

Background

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Countering Turkey's Strategic Drift

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Abstract: *For decades, Turkey and the United States cooperated in the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and even Korea. However, Turkish and U.S. interests in the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf have recently diverged. On its current trajectory, Turkey's traditional strategic relationship with the West could devolve into a looser affiliation while Turkey enters into a closer alliance with Iran and other Middle Eastern powers hostile to U.S. leadership. The U.S., in concert with its European allies, needs to address the serious differences that are emerging.*

Commonly referred to as the West's bridge to the Muslim world, Turkey has long been a key NATO partner and a strategic ally of Europe and the United States. On his first official state visit to Turkey, President Barack Obama singled out Turkey as a "strong, vibrant, secular democracy."¹ It is strategically located between Europe and the Middle East, and for decades, Turkey and the U.S. have cooperated in areas from the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf to Central Asia and even Korea.

However, Turkish and U.S. interests in the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Persian Gulf have recently diverged. On critical issues, especially energy and the Middle East, Turkey currently stands at odds with the United States. President Obama expressed criticism in June when Turkey defied its traditional allies, including the United States and Israel, by voting against a fourth round of U.N. sanctions against Iran.

Talking Points

- Turkish and U.S. interests in the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Persian Gulf have recently diverged, especially on pipeline routes and energy cooperation with Russia, Iranian nuclear policy, and broader Middle East issues.
- By distancing itself from Europe and the U.S. and reaching out to Russia and the Muslim world, Turkey is trying to become an independent pole in a multipolar world.
- The ruling Justice and Development Party's growing Islamist sympathies and foreign and domestic policy leanings raise questions about Turkey's commitment to secular democracy.
- The EU has not negotiated Turkish accession in good faith. Several EU members, including Greece and Cyprus, are blocking Turkey's progress.
- Turkey, the U.S., Europe, and the EU need to invest significant time and resources into revitalizing their relationships and seek to maintain strategic cooperation. This includes a demonstrable Turkish commitment to secular government and NATO.

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Further, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has displayed growing Islamist sympathies and exercises an undemocratic stranglehold on power. Recent trends have raised legitimate questions about Turkey's commitment to secular democracy as well as to NATO.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently stated that Turkey's strategic drift away from the West is due in part to the European Union's reluctance to grant Turkey full membership in the organization.² NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen echoed Gates's remarks, criticizing the European Union for its "unfair" treatment of Turkey.³ The EU has certainly sent mixed messages to Turkey, granting it accession status but then refusing to open chapters of the *acquis communautaire*, which

Culture, Muslim identity, and affinity with the global Muslim ummah affect the AKP's worldview and, consequently, Turkey's behavior on the international stage and dealings with the U.S. and other countries.

Ankara must discharge to accede to the EU. The EU should be honest with Turkey about its chances of accession and advance tangible projects on trade and energy, regardless of the negotiations over its membership.

Turkey, the EU, and the U.S. should invest significant time and resources into repairing and revital-

izing their relationship. The United States, Turkey, NATO, and the EU have shared regional interests, including the stability of the Caucasus, energy security, and increasing economic ties. However, Turkey needs to play its part too. As a NATO member and a key U.S. partner, Ankara should not undermine solid regional allies such as Israel while cozying up to odious dictators such as Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

Modern Turkey

By distancing itself from Europe and the U.S. and reaching out to Russia and the Muslim world, Turkey is pursuing its aspiration to become an independent pole in a multipolar world. This phenomenon, often described as "neo-Ottomanism,"⁴ was ushered in at the end of the Cold War when Turkey no longer needed U.S. military protection against a hostile Soviet Union.⁵ The creeping Islamization of Ankara's foreign policy also plays a role.⁶ Culture, Muslim identity, and affinity with the global Muslim *ummah* (global community) affect the AKP's worldview and, consequently, Turkey's behavior on the international stage and dealings with the U.S. and other countries.⁷

Today, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President Abdullah Gül, and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu are implementing a policy of "strategic depth," first described in Davutoglu's book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position*.⁸

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1. Helene Cooper, "America Seeks Bonds to Islam, Obama Insists," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2009, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/07/world/europe/07prexy.html> (June 30, 2010).
 2. BBC News, "US Defence Secretary Gates Blames EU for Turkey 'Drift,'" June 9, 2010, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/europe/10275379.stm> (June 30, 2010).
 3. Agence France-Presse, "NATO Chief Slams EU over 'Unfair' Turkish Treatment," *Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review* (Istanbul), July 7, 2010, at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=nato-chief-slams-eu-over-unfair-turkish-treatment-2010-07-07> (July 7, 2010).
 4. Güldener Sonumu, "Neo-Ottoman Minister," *European Voice*, September 7, 2009.
 5. F. Stephen Larrabee, "Turkey's New Geopolitics," *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (April–May 2010), pp. 157–158.
 6. Barry Rubin, "Wake Up and Smell the Paradigm Shift: Turkish Regime Marches Towards Islamism," *The Rubin Report*, April 7, 2010, at <http://rubinreports.blogspot.com/2010/04/wake-up-and-smell-paradigm-shift.html> (June 19, 2010).
 7. Henry Barkey, "Turkey Emerges as Middle East Leader," CNN, June 3, 2010, at <http://www.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/06/03/barkey.turkey.israel/index.html> (June 19, 2010).
 8. Varun Vira, "The Neo Ottomans: Looking East Without Looking Back," *Foreign Policy Journal*, June 15, 2010, at <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/06/15/the-neo-ottomans-looking-east-without-looking-back> (June 17, 2010).

Davutoglu describes Turkey as separate from its Euro-Atlantic allies, sitting in the center of three concentric geopolitical circles: (1) the Balkans, the Black Sea basin, and the Caucasus; (2) the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean; and (3) the Persian Gulf, Africa, and Central Asia. This “neo-Ottoman” vision of Turkey in a multipolar world emphasizes Turkey’s access to the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. It also emphasizes a “zero problems” approach to relations with Turkey’s neighbors. However, ongoing friction with Armenia and the increasing confrontation with Israel indicate a lack of success in implementing the policy.

The internal underpinnings of this change in foreign policy are crucially important. A new, more religiously observant political and social elite from Anatolia and the Black Sea towns is increasingly challenging the traditional, Istanbul-based and Ankara-based secularist Kemalist elite’s dominance of Turkish political life and foreign policy.

This is done at times through abuse and manipulation of the criminal justice system. In “the Ergenekon conspiracy,” 600 suspects, including former military officers and prominent intellectuals, were arrested by the AKP-controlled police in 2007, further solidifying the AKP’s grip on power.⁹ Suspects’ phones were tapped, and the wiretaps were leaked to the pro-AKP media, apparently illegally. However, AKP politicians were never subject to these embarrassing leaks. By literally inventing a “wide-ranging right wing conspiracy,” the AKP-inspired investigators instilled a climate of fear, especially among secular politicians, the military, and intellectuals.

