activist foreign policy toward Bosnia and supported all U.S. military and diplomatic initiatives to end the Serbian aggression. Turkey's historical ties with the Bosniaks and humanitarian concern overlapped with the new world order anxiety and humanitarian concern by the U.S. over Bosnia. Thus U.S. efforts to stop Serbian aggression succeeded with the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995, in which Richard Holbrooke played the most crucial role. Later, the U.S. supported Turkey's involvement in the multilateral peacekeeping operations, and their cooperation continued in the following periods. Turkey actively participated in Implementation Force (IFOR), after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, and even sent help to Bosnian-Croat Federation to train a new military force in this country beside the U.S.⁷¹ since Turkey was also a key actor in the establishment of this federation. The most significant point was that this U.S.-Turkish cooperation would try to bring stability and order to all Balkan states, including Kosovo.

3.3.2 Kosovo

U.S.-Turkish cooperation on Bosnia-Herzegovina continued in the conflict between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs that turned into an armed conflict in 1998. Serbian aggression once again emerged only three years after the Dayton Peace Accord, and

⁶⁹ Sabri Sayarı, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era", p. 177.

⁷⁰ İlhan Uzgel, "Doksanlarda Türkiye...", pp. 409-10.

⁷¹ Sabri Sayarı, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", pp. 176-78.

this time Kosovar Albanians suffered Serbian atrocities. As in the Bosnian case, Turkey followed a policy of multilateral activism in Kosovo because it was concerned about regional stability and order of the Balkans. However, unlike in Bosnia, Turkey did not only get involved in the conflict diplomatically. Ankara as an ally of NATO strongly supported NATO's air campaign against the Serbs and applied military and economic sanctions against Serbia.⁷²

The U.S. in the beginning of the decade had seen that Kosovo might become a potential dispute, and when the fight in Kosovo emerged, the U.S. did not hesitate to intervene and immediately started diplomatic initiatives over Kosovo in May 1998 with the mediation efforts of Richard Holbrooke.⁷³ Nevertheless, despite the U.S. and the Contact Group's efforts to stop Milosevic, diplomacy did not bring any solution. This diplomatic failure necessitated escalation to NATO's air attacks against the Serbian military arsenal. At the end, Milosevic was compelled to surrender.

The main difference in Turkish foreign policy regarding Kosovo was that Turkey was not as free as it had been in Bosnia. Because of domestic concerns, Turkey could not really support the idea of an independent Kosovo while it was facing a similar situation with its Kurdish population. On the other side, though Turkey supported the idea that Kosovar Albanians should preserve their Constitutional rights, for regional concern, it had to think about the stability of the Balkans. Hence, Turkey had to take into consideration the notion of preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia rather than supporting the independence of Kosovo as a country.

Furthermore, Ankara evaluated the Kosovar issue in terms of its own sensitivity to the issue of territorial integrity, as it had shown in the Iraqi case since

⁷² Sayarı, p. 178.

⁷³ Uzgel, "Doksanlarda Türkiye...", p. 421.

the Gulf War of 1991. Thus, Turkey moved together with the U.S. and the international community in condemning the Serbs. Turkey played an important role in peacekeeping operations by taking part in multilateral post-conflict initiatives. The peaceful contribution of Turkey continued with Kosovo Force (KFOR) that aimed to provide order and stability for Kosovar Albanians under the guidance of United Nations.

In conclusion, it was important to see that Turkey and U.S. had cooperated in the Balkans. The main concern on Balkan security brought together Turkey, as a regional power, and the U.S. as a global power, to “fight” against a common threat, the Serbs. Although the cooperation in the Balkans was in multilateral frameworks, it could be claimed that this cooperation contributed to enhance the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey. Bosnia and Kosovo cases demonstrated that Turkey and the U.S. could continue to cooperate in different areas since they usually share common humanitarian concerns, and they have overlapping interests. Nonetheless, Turkey and the U.S. did not always prefer the same methods when they came across problems. Although they had common objectives, there were areas where they confronted each other. Especially in the Middle East, Turkey and the U.S. had different preferences in dealing with Iraq, Iran, and Syria, despite the fact that Washington had described them as rogue states.

3.4 Common Objectives but Different Methods

3.4.1 Iraq

In the post-Cold War era, the Persian Gulf Crisis, which emerged in August 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, was one of the main areas that the U.S. and Turkey had to face in the Middle East. This crisis would have various implications for Turkey and its role in the Middle East in the following years. It brought another dimension to

post- Cold War U.S.-Turkish relations and also changed the decades-old Turkish foreign policy of non-interference in the Middle East unless its vital national interests were at stake. With this crisis and the war following it, Turkey got involved in a Middle Eastern dispute by supporting the Coalition powers, which aimed to repel Saddam Hussein. Secondly, Turkey, by cooperating with the West, pointed out that it cared about the security interests of the Arab states.⁷⁴ Hence, this shift from non-interference to a pro-active stance in Middle Eastern problems in Turkish foreign policy would guide Ankara's decisions in the following years not only with Iraq but also with Iran and Syria.

For President Turgut Özal, the Gulf crisis was a fortuitous event for Turkey to underscore its continuing significance for the Western alliance in terms of being able to deter regional conflicts and instability in the Middle East. The Western countries were aware of the fact that they needed Turkey on their side if they wanted to be successful with the embargo applied against Iraq.⁷⁵ Seeing this, Özal took advantage of the opportunity. On August 8, 1990 the Turkish government under the influence of the president, closed the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline first, and later it allowed the coalition powers to use İncirlik airbase under the obligations of NATO alliance despite domestic opposition. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Bozer's resignation on October 11 was followed by the resignation of General Necip Torumtay, the Chief of the General Staff, on December 3, 1990.⁷⁶ These resignations came as a protest of Özal's policy of furthering Turkey's military involvement in the Gulf War. Political support given to the coalition powers by allowing them to use

⁷⁴ James Brown, "Turkey and the Persian Gulf Crisis", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Spring 1991), pp. 46-54, p. 46.

⁷⁵ William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, (1992), pp. 679-692, pp. 683-84.

⁷⁶ William Hale, pp. 684-86.

İncirlik base and economic support of applying embargo against Iraq were deemed quite sufficient by the civilian-military elite.⁷⁷

Thus, both Ankara and Washington were close to each other since they cared about peace and stability in the region, and both wanted Saddam Hussein to fulfill the UN Security Council resolutions. However, it could not be claimed that there was a total overlap between the policies of Turkey and the U.S. Despite the common objectives, the U.S. and Turkish motivations towards policies on Iraq in particular and Middle East in general were different. From the U.S. perspective, the security of the Gulf region was significant in order to preserve the free flow of Gulf oil to the industrialized West, and a regime change in the Gulf would increase the chance of Arab-Israeli peace by reducing extremism, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction.⁷⁸ Therefore, after the Gulf War, the U.S. acted in accordance with these foreign policy objectives and its primary motivation became ousting Saddam Hussein. It seemed that ideas like the dissolution of Iraq and creation of an independent Kurdish state within the lands of Iraq did not bother the U.S. as it did Turkey. Despite Alan Makovsky's statement that the U.S. "advocates the maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity",⁷⁹ it became a contentious issue that the U.S. overlooked the autonomous movements of Iraqi Kurds that might lead to the dissolution of Iraq resulting in an independent Kurdistan, an unacceptable idea for Turkey.

On the other side, Turkey was apprehensive about the idea of an independent Kurdish state in Iraq because this was believed to increase the terrorist activities of

⁷⁷ Necip Torumtay, Değişen Stratejilerin Odağında Türkiye (Turkey at the Focus of Changing Strategies), (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1996), pp. 45-60. For details of the resignations and the opposition to Özal's policy on Iraq see also Necip Torumtay, Orgeneral Torumtay'ın Anıları (General Torumtay's Memories), (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1994).

⁷⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, and Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (May/ June 1997), pp. 20-30, p. 20.

PKK, which was mainly trained in Iraq, Iran and Syria. Hence, the primary Turkish policy toward Iraq was guided by Turkish concerns on preventing an independent Kurdish state (despite the *de facto* Kurdish state in northern Iraq), the expulsion of PKK camps and terrorists from the region, and restarting trade with Iraq.⁸⁰ Hence, when looked at the Iraqi issue from the Turkish perspective, it could be argued that ousting Saddam Hussein was not the best solution. Although he was ruling his country as a dictator, he was also the protector of Iraqi integrity by not allowing an independent Kurdish entity. Thus for Turkey, most probably making Saddam Hussein obey UNSC resolutions and democratize Iraq would be better solutions rather than ousting him.

Nevertheless, the economic hardships Turkey faced after the war by ending trade with its second-largest trade partner in the Middle East, Iraq, increased Turkey's economic problems. Turkey applied the UN embargo against Iraq although it had a very devastating effect on the Turkish economy. Alan Makovsky admitted that Turkey suffered the largest economic loss resulting from the Iraqi sanctions. Subsequently, he argued that the U.S. should compensate the Turkish economic loss.⁸¹ When looked at from the Turkish point of view, there was a great dilemma for Turkey since, on the one side, Ankara envisaged to cooperate with U.S. and UN policies on the embargo, but ignored its own economic interests. On the other side, challenging the UN embargo and restarting relations with Iraq would mean direct opposition to UN and especially to the U.S.⁸²

⁷⁹ Makovsky, "U.S. Policy Toward Turkey...", p. 230.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Makovsky, "U.S. Policy Toward...", pp. 232-33.

⁸² Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives on Turkish-US Relations Concerning Persian Gulf Security in the Post-Cold War Era: 1989-1995", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 3, (Summer 1996), pp. 344-358, pp. 352-53.

The most confrontational and problematic issue between the U.S. and Turkey, which reemerged in Iraq, was the autonomous Kurdish population in northern Iraq. The no-fly zone established between the Turkish border and the area north of the 36th parallel after the Gulf War to protect the civilians in the region from Saddam Hussein turned out to be a *de facto* Kurdish state that was perceived as a threat for Turkey's integrity because of the "domino effect" it might have on its territory.⁸³ Hence although Turkey shared the U.S. ideas of democracy and equality for Iraqi people, Ankara could not support the independence of a potential Kurdish state. Contrary to this, Turkey stated its support for the territorial and political integrity of Iraq even at the expense of seeing Saddam Hussein in power in Iraq. Nonetheless, Washington had already decided to oust Saddam Hussein as soon as possible, and it seemed that Washington would not allow Saddam Hussein any opportunity to establish relatively better relations with the Kurds. This meant that, unlike Ankara, Washington would support an autonomous Kurdish state or a special status for the Kurds in Iraq for the sake of getting rid of Saddam Hussein.⁸⁴

In conclusion, it could be argued that the significance of the Middle East in general and Iraq in particular for U.S.-Turkish relations resulted from current problems. With the end of the Cold war, the agenda of Western and especially U.S.-Turkish relations were shaped according to heightened concerns over energy security, proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, containing and engaging Russia, and Turkish integration to the EU.⁸⁵ Thus, Iraq, at the very center of the U.S.-Turkish relations, increased its value both for Turkey and

⁸³ Ibid, p. 352.

⁸⁴ Makovsky, "U.S. Policy...", p. 231. This issue will be discussed in detail in the following pages of the thesis separately as a major Turkish reservation about U.S. policies in the Middle East.

⁸⁵ Zalmay Khalilzad, "A Strategic Plan for Western-Turkish Relations", in The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan, (eds.) Zalmay Khalilzad, Ian Lesser, and Stephen Larrabee, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000), p. 79.

the U.S. On the other hand, similar problems arose between Turkey and the U.S. because of Iran.

3.4.2 Iran

Starting with the revolution in Iran in 1979, relations between Iran and its neighbors changed since Iran constitutionally declared its intention to export the Islamic revolution to its neighborhood. On the other side, Iran as an Islamic Republic with rich natural resources became a source of conflict for the region by trying to develop ballistic missiles and nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons (NBC) programs. Such Iranian initiatives annoyed not only its neighbors but also the Western world and especially the U.S., because Iran with its political regime and military arsenal became a probable threat to the stability of the region. Hence the U.S. worried about preserving its interests in the Middle East, tried to convince Turkey and the other countries in the region to impose an embargo against Iran.

Turkey, as a neighbor of Iran, suffered from certain Iranian policies. Iranian support for the fundamentalist movements in Turkey threatened its political integrity and stability. Iranian efforts to obtain nuclear technology increased the vulnerability of Turkey in the event of a dispute between Turkey and Iran.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, there was not a clear indication that Turkey was a target of Iranian military arsenal despite the fact the U.S. wanted to depict Iran as “an ideological rival and threat”⁸⁷ for Turkey.⁸⁸ For a Turkey that was already suffering from the sanctions applied on Iraq, Iran was too crucial a country to “pursue a policy of confrontation”. This was not only because of Turkey’s economic interests and historically cordial relations, but

⁸⁶ Aykan, “Turkish Perspectives...”, p. 353.