In addition, Erdogan’s critics in the media were prosecuted on tax evasion charges. For example, the Dogan Group was fined \$2.5 billion. Secular principles, such as the headscarf ban, are also being

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challenged. A picture is emerging of a ruling Islamist party jeopardizing Turkey’s hard-won democratic liberties.¹⁰

President Obama’s first foreign policy speech, in which he reached out to the Muslim world, was delivered in Ankara.¹¹ However, his embrace of Turkey was based on what he wanted it to be, not on the reality created under Erdogan. Obama disregarded both the AKP’s Islamist roots and Erdogan’s abysmal track record in domestic and foreign policy. President Obama did Turkish friends of the U.S. no favors when he repeatedly embraced the architect of the Ergenekon crackdown.

U.S.–Turkish Relations

The United States and Turkey were critical allies during the Cold War, and successive Administrations in Washington have praised the strategic relationship with Ankara. During the Korean War, Turkish soldiers valiantly fought and died side by side with their American allies. Turkey played a positive role during the Balkan Wars during the 1990s, including participation in peacekeeping missions, and reached out to the newly independent nations of the former Soviet Union, reconnecting to its Turkic heritage. The U.S. also facilitated Turkey in assuming the role of Eurasia’s energy hub through negotiation of the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline and other energy projects that benefit the Turkish economy.

With the second largest military in NATO, Turkey is a critical alliance member. However, the NATO–Ankara relationship has had difficulties in recent years. In 2003, France, Germany, and Bel-

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–36 and 37–55.

10. Ayla Jean Yackley, “Turkey Gov’t Hits Media Group Dogan with Tax Fine,” Reuters, September 8, 2008, at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL815352620090908> (June 17, 2010).

11. Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama to the Turkish Parliament,” The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, April 6, 2009, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Turkish-Parliament (July 15, 2010).

gium attempted to deny NATO defensive systems to Turkey in the event of an attack during the liberation of Iraq.¹² U.S.–Turkish relations suffered especially in March 2003 when Ankara refused passage for U.S. troops into northern Iraq. In August 2008, Ankara delayed U.S. assistance to embattled Georgia following Russia's invasion. Therefore, President Obama's trip to Turkey in April 2009 was more than an attempt to reach out to a majority-Muslim nation; it was intended to repair fractured U.S.–Turkish relations.

However, Turkey's relations with Armenia continue to be a complicating factor in the rejuvenation of U.S.–Turkish relations. The Armenian question is of great interest to Congress due to the scope of the atrocities of 1915–1918, the size of the Armenian diaspora in the U.S., and the 150-member Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues.¹³

Turkey's indifference to Georgia's dismemberment highlighted Ankara's realpolitik approach, which prioritizes economic and security relations with Russia.

On March 4, 2010, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved a resolution condemning the World War I slaughter of Armenians as genocide.¹⁴ Prime Minister Erdogan angrily called for the expulsion of Armenians from Turkey and recalled Turkey's ambassador from the U.S. for consultations.¹⁵ The resolution would require President Obama to use the term “Armenian genocide” to refer to the World War I mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, which the executive branch has thus far resisted. U.S. Secretary of State

Hillary Clinton has said that the Obama Administration will work hard to make sure that the resolution does not come up for a vote before the full House of Representatives,¹⁶ but Turkey's behavior may make this impossible.

As Turkey's foreign policy drifts away from the West and as the U.S. Congress inches toward recognizing the 1915 massacres as genocide, U.S.–Turkish relations have become increasingly tenuous.

Regional Perspectives

Turkey is commonly referred to as the West's bridge to the Muslim world, particularly because it is strategically located between Europe and the Middle East. For decades, Turkey and the U.S. cooperated in the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and even Korea. However, Turkish and U.S. interests in the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and the Persian Gulf have recently diverged.

The war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 created a new reality in the Caucasus, with Russia unequivocally demonstrating its willingness to use force to achieve its strategic goals in the region. Turkey's indifference to Georgia's dismemberment highlighted Ankara's realpolitik approach, which prioritizes economic and security relations with Russia.

Turkey–Russia: Toward a Strategic Alliance. The end of the Cold War meant that Turkey and Russia could bury Soviet-era confrontation. In December 2004, Vladimir Putin became the first Russian president to visit Turkey in 32 years. His visit precipitated increased high-level political contacts between the two countries, and Turkey's relations with Russia have improved notably since then.¹⁷

12. The United States took the decision to the Defense Planning Committee, where France did not have a vote at that time. The Franco–German–Belgian coalition collapsed, and Article IV of the North Atlantic Treaty was ultimately honored.

13. Armenian Assembly of America, “Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues,” March 30, 2010, at <http://www.aaainc.org/index.php?id=39> (July 12, 2010).

14. Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution, H. Res. 252, 111th Cong., 2nd Sess.

15. Ibon Villelabeitia, “Turkish PM Threatens to Expel Armenians,” Reuters, March 17, 2010, at <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-46991220100317> (June 20, 2010).

16. Voice of America News, “Turkey's Ambassador Is Not Returning to the U.S. Yet,” March 9, 2010, at <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Turkeys-Ambassador-Not-Returning-to-US-Yet-87139422.html> (July 15, 2010).

Ankara and Moscow share business and geopolitical interests. Russia became Turkey's largest trade partner in 2008, and Turkish trade with Russia is four times as large as trade with the U.S. Annual trade between Russia and Turkey totals \$40 billion.¹⁸

Moscow and Ankara are also uneasy about U.S. and Western policies.¹⁹ Significantly, Turkey parted ways with the U.S. when it refused to take sides during Russia's war against Georgia. Quoting the 1936 Montreux Convention on the passage of naval vessels in the Bosphorus, Turkey temporarily blocked the transit of U.S. warships delivering humanitarian aid to Georgia.²⁰ Neither Turkey nor Russia wants a U.S. presence in the Black Sea, and both are interested in limiting the NATO presence.²¹ During the Russia-Georgia war, Prime Minister Erdogan proposed a "Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform" that would include Russia and the three South Caucasus countries but not the U.S., EU member states, or Iran. This would effectively have created a Russo-Turkish condominium in the region.²²

Moscow and Ankara share a number of other close ties. Russia accounts for one-fourth of the glo-

bal market for Turkish construction companies. Turkey is one of the most popular tourist destinations for Russians, with nearly 4 million Russian tourists visiting in 2008, and the two countries maintain a visa-free travel regime.²³ Russia is the source of 65 percent of Turkey's natural gas and 40 percent of its crude oil, and their energy cooperation is booming.²⁴

In August 2009, Turkey signed on to construction of the Gazprom-backed South Stream gas pipeline, a competitor to the EU-backed Nabucco pipeline. Russia is also supporting an oil pipeline from the Black Sea port of Samsun to Ceyhan on the Mediterranean because it is planning to turn Ceyhan into a global energy hub.²⁵ In addition, Gazprom agreed with the Turkish company Aksa Dogalgaz to construct a gas power station and a liquefied natural gas plant and to privatize the gas distribution networks in Ankara and Istanbul.²⁶ In January 2010, Russia and Turkey signed a joint statement on nuclear power station construction, which was reaffirmed during President Dmitry Medvedev's May 2010 visit to Ankara.²⁷

17. Stephen F. Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change," RAND Corporation, 2010, pp. 48-49, at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG899.pdf (June 12, 2010).
18. "Turkey, Russia Can Carry Out Many Projects, Says Erdogan," *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), January 14, 2010, at <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-198481-turkey-russia-can-carry-out-many-projects-says-erdogan.html> (May 1, 2010).
19. "Turkey/Russia: Economic Interests Bolster Growing Ties," Oxford Analytica, Daily Brief Service, March 18, 2010.
20. Ariel Cohen and Owen Graham, "Obama in Ankara: Turkey's Dangerous Drift," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2383, April 6, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/04/Obama-in-Ankara-Turkeys-Dangerous-Drift>, and U.S. Department of the Navy, Naval Treaty Implementation Program, "Montreux Convention," July 20, 1936, at http://www.ntip.navy.mil/montreux_convention.shtml (June 12, 2010).
21. "Europe: Old Rivals, New Partners; Turkey and Russia," *The Economist*, p. 47.
22. Russia did not agree to the arrangement, instead striving for what President Dmitry Medvedev called "an exclusive sphere of interests." Cohen and Graham, "Obama in Ankara."
23. Tuncay Babali, "Turkey at the Energy Crossroads," *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 25-33, at <http://www.meforum.org/2108/turkey-at-the-energy-crossroads> (June 12, 2010).
24. Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership," p. 49.
25. Saban Kardas, "Russia Joins the Samsun-Ceyhan Pipeline," *European Dialogue*, at <http://eurodialogue.org/Russia-Joins-The-Samsun-Ceyhan-Pipeline> (June 20, 2010).
26. Reuters, "Turkey's Aksa Signs Deal with Gazprom on Gas Imports," at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKIST00398620090806> (June 20, 2010).
27. Press release, "Russia and Turkey Signed a Joint Statement on Interaction in NPP Construction," Rosatom, January 15, 2010, at http://www.rosatom.ru/en/about/press_centre/news_main/printable.php?print=1&id4=15940 (May 1, 2010), and Saban Kardas, "Russia Will Construct Turkey's First Nuclear Power Plant," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, May 20, 2010, at [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=36401](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=36401) (July 15, 2010).

Even though Turkey fits into Russia's vision of a multipolar world, Russian and Turkish interests collide in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Turkey wants to become a transit hub for energy from Russia, Iran, Iraq, and the Caspian basin to Europe, but Russia wants to monopolize European markets and transit routes.²⁸ Russia has no interest in Turkey having an independent presence in Central Asia and the Caucasus because both nations have competing ambitions for restoring their spheres of influence in Eurasia. In the future, these differences may become insurmountable obstacles to a strategic partnership, despite the two countries' current considerable economic cooperation and warm relations.

Turkish–Armenian Rapprochement. Despite the volatile situation between the two countries, Turkey has attempted to tackle its highly charged relations with Armenia. Reaching a settlement with Armenia would further support Foreign Minister Davutoglu's strategic depth concept, which calls for zero conflicts with Turkey's neighbors.²⁹ However, Turkey has not enjoyed much success.

In September 2008, Abdullah Gül became the first Turkish president to visit Yerevan. He kicked off "football diplomacy" by attending a soccer game between the Turkish and Armenian teams with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan.³⁰ This was followed by President Sargsyan's visit to Turkey and the development of close, informal relationships between the two presidents and their spouses. After secret talks mediated by Switzerland, Turkey and Armenia announced an agreement on a framework to normalize relations. This happened just a day before President Obama was "to give the annual 24

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April statement by US Presidents on the issue of the killing of Armenians."³¹ President Obama reneged on his election campaign pledge to recognize the World War I mass killings and forced relocation of Armenians from the Ottoman Empire as genocide. Instead, he used the term "great tragedy."³²

On October 10, 2009, Davutoglu and Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian signed protocols on establishing diplomatic relations and developing bilateral ties. The two countries agreed to open their border within two months of ratification of the protocols. Turkey closed the border in 1993 when Armenia invaded neighboring Azerbaijan, occupying 20 percent of its territory, including the majority-Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh and nearby territories. The two countries also agreed to "implement a dialogue on the historical dimension... including an impartial scientific examination of the historical records and archives to define existing problems and formulate recommendations."³³ The implementing institution would be an intergovernmental commission with a separate subcommission to address the World War I events, but neither side has ratified the agreement yet, and both parties have attached additional conditions.

Fearing Azerbaijan's rapprochement with Russia and the outcry of domestic public opinion, which remains staunchly pro-Azeri,³⁴ Turkish leaders

28. Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership," p. 50.

29. Eyüp Ersoy, "Old Principles, New Practices: Explaining the AKP Foreign Policy," *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Winter 2010), pp. 118–120, at <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/images/stories/2009-04-tpq/115-127.pdf> (July 15, 2010).

30. Amberin Zaman, "Turkey and Armenia: Soccer Diplomacy Shifting Rules Are Creating a Zero-Sum Game," German Marshall Fund of the United States, August 31, 2009.

31. William Chislett, "Turkey and Armenia Move to Bury the Hatchet," Real Instituto Elcano, June 5, 2009, at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/europe/ari72-2009 (May 1, 2010).

32. Amberin Zaman, "Turkish–Armenian Reconciliation: Lots of Gloom but Not All Doom," German Marshall Fund of the United States, March 16, 2010, at http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/ForeignPolicyAmberinZamanOnTurkeyTurkishArmenianReconciliation.pdf (July 15, 2010).

33. "Historical Protocols Signed by Turkey and Armenia," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, October 11, 2009, at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/print.asp?type=1&id=90873> (May 1, 2010).

stated that Turkey's ratification is contingent upon resolution of the Karabakh conflict on terms acceptable to Azerbaijan.³⁵ In May 2009, Prime Minister Erdogan stated: "There is a relation of cause and effect here. The occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh is a cause, and the closure of the border is an effect. Without the occupation ending, the gates will not be opened."³⁶

The signing of the Turkish–Armenian accords and resolution of the Karabakh stalemate are in America's interests because normalized relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and an open border with Turkey would reduce Armenia's economic and political dependence on Russia and Iran and open the door to new energy export routes.³⁷ However, a number of issues have combined to make ratification impossible, including Azerbaijan's demands to link the Turkish–Armenian rapprochement to progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, the Armenian genocide question, and Russia's ambitions to establish a sphere of exclusive interests in the Caucasus.