⁸⁷ Makovsky, “U.S. Policy...”, p. 233.

⁸⁸ Ankara did not need the direction of the U.S. to recognize the threat posed by Iran. However, the major Turkish concern about Iranian threat was not about increased nuclear technology but religious

also because dialogue and cooperation through diplomatic means could work in the Iranian case to make it conform to international rules on proliferation of nuclear weapons.⁸⁹

Moreover, Turkey, despite the general U.S. request to isolate Iran through economic sanctions, opposed this policy and continued its relations with Iran. It was clear that Turkey could not compensate “the loss of \$250 million of Turkish exports to Iran and about \$700 million of imports from that country” if it participated in the embargo.⁹⁰ Turkey needed Iranian natural gas and the two countries “concluded petroleum, and a 23-year natural gas agreement in May 1995”⁹¹ with which they agreed on the construction of a pipeline to transport Iranian gas to Turkey by July 2001.⁹² However, although Turkey needed Iranian gas, it did not want to alienate the U.S., so that Ankara did not fulfill its obligations under the agreement on time. Moreover, Turkey took into consideration the U.S. opposition to the agreement with Iran, in which Turkmenistan gas was to be transported to Turkey through Iran, and did not sign the agreement at first⁹³. However, later an agreement was signed and currently, Turkey buys gas from Iran.

On the other hand, even Washington was aware of the fact that Turkey should cooperate with Iran despite the fact that Turkey did not approve of Iranian policies and probable threats toward its neighbors and the whole world. Turkey could not rely only on the natural gas coming from Russia but had to secure another source and carry out the rules of the contract made on a “take-or-pay” basis with Iran.⁹⁴ Another

fundamentalism. There is ample of data to argue that Iran exports fundamentalist activities to its neighborhood, and especially to Turkey, however, this is outside the scope of this thesis.

⁸⁹ Aykan, “Turkish Perspectives...”, p. 353.

⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 353-54.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 355.

⁹² Makovsky, “US. Policy...”, p. 234.

⁹³ Aykan, “Turkish Perspectives...”, p. 355.

⁹⁴ Makovsky, “US Policy...”, p. 234. In the following parts of the chapter Makovsky also points that the U.S. views the Turkish-Iranian agreement on natural gas as a Turkish contribution to Iranian

crucial point that needs to be stressed within the context of the U.S.-Turkish relations concerning Iran is that the U.S. periodically reminds Turkey of the possibility of developing better relations with Tehran, and in a way the U.S. holds out the option of choosing Iran rather than Turkey for the transportation of the Caspian oil to the world.⁹⁵ When this type of consideration is taken into account, it has to be remembered that there is not real friendship between states, but only common or intersecting national interests. It would not be wrong to state that Turkey acted according to its national interests while cooperating with Iran despite the opposition of the U.S. Finally, the third Middle Eastern neighbor that became a problematic issue between Turkey and the U.S. was Syria.

3.4.3 Syria

The emergence of a *de facto* independent Kurdish entity after the Gulf War in northern Iraq increased fears in Syria, Turkey and Iran that similar incidents might occur on their lands with their respective Kurdish populations. Hence in 1992, these three states came together in Ankara and proclaimed a declaration that they would back the territorial integrity of Iraq.⁹⁶ While this common threat brought Syria and Turkey together, Turkey and Syria did not completely agree nor did they apply similar policies on the problem. Although Syrian threat was not direct and imminent, Damascus, like Tehran and Baghdad, had been posing a threat for Turkey's integral unity with its support of PKK activities. Hence the main conflicting areas between Turkey and Syria could be stated as the unresolved trans-boundary watercourses of

economic development. This argument against Turkey seems to be unfair when Turkey has the right to protect its own national interests like the U.S. does in many areas. Turkey does not have many options for getting gas, a main energy source for the large Turkish market.

⁹⁵ F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkish Foreign and Security Policy", in *The Future of Turkish-Western Relations: Toward a Strategic Plan*, p. 34.

⁹⁶ İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler" in *Türk Dış Politikası...*, p. 264.

Euphrates/Tigris basin and Asi/Oxus River and Syria's support for PKK.⁹⁷ From Turkish point of view the major problem between Turkey and the U.S. concerning the trans-boundary watercourses is that the U.S. takes position according to its interests rather than being objective.

Turkey was worried about U.S. neglect of the Syrian support for PKK terrorism during the 1990s, because the U.S. did not include Syria on the list of countries supporting terrorism or otherwise put pressure on Syria to end its support. This U.S. avoidance lasted until Turkey itself coerced Syria to stop providing shelter for Abdullah Öcalan⁹⁸ in 1998 by threatening to take military action. This threat was taken seriously by Syria and resulted in the expulsion of Abdullah Öcalan from the

⁹⁷ The disputes over trans-boundary watercourses between Turkey and Syria have long been unresolved and with the construction of Southeastern Anatolian (GAP) project, the disputes came into the agenda again in the eighties. Euphrates and Tigris originate in Turkish lands yet they also flow through Syria and Iraq before they join with Iranian gulf. Syria and Iraq are concerned with the Turkish dams over Euphrates and Tigris. They blame Turkey for not allowing enough water to flow to their lands. Syria has always been more interested in this issue and it has also acted on behalf of Iraq. The amount of waters of Euphrates flowing through Syria has never satisfied Damascus, and the Syrian capital increased its opposition against Turkey by convincing Arab states to support Syrian and Iraqi case on trans-boundary watercourses. However, on the Oxus River case, which originates from Lebanon and passes through Syria, and pours into the Mediterranean from Turkish land, Syria forgets all its accusations toward Turkey. Syria does not really implement the international rules of trans-boundary waters. The Syrian dams use almost all the waters of Oxus. For detailed information on Syrian-Turkish disputes on watercourses see Hüseyin Pazarcı, "Su Sorununun Hukuksal Boyutları", in Neşet Akmandor, Hüseyin Pazarcı, Hasan Köni (eds.), *Orta Doğu Ülkelerinde Su Sorunu*, (Ankara: TESAV, 1994); Konuralp Pamukçu, *Fırat/Dicle Nehir Havzasındaki Su Sorunu ve Çözüm Arayışları*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Ağustos 1994; and Murhaf Jouejati, "Water Politics as High Politics: The Case of Turkey and Syria", in Henry J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996).

⁹⁸ It was well known in Turkey that Abdullah Öcalan was accommodated in Damascus and Damascus became a center for planning PKK activities toward Turkey. In April 1997, it was announced by the headquarters of Chief of the General Staff that Turkey would take political, economic and military measures against Iran and Syria if they continued to support fundamentalist and terrorist movements toward Turkey. It was seen that Syria did not really end its support so that the Syrian-Turkish relations got tenser in September 1998. On 16 September 1998, General Commander of Land Forces, Atilla Ateş, stated in a speech made in Hatay Ankara's dissatisfaction of Syrian support for Abdullah Öcalan and PKK. Following this speech, Ankara initiated more serious precautions towards Syria such as ending diplomatic relations until Damascus ended its support for PKK and expelling Abdullah Öcalan from Syria. Seeing the ultimatum as a serious one Damascus accepted Ankara's demands and finally the Öcalan Crisis of 1998 ended with Adana Compromise in October 1998. This was a successful application of Turkish foreign policy. Ankara demonstrated to the U.S. and the whole world how effective its foreign policy could be by threatening to use force against Syria unless it stopped its support for PKK. For details see also Melek Fırat & Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler (Relations with the Middle East)" in Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası...* pp. 563-67.

country and the declaration of ending its immediate support for PKK activities.⁹⁹ This unilateral Turkish initiative towards Syria, pointed out that Turkey was powerful enough to take care of its national interests independently if necessary. It could be evaluated as a message sent to the world in general and the U.S. in particular to demonstrate that Turkey was determined to solve its problem of PKK terrorism and it makes good on its threat. In this issue, the U.S. seemed to be on the Turkish side since it did not really interfere with the issue.

To summarize, it could be stated that during the 1990s providing stability and peace in the region; free flow of oil; and establishing better relations with the countries were among the major interests of Turkey and the U.S. in the Middle East. Nonetheless, the objectives of Turkey and the U.S. did not overlap all the time, and in such situations, Turkey tried at least to act according to its national interests. This was a significant change for Turkey's foreign policy, since Turkey was learning how to stand on its own feet in an environment free of Cold War concerns. Hence, this helped Ankara to formulate its own foreign objectives when it did not have common policies with the U.S. over issues related to Armenia, Greece and Cyprus.

3.5 Real Conflicts or Confrontations in Objectives

3.5.1 Armenia

Turkish-Armenian relations have never been smooth because of longstanding Armenian allegations that the Ottomans massacred Armenians in 1915 during WWI. These Armenian claims have prevented the establishment of friendly relations between Turkey and Armenia not only under the Soviet rule of Armenia but also after Armenia got its independence in 1991. On the other side, the Armenian-

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 33.

American lobby brought the genocide issue into the agenda in the U.S. Congress and they tried to prevent U.S. military aid to Turkey.

Nevertheless, besides this historical antagonism toward Turkey, the negative atmosphere between Turkey and Armenia increased with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the post-Cold war period. Armenia occupied about 20% of the Azeri land of Nakhichevan in 1992, and claimed this land to be part of Armenia. Therefore, Turkey took the Azeri side not only because it had historical ties with Azerbaijan, but also because Turkey could not accept Armenian occupation of Azeri land. Hence the already poor relations between Turkey and Armenia worsened. Turkey as a country facing the conflict in its very close neighborhood, immediately worked for “mobilizing governments and international forums to condemn Armenian acts”.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, Turkey demanded that Armenia “abandon its ‘expansionist policy’”.¹⁰¹

The U.S., on the other hand, immediately wanted to see better relations between Turkey and Armenia. Because of the Armenian-American lobby in Washington, Armenia’s importance increased in U.S. policies. However, Armenia was not well connected to the rest of the world and especially to the Western world, since it is a land-locked country on the Asian continent with no access to the seas. In order to be successfully integrated into the Western world Armenia needed Turkey’s support. Only when Turkey opens its borders to Armenia could Yerevan establish meaningful relations with the world and especially with Turkey. This would decrease Armenian dependence on Russia, and more significantly might also end the negative Armenian-American lobbying in Washington against Turkey, though this was not a

¹⁰⁰ Kemal Kirişçi, “The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behavior”, 1993, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ Phillip Robins, “Between Sentiment and Self-Interest: Turkey’s Policy Toward Azerbaijan and the Central Asian States”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4, (Autumn 1993), pp.593- 610, p. 597.

guarantee, since there is a difference between diaspora Armenian nationalism and Armenia proper.¹⁰² Hence for stability and peace in the region, the U.S. requested that Turkey make life easier for Armenia.¹⁰³ However, it was clearly seen that only after the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could Turkish-Armenian rapprochement and cooperation be observed in the region.¹⁰⁴

However, despite U.S. optimism on the issue, the international community did not see any real Armenian effort to retreat from the occupied lands. While at times Ankara thought of ending its embargo against Armenia because it has also damaged Turkey, Armenia did not cease its historical claims about Ottoman genocide. On the other side, despite the U.S. initiatives to start cooperation between Turkey and Armenia, Turkey could not really come closer to Armenia because of its economic ties with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan was promising a vital role in the transportation of Caspian oil to the West on condition that Turkey continued its support for the Azeri case in the Azeri-Armenian conflict. Thus this meant that Turkey's hands were tied until a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Turkey could not dare to lose Azeris and the economic benefits of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project. However, Turkey could strongly support the idea of multilateral peaceful solution to the problem that would benefit all the parties in the dispute.

If not resolved, the problematic issues between Turkey and Armenia would not only destroy their relations but also it could damage U.S.-Turkish relations. The unresolved issues alienated Armenia from Turkey and this situation has been affecting the Armenian-American lobby in the U.S. The pro-Armenian lobby in Washington has always been very influential. Thus, the Turkish lobbying firms,

¹⁰² Makovsky, "U.S. Policy ...", pp. 244-45.

¹⁰³ Uslu, pp. 326-27.

¹⁰⁴ Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Objectives in the Caspian Region" in The Security of the Caspian Sea Region, Ed. Gennady Chufirin, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 164

which aim to protect Turkish interests, cannot speak up as the pro-Armenian lobby. The scattered and numerically inferior voting power Turkish-Americans in the U.S. are usually defeated by the Armenian-Americans when their voting power is taken into account. Hence the delay in arms sales to Turkey during the 1990s could be connected to the effectiveness of the Armenian lobby. On the other side, Turkish relations with Greece over the Aegean Sea and Cyprus hardened U.S.-Turkish relations during the 1990s.