Turkey–Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev, among others, has called Turkey and Azerbaijan "one nation, two states," referring to their shared language and ethnicity. The two countries maintained cordial ties and a strategic partnership until the AKP's rise to power in 2002. They cooperated closely in constructing the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum pipe-

lines and the Baku–Kars railway in the 1990s and the early 2000s. In 2001, a Turkish F-16 squadron prevented an Iranian air force intimidation action in Azerbaijani territorial waters.³⁸

However, experts have noted that Turkey, in striving to become an independent regional power, has downplayed Turkic solidarity with its sister state, leaving Azerbaijan largely out in the cold. Instead, Turkey is reaching out to Armenia, Iran, and Russia.³⁹ The AKP administration is discarding the secular democratic nationalism that Turkey shared with Azerbaijan. Other obstacles are Turkish–Armenian rapprochement and settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, but Turkey still needs Azerbaijan's energy resources. Turkey's attempts to become a transportation hub for both Russian and Caspian oil and gas also create problems. Today, Ankara is trying to sit on two chairs by signing contracts with Gazprom and Nabucco.

Baku is concerned that if Turkey and Armenia open their border, it will lose its leverage over Armenia on Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Azerbaijan reached out to Russia by signing an agreement with Gazprom on gas sales in June 2009 to signal that Russia is an alternative export path. Gazprom and the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic agreed that Azerbaijan will start selling gas (a modest 500 million cubic meters per year) to Russia in 2010 at the market price.⁴¹ In response to Azerbaijan's dismay, Prime Minister

34. Anar Valiyev, "The Turkish–Armenian Protocols: Implications for Azerbaijan," *Russian and Eurasian Security Network Caucasus Analytical Digest* No. 11, November 23, 2009, p. 7, at <http://www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/cad/details.cfm?lng=en&id=110011> (May 1, 2010).

35. Alexander Iskandaryan, "Armenian–Turkish Rapprochement: Timing Matters," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No 3 (July–September 2009), p. 38, at http://www.insightturkey.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=115&Itemid=58 (May 1, 2010).

36. "Prime Minister Erdogan Puts Baku's Armenia Concerns to Rest," *Today's Zaman* (Istanbul), May 14, 2009, at <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=175222> (May 1, 2010).

37. Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership," p. 52.

38. Jon Gorvett, "Turkey Plays Big Brother to Azerbaijan in Opening Skirmishes over Control of Caspian Resources," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, November 2001, at <http://www.wrmea.com/archives/november01/0111031.html> (July 21, 2010). See also Ariel Cohen, "Iran's Claims over Caspian Sea Resources Threaten Energy Security," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder* No. 1582, September 5, 2002, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2002/09/Irans-Claim-Over-Caspian-Sea-Resources-Threaten-Energy-Security>.

39. Nigar Göksel, "Turkey and Azerbaijan: Passion, Principle, or Pragmatism?" German Marshall Fund of the United States, June 4, 2009, at http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/Nigar_OnTurkey_Analysis_0609_final.pdf (July 15, 2010).

40. Larrabee, "Troubled Partnership," p. 53.

Erdogan linked opening the Armenia–Turkey border to resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

Both Azerbaijan and Turkey are market-friendly economies. Azerbaijan has energy resources, and Turkey controls transit routes to the European market. While the window of opportunity to advance the Southern Corridor is still open, Russia is trying to bring the region's resources and transit routes under its control. Without the return to the Turkish–Azerbaijani solidarity of the 1990s, relations between Baku and Ankara will likely remain problematic at best.

Energy and Eurasian Pipelines

One pillar of Turkey's energy strategy is to become a key energy transportation hub.⁴² Three-quarters of the world's proven oil and gas reserves are located in Turkey's neighborhood, including the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.

Although poor in fossil energy resources, Turkey plans to have 6 percent of global energy consumption pass through its territory. Around 3.7 percent of all global oil consumption passes through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and 60 percent of the oil tankers are transporting Russian energy resources, forming a geo-economic link between the two states.⁴³ Europe already depends on Turkey for the transportation of energy resources from Russia, the Caspian region, and the Middle East.

Major gas pipelines across Turkey include Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum, Blue Stream, Iran–Turkey (Eastern Anatolia), and the Romania–Bulgaria–Turkey

connector.⁴⁴ The planned South Stream and Blue Stream II pipelines will carry Russian gas, and the planned Nabucco pipeline will transport Azeri and possibly Iraqi and Turkmen gas. (See Map 1.)

Major Turkish oil pipelines include Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and Kirkuk–Ceyhan, which transport Azeri and Iraqi oil, respectively.⁴⁵ Hydrocarbon traffic in the Bosphorus Strait is dangerous to the population of Istanbul and the environment. The planned Samsun–Ceyhan (Trans-Anatolian) oil pipeline, which is earmarked for Russian and Kazakh oil, is intended to reduce oil shipping through the Bosphorus.⁴⁶ (See Map 1.) It is being promoted by Italy's ENI, Turkey's Calik Holding, and Russia's Rosneft and Transneft.⁴⁷ Russia gave its support to the project in exchange for Turkey signing on to the Russian-backed South Stream gas pipeline.

In March 2010, Turkey also ratified the Nabucco Agreement,⁴⁸ and on June 7, 2010, the two countries signed an agreement for Azeri gas sales to the

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Nabucco project. This 3,300-kilometer (2,050-mile) pipeline between Turkey and Austria will cost an estimated \$10.5 billion and is scheduled to be completed by 2014. It is designed to transport up to 31 billion cubic meters of gas annually.⁴⁹ The U.S. has

41. Bruce Pannier, "Russia, Azerbaijan Achieve Gas Breakthrough," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, June 30, 2009, at http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Azerbaijan_Achieve_Gas_Breakthrough/1766221.html (May 2, 2010).

42. Babali, "Turkey at the Energy Crossroads," pp. 25–33.

43. *Ibid.*

44. U.S. Energy Information Agency, "Turkey: Natural Gas," April 2009, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Turkey/NaturalGas.html> (May 2, 2010).

45. U.S. Energy Information Agency, "Turkey: Oil," April 2009, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Turkey/Oil.html> (May 2, 2010).

46. Kulpash Konyrova, "Trans-Anatolian Pipeline Bets on Kazakh Oil Supplies," *New Europe*, May 31, 2007, at <http://www.neweurope.eu/articles/74409.php> (May 2, 2010).

47. Vlad Popovici, "Black Sea Region Stands at Energy Crossroads," *Oil & Gas Journal*, Vol. 107, Issue 45 (December 7, 2009), p. 59.

48. Simon Taylor, "Turkey Signs Up to Nabucco," *European Voice*, March 5, 2010.

49. Agence France-Presse, "Supply Concerns Haunt Nabucco Despite Azerbaijan Deal," *Georgian Daily* (New York), June 13, 2010, at http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18899&Itemid=65 (June 15, 2010).

Primary Oil and Gas Pipelines to Europe



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, "Russia," Country Analysis Brief, May 2008, p. 11, at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Russia/pdf/pdf> (March 6, 2009).

Map 1 • B 2442 heritage.org

encouraged this agreement,⁵⁰ which will increase the gas supply to Europe independent of Russia, expand the Southern Corridor capacity, and possibly transport abundant Turkmen gas to Europe.

On May 31, 2010, Turkmenistan began construction of a 1,000-kilometer, \$2 billion pipeline to the Caspian coast.⁵¹ Technically, connecting it to the Baku–Erzurum pipeline and therefore to Nabucco would be relatively easy, but it would also be complicated geopolitically. The pervasive corruption in Turkey's energy sector, the ambiguity surrounding the realization of the Southern Corridor, attempts to bring Iran into Nabucco, and Turkey's close energy ties with Russia demonstrate the limits of Turkey's role as a reliable energy hub. To enhance reliability, Ankara needs to show leadership on Nabucco, reject ties to Iran, and emphasize its role as a corridor for transporting Caspian, non-Russian energy to Europe.

The Middle East

Since the AKP assumed power in 2002, Turkish foreign policy has drifted steadily away from the West. Under the AKP, Turkey has sought better ties with its Muslim Arab and Iranian neighbors and with other Muslim countries, often at the expense of the United States, Israel, and its other Western allies. The AKP's Islamist ideology, which holds that Muslims are engaged in an endless conflict with non-Muslims and the West, has prompted striking changes in Turkish foreign policy. It has led Turkey to distance itself from the United States and Israel while pressing for closer ties with dictatorships in Muslim countries, including Iran, Syria, and Sudan.

“Since the end of the Ottoman Empire,” Foreign Minister Davutoglu has stated, “Muslims have gotten the short end of the stick, and the AKP is here to correct all that.”⁵² Turkish foreign policy has been tilted to favor Islamist movements such as Hamas over secular Muslim movements such as the Pales-

tine Liberation Organization (PLO). Turkey now vehemently denounces Israel, defends the Iranian nuclear program, supports Hamas, and cozies up to Muslim dictatorships. Ankara has inserted itself into the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Iran nuclear standoff, to the detriment of Western interests in general and American interests in particular. The AKP has also significantly changed Turkish policies toward Israel, Iran, and Syria.

Israel. Turkey's formerly close relations with Israel have deteriorated steadily since the AKP's rise to power. In 1949, Turkey was the first Muslim state to recognize Israel. Bilateral relations flourished as the two democracies found themselves threatened by Arab dictatorships aligned with the Soviet bloc, many of them imbued with a pan-Arab nationalist ideology that was hostile to Turkish and Israeli national interests. By the 1990s, the two countries had developed a close strategic alliance to deter and defend against common foes in the Middle East, particularly Syria, Iran, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and a variety of terrorist groups, some of which were based in Lebanon.

Turkey's formerly close relations with Israel have deteriorated steadily since the AKP's rise to power.

For Turkey, Israel was a useful ally against Syria and Iraq, which had aligned with the Soviet bloc, and against such anti-Turkish terrorist groups as the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Both the PKK and the ASALA have received support from Syria and were given sanctuary in Syrian-controlled Lebanon. ASALA cadres trained in PLO camps in Lebanon and became a major threat to Turkish diplomats, assassinating at least 36.

Turkish–Israeli military and intelligence cooperation increased rapidly after Israel's 1982 interven-

50. N. Bogdanova, “United States Believes That Turkey and Azerbaijan Will Reach an Agreement on Shah Deniz—Richard Morningstar,” Trend News Agency, January 29, 2010, at <http://en.trend.az/capital/pengineering/1628362.html> (May 2, 2010).

51. Alexander Vershinin, “Turkmenistan Starts New \$2 Billion Gas Pipeline,” ABC News, May 31, 2010, at <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=10789189> (July 15, 2010).

52. Soner Cagaptay, “Turkey's Clash of Civilizations,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 8, 2010, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703303904575292534241628418.html> (July 15, 2010).

tion in Lebanon. Israel went to war to expel Palestinian terrorists based in Lebanese refugee camps, but it also developed extensive intelligence on Lebanon-based groups, such as the PKK and ASALA, that targeted Turkey. Israel also sold arms to Turkey's armed forces. In return, Ankara allowed the Israeli Air Force to use Turkish air space for training exercises.

Despite the continued close cooperation between the Turkish and Israeli military and intelligence establishments, under AKP leadership, Ankara has viewed Israel through an Islamist prism and has been increasingly critical of Israel's policy toward the Palestinians. Turkey has gradually abandoned its role as a neutral mediator between Israel and its Arab neighbors and has become an active supporter of Arab and Muslim causes against Israel.

Turkey denounced Israel's counterterrorism campaign against Hamas-controlled Gaza in December 2008–January 2009. Prime Minister Erdogan played a leading role in chastising Israel for the war in Gaza. Shortly afterward, he angrily stormed off the stage during a joint appearance with Israeli President Shimon Peres at a conference in Davos, Switzerland, shouting: “When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill.”⁵³

Ankara has condemned Israel for “committing atrocities and genocide” in Gaza but has publicly embraced Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir, whose regime has conducted a genocidal campaign against opposition forces in Darfur. Erdogan displayed his ideological bias in his statement that the Sudanese tyrant “could not have committed genocide in Darfur, because he is a Muslim and Muslims do not commit genocide.”⁵⁴

This Islamist logic explains a lot about the Erdogan regime's thinking about Hamas, Israel, and

the recent naval incident in which Turkish Islamists attacked Israeli commandos who were enforcing the naval blockade of Gaza. The May 31 clash on board a Turkish ship seeking to run Israel's naval blockade has driven a wedge much deeper between the two former allies. The Turkish government tacitly supported the efforts of a Turkish Islamist charity to acquire ships and man them with a crew of Islamists, pro-Palestinian activists, and left-wing European “peace activists” to transport humanitarian aid and other goods directly to Gaza, bypassing Israeli inspections intended to prevent delivery of arms to Hamas. When Israeli commandos boarded the *Mavi Marmara*, the “peace activists” attacked them, starting a bloody battle that left nine Turks dead.

Prime Minister Erdogan denounced the Israeli action as “state terrorism,” recalled the Turkish ambassador from Israel, demanded a formal apology from Jerusalem, called for lifting the arms embargo on Gaza, and pushed for an international investigation of the incident. Ankara also barred Israel from participating in military exercises in its territory and has threatened to break diplomatic relations. Turkish President Abdullah Gül indicated on June 15 that Ankara had a “road map” for determining its future relations with Israel that would be made clear in the future.⁵⁵

The two governments held secret talks in Zurich earlier this month to resolve their differences over the incident. Foreign Minister Davutoglu met with Binyamin Ben-Eliezar, a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet, but it is unclear whether they narrowed the gap between the two former allies. Davutoglu subsequently warned that “Israelis have three options: They will either apologize or acknowledge an international impartial inquiry and its conclusion. Otherwise, our diplomatic ties will be cut off.”⁵⁶ The Israeli government

53. Katrin Bennhold, “Leaders of Turkey, Israel Clash at Davos,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 2009, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html> (July 15, 2010).

54. Soner Cagaptay, “The AKP's Hamas Policy I: How Turkey Turned,” *Hurriyet Daily News and Economic Review*, June 29, 2010, at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=the-akp8217s-hamas-policy-i-how-turkey-turned-2010-06-29> (July 15, 2010).