3.5.2 Turkish-Greek Disputes and Cyprus

Turkish-Greek conflicts over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea continued unresolved during the 1990s as a legacy from the Cold War period. These conflicts demonstrated the “continuity” process of Turkish foreign policy regarding its relations with Greece and the U.S., which was indirectly involved in these issues. The U.S., having strong ties both with Turkey and Greece insisted on a resolution of the Cyprus problem.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the U.S. pressured Turkey to make concessions in order to reach a compromise on Cyprus not only during the Cold War but also during the 1990s. This pressure intensified the discontent created between Turkey and the U.S. Additionally this discontent decreased the reliability of the U.S. administration in the eyes of many Turkish officials.¹⁰⁶

On the other side, Greek-American lobbies in the U.S. Congress were very effective in U.S. foreign policy making and usually Washington could not get rid of this influence over issues related to Turkey. Like the Armenians, the Greek-Americans used the lobbying card against Turkey. The pro-Greek lobby affected the Congress and usually they forced Washington to veto U.S.-Turkish agreements on

¹⁰⁵ Özden Z. O. Alantar, “Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinin Güvenlik Boyutunda Dönüşümü (The Transformation of Turkish-U.S. Relations in Security Dimension)”, in En Uzun Onyıl:....(The Longest Decade....), p. 239.

financial aid or arms sales. Furthermore, this rivalry was making the U.S. part of all Greek-Turkish relations. Thus, the U.S. appeared as a third party in every dispute between Turkey and Greece, not only during the Cold War but also in the post-Cold War decade. In 1996, with Imia/Kardak crisis, Turkey and Greece came very close to war, yet the U.S., as a stabilizing factor, calmed down both Turkey and Greece. This U.S. contribution to the conflict could be explained as a necessity of U.S. interests. It is well known that continuing Turkish-Greek disputes threaten stability in the entire eastern Mediterranean and create havoc in NATO alliance.¹⁰⁷

Taking this fear into consideration, the U.S. promoted the idea of bringing Turkey and Greece once more to the table to deal with their problems. In 1997, the Madrid Summit was prepared by U.S. initiative for the improvement of bilateral relations between Turkey and Greece. However, the post-summit declaration pointed out that this summit was only an initial step, and there were no resolutions proposed for the decades-long conflicts.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, in 1999 “the earthquake diplomacy” once more increased Turkish-Greek prospects for better relations. Athens, which was suffering from international criticism because of its support given to PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, in Kenya, had tried to dispel this negative image. The earthquake in Turkey followed by those in Greece provided the most convenient atmosphere for Greece to establish closer ties with Turkey by helping the victims of the earthquake. Turkey’s optimistic response to this humanitarian assistance from Greece most probably satisfied the U.S. the most. However, this rapprochement could still not be converted into a

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Makovsky, “U.S. Policy”, p. 249.

¹⁰⁸ S. Güliden Ayman, “Türk ve Yunan İlişkilerinde Güç ve Tehdit (Power and Threat in Turkish-Greek Relations)”, in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi (The Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy)*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoglu, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), pp. 543-44.

solution to the disputes in the Aegean Sea or Cyprus, as opposed to closer cooperation in soft politics such as trade, tourism, and antiterrorism.¹⁰⁹

It was obvious that Turkish-Greek disputes over Cyprus and Aegean would not be easily resolved as long as these two countries failed to stop seeing each other as an existential threat, and the U.S. and the other Western countries were at a loss as to what to do about issues related to Turkish-Greek disputes. The EU membership of Southern Cyprus without the resolution of the Cyprus conflict would make it harder to get along well. Therefore, it is possible to see the U.S. or EU repeatedly on the scene trying to convince Turkey and Greece to reach a compromise on the disputes. In addition to disputed issues, Turkey and the U.S. reached a common policy over Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan because of common interests in the region, yet economic problems resulted in delays.

3.6 Major Fields of Cooperation but Without Conclusion

3.6.1 Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the independent Caucasian and Central Asian states gained more power and control over the natural resources within their countries. Thus with the emergence of the Caspian region and its high potential for supplying oil and natural gas, the world's attention turned towards this region. Turkey, which decided to improve its historical relations with the Caucasian and Central Asian states, saw the Caspian resources as an alternative to its growing energy needs. If Turkey could get a share in the Caspian oil and persuade Azerbaijan and the Western states to export oil through Turkish lands, Ankara would not only find a suitable source for its domestic needs, but also would benefit from the pipeline route's income. Nevertheless, this was not an easy task since despite the Western

¹⁰⁹ Makovsky, "U.S. Policy...", p. 249.

companies' interests in the region, Turkey had to compete with Russia and Iran, which also wanted to be involved in the transportation of Caspian oil and natural gas.¹¹⁰

In line with this objective, Turkey tried to establish closer diplomatic and political ties with Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan and signed many bilateral and multilateral agreements with these countries. Even in the very beginning of the 1990s, Turkey initiated the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project through which Caspian oil would be transported to the West. Subsequently, Turkey marshalled diplomatic support for this project from Washington and got it; however, this was not the only alternative. Russia and Iran were the other two strong alternative routes, while Bulgaria and Ukraine also suggested alternative plans for the transportation of Caspian oil to the West, despite the limitations and unfeasibility of their projects.¹¹¹

The U.S. supported Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project because with this project Georgia, instead of Russia was involved in the transportation route, and if possible, the U.S. would also prefer to see Armenia involved. For Washington, this project was a real alternative for decreasing reliance on a Russian pipeline, the Baku-Novorossiysk, which might give Russia a monopoly over the region. The alternative route proposed by Iran to use the Persian Gulf met strong U.S. opposition because the U.S. did not want to see Iran in the transportation of Caspian oil.¹¹² On the other side, the U.S. acknowledged Turkey's concerns about the environmental risks of oil transport through the Turkish Straits and the Marmara Sea. Thus, once more the U.S. supported the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) route since this pipeline would lessen tanker traffic in the Turkish Straits, Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

¹¹⁰ Sabri Sayari, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era: The Challenges of Multi-Regionalism", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1, (Fall 2000), pp. 169-182, pp. 173-74.

¹¹¹ Jan H. Kalicki, "Caspian Energy at the Crossroads", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 5, (September/October 2001), pp. 120-134, p. 124.

Nonetheless, despite U.S. support for the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, this Turkish initiative had its disadvantages. The construction of BTC pipeline had a high cost when compared to the other alternatives such as Baku-Supsa, Baku-Novorossiysk, and the Iran-Persian Gulf route. According to different feasibility studies, it was estimated that the cost might increase from \$2,4 billion to \$2,7 billion.¹¹³ And this cost was too high for the Western companies, which viewed the other alternatives commercially as more convenient. This economic disadvantage decreased the attractiveness of the pipeline. Nevertheless, Turkey was determined to realize this project, and “guaranteed to cover construction costs of above \$1,4 billion for the section of the pipeline that passes through Turkish territory” since Ankara supported the construction of this pipeline not only because of economic interests but also because of its political benefit of extending its role in the region.¹¹⁴

Although the U.S. support for BTC pipeline did not end, the U.S. realized that it had underestimated Russian influence over the states in the region. It was an explicit fact that the U.S. should not irritate the Russian Federation and once more make it the enemy of the West but give credit to Russian initiatives. Turkey also was aware that rather than antagonizing Russia it should cooperate on issues directly related to their interests. However, Ankara should also not let Russia dominate the regional arrangements such as oil and natural gas routes.

Only when Turkey pursues policies that preserve the economic and political interests of the states in the region, could it continue to receive U.S. support for Turkish initiatives such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. It could be argued that

¹¹² Karaosmanoğlu, “Turkey’s Objectives...”, p. 157.

¹¹³ Jan H. Kalicki, p. 131.

¹¹⁴ Karaosmaoğlu, “Turkey’s Objectives...”, p. 157.

Turkey should also be aware of the U.S. policy objectives.¹¹⁵ It was seen that the U.S. wanted to enter into Caucasus and Central Asia to take control over the rich oil and natural gas reserves in order to decrease the Russian influence in the region. It was a great opportunity for Turkey to possess overlapping policies with the U.S. regarding the region since Ankara also wanted to have a crucial role in the region. Turkey shared the U.S. and Western approaches to the Caspian oil. More significantly, Turkey was conscious about the fact that it needed and would need U.S. support to be able to find Western companies to sponsor and finance the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. Finally Turkey began to wait for a more determined Caspian policy from the Bush administration.

In conclusion, despite the short-term failures in Turkish Trans-Caucasian policy, it was noteworthy that Turkey did not give up the idea of playing a crucial role in this region. Although it seemed that Russia has increased rivalry with Turkey by protecting its military and political presence in Armenia and Azerbaijan, Turkey would not dare to give up since these states are important for Turkish interests. In the long run, it is highly possible that these states will need Western and especially Turkish assistance to solve their regional problems in order to become politically and economically independent states.¹¹⁶ Hence Turkey should be ready to help them whenever they need support. On the other side, the U.S. assisted many Turkish initiatives that emerged after successful Turkish foreign policies.

¹¹⁵ The main USA policy objectives toward the region: a) strengthening the independence and prosperity of the new states; b) encouraging political and economic reform; c) mitigating regional conflicts by building economic linkages between regional states; d) bolstering the energy security of the USA and its allies and regional states by ensuring the free flow of oil and gas to the world market; and e) enhancing commercial opportunities for US and other companies. Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Objectives...", p. 158. He also quotes from *Turkish Daily News*, 10 December 1998, p. A3.

¹¹⁶ Süha Bölükbaşı, "Ankara's Baku-Centered Trans-Caucasian Policy: Has It Failed?", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1, (Winter 1997), pp. 80-94.

3.7 Turkish Foreign Policy Initiatives Encouraged and Assisted by the U.S.

3.7.1 Military Cooperation with Israel

With the 1993 peace process of Oslo, where the Declaration of Principles was signed between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), relations between Turkey and Israel were elevated into another dimension. The “ups and downs” in the relations between Turkey and Israel after the emergence of the state of Israel were related to Turkish concerns about peace between Israel and the Arab world in general and Palestine in particular. Nevertheless, the Declaration of Principles became a sign of hope for the Arab-Israeli peace, and Turkey accepted this as a basic milestone to develop its relations with Israel. Thus, 1996 became a turning point for the bilateral relations of Turkey and Israel.

Since the military cooperation and training agreement in February 1996, which permitted the Israeli air force to exercise in Turkish skies and following a free trade accord in March, the number of bilateral agreements between these two states has grown to thirteen.¹¹⁷ The military cooperation was concentrated on weaponry upgrade, hardware purchase, joint production, training, and intelligence sharing while, on the other side, the Turkish-Israeli relationship also necessitated cooperation in trade, transportation, and water.¹¹⁸ In this sense, the military cooperation started as soon as the agreements were put into practice.

The changing conditions in world politics and especially in the Middle East pointed out that better Turkish-Israeli relations would serve the interests of both. It was obvious that closer relations with Israel would help Turkey to overcome the

¹¹⁷ Daniel Pipes, “A New Axis: The Emerging Turkish-Israeli Entente”, *The National Interest*, (Winter 1997/98), pp. 31-38, p. 32.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 34-35.

political and economic problems it faced during the 1990s¹¹⁹ as a result of the losses in fight against PKK terrorism, in trade incomes after the Gulf War, and in terms of overall relations with other neighbors. Therefore, Turkey's cooperation with Israel could first enable it to put pressure on Syria, then the most hostile neighboring country because of its support for PPK. Later, the military cooperation would lead to Turkish access to "an arms relationship with a technologically advanced, Western-oriented, inventory-compatible state free of anti-Turkish lobbies".¹²⁰ And finally, Turkey would gain support from the American-Jewish lobby, which had a very distinctive place in the Congress, against the pro-Greek, pro-Armenian, pro-Kurdish, and human rights lobbies.¹²¹ On the other side, Israel would also benefit both economically and militarily from the multilevel cooperation with Turkey. For Israel, Turkey would be a client of its military arsenal and would provide mountainous lands and open skies to exercise its military capability.

Seeing that such Turkish-Israeli cooperation would serve its interests, the U.S. from the beginning supported and even encouraged the cooperation because this cooperation did not challenge U.S. interests in the region. From U.S. perspective this cooperation was

- ◆ A model of regional normalization between Israel and a Muslim-majority state;
- ◆ An opportunity for deeper trilateral cooperation, enhancing Israeli and Turkish security and increasing weapons of interoperability for U.S. forces at times of regional crisis;
- ◆ A source of pressure on Syria's peace process policies;
- ◆ A potential means for the executive branch to bypass Congress in supporting Turkey (through presidential waivers on Israeli sales of arms that include U.S.-origin technology); and

¹¹⁹ Dietrich Jung & Wolfango Piccoli, "The Turkish-Israeli Alignment: Paranoia or Pragmatism", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31 (1), (2000), pp. 91-104, p. 98.

¹²⁰ Makovsky, "New Activism...", p. 102.

¹²¹ Ibid.

- ◆ A potential nucleus for pulling other pro-U.S. states, such as Jordan, into a wider Middle Eastern regional security regime.¹²²

Seen from the above conclusions, as two democratic states Turkey and Israel would empower the stability of the region by promoting Western values such as democracy and liberalism to the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East. Hence for the U.S., pro-American and democratically oriented states of the Middle East would lead to a “peaceable Middle East”.¹²³ Moreover, the U.S. support for this cooperation came as a result of unquestionable U.S. trust and support to Israel. Israel has always been a significant partner to the U.S. and Israel has almost represented the U.S. in the Middle East. Hence, the U.S. could not dare to frustrate Israel, and the Israeli-American interests almost always coincided.¹²⁴ It was clearly observed that with the Turkish-Israeli cooperation, the U.S. increased its influence in the Middle East and Mediterranean. This would provide the U.S. a better opportunity to take care of Israeli security among the hostile neighbors. On the other hand, the U.S. would become more influential in pressuring Syria to contribute to the Middle Eastern peace process.¹²⁵

3.7.2 The Arab-Israeli Peace Process

The emergence of Israel as a state in the Middle East in 1948 initiated the decades-long disputes between Israel and the Arab states of the region since Israel was established after the Israelis occupied some of the Palestinian land and bought the rest of it from the absentee Palestinians. Turkey’s closeness to Israel and to Palestine has varied in the past. However, Turkey did not waver in its insistence on the fact that an emergent peaceful resolution should be found. Ankara was aware of the fact

¹²² Makovsky, “U.S. Policy toward Turkey...”, p. 236.

¹²³ Daniel Pipes, p. 38.

¹²⁴ Seyfi Taşhan, interview on 14.04.2004.

that stability of the Middle East was primarily dependent on the resolution of this conflict. Hence Turkey took a more determined stance on the dispute during the 1990s.

U.S.-Turkish interests converged again in the restoration of Middle Eastern peace. While the U.S. was concerned with the security and stability of the region and wanted peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli dispute for the sake of the peaceful existence of Israel in the region, Turkey was also concerned with possible threats to security if a final agreement was not reached. Hence, Turkey strongly supported the Oslo peace process of 1993.¹²⁶ For Turkey, this peace process was a very promising one, and Ankara really wanted a conclusion to be reached under the leadership of the U.S. Turkey has always encouraged the peace process but it also required that Israel and PLO solve their problems mutually.¹²⁷ Turkey did not want to see any other regional power such as Syria as a third country in the peace process. Turkey would be concerned with a Syrian-Israeli rapprochement for the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since this would damage Turkey's strategic interests because of Syrian support for PKK activities. More significantly, any U.S.-Syrian relationship concerning this issue would disturb Turkey because Syria was thought to be after gaining impetus in the trans-boundary waters issue with Turkey and could easily relate it to the Middle Eastern peace process.¹²⁸

The positive atmosphere of Oslo did not translate into lasting peace in the Middle East. The struggles and disputes continued in the following years. Turkish concerns about Syrian demands did not materialize and especially after the crisis

¹²⁵ İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler", p. 274.

¹²⁶ Nasuh Uslu, p. 349.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Alan Makovsky, "Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish Periphery Strategy", in Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East, ed. Henri J. Barkey, (Washington, D.C: USIP Press, 1996), pp. 156-57.

surrounding Abdullah Öcalan in 1998, bilateral relations needed time to recover. Nevertheless, there has been a positive feeling that the Syrian-Turkish ties would gain a new momentum once the main dispute over PKK support ended. This of course would be reflected in the Middle East process in the following years. Hence in another region vital for U.S. interests the U.S. supported the Turkish initiative called The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone.

3.7.3 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone

Starting with the activist policy of Özal, Ankara applied a more assertive policy and got involved in almost all regional multilateral structures directly affecting Turkey's interests or sometimes it even worked for the emergence of multilateral structures. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone was one of these initiatives.¹²⁹

Officially introduced by Turgut Özal, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone was established in 1992 in İstanbul with the intention of easing trade barriers and facilitating investment among Black Sea states. Furthermore, the BSECZ as a platform brought together neighbors that were in dispute with each other. For instance Greece-Turkey, Azerbaijan-Armenia, and others came under the same structure despite conflicts.¹³⁰

In the very beginning of the post-Cold war decade, Turkey realized that it could not remain isolated from its neighborhood, and realized that it should also enhance relations with its neighbors. Ankara realized that it should start with economics. The more economic interdependence increased, the more political interdependence would arise between these states by leading to a stable and secure

¹²⁹ For detailed information of what really the BSECZ proposed to the region, the founding father of the BSECZ, Şükrü Elekdağ wrote different articles and issues. For instance see "Karadeniz Ekonomik İşbirliği (Black sea Economic Cooperation)" in Yeni Dünya Düzeni ve Türkiye (New World Order and Turkey), (İstanbul: Hava Harp Okulu Yayınları, 1992).

¹³⁰ Makovsky, "New Activism...", pp. 104-05.

regional order.¹³¹ Mainly, the BSECZ proposal of free movement of goods and capital was welcomed by the Black Sea states and those states that did not share a Black Sea coast but were invited to become involved in the Zone.

The U.S. appreciated these Turkish efforts that contributed to regional stability. The U.S. supported the BSECZ, which aimed at bringing its members under the same platform to revive their economic relations and to resolve the problems between each other¹³², and to learn to improve cooperation not only in economics but also in all fields possible. Although some political and economic reasons prevented the BSECZ from meeting the expectations of the member states, Turkey deserved credit for its contribution to regional stability. It could be argued that economic interdependence would increase the possibility of political interdependence and this would lead to political stability and security in the region.

3.7.4 South- Eastern European Brigade (SEEBRIG)

Another regional multilateral initiative of Turkey was seen in 1998. As a neighbor Turkey was understandably concerned with Balkan security and stability. Hence Turkey, alarmed with the Serbian aggression toward Kosovo, proposed the initiation of a Balkan peacekeeping force in 1998. This multinational peacekeeping force in South-Eastern Europe would be mainly responsible for the security of the Balkans, and would be “deployed in NATO-or WEU- led operations sanctioned by the UN or OSCE.”¹³³

In January 1999, the peacekeeping force was first born as a South-Eastern European Multinational Force (SEEMNF), and later turned into a South-Eastern

¹³¹ Kemal Kirişçi, “The End of...”, p. 24.

¹³² İlhan Uzgel, “Doksanlarda Türkiye...”, p. 549.

¹³³ Makovsky, “New Activism...”, p. 105.

Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). This Balkan security force emerged with 4.000 soldiers in Athens with the main function of aid relief and peacekeeping.¹³⁴ Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey were the three major countries alarmed that Serbian aggression might even threaten their own existence in the Balkans so that they came together to form SEEBRIG and to provide the military personnel needed to deploy this force in any Balkan conflict.

The U.S., concerned with its own interests in Europe beside peace and stability in the Balkans, backed up the idea of establishing this Balkan security initiative. This U.S. support came not only because the peacekeeping force would be helpful and ready to intervene in any Balkan dispute before it escalated into a conflict threatening the whole Balkan region, but also because it would be established under the NATO or WEU umbrella. This meant that the U.S. would have control over this initiative as a part of NATO and WEU. Moreover, another crucial part of this peacekeeping force from the U.S. point of view was that it would bring the Balkan states together in unison over possible Balkan conflicts. This would be beneficial for the security of the Balkans and U.S. interests in the region. Finally, the U.S. supported Turkey's candidacy to EU since it was interested in a pro-Western Turkish identity also for its own reasons.

3.7.5 EU Membership

U.S. support for Turkey's foreign policy objectives also came with the issue of EU membership, an utmost foreign policy objective. It is widely believed that the U.S. backed Turkey's membership for EU, and some even believed that the U.S. pushed

¹³⁴ Zoran Kusovac, "Balkan Security to Set Up Rapid Reaction Force", *Jane's Defense Weekly*, (20 January 1999), Vol. 3, Issue No. 3.

for Turkey's membership to the extent of disturbing its Western allies.¹³⁵ It is also arguable that the U.S. believed that a Western oriented and EU member Turkey could best serve its own and other Western countries' interests. Washington knew that a democratic, secular, and liberal Turkey would promote Western values. Moreover, Turkey's Western orientation and identity would become an example for many non-democratic regimes in the Middle East.

The U.S. played a crucial role in the ratification process of Customs Union Agreement between EU and Turkey in 1995.¹³⁶ From the U.S. perspective, Turkey's EU membership has been significant for the economic and political stability of Turkey as well as of the whole region. Hence U.S. support for Turkey's EU membership continued in the following years. The acceptance of Turkey's candidacy in 1999 was undoubtedly related to U.S. backing and effort. The U.S. openly demonstrated its satisfaction when EU declared Turkey as a candidate state. Nevertheless, there are some U.S. concerns about Turkey's membership, since if Turkey becomes (though there are serious concerns about whether it will ever become) a member of the union in the following years; and this might cause trouble for U.S. and its interests. It is arguable that a stronger and EU member Turkey might raise its reservations about the U.S. more easily. Nonetheless, this does not mean that Turkey is not capable of opposing U.S. interests when they do not overlap with Turkish ones, yet an EU member Turkey's confidence in its ability might be different.

While the U.S. now supports Turkey's EU membership for the sake of increasing the Western orientation of Turkey, there is a possibility to lose Turkey as

¹³⁵ Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey and the United States: Ambivalent Allies", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (December 1998), pp. 18-27, p.21.

¹³⁶ Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey and the United States...", p. 21; also Alan Makovsky, "U.S. Policy Toward Turkey...", p. 245.

a loyal political ally or junior partner when it becomes an EU member. An EU member Turkey might apply policies that could oppose U.S. objectives since not all EU policies coincide with U.S. interests. Thus, it is probable that Turkey might be less dependent on the U.S. as a member of the EU.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, when the history of Turkish-American relations is studied, it will be concluded that neither Turkey nor the U.S. would give up their alliance. The strategic relationship between Turkey and the U.S. and common interests necessitate that they continue to act in harmony unless the circumstances change since there are no permanent friends or foes in international relations. However, this relationship based on reciprocal interests did not totally erase the doubts and reservations they had towards each other.

3.8 U.S. Reservations about Turkey

Beside areas of political and economic cooperation where Turkey and the U.S. have applied similar foreign policies, there have also been issues on which neither Turkey nor the U.S. could easily trust each other or support each other's policies. Two of these subjects, on which the U.S. had reservations about Turkey's policies, were the issues of human rights and PKK terrorism. From a Western point of view these two issues were interrelated.

There has always been a gap between Ankara and the Western capitals regarding the issue of PKK and its activities in Turkey. For Turkey, the Kurdish question was "a domestic issue"¹³⁸ in which PKK terrorism threatened not only the security but also the integral unity of the Turkish state. On the other side, the Kurdish question was also "a foreign policy issue" because of the Kurdish populations in

¹³⁷ Seyfi Taşhan, 14.04.2004; also Alan Makovsky, "U.S. Policy...", p. 248.

¹³⁸ Philip Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue", *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4, (1993), pp. 657-676, on p. 659.

Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Europe. Turkey did not act unilaterally but it took into account its neighbors' views while it was determining its southeastern policy.¹³⁹

The U.S., even before the Western European countries did, accepted PKK as a terrorist organization, and usually was more sensitive about the Turkish concern on PKK terrorism. However, in the post-Cold War era, Washington emphasized the need for a political resolution to this problem, like the Europeans did. Different from the Cold War era, the U.S. related the PKK issue to human rights. However, U.S. insistence on the recognition of wider rights for the Kurdish population in Turkey was not welcomed by the Turks¹⁴⁰, since this was viewed as a domestic problem in which the U.S. did not have the right to interfere.

During the 1990s, whenever Turkey approached the European Union, the EU countries put forward the human rights issue as a precondition for Turkey's EU accession. Moreover, some PKK sympathizers from the Western countries believed that the terrorist leader Öcalan and the PKK were representing Kurdish interests, and accepted them as freedom fighters in the Kurdish nationalist movement.¹⁴¹ These people even ignored the fact that most of the civilian Kurdish population supported neither the PKK and their violence, nor the idea of separate Kurdish state.¹⁴²

Although the U.S. was not as prejudiced as some of the Western states, Washington used "public diplomacy, quiet diplomacy and efforts" to encourage Turkey to promote its human rights performance, because, according to Henri J. Barkey, the U.S. cared about Turkey.¹⁴³ The most effective pressure the U.S. applied

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 670.