55. “Gul Says Turkey Has Road Map for Israel Ties,” *World Bulletin* (Istanbul), June 16, 2010, at http://www.worldbulletin.net/news_detail.php?id=60027 (July 15, 2010).

56. Janine Zacharia, “Turkey Threatens to Sever Ties Unless Israel Apologizes for Deadly Raid on Ship,” *The Washington Post*, July 6, 2010, p. A8, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/05/AR2010070502889.html> (July 15, 2010).

has stated that it regrets the loss of life but refuses to apologize for the actions that its commandos took in self-defense.

Whatever the outcome of these talks, Turkish–Israeli relations clearly face a rocky future. Prime Minister Erdogan has demonstrated that he is willing and eager to exploit anti-Israeli sentiments to boost his own political popularity. The popular backlash against Israel also makes it easier for Erdogan’s AKP to reorient Turkish foreign policy even further and extend more support for Islamist causes in the future.

Iran. Turkish policy toward Iran has also undergone a sea change under the AKP. Ankara, once an important ally in helping to contain Iran, has become a friendly diplomatic ally of the Islamist dictatorship in Tehran. Working with the Lula government in Brazil, Ankara aided and abetted Iran’s efforts to forestall U.N. sanctions for its long-standing nuclear defiance. Turkey and Brazil colluded with Iran to resurrect a nuclear fuel swap proposal hatched by the Obama Administration in the fall of 2009, which the Administration had unwisely left on the table despite Iran’s rejection of the deal.

Under the proposed deal, Iran would send 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium to Turkey within a month in return for 120 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium that would be delivered within a year, ostensibly to fuel a medical research reactor. This last-minute deal did not satisfy the U.N. Security Council’s long-standing demands that Iran halt its uranium enrichment activities, but it did help Tehran by disrupting U.S. and European diplomatic efforts to impose another round of Security Council sanctions on Iran.

Ankara subsequently voted against the sanctions resolution in the Security Council. Despite deep Western misgivings about the proposed nuclear deal, Ankara is determined to press on with the initiative. Foreign Minister Davutoglu insisted on June 22, “We still believe a solution can be found. We are determined to continue our efforts.”⁵⁷

Syria. Syria has a long history of hostility toward Turkey. The two countries have had bitter border disputes and disagreements over water rights due to the construction of Turkish dams on the Euphrates River, and they joined different camps during the Cold War. Syria became one of Moscow’s closest Arab allies and gave the Soviet Navy access to its naval bases.

Syria’s pan-Arab Baathist socialist ideology exacerbated bilateral tensions. Syria threw its support behind Kurdish separatists inside Turkey, the Kurdish Workers Party, and allowed the PKK to set up a training base in the Syrian-dominated Bekaa valley of Lebanon in 1982. The PKK launched a bloody insurrection in 1984 that claimed more than 37,000 lives. It has committed thousands of terrorist attacks against the Turkish government and has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States, the United Nations, NATO, and the EU.

In 1998, Turkey and Syria almost went to war because of Syria’s extensive support for the PKK, but Syria backed down and averted a war by expelling PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and restricting PKK activities. Bilateral relations gradually improved as Syria become increasingly isolated due to its support for terrorism and suspected involvement in the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The recent rapprochement between the two countries has led to an easing of trade restrictions and a blossoming of cross-border trade and Turkish investment in Syria.

Syria sees ties to Turkey as important to easing its isolation and as part of a new alignment of powers against Israel and the West. Syrian dictator Bashar Assad claimed in May that the failure of U.S. and European leaders to advance the Middle East peace process prompted his regime to strengthen ties with Iran, Turkey, and Russia: “Out of this failure what’s emerging out of necessity is another alternative—a geostrategic map that aligns Syria, Turkey, Iran and Russia linked by politics, common interests and infrastructure.”⁵⁸

57. Daren Butler, “Turkey Says to Press Fuel Swap Plan with Iran,” Reuters, June 23, 2010, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65L1GD20100622> (July 15, 2010).

58. Andrew Davis, “Syria to Strengthen Iran, Russia Ties, Assad Tells Repubblica,” Bloomberg, May 24, 2010, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?sid=aBp2SpkGT2ic&pid=20601087> (July 15, 2010).

Turkey and the European Union

The European Union formally granted candidate status to Turkey at the Helsinki summit in 1999. In October 2005, the EU concluded that Turkey had fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria for actual membership negotiations to begin. In 2006, Brussels set out 35 chapters of *acquis communautaire* for Ankara to discharge before a final vote on accession.

However, France, Greece, and Cyprus have repeatedly blocked the opening of several chapters of the *acquis communautaire* to Turkey. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy have been at the forefront in opposing full Turkish membership in the EU, proposing instead a privileged partnership between Ankara and Brussels. Turkish leaders have dismissed this proposal as insulting because Turkey already enjoys a privileged relationship with the EU.

There is a pervasive sense in Ankara that the EU is negotiating in bad faith.

There is a pervasive sense in Ankara that the EU is negotiating in bad faith. The Turkish government has undertaken significant reforms to align itself more closely with EU law, but the feeling that Brussels may not be serious about Turkey's eventual accession has led to disenchantment with the EU. Favorable attitudes toward the EU, according to polling data, currently stand at just 22 percent.⁵⁹

Questions are being asked in Ankara about whether EU accession is even desirable, much less possible. In the past decade, Turkey's regional position has strengthened significantly, and Turkey has greater opportunities to look to the east for allies.

To advance its relationship with Turkey, the EU should therefore seek to advance tangible projects with Turkey in addition to its technocratic membership action plan. Brussels also needs to be honest about Turkey's accession prospects, lest Ankara reach the finish line of negotiations only to be denied full membership.

Trade. Turkey has been a member of the EU Customs Union since December 31, 1995—a move that was strongly supported by the United States.⁶⁰ Since then, trade between Europe and Turkey has increased significantly, reaching €81 billion (\$104 billion) in 2009.⁶¹ Turkey joined the customs union rather than concluding a free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union to enhance its accession prospects. However, if EU accession does not happen in a timely fashion, then the exceptional costs of aligning its rules and regulations with EU law will be seen to have been for naught.

Membership in the EU Customs Union makes sense only if Turkey's accession to full membership is virtually certain. Therefore, to maximize free trade between Brussels and Ankara, the status and scope of the EU–Turkey trading relationship should be reassessed.

Under the customs union, Turkey enjoys preferential access to EU markets and free trade in certain products. However, this relationship remains overly complex and discriminatory toward Turkey in two respects. First, as a precondition of joining the customs union, Turkey was required to adopt the EU's existing FTAs with partner countries, including the European Free Trade Area. However, arrangements between the EU and third countries since 1995 automatically extend to Turkey, even though Ankara is excluded from the decision-making process.⁶² Second, Turkish markets are automatically opened to

59. Richard Wike, "Negative Views of U.S. Unchanged in Turkey," Pew Research Center, December 3, 2009, at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1429/negative-views-of-america-unchanged-in-turkey> (May 26, 2010).

60. Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Difference in European and US Attitudes, and Challenges for Turkey," paper presented at 2001 Black Sea Regional Policy Symposium, March 29, 2001, p. 3, at <http://www.irex.org/programs/symp/01/kuniholm.pdf> (May 26, 2010).

61. Turkish Statistical Institute, "Foreign Trade Statistics," Web site, at http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4 (May 26, 2010).

62. Sinan Ulgen and Yiannis Zahariadis, "The Future of Turkish–EU Trade Relations," Center for European Policy Studies *EU–Turkey Working Paper* No. 5, August 2004, p. 8, at <http://www.ceps.eu/node/998> (May 25, 2010).

these third countries under the customs union agreement, but Turkey is not automatically granted reciprocity by the third country. Reciprocity depends on Brussels' goodwill and willingness to include a "Turkish clause" in their final agreement.⁶³

This arrangement is unsatisfactory. Turkish commercial policy has essentially been seconded to Brussels without any gain in voting rights. Trading away its sovereignty *might* be a price worth paying if EU membership were assured, but membership is not assured. Therefore, the EU should adopt a full and comprehensive FTA with Turkey to replace the customs union agreement.

In its 2007 Market Access Strategy, the EU stated that a new generation of free trade agreements was needed to secure greater market reach for EU member states.⁶⁴ As a member of the Union for the Mediterranean, Turkey should be part of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA), which is being negotiated by partner countries and the EU. Concluding the EMFTA should be a priority for all parties this year, with a view to expanding this free trade zone into the greater Middle East thereafter.

Enhancing trade among Turkey, the EU, and the other members of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership would invariably bring greater prosperity and regional stability. The EU should therefore liberalize trade in sectors previously excluded from the EU-Turkish Customs Union, including agriculture. A University of Manchester impact assessment of EMFTA concluded that, "[i]n parallel with other strategic measures at the national and regional level the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area is capable of making a major contribution to achieving the objectives of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and hence to the sustainable development of the region."⁶⁵ A bold and comprehensive FTA with Tur-

key could set a precedent for achieving greater volumes of trade than the EU Customs Union and would create an enduring basis for EU-Turkish integration separate from the highly politicized question of EU membership.

Establishing an FTA with Turkey in place of the customs union should not remove the prospect of EU membership for Turkey. Nor should the EU withdraw its financial aid to Turkey as designated under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.⁶⁶ However, if Turkey is ultimately denied EU membership, Ankara will still be in a position to

If Turkey's accession to the EU remains as unlikely as it appears today, Europe needs a fallback position to ensure that Turkey still has a reason to maintain good relations.

benefit from an enduring trading relationship with the EU and its Mediterranean partners. If Turkey's accession to the EU remains as unlikely as it appears today, Europe needs a fallback position to ensure that Turkey still has a reason to maintain good relations.

Greece also needs to stop using the EU as an arena to play out its bilateral disputes with Turkey. Greece has poisoned EU-Turkish relations on several occasions, even vetoing EU payments to Ankara.⁶⁷ Considering the significant political and economic support that the EU and the U.S. have extended to Greece in recent months, leaders on both sides should exercise their influence with Athens to ensure that European-Turkish relations continue to move forward positively. Resolution of the Greco-Turkish dispute over Cyprus was not a precondition for Cypriot accession to the EU, and it

63. *Ibid.*

64. Commission of the European Communities, "Global Europe: A Stronger Partnership to Deliver Market Access for European Exporters," April 18, 2007, p. 6, at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2007/april/tradoc_134507.pdf (May 26, 2010).

65. SIA-EMFTA Consortium, "Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area," University of Manchester, November 2007, p. ix, at http://www.sia-trade.org/emfta/en/final_report_nov07.pdf (May 20, 2010).

66. European Commission, "Turkey—Financial Assistance," at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/turkey/financial-assistance/index_en.htm (May 26, 2010).

67. Kuniholm, "Turkey's Accession to the European Union," p. 12.

should not stop Turkish–EU relations from going forward.

Flexible Membership. The EU needs to be more honest with Turkey about its prospects for membership while advancing projects that can benefit both sides regardless of Turkey’s accession status.⁶⁸ In addition to concluding an FTA, Turkey should be accepted into the European Defense Agency. Norway is a member even though it is not an EU member. Turkey’s continued exclusion is unfairly discriminatory.

President Obama should also refrain from associating Turkey’s membership in the EU with the West’s relationship with the Muslim world in general.⁶⁹ If Turkey does not accede to the EU, it will not be primarily because it is a Muslim country, but because Turkey’s size would give it significant voting weight inside EU institutions and because it would qualify for considerable EU subsidies. Turkey’s voting weight and subsidies are at least as important to France, Germany, and Greece as are Ankara’s religious inclinations.

Because Turkish accession will not be decided during President Obama’s current term, he should not waste political capital with America’s allies in Europe by advocating for a policy over which he has little control. Further, a European Union that could expand to 40 members in the future needs to be more flexible with new membership arrangements for different countries, including existing members such as Britain, which is clearly uncomfortable with its current membership terms. Flexible membership arrangements and privileged partnerships should be the future for the EU.

NATO

The Turkish government continues to describe NATO as “the cornerstone of Turkey’s defense and

security policy.”⁷⁰ Turkey joined NATO in 1952 and has been one of the alliance’s most important partners. Turkey has significant military resources to contribute, and it is situated at the pivotal gateway between Europe, Russia, and the Middle East. Turkish membership gives NATO the capability to project power far beyond Europe’s borders, and Ankara’s participation in regional peacekeeping missions, including all NATO-led operations in the Balkans since 1995, has been good for the alliance.⁷¹ Turkey has even contributed to several EU civilian missions, despite the EU’s continued discrimination against it in the defense sphere.

However, Turkey’s relationship with NATO has not been an easy one of late. Ankara’s very public objection to the appointment of Anders Fogh Rasmussen as NATO Secretary General at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in 2009 went against the spirit of consensus that characterizes the alliance’s usual decision-making process. Rasmussen was Prime Minister of Denmark when Danish Muslims created an international furor over satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in a private newspaper. Rasmussen’s refusal to condemn the newspaper and his perceived weakness over televised Kurdish terrorist propaganda raised Turkey’s ire. Only intense negotiations by President Obama and the promise of senior positions within the alliance assuaged Turkish concerns.

Turkey also blocked Israel’s participation in the annual NATO Anatolian Eagle joint military exercise in October 2009 on the same day that Ankara announced a closer military relationship with Syria.⁷² In addition, Turkey has broken with NATO’s diplomatic consensus by hosting Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.⁷³

68. In May 2010, Turkish President Abdullah Gül stated that as EU accession prospects have dimmed, so has Turkey’s enthusiasm for prioritizing EU membership. See Stephen Collins, “Gul Asks EU to Reflect on Accepting Turkish Accession,” *The Irish Times*, May 12, 2010, at <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/0512/1224270210561.html> (May 20, 2010).