¹⁴⁰ Yalim Eralp, "An Insider's View...", p. 116.

¹⁴¹ Michael Radu, "The Rise and the Fall of PKK", *Orbis*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (Winter 2001), pp. 47-63, p. 54.

¹⁴² Svante E. Cornell, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics", *Orbis*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (Winter 2001), pp. 31-46, pp. 31& 40.

¹⁴³ Henri J. Barkey, "The Endless Pursuit: Improving U.S.-Turkish Relations", The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need, (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2003), p. 222.

over Turkey's low profile human rights record was the implicit embargo on arms sales.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, while Turkey continued its fight against terrorism, Ankara also began to revise the Turkish legal system and the Constitution, and even made very important changes concerning the human rights issue. Turkey as a EU candidate state under requirements of the Copenhagen criteria, has already initiated the process of reforming the Constitution in order to fulfill its obligations and eradicate major sources of Western criticism.¹⁴⁵ When Turkey implements all the Copenhagen criteria and puts them into practice Turkey's fate and future will alter, and it may decrease the U.S. and Western countries' reservations about its Western identity. On the other hand, Turkey also had reservations about the U.S., since after the Gulf War of 1991 Iraq became a problem for Turkey especially concerning the issue of northern Iraq.

3.9 Turkish Reservations about the U.S.

Post-Cold War conditions brought new opportunities and challenges to the U.S. as the single superpower. Starting with the Gulf War's success the U.S. intensified its determination to take control over all regions important for U.S. interests. Removal of Saddam Hussein from Iraq was among the primary objectives of the U.S. after the Gulf War, so that Washington supported all occasions that would serve this purpose. In such an atmosphere, in order to overthrow Saddam, Washington backed the tribal Kurdish population in northern Iraq to declare their autonomy. Nevertheless, this

¹⁴⁴ Henri J. Barkey, p. 223. During the 1990s, U.S. Congress did not allow Washington to send three frigates paid for before, despite the agreements made between Turkey and the U.S. This was one of the reasons that led Turkey to initiate military cooperation with Israel.

¹⁴⁵ Aslan Gündüz, "Human Rights and Turkey's Future in Europe", *Orbis*, Vol. 45, No. 1, (Winter 2001), pp. 15-30.

consideration disturbed Turkey, which did not welcome the idea of an independent Kurdish state near its border.

After the Gulf War Turkey began to support the idea of establishing a no-fly zone” or “safe havens” in northern Iraq, and allowed “Poised Hammer” operations to take place from Turkish soil to control north of the thirty sixth parallel, although Ankara was worried that this could increase the power of Kurdish entities in the region. Nevertheless, Turkey had to make a difficult decision and support the U.S. on its “Poised Hammer” policy in return for cooperation against PKK terrorism at home.

In the beginning, northern Iraqi Kurds seemed to be dependent on Turkey for most of their needs, and they avoided disturbing Ankara. However, it was not certain how long this would last.¹⁴⁶ On the other side, the U.S., by not allowing the Kurdish parties of KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) to compromise with Saddam Hussein and the Baghdad regime, willingly or not let the doors open for an independent Kurdish state. The initial clues for this were U.S. acquiescence in increasing autonomy of the de facto Kurdish state. Furthermore, Turkish concerns about U.S. reliability increased when some Turkish reports stated that the allied coalition forces were secretly arming PKK camps in northern Iraq.¹⁴⁷

For Turkey, unlike the U.S., regional stability could be provided only with the preservation of Iraq’s territorial integrity. Achieving regional stability was dependent on Baghdad obeying UN Security Council resolutions, which envisaged international monitoring of Iraqi weapons program. According to Ankara, this would

¹⁴⁶ Mahmut Bali Aykan, “Turkey’s policy in northern Iraq, 1991-1995”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4, (October 1996), pp. 343-366, on p. 360.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 351.

end most of the political and economic constraints on Turkish-Iraqi relations and it strongly supported the idea of international monitoring.¹⁴⁸

In short, by 2000 many Turks were still annoyed with the idea that the U.S. administration might have intentions of creating a new Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and that Turkey would have to accept this reality as a *fait accompli*. Although the U.S. assured Turkey that this was not true, neither former U.S. deeds nor present U.S. intentions on Iraq helped to allay Turkish anxiety on this subject.¹⁴⁹ Hence, after pointing to U.S.-Turkish areas of divergence and convergence during the 1990s, it is time to analyze their relationship and draw conclusions about whether it is essential for both sides and to what extent it will shape the ties between Turkey and the U.S. in the future.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 360-61.

¹⁴⁹ Yalın Eralp, p. 116.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATIONS ON U.S-TURKISH RELATIONS

4.1 The Mutual Importance of U.S.-Turkish Relations

Because of the existence of a common threat, during the Cold War, U.S.-Turkish relationship became solid in this period. However, despite the end of the Cold War, Turkey's significance for the U.S. did not disappear in this period since other exogenous factors began to raise Turkey's profile in the region. According to Alan Makovsky, Turkey is

a moderate, pro-Western state in an unstable area; a rare, probably unique, example of democracy, however, flawed, in a Muslim majority state; a supporter of Israeli-Palestinian peace and a peace-setter in Islamic world normalization with Israel; a base for Operation Northern Watch, which enforces a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, a key element of Washington's Iraq strategy; an ideological counterweight to Iran; a buffer against resurgence of Russian aggression; a forceful but pacific and anti-separatist advocate of the causes of besieged Muslims in its region (Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Chechnya, and Kosovo), all of whose kin are liberally represented in Turkey's population mix; an important, non-Russian line of communication with the West, and to some extent a role model, for the still-unsteady Turkic-language states of former Soviet Union; and a potential outlet for Caspian Sea energy resources as an alternative to Russian and Iranian routes.¹⁵⁰

All the above-mentioned issues indicated the significance attributed to Turkey by the U.S. in the decade examined. Although there had been some doubts at the very beginning of the decade that Turkey lost its significance, very soon it was seen that this idea was not accurate. Turkey did not lose its significance; instead, it was promoted to the status of being a "front-line state" by U.S. officials, who believed

¹⁵⁰ Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism...", p. 108. Also these points attributed to Turkey concerning its importance for U.S. initiatives and strategies are stated by Alan Makovsky, "U.S. Policy toward

that Turkey gained more strategic importance than during the Cold War, since it was located at the very center of many regions,¹⁵¹ where U.S. interests either had to be preserved or initiated.

From the U.S. perspective, Turkey's role and importance in the post-Cold War era accelerated especially after the U.S. decided to be more selective toward the developing world by focusing mainly on pivotal states rather than dispersing its attention and resources among all countries in the world. Turkey was labeled a pivotal state by U.S. officials, since it had the potential of becoming a regional power. Because of that it also required U.S. attention. With "its large population", "important geographical location", "economic potential", and more crucially with "its capacity to affect regional and international stability" Turkey became a state that could influence the future of the areas strategically important for the U.S. in the eyes of U.S. officials.¹⁵² In this decade, Turkey acquired a freer access to the resources of the Caucasus, Central Asia, and to Middle East, which are not under the Soviet sphere of influence anymore. Simultaneously, in Europe, the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the emergence of new independent states in the Balkans seeking economic and military assistance increased Turkey's role as a provider and protector of peace and stability of these regions as a U.S. ally.

As a bridge between East and West, North and South, Christendom and Islam, Turkey has a special place in U.S. politics. The U.S. has kept in mind the fact that Turkey has had many political, economic, demographic, and even social

Turkey: Progress and Problems", in *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy*, Ed. Morton Abramowitz, (New York: The Century Foundation, 2000), p. 222.

¹⁵¹ Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism...", pp. 108-09. He quotes from a speech by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, "U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Age of Interdependence", delivered at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, October 14, 1998, and Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Richard Holbrooke (a statement before the House International Relations Committee, March 9, 1995).

¹⁵² Robert S. Chase, Emily B. Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 1, (January/ February 1996), pp. 33-50, pp. 34-37.

problems at home; however, it always recalled that stability in Turkey would be to the benefit of the U.S. and its interests in the neighboring pro-NATO and pro-Israel states.¹⁵³ Therefore, when the U.S. thought of Turkey and its security and stability, it had to take into consideration the whole region encircling Turkey in order to be sure about the security of Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia, Balkans and Western Europe. There was a possibility that any dispute in any of these regions important to the U.S. might spread to the others.

Another important factor that shaped the U.S.-Turkish relationship was arms trading. The U.S. has been the main provider of arms for Turkey, which has long been dependent on military imports. The U.S. and Turkey have been connected through “a salesman-client” connection. Neither the U.S. nor Turkey could afford to lose each other. While the U.S. would not manage to lose Turkey, which has been an important arms customer since the end of World War II, Turkey also could not envisage losing the U.S., a major arms merchant providing arms for Turkey in an unstable neighbourhood that necessitates a strong military.¹⁵⁴ Thus the continuity of this reciprocal military trade relationship has served not only Turkish interests but also U.S. interests, since the U.S., despite some low profile embargoes, would not really like to decrease its arms sales by losing a crucial client such as Turkey.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, from this military dimension, it could be stated that both the U.S. and Turkey would preserve their significance in the eyes of the other as long as this relationship does not harm the interests of the other.

¹⁵³ Ibid, pp. 47-48.

¹⁵⁴ During the nineties there were four ways for Turkey to obtain arms. Through 1) Foreign Military Sales (FMS); 2) Direct Commercial Sales (DCS); 3) Pentagon’s program of Excess Defense Article (EDA); 4) cascading method of Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). İlhan Uzgel, “ABD ve NATO’yla İlişkiler”, p. 287.

¹⁵⁵ Ramazan Gözen, “Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri ve Türk Demokrasisi: ‘Realist’ Bağlantı (Turkish-American Relations and Turkish Democracy: “Realist” Connection)”, in Türkiye’nin Dış Politika Gündemi: Kimlik, Demokrasi, Güvenlik (Turkish Foreign Policy Agenda: Identity, Democracy,

From the Turkish point of view, the U.S. has been a crucial and essential ally, which could not be easily ignored or renounced. The U.S. also strongly supported Turkey's efforts to become a candidate for EU membership. This backing from the U.S. had a very important meaning for Turkey, since it has been expecting to be accepted as a candidate for a long time. This U.S. support was appreciated by Turkey not only because the U.S. was an ally but also because the support came after the EU's rejection of Turkey's candidacy in 1997 and 1998 respectively.¹⁵⁶ Thus U.S. support that continued even after Turkey received a candidate status in 1999 increased the importance of Washington's role for Ankara since by this support Turkey came closer to realize its objective of becoming an EU member.

Another sign pointing to U.S. significance in the eyes of Ankara came as a result of the U.S. support for Turkish initiatives. In the post-Cold War era, Turkey's role in its neighborhood gained momentum and Ankara initiated economic and military models for regional cooperation. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone (BSECZ) and South-Eastern European Brigade (SEEBRIG) were two of these Turkish initiatives.¹⁵⁷ Seeing that these Turkish initiatives would be beneficial for stability and order in the Balkans and in the Black Sea countries, not only in economic terms but also in security terms, the U.S. backed these regional cooperation zones. In spite of Turkey's increasing regional importance, it was necessary for Ankara and for all states in the world to get U.S. support and approval to successfully make the initiatives work. Hence Turkish aims of leading and helping

Security), Şaban H.Çalış, İhsan D. Dağı, and Ramazan Gözen (eds.), (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2001), p. 109.

¹⁵⁶ The main concern here was that the U.S. supported Turkey's candidacy. Although the U.S. might have possessed different expectations or this support was serving U.S. interests, it was noteworthy that the support came and continued in a period when Turkey was really in need of it. In the previous chapter of the thesis there is a much more detailed information of U.S. support given to Turkey regarding Turkish-EU relations.

¹⁵⁷ BSECZ and SEEBRIG were two initiatives proposed by Turkey. For details on these subjects see the previous chapter.

the newly independent states in its neighborhood to have a softer transition to Western norms suited well, and even responded to the U.S. concerns about the stability and order in the Balkans and between the Black Sea region countries.