69. Vince Morelli, “European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey’s Accession Negotiations,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, April 5, 2010, p. 13, at http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RS22517_20100405.pdf (May 26, 2010).

70. Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Turkey’s Security Perspectives and Its Relations with Nato*, at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/nato.en.mfa> (June 7, 2010).

71. *Ibid.*

These incidents do not threaten the longevity of NATO, but they do raise questions about Turkey's long-term role within the alliance. It is time for Turkey to revitalize its NATO membership.

Afghanistan. Aydemir Erman, Turkey's former special coordinator for Afghanistan, has described Turkey as "a historically trusted friend of Afghanistan."⁷⁴ Turkey has taken a leadership role in Afghanistan on several occasions since 2002, most notably from June 2002 to February 2003 and from February 2005 to August 2005. In April 2007, Turkey once again assumed leadership of Regional Central Command, Kabul, supported by two Turkish-manned helicopters.⁷⁵ In response to President Obama's request for additional troops to support his December 2009 surge in Afghanistan, Turkey contributed more than 1,000 additional troops. A total of 1,755 Turkish troops currently support the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and on October 31, 2009, Turkey again took command of the Regional Command in Kabul.⁷⁶

With the second largest military in NATO, Ankara could send additional forces to support the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan.⁷⁷ However, Turkish troops in Afghanistan operate under extremely restrictive national caveats that limit them to noncombat missions in Kabul. As NATO approaches its most decisive operation to date in Kandahar, General David Petraeus should be given greater operational flexibility to determine NATO's troop deployments. Commanders on the ground, not micromanagers in national capitals, should determine deployments and the scope of engagements.

Turkish troops in Afghanistan operate under extremely restrictive national caveats that limit them to noncombat missions in Kabul.

NATO also needs to ensure that its forces have adequate air mobility. Airlift, especially helicopters, is needed for a range of missions, including combat engagements and medical evacuations. In 2007, Turkey, France, Germany, Greece, and Spain refused a NATO request for additional helicopters, forcing NATO to contract commercial helicopters to compensate for military shortfalls.⁷⁸ Increased airlift capability from Turkey unrestricted by national caveats would markedly increase the security and efficacy of combat operations in Afghanistan.

Turkey can also expand its diplomatic and civilian support for the Afghanistan mission in three important ways:

1. Expediting establishment of its second Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Jowzjan, building on the success of its \$20 million Wardak PRT;
2. Doubling from five to 10 the number of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLT), which train and mentor Afghan National Army (ANA) recruits, and complement the deployment by providing modern equipment for the ANA; and
3. Deploying a dedicated gendarmerie OMLT and Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams as NATO broadens its training to the full scope of Afghan National Security Forces.

72. David Schenker, "A NATO Without Turkey?" *The Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 2009, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704013004574517210622936876.html> (July 12, 2010).

73. Zeyno Baran, "Will Turkey Abandon NATO?" *The Wall Street Journal*, August 29, 2008, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121997087258381935.html> (June 7, 2010).

74. Aydemir Erman, "How Turkey Can Help NATO in Afghanistan," *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 9, 2010, at <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2010/0209/How-Turkey-can-help-NATO-in-Afghanistan> (June 7, 2010).

75. Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Turkey's Security Perspectives and Its Relations with Nato*.

76. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army Strength & Laydown," February 1, 2010, at <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf> (June 7, 2010).

77. Turkey has 30,000 troops deployed in Northern Cyprus.

78. "NATO Funds Additional Helicopters in Afghanistan," *Afghanistan Conflict Monitor*, October 29, 2007, at <http://www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/2007/10/nato-funds-addi.html> (June 7, 2010).

What the U.S. Should Do

To revitalize the strategic relationships between Turkey and the United States and NATO, the Obama Administration and Congress should:

- **Warn the Turkish government that diplomatic or material support for the Iranian nuclear program and continuing confrontation with Israel undermine the foundations of U.S.–Turkish relations and jeopardize military and intelligence cooperation.** The Obama Administration should mediate the repair of ties between Ankara and Jerusalem.
- **Monitor the rule of law, freedom of the press, and other civil and political freedoms in Turkey.** Turkey's performance should receive close scrutiny from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, as well as the U.S. Department of State in its Annual Report on Human Rights.
- **Express concern regarding Turkish–Russian economic and military ties,** including the sale of Russian advanced weapons and a nuclear reactor to Ankara.
- **Encourage Turkey to play a significant role in assuring security, stability, and conflict resolution in the Caucasus.** NATO members, including Turkey, should continue to refuse to recognize Abkhazian and South Ossetian independence and ask Turkey to support NATO's objection to Russian military bases in these areas. The U.S. and the NATO allies should also emphasize that Turkish–Armenian rapprochement should be linked to resolution of the Karabakh conflict, including liberation of all occupied Azerbaijani territories.
- **Expand energy cooperation with Turkey, especially on the Nabucco, Turkmenistan–Azerbaijani, and Iraq–Turkey gas pipelines,** as long as no Iranian oil or gas is exported through these pipelines. Under such circumstances, the U.S. Departments of State and Energy should provide diplomatic support for these projects in the Caspian basin, the Caucasus, and Europe.

- **Support upgrading EU–Turkish trade relations through a free trade agreement and completion of the Euro–Mediterranean Free Trade Area.** The U.S. should also support Turkish accession to the European Defense Agency.
- **Not associate Turkish membership in the EU with the West's relationship with the Muslim world in general.**
- **Request that Turkey deploy additional forces to Afghanistan and remove its national caveats on troops and provisions of matériel.** Ankara should also be asked to provide unrestricted air support to all NATO troops and to increase its civilian support to the mission in Afghanistan with an additional Provincial Reconstruction Team and additional Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams and Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams.

Conclusion

On its current trajectory, Turkey's traditional strategic relationship with the West could devolve into a looser affiliation while Turkey enters into a closer alliance with Iran and other Middle Eastern powers hostile to U.S. leadership. The AKP-instigated backlash against Israel has made it easier for Erdogan and Davutoglu to reorient Turkish foreign policy and extend Turkish support for Islamist causes more broadly.

The United States and NATO should not stand idly by, watching this happen. The U.S., in concert with its European allies, needs to address the serious differences that are emerging.

The U.S. cannot dictate the terms of Turkish engagement with the West, but it can induce, persuade, negotiate, and confront Ankara where necessary into maintaining its shared interests, traditional alliances, and existing responsibilities. The European Union should also be honest with Ankara about the prospects of Turkish membership and advance tangible projects that will increase engagement between Brussels and Ankara regardless of Turkey's accession status.

President Obama needs Turkey to be a strong regional partner, but Ankara cannot conduct its own regional diplomacy without consideration for

its allies and partners. On energy policy, Ankara needs to show leadership on Nabucco, reject ties to Iran, and emphasize its role as a corridor for transporting Caspian, non-Russian energy to Europe.

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