Not only an economically but also politically important project for Turkey was the construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Hence to realize this project U.S. support was important. The initiation of this Turkish project, which was one of the less economically feasible routes when compared with the trans-Russian and trans-Iranian alternatives, required economically strong Western sponsors and political support from Washington. Once more the U.S. as a global power entered the scene and Turkey had to look for support from Washington. It was observed that despite the uncertainties about the new energy route's fate U.S. support for the Turkish project continued not only as a favor for Turkey but also because the project has been serving U.S. interests in the Caucasus.¹⁵⁸

To overcome its financial problems that have been really weakening Turkish economy for long time, Turkey needed U.S. backing and most probably approval whenever it applied for credits from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and funds from the World Bank. The U.S. was very influential in IMF policies, and whenever Turkey and IMF came together for negotiating a new "stand-by" agreement, Turkey also had to convince or give guarantees to the U.S. that it would conform to IMF rules. Hence only after U.S. approval could Turkey make an agreement with the IMF. Beside U.S. support for Turkey's getting IMF credits and World Bank funds, the U.S. itself was providing credits and economic and military donations to Turkey.

¹⁵⁸ See also the previous chapter for detailed analysis of U.S. stance on Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline route.

Through *Foreign Military Financing* (FMF), *Economic Support Fund* (ESF), and *Foreign Military Sales* (FMS) programs, the U.S. gave Turkey military and economic assistance through the nineties. On the other side, until 1993 Turkey also received some donations from the U.S. through FMS. Later however, the donation programs ended and the limits of U.S. credits grew tighter. This development brought Turkey a short period of relaxation yet the interest rates were so high that even though in 2000 the U.S. stopped its credits program, Turkey would continue repaying until 2016.¹⁵⁹ Ankara had long been accustomed to living with foreign aid and credits that really caused troubles at home. Ironically; despite this mutual importance attributed to the significance of their relationship, Turkey's military empowerment as a regional state increased Washington's doubts about Turkey's reliability.

4.2 U.S. Doubts about a “New Turkey”

At the very beginning of the decade the U.S. began to focus on the increasing significance of Turkey, and even began proposing a new role for Ankara in the post-Cold War era. It could be claimed that in the post-Cold War era, the already existing interest for Turkey almost doubled in U.S. scholars' environment because Turkey was at the center of many regions in which the U.S. was about to gain influence. In such an atmosphere many experts on Turkey started to call Turkey a “pivotal state”, “a frontline state”, or “a regional power”. Subsequently, by proposing that Turkey with its secular and democratic regime became a model for the newly independent states (NIS) and even to all non-democratic states in the region, these scholars pointed out Turkey's potential for becoming an influential country, promoting regional stability and democratic values.

¹⁵⁹ İlhan Uzgel, “ABD ve NATO’yla İlişkiler”, pp. 284-87.

This increasing interest of many think tanks and especially RAND Corporation also widened Ankara's vision of its role in the Balkans, Caucasus & Central Asia, and Middle East. Therefore, Ankara gained confidence in its ability to formulate more independent foreign policies regarding these areas. To some extent, with its involvement in multilateral cooperation fields, and even with Turkey's multilateral initiatives, Ankara was trying to shape its role as a regional power. The U.S. seemed to be supporting Turkey's increasing influence in the region at first. However, later Turkey's military empowerment began to cause concerns for the U.S.

During the 1990s, it was seen that Turkey got stronger both politically and militarily, and it had more activism and power in its region when compared with the Cold War circumstances. Under changing conditions of the post-Cold War era, Turkey chose to have an activist foreign policy towards the countries with which it had once had no or low profile relations. This policy shift allowed Turkey to have more independence in its foreign policy than it ever had. Having gained power in political and military terms, Turkey clearly began to attach more importance to its own priorities and interests in its foreign policy objectives and in this way it may have ended up challenging U.S. hegemony. This new perspective in Turkish foreign policy led to concerns and doubts in Washington and it also caused some experts on Turkey to become suspicious and alarmed.

Alan Makovsky stated those doubts and fears. According to him, Washington had doubts about whether “ ‘a new Turkey’ that is stronger, more prosperous, more regionally assertive, and more foreign-policy-independent” would have more or fewer common objectives with the U.S. on issues that were directly influencing U.S. interests.¹⁶⁰ Makovsky also emphasized U.S. reservation and skepticism as to

¹⁶⁰ Makovsky, “Marching in Step, Mostly!”, *Private View*, (Spring 1999), pp.30-38, p. 37.

whether this new Turkey, which emerged as a regional power, would decrease or increase its reliability as an ally of the U.S.¹⁶¹ These U.S. doubts about the new Turkey indicated the anxiety the U.S. had toward Turkish foreign policy. Nevertheless, as a result of this concern and as a sign of comforting themselves, officials in Washington focused on the fact that they would prefer a stronger Turkey to a weaker one since they believed that it was easier to cooperate with a stronger country, to the extent that Makovsky represented official U.S. views.¹⁶²

Another U.S. concern regarding Turkey's freer policies during the 1990s came from Michael Hickok. He described how and why Turkey's rising military capability as a new regional power annoyed Washington. This was a big difference for Washington, which was not accustomed to seeing Turkey act without "taking permission" from the U.S. or "act without U.S.' information".¹⁶³ More significantly, Washington's mixed emotions of suspicion, fear, and anger were reflected in accusations made against Turkey. It was claimed that Turkey contributed to regional instability and disorder because the already unpredictable Turkish security policy grew more so with the increasing military strength Ankara achieved in the 1990s.¹⁶⁴ These claims were unfair and even prejudiced since Turkey had the right to protect its borders and Turkey was a reasonable enough country not to wage a war without having meaningful reasons. Moreover, it could be debated that this issue of

¹⁶¹ Makovsky, "New Activism...", p. 109.

¹⁶² Makovsky, "Marching...", p. 37.

¹⁶³ Michael R. Hickok, "Hegemon Rising: The Gap between Turkish Strategy and Military Modernization", *Parameters*, (Summer 2000), Vol. 30, Issue 2, (Academic Search Premier) The quotation marks in the text are not Michael Hickok's but the author's.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. The modernization process of Turkish armed forces started even in the 1980s, yet this process accelerated in the 1990s again. The main aim of the military modernization program was restructuring the military in both doctrine and equipment. Ankara initiated the program by upgrading the systems of F-5, F-4, and F-16 and by buying new technology helicopters. Later Turkey requested AWACS-type platforms. Turkey was also involved in the co-production of tanks and Israel became important in upgrading Turkey's military assets, especially tanks. For details on the modernization program see Ministry of National Defense (Turkey), *White Paper-Defense 1998*, (Ankara: Ministry of National Defense, 1998). Ankara's modernization program was successfully put into practice.

“unpredictability” was put forward by the U.S. as a way to show its dissatisfaction of growing Turkish influence in the region during the 1990s.

It was clearly viewed from Washington that a more independent and assertive Turkish foreign policy, enhanced by the support of the modern Turkish armed forces, might not always accommodate U.S. interests. The effective cooperation of the government and the military in 1998 increased U.S. concerns on the issue. The Turkish-Syrian crisis of 1998 concerning Abdullah Öcalan’s expulsion from Syria, in which Ankara applied a more assertive policy toward Syria by threatening to use force if Syrian support for PKK continued, demonstrated Turkish activism but this also annoyed the U.S.¹⁶⁵ Ankara’s independent policy toward Syria annoyed Washington, because, according to officials in Washington, this policy could threaten stability in the region by causing a war between Turkey and Syria. Washington was anxious that any war between Turkey and Syria might spread to the region. The possibility of regional instability would directly damage U.S. interests in the region.

On the other side, Ümit Özdağ asserted that the U.S. was disturbed by the fact that Turkey as an emerging state might be able to follow independent regional politics that would not always enhance U.S. or its allies’ interests. Furthermore, he focused on U.S. annoyance resulting from the modernization process of the Turkish army, which empowered Turkey not only militarily but also politically by increasing the confidence of the governments in Ankara. By referring to Hickok’s concerns, Özdağ pointed out how uncomfortable the U.S. had become because of the possibility of Turkey’s more independent behavior and growing influence in Eurasia as it has been in the Turkish-Syrian crisis of 1998.

¹⁶⁵ Ümit Özdağ, *Gündem Ankara*, Kanal A, 12.07.2003. This TV program has a discussion format in which foreign and domestic issues of Turkey’s agenda are discussed and analyzed. Mainly contributors to the program are Gündüz Aktan, retired ambassador, Dr. Hasan Ünal from Bilkent University, and Alper Tan, journalist. In this specific program Ümit Özdağ replaced Gündüz Aktan.

Thus, in a way, to take control over Turkey's increasing regional power, some scholars like Hickok began to depict Turkish Armed Forces as a threat not only to regional stability but also for the Turkish nation.¹⁶⁶ Even though this was not Washington's official declaration, Hickok stated this possibility. Hence, these statements brought together the conclusion that the U.S. might also try to benefit from the already existing domestic debate on the influence of military over politics. Although this was mainly an EU concern because of the superiority of democratic values, it was still arguable that decreasing influence of military in Turkish foreign policy could be also desirable for the U.S. and its regional interests. Nevertheless, it would be useful to view what main U.S. policies were applied by different administrations in Washington since it seems that the Clinton and Bush administrations were not identical.

4.3 U.S. Policy Toward Turkey: From Clinton to Bush

In the early Clinton years, Washington was so involved in domestic affairs that the significance of Turkey's role in its region was not given due weight. From the U.S. perspective, beside Turkish support given to Operation Provide Comfort and some initial expectations that Turkey might win over the Turkic states of former Soviet Union, there were no other issues for which Ankara received Washington's attention. However, Washington usually criticized Ankara for its Kurdish policy and human rights performance.¹⁶⁷

Only in the mid-1990s, after Clinton administration began to get involved in regional affairs, did Washington realize the strategic importance of Turkey. Richard

¹⁶⁶ Ümit Özdağ, *Gündem Ankara*. Ümit Özdağ analyzed Michael Hickok's article "Hegemon Rising..." and pointed out the reasons of his concerns about growing Turkish power in its region.

¹⁶⁷ Makovsky, "U.S. Policy...", p. 223.

Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and Marc Grossman, then U.S. ambassador in Ankara, played a crucial role in convincing Washington to initiate closer ties with Turkey. These officials recommended that Washington support Turkish foreign policy initiatives since they had already identified Turkey's strategic role for U.S. global interests.¹⁶⁸ It was viewed that U.S.-Turkish relations evolved despite this process. U.S.-Turkish cooperation within NATO alliance in Bosnia first and Kosovo later became two examples where Ankara and Washington shared common interests. It was seen that they would act together to stabilize regions important for their interests alongside other countries concerned about order and peace in the Balkans particularly and in the entire world generally.¹⁶⁹

During two periods of the Clinton administration Turkey was governed by different coalitions and the level of Turkish-U.S. relations was determined according to Turkish governments' closeness to Western values. When Necmettin Erbakan was Turkey's prime minister between 1996 and 1997, Washington preferred to be cautious and distant toward Turkey. Erbakan government's policies of turning toward Muslim countries were not appreciated either by Washington or by the secular elite in Turkey. The U.S. did not approve of Erbakan's foreign policy, which rejected Western orientations of "democratization and political reforms"¹⁷⁰ in favor of concepts of "Muslim brotherhood". However, it had been the same Clinton administration that welcomed Bülent Ecevit's coalition government in 1997 despite the fact that Ecevit was the prime minister who undertook the Cyprus intervention in 1974. Unlike Erbakan, Ecevit was a pro-Western leader, who believed in democracy

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 223-24.

¹⁶⁹ For details on NATO's out of area mission see Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası*, Vol. 1, pp. 567-68, and Vol. 2, pp. 45& 74.

¹⁷⁰ Henri J. Barkey, "The Endless Pursuit: Improving U.S.-Turkish Relations", (ed.) Morton Abramowitz, *The United States and Turkey: Allies in Need*, (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2003), p. 213.

and human rights, and this helped Turkey and the U.S. sustain their good relationship.

The harmony of U.S.-Turkish relations probably resulted from pro-Western Turkish governments. It was noteworthy that Washington was satisfied with Turkish-Israeli military cooperation and improvements in Turkish-Greek relations in 1999.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, the relatively tranquil U.S.-Turkish relations during the Clinton administration suffered to an extent after George W. Bush was elected as the new U.S. president in November 2000.

After Clinton's period, the neo-conservatives got involved in pushing the new Bush administration to end senior Bush's cautious policies regarding the Middle East. This time, according to the neo-cons, with its global power and influence, Washington was ready to put into practice its alarming plans for the security of U.S. interests. Unlike the Clinton administration, which was interested in globalization and political change by demanding that its allies to focus on democracy and human rights in domestic affairs, the primary concerns of Washington's agenda in the new Bush administration were "new security threats, weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile defense".¹⁷² Washington's policy toward Turkey would be guided by these considerations. Although human rights and democracy were the main U.S. concerns to improve in all states of the world, the Bush administration would try to alter the focus of its strategic relationship with Turkey by emphasizing other common interests.

For Washington, Turkey's importance as an ally increased, since the Bush administration's policies of fighting against international terrorism and supporters of terrorism, required contribution from all democratic states. For a long time, Turkey

¹⁷¹ Henri J. Barkey, "The Endless Pursuit...", p. 230.

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 231.

had suffered from PKK activities and it had to fight PKK terrorism. Thus, this experience of fighting terrorism could help the U.S. in its fight against international terrorism. Turkey could become a key actor in the fight against rouge states if it sided with the U.S. against this global challenge, which included overthrowing Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. Hence, Turkey's significance for Washington would be evaluated according to its position in this fight, and September 11, 2001 became a turning point in U.S.-Turkish relations. Nonetheless, the issue of being strategic partners had already been initiated by the administration of Bill Clinton and it covers the period of our study; thus it is important to analyze U.S.-Turkish relations from this perspective also.

4.4 Strategic Partnership between U.S. and Turkey?

After forty years of Turkish-U.S. relationships largely guided by NATO security commitments during the Cold War, the 1990s brought a new phase to U.S.-Turkish bilateral ties. In the post-Cold War era, beside their NATO commitments, the path of Turkey and U.S. converged in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. These new challenges and opportunities increased the possibility of regional cooperation between Washington and Ankara by diversifying their common interests. Hence, in such a circumstance, not only security but also political and economic orientations of U.S.-Turkish relations should be taken into consideration to analyze the nature of this relationship.

It will be useful to recall different U.S.-Turkish policy areas mentioned in the previous chapter during the nineties, and to see on which occasions U.S.-Turkish interests diverged or converged before drawing a conclusion on how to rename U.S.-Turkish relationship in the post-Cold War era. It is essential to analyze the entire

chain of relations between these two states to make a meaningful characterization of the relationship. Thus, the Gulf War between coalition powers and the Baghdad regime became the first occasion in which Turkey supported the U.S. to the extent of being deprived of Iraqi oil income. Another area where Turkey and U.S. acted together was in the Balkans. In Bosnia and Kosovo, Turkey and the U.S. cooperated against Serbian aggression. Although there were no direct or existential threats to U.S. or Turkish interests, these two states were concerned with peaceful and stable future of the Balkan region in particular and of Europe in general. Moreover, Turkey's concern was not totally altruistic. Yugoslavia/Serbia is also an air and land corridor for Turkish exports to Europe. Hence with this in mind, Ankara cooperated with Washington since a mutual interest in ending wars in the Balkans motivated them. It could not be claimed that there was an unconditional Turkish support for the U.S. but in these cases two NATO allies cooperated against a common aggressor, Slobodan Milosevic.

Other areas in which Turkey needed U.S. political and economic support and approval were Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline route, SEEBRIG, Turkish-Israeli military cooperation, BSECZ, and EU membership. In these areas U.S. interests were not in conflict with Turkish ones; actually, these initiatives helped the U.S. to realize its primary goal of preserving its own and its allies' interests. Hence when looked at from this perspective, it might be stated that U.S.-Turkish relationship possessed the characteristic of being a partnership; however, there was not any challenge to test whether the U.S. would support these Turkish initiatives or not if and when they opposed some of its own interests. Most probably Washington would not support Ankara on occasions that would not promise the U.S. any profit. Additionally, there were other areas in which Turkish-U.S. interests clashed.

Generally U.S. policy toward Middle Eastern states such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria ran parallel to Turkey's policy. However, the U.S. and Turkey did not agree on the methods of dealing with these countries. Ankara could not approve of U.S. embargo against Iran or an immediate overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad that could lead to instability in Iraq. Hence such a conditional Turkish support for Washington in its Middle Eastern policy separated Turkey from the United Kingdom or Israel, which had already approved U.S. policies. On the other hand, Turkish policies toward Armenia, Greece and Cyprus were also in conflict with U.S. stance of ending the decades-long problems as soon as possible.

Seen from these disputed dimensions, it could be argued that neither Turkey nor the U.S. could totally trust one another or support the other unconditionally. There has not been any historical incident to tie Turkey and the U.S. so closely to each other in issues that their interests could overlap like Israel or UK. The closeness of U.S.–UK relations originate from the common ethnicity they have been sharing, while cordial relations with Israel were built just after the creation of the Israeli state in the Middle East. Mainly, with the help of Jewish-Americans in the U.S., good relations between Washington and Jerusalem continued in the subsequent decades. Naturally, this does not mean that the former countries' interests are always 100% the same as U.S.', yet they have found common interests to compromise and support each other on almost all occasions, because of the reciprocal trust in one another.

Nonetheless, Turkey's not being at the same level with UK or Israel in terms of its relations with the U.S. did not erase its significance for Washington. It was viewed that U.S. interests in the region required Washington to take into account Turkish concerns and expectations about regional change. This meant that the U.S. could not be averse to Turkey's significant role for the region. And also the U.S.

should satisfy Turkey and cooperate with it to be successful with its global policy. Therefore, it is necessary to look at whether U.S.-Turkish relationship is based on equal footing or not to continue the analysis.

4.5 No “Equal Footing” in U.S.-Turkish Relations

The debate over how to define U.S.-Turkish relations during the nineties required finding an answer to the question of equal footing.¹⁷³ Whether Turkey’s relationship with the U.S. was based on equal commitments or not would give clues about the nature of the relations. Nonetheless, before answering this question it would be necessary to turn again to the definition of partnership¹⁷⁴, and to recall what the requirements of partnership were. By definition a partnership is “a business which has more than one owner but is not incorporated, the individual partners remaining fully responsible for its debts” namely, for its duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, “partners need not all be equal: in professional partnerships it is common for senior partners to get a larger share of the rewards and do a smaller share of the routine work than junior partners.”¹⁷⁵

This definition of partnership has been visualized by Seyfi Taşhan. According to him, the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. resembled a limited company. In a limited company, two or more partners might not really have equal shares but this still would not change the reality that they are partners. While one of the partners might have 90% of the share, and the other had only 10%, the partnership was still

¹⁷³ For details on equality see Reşat Arım, Foreign Policy Concepts: Conjecture, Freedom of Action, Equality, (Ankara: Dış Politika Enstitüsü, 2001), pp. 87-107.

¹⁷⁴ Henri J. Barkey, “The Endless Pursuit”, pp. 237-39. According to him, a strategic partnership “implies a strong and more persuasive relationship with a democratic, prosperous, and stable Turkey, a member of NATO and ultimately of the European Union”. Hence the military partnership between Turkey and the U.S. requires having common military and political objectives and interests that might bring these two states together.

¹⁷⁵ John Black, p. 343.

present, yet with unequal shares.¹⁷⁶ As seen from this example a partnership between two states does not necessitate equal footing. Thus, if only this characteristic was taken into consideration, it could be concluded that the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. could be named as a partnership. The U.S. as the senior partner gets the larger share of the rewards, while Turkey, as the junior partner gets a smaller share.

Nevertheless, Turkey's partnership with the U.S. in the post-Cold War era did not reach the level of resembling the partnership between the U.S. and UK or Israel, which have already been defined as strategic partners of the U.S. The partnership between the U.S. and UK has been defined as "a special relationship" based on "military and intelligence cooperation, shared strategic interests, continued endurance of strategic cooperation"¹⁷⁷, 'nuclear affairs, cultural and intellectual life'.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, the special relationship between the U.S. and UK originated from "*common legacy of history, common culture, common language/ethnic partnership, common institutions, personal reasons/family ties, and race*".¹⁷⁹ Considering Israel, it is seen that "Israel is a *de facto* ally of the U.S." and it also possesses "a special relationship" with the U.S. mainly since 1967 based on mutual political and military interests.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Seyfi Taşhan, interview on 14.04.2004.

¹⁷⁷ Craig Thompson, "UK-U.S. Strategic Cooperation", JIIA Column 1/ 2003.
www.jiia.or.jp/report/column/0301_thompson.html

¹⁷⁸ Gideon Rachman, "Is the Anglo-American Relationship Still Special?", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (Spring 2001), pp.7-20, p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ Sedat Laçiner, *ABD-İngiltere İlişkileri: 'Özel' Bir İlişki*, (Ankara: Avrasya-Bir Vakfi-ASAM, 2000), pp. 7-10. For detailed analyses on the "special relationship" between the U.S. and UK see C.J. Bartlett, *'The Special Relationship': A Political History of Anglo-American Relations since 1945*, (London: Longman, 1992); John Dickie, *'Special' No More: Anglo-American Relations: Rhetoric and Reality*, (London: Weindenfeld & Nicolson, 1994); and John Dumbrell, *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations in the Cold war and After*, (Houndsmills: Macmillan Press, 2001). These books analyze how "special" the relationship has been and whether it preserves the "special" character during the nineties by arguing that UK's convergence to EU and its cases threatens the special relationship.

¹⁸⁰ Jay Cristol, "When Did the U.S. and Israel Become Allies?", Center for History and New Media, <http://hnn.us/articles/printfriendly/751.html>. The special relationship, which is verbalized as an alliance, is characterized by three dimensions: "1) Shared threat perceptions and common security interests; 2) Institutionalization in the relationship, and the resulting ability to ride out short term

Seeing how different the relationship between the U.S. and UK or Israel has been increased the debate over what was intended by calling Turkey a strategic partner like UK and Israel, but not treating it as the same type of an ally. Most probably different from the partnership with UK or Israel, the partnership between Turkey and the U.S. has always lacked and will lack historical and ethnic ties. Because of this, there has not been unconditional support and total mutual trust between Turkey and the U.S. Otherwise, when one of the partners is in need of help the other gives its support usually without questioning it or making it conditional. While, it would not be accurate to state that these states always share the same policies, exceptions did not undermine the close relations in any way. Hence, all these characteristics of a partnership are present only in U.S.' relationship with UK and Israel but not with Turkey.

Under these circumstances, it was viewed that there was a gap between these two examples of partnership. The relationship between Turkey and the U.S. did not really resemble the relationship between the U.S. and UK or Israel and that being called a strategic partner verbally would not mean a real partnership in the sense of the Israeli or British case. From this standpoint, it is also significant to examine whether there was dependency or interdependency between Turkey and the U.S. that is another characteristic of a partnership.

4.6 Strategic Partners are not Dependent But Interdependent

Another debatable issue concerning U.S.-Turkish relationship was related to the correlation between dependence and interdependence. It was widely accepted that

policy disagreements in some areas; 3) Symmetry and burden sharing: Israeli reciprocity and support for American objectives in the region", Gerald Steinberg, "Israel and the United States: Can the Special Relationship Survive the New Strategic Environment?", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (December 1998), pp. 61-81, p. 64. See also Mitchell G. Bard and Daniel Pipes,

usually two strategically tied partners are not dependent on each other but are interdependent. This issue of dependence/interdependence has also taken a crucial place concerning the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. starting in the Cold War. Nevertheless, though the questions of how to define the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey, and whether it was based on dependency or interdependency were still unresolved, the issue increased in significance. The concept of strategic partnership began to dominate U.S.' and Turkey's agendas in the second half of the nineties, a period governed by relatively successful coalition governments compared to the previous years.

At first sight, it might be thought that U.S.-Turkish relationship was based on Turkey's one-sided dependence on U.S. support. According to some, Turkey was dependent on the U.S. and only in the mid-1990s, Turkish officials decided to upgrade the strategic partnership with the U.S. to a level of interdependency. Additionally, by doing this Turkey would attain a stronger position in NATO, which aimed to increase influence over the Black Sea, Mediterranean, and Central Asian regions.¹⁸¹ Even if it could be argued that the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. was once based on dependency, it could be stated that in the post-Cold War era dependency turned into interdependency since U.S. interests required Turkey's support in major fields. Hence under such circumstances, common interests increased the level of interdependency between them. This means that interdependent states cannot easily dare to lose each other.

Starting with Operation Provide Comfort, the U.S. needed Turkey's support in order to preserve its existence in the region, otherwise, it was known that without

"How Special Is the U.S.-Israel Relationship?", *Middle East Quarterly*, obtained from <http://www.meforum.org/pf.php?id=349>

¹⁸¹ Ekavi Athanassopoulou, "American-Turkish Relations since the End of the Cold War", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (September 2001), pp. 144-164, p. 155.

Turkish support for the operation, Saddam Hussein would regain power in northern Iraq. Turkey's contribution to NATO as a reliable ally ready to activate its personnel, military bases, and arms was invaluable support for the U.S. that had very few allies giving such kind of backing as Turkey did. Generally, the U.S. was also in need of Turkey's help for the preservation of stability in the region. Turkey for long has been a stabilizing factor in its region by not getting involved in intra-Arab quarrels and by promoting the idea of democratic and peaceful living conditions for all states in the neighborhood. The U.S. benefited from this stable order provided with the help of Turkey. Hence it was viewed that not only Turkey needed U.S.' support but also the U.S. needed Turkey's support in the region to realize its global hegemonic power.

The interdependent U.S.-Turkish relationship is affected by domestic developments both in the U.S. and Turkey. During the nineties Turkey suffered many political and economic crises that sometimes weakened Ankara's hand in managing its relations with the U.S. Among these domestic liabilities were initially disabled coalition governments. Turkey's role in the region could really increase when Turkey was strong at home. Thus, Ankara first had to fight against corruption at home to be stronger in world politics and its relations with the U.S. However, on the other side, some fundamentalist orientations decreased Ankara's ability to evaluate its foreign policy on an equal stance with the U.S. Nonetheless, the resolution of domestic problems, and especially the one concerning Abdullah Öcalan and PKK, gradually increased the hope in Turkey that better relations on equal and an interdependent footing could be established.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

It has been seen that the nature of U.S.-Turkish relations during the nineties were affected by varied exogenous factors, which have also affected the fate of world politics, as well as varied indigenous factors. At the same time, Turkey's economic and political stability directly influenced Ankara's bargaining power in the international arena, and especially in its relations with the U.S. Whenever Turkey was powerful at home, this increased its possibility of being powerful also in its immediate region. Nonetheless, being strong at home was not enough to overcome all regional disputes. Turkey's geo-strategic importance grew to a level that Turkey had to be more cautious than before and to preserve balance in the region. Turkey's access to new regions such as the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia after a long time required sound policies since all these were also new areas of challenge and opportunity for the U.S. Therefore, success or failure toward these regions would be directly reflected in U.S.-Turkish relations. The more the U.S. and Turkey find common interests in these regions, the more they develop their relationship.

Very recently, on April 7, 2004 U.S. Chief of the General Staff, Richard Myers, made a speech in the American-Turkish Council.¹⁸² In his speech, there were many clues about U.S.-Turkish relationship that could be also applied to the time period discussed in this study. Myers focused on the importance of U.S.-Turkish

relations both at bilateral and NATO levels, and added that Turkey's contribution to the fight against terrorism and to regional stability "*now has been more significant than other time*".¹⁸³ Furthermore, Myers likened the U.S.-Turkish relationship to a marriage with its ups and downs, which necessitates effort to continue,¹⁸⁴ and additionally he stressed that he was satisfied with this very important friendship.¹⁸⁵ Besides, according to Myers, Turkey was a "*real friend, trade partner and ally*", and thus the levels of "cooperation, communication, and information" should be furthered.¹⁸⁶

With these messages Myers tried to calm down increasing Turkish doubts about U.S. policies in the Middle East generally and on Iraq particularly. However, this speech is also important to analyze the pre-September 11 relationships between the U.S. and Turkey. In the last decade of the 20th century Turkey's significance was also on the U.S. agenda, and the state of being married to each other referred to this relationship during the Cold War and its aftermath given the chauvinistic analogy about marriage. Nonetheless, it is debatable whether this marriage satisfied and still satisfies either partner. It is also doubtful whether in this marriage the powerful partner exploited and still intends to exploit the weaker one. Moreover, it is important to question whether this marriage preserved and still preserves the interests of each partner. Another crucial argument that might probably be the most convenient statement explaining this marriage was that it resembled a Catholic marriage. In a Catholic marriage neither side could really get rid of the other even if

¹⁸² The meetings in the American-Turkish Council (ATC) were made annually and this year Richard Myers was among the guest speakers. Comments on this speech were publicized by different newspapers in Turkey. *Radikal* and *Sabah* were two of these newspapers focusing on Myers speech.

¹⁸³ Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Dostluğumuz hiç bu kadar önemli olmamıştı (Our friendship has never been as important as it is now)", *Sabah*, 08.04.2004. <http://www.sabah.com.tr/2004/04/08/gnd134.html> The italics are author's since the news were in Turkish and the journalist also quoted Myers' words.

¹⁸⁴ *Sabah* and *Radikal*, on 08.04.2004.

¹⁸⁵ *Sabah*, 08.04.2004.

¹⁸⁶ *Radikal*, 08.04.2004.

one party intends to do this because of the dogmas that could not be changed.¹⁸⁷ The marriage between Turkey and the U.S. has always depended on common interests tying them closely to each other as in the dogmas of medieval Catholicism. In other words, it is a marriage of convenience where the scope of mutual tolerance is limited by heavy hardness.

Neither Turkey nor the U.S. could give up being an ally of the other since the hegemonic power of the U.S. and its global interests requires having sound relations with Turkey to carry out U.S. policies in the region. On the other side, despite the fact that Turkey did not always share the same ideas and policies with the U.S., Ankara was in need of a strong ally and supporter of its main foreign objectives such as EU membership, fight against terrorist PKK, and financial support for Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil/gas transportation in the international arena. Despite some areas of dispute the U.S. has been the most significant contributor to political, military and economic stability in Turkey. Hence, it could be argued that Turkey and the U.S. have been two important partners. There is a wholesome and essential relationship between Turkey and the U.S. that neither side could afford to lose the other in the foreseeable future.

In the post-Cold War decade, the discourse primarily focused on by the U.S. was that Turkey's role in its immediate environment would increase and that Turkey would become more important for U.S. interests was welcomed in some circles in Turkey. Turkey as a result of support both from outside and inside was drawn into expectations impossible to realize. It was noteworthy that not only foreign policy makers' but also scholars and strategists overestimated Turkey's increasing significance in its region. More specifically, by exaggerating Turkey's significance

¹⁸⁷ Nur Bilge Criss, discussion made with the author regarding Myers' speech. 08.04.2004.

for the U.S. more than necessary or by wishing this to come true, these strategists caused many discussions in Turkey. For that reason, the issue that Turkey was a “strategic partner” of the U.S. became one of the major polemics during the 1990s and even at the beginning of 2000s.¹⁸⁸ Hence both in their articles and oral statements, the strategists, who defended the idea that Turkey became a strategic partner for the U.S., put forward this claim because of Ankara’s increased role in the region.

Nevertheless, what these experts perceived from a strategic partnership or at least what they wanted to perceive from it did not reach the level of their expectations. These people by overemphasizing Turkey’s importance mistakenly got the impression that in the post-Cold War circumstances Turkey might rise to the level of UK, Israel, or Canada in the eyes of the U.S. According to them, this meant that in the developing world conditions Turkey moved to a more crucial position in world politics that is to say for the U.S., Turkey might become equal to Israel or UK. However, the situation was not the same as these Turkish scholars thought that it had been.

It was explicitly well known that Turkey had and still has a crucial place for the protection of U.S. interests, yet Turkey’s significance could not be considered equal to either that of Israel or the United Kingdom. In real sense, from U.S. perspective Turkey’s importance did not reach the level of being called “a strategic partner” in Israeli or British terms. Namely, when looked at the relations between the U.S. and Turkey, it was immediately viewed that Turkish ties with the U.S. did not rely on ethnic and historical basics as with UK or human and social basics as with Israel. In that case since the beginning points were not the same so the finishing

¹⁸⁸ Ümit Özdağ. Among these strategists who overestimated Turkey’s role in the region Cengiz Çandar was a forerunner.

points should be different. That is to say there is a great difference in the meaning of strategic partnership regarding the country it is applied to. However, this is not the end of the relationship between Turkey and the U.S., contrary to this, the continuity of Turkish-American relations will be preserved in different levels anyhow. Moreover, polemics referred to above did not even consider the price to be paid for strategic partnership, as American over-reaction in Iraq unfolded.

On the other side, if strategic partnership is accepted as “a military closeness” and “a business partnership” as has been defined by Seyfi Taşhan, it could be claimed that the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. was a partnership. It has been noteworthy that Turkey and the U.S. have been two countries militarily close to each other because of their overlapping common interests and because of being NATO allies. Hence usually they acted together when they shared common interests. Cooperation in the Balkans concerning the war in Bosnia and Kosovo, and Middle East, where Turkey supported U.S. policies were among many examples of overlapping interests with the global power, the U.S. and regional power, Turkey. Neither historical ties nor ethnic ties between the U.S., Israel, and the UK, are present between the U.S. and Turkey. The mutual importance given to U.S.-Turkish relationship was explicitly viewed in the pre-September 11 periods however; there has not been any eyes-wide-shut trust between Turkey and the U.S. Nevertheless, maybe this is the healthiest approach to bilateral relations.

Another crucial element that brought Turkey and the U.S. together was the alliance within NATO. Since 1952 Turkey proved to be a reliable ally of the U.S. within NATO structures, and even in the nineties Turkey supported the idea of transformation of NATO and the enlargement of NATO. Therefore, Turkey's role in NATO and U.S. need of Turkey's contribution to NATO have already tied Turkey

and the U.S. Being allies within NATO was the major frame that overlapped their common interests, and most probably there was not a necessity to look for other concepts such as strategic partnership to define their relationship. As Ümit Özdağ pointed, it was urgent to build U.S.-Turkish relations on a sound framework and NATO was this basic framework. He continued by saying that neither Germans nor Spanish, nor even French were after being called strategic partners of the U.S., since they have already been allies within NATO, the fundamental defense organization.¹⁸⁹

Seen from the above-made analyses related to Turkish-American relations in the post-Cold War era, it could be argued that Turkey experienced a survival test among many global and regional developments in world politics and as well as problems in the domestic sphere. Under these circumstances, the importance of U.S.-Turkish alliance and the backbone of their relationship have been put into the agenda and have been discussed. In this new decade, Turkey's role for the preservation of U.S. global and regional interests has accelerated. On the other hand, Turkey faced new opportunities and challenges to determine and follow its own independent foreign policy as an emerging regional power but without ignoring U.S. interests.

Under the conditions of the new world order, it could be claimed that Turkey and the U.S. came closer within NATO alliance and as a result of overlapping common interests. During the 1990s the already existing allied relationship between the U.S. and Turkey has been improved and diversified with different opportunities of cooperation especially in the Balkans and Caucasus. On the other hand, the problematic issues such as Turkish relations with Greece and Armenia, or its Middle Eastern neighbors of Iraq, Iran, or Syria has provided significant opportunities for

¹⁸⁹ Ümit Özdağ, 12.07.2003.

Turkey and the U.S. to test the essentiality of their relationship since they have challenged each other on these problems.

During the 1990s, the U.S. had tried to keep Turkey at arm's length by increasing the levels of cooperation and supporting Turkish initiatives for regional stability such as BSECZ and SEEBRIG since Turkey had already started to gain political and military power in its region. The U.S. could not afford to lose a reliable NATO ally in an unpredictable and unstable region where U.S. interests were at stake. As a response to U.S. backing, Turkey was in harmony with the U.S. and its regional policies to the extent that U.S. policies were not in conflict with Turkish national interests. Furthermore, the increasing debates over strategic partnership between Turkey and the U.S. in the late nineties seem to preserve its importance in the following years. However, when the pre-September 11, conditions are taken into consideration, it is viewed that there has not really been a necessity to become a strategic partner to continue its relations with the U.S.

It was and still is an arguable issue of whether Turkish relationship with the U.S. should be equal to the one with UK or Israel or not. It has been debated whether being a strategic partner of the U.S. has been a desirable objective for Turkey. If this level were realized anyhow, the advantages and disadvantages of being a U.S. partner would have to be taken into account. The most important benefit of being a U.S. partner for Turkey would be mutual trust and unconditional support for Turkish cases in problems with its neighbors as it has been with many occasions related to UK and Israel. The U.S. has usually sided with Israel or supported Israeli cases in the disputes with Palestine and other Middle Eastern states. However, on the other hand, being a U.S. partner would mean sharing the responsibilities of American activities

all over the world and support U.S. policies at any cost as UK and Israel did in the Middle East, Balkans and Caucasus during the nineties and even today.

In conclusion it could be expressed that in the last decade of the 20th century, cooperation in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia has provided the ground for U.S.-Turkish relations. Both Turkey and the U.S. are in need of each other in this decade and this need increased especially after September 11, since this incident has pointed the essentiality of Turkey's support in the fight against terrorism. Therefore, it seems that neither Turkey nor the U.S. could afford to give up the support given by their ally despite some areas of confrontation. Even when looked at from a realist point of view, there was not a concrete reason to destroy the relationship between Turkey and the U.S., two NATO allies loyal to the alliance and each other. Moreover, both global and regional developments necessitate the continuity of Turkish-American relationship whether it is named a strategic partnership or not. The incidents of the nineties have demonstrated that Turkey and the U.S. will act together as long as their common interests overlap. It was noteworthy that the level of Turkish-American relationship was not as "special" as it has been with UK or Israel and Ankara cannot be called a strategic partner of the U.S. in the sense of Israel or UK, yet, the U.S.-Turkish relationship is significant enough and this significance will be preserved in the post-September 11 period, however within reasonable bounds.

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