

RELUCTANT PARTNERSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH
PARLIAMENT'S DECISION ON MARCH 1, 2003

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ABSTRACT

RELUCTANT PARTNERSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT'S DECISION ON MARCH 1, 2003

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This thesis analyzes the historical decision made by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on March 1, 2003. On this date Turkey made the decision not to accept the United States' offer of monetary compensation in exchange for the use of Turkish Air Force bases and the right to move troops through South Eastern Turkey into Northern Iraq. The aim of this work is to give the reader historical background of the strategic alliance these two countries have shared since World War II, and discuss the events leading up to the Iraq War. The main focus of the paper is to understand, through historical context, the reasons why Turkey said "no." This thesis posits three main reasons for the failure of this motion.

Keywords: March 1, 2003, Iraq War, foreign policy, Turkey, US, alliance.

ÖZ

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Bu tez, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi tarafından 1 Mart 2003 tarihinde alınan tarihi kararı incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tarihte Türkiye, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin parasal tazmini karşılığında, Türk hava sahasını, liman ve topraklarını, İncirlik Hava Üssü'nü Kuzey Irak'a geçişi için kullanma talebini reddetmiştir. Bu tezin amacı, iki ülke arasında II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana sürmekte olan stratejik ittifakın tarihsel arka planını ve Irak Savaşı'nı hazırlayan olayları tartışmaktır. Tez, tezkerenin reddedilmesi ile ilgili olarak üç ana sebep öne sürecek ve Türkiye'nin "hayır" cevabının altında yatan faktörleri tarihsel bağlamında tartışacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: 1 Mart 2003, Irak Savaşı, dış politika, Türkiye, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, ittifak

For my mom

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On March 1, 2003, the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Parliament, voted against the measure that would allow the United States and its coalition to invade Iraq through Turkey. Parliament's decision surprised the United States, the international community, and the Turkish politicians, military, and civilians.

The bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey began after World War II, the Cold War bipolar era. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union balanced power in the international system. Furthermore, the United States and Turkey collaborated through the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). More directly, the United States assisted Turkey with economic and military development through the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. The United States also encouraged the European Union (EU) to grant Turkey full membership.

Turkey, located on the continents of both Europe and Asia, it is literally where east meets west. Turkey has had an instrumental role in United States foreign policy. Turkey, a democratic ally, worked with the US to help buffer the United States and European countries against communism. In doing so, Turkey helped curtail Soviet expansion during the containment period of the Cold War, but was able to diversify its foreign policy aims to successfully work in both spheres of influence.

As the Cold War waned Turkey's strategic Cold War advantage began to wane as well with the dismantling of the Soviet Union. Without the Soviet Union as a superpower, the United States emerged as the hegemonic power in a unipolar international system.

Given the historical and mutually beneficial alliance between the United States and Turkey, the United States in 2003 expected Turkey to assist more fully with removing Iraq's Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction. The United States strategy was to move thousands of troops through northern Turkey and to use Turkish air bases for an indeterminable period. As compensation, the United States offered Turkey \$6 billion in cash grants, or up to \$30 billion in low-interest loans. The compensation offered assurance for Turkey's continued recovery after the country's worst economic crisis in 2001.¹

Why did the Turkish Parliament refuse United States compensation by denying the United States' request? Turkey had to consider the consequences to domestic and foreign policies. Domestic policy involved a new democratic political party. In addition, the new civilian government waited for advice from the Turkish military, the protector of Turkey's sovereignty.

¹ Prior to the economic crisis in February of 2001, the inflation rate in Turkey had been steadily rising. In 1999 the IMF supported a new three year standby credit to Turkey. The new counter inflation package was known as the "crawling peg system" and was meant to slow down the rate of inflation by artificially holding it back. However, in November of 2000, when the market expectations showed that Turkey would not be able to meet its targets, the financial market went into turmoil. Capital streamed out of the country, an estimated six to seven billion within one week of the news. Later, following accusations of corruption in three state run banks, rumors of imminent falls in the market, confidence collapsed and the market did fall. The Lira fell 60% against the dollar. While the IMF rescued the market with grants in excess of eight billion dollars, the sharp rise in unemployment and loss of personal revenue brought a sharp decline in public support for the government (Hale, 2000, pp. 341). This also caused a heavy dependence on the United States and its support via financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank.

Furthermore, public opinion was against Turkey's involvement in the Iraq War that would engage two Muslim countries.

Another dilemma Turkey faced was the Kurdish issue, which straddled domestic and foreign policies. The Iraq War could aggravate the Kurdish issue by causing a refugee crisis similar to the one following the first Gulf war, or the stability of Iraq could be compromised thus allowing for an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. This second scenario is concerning as it has the potential to influence Turkish structural integrity in the process. Additionally, a war in Iraq could aggravate Turkey's current ceasefire with the Kurdish separatist group the PKK, and bring the country back into a civil war. The United States claimed that Iraqi territorial integrity was a priority, however actions leading up to the war told a different story. Thus, Turkey was not inclined to join an ally in a war that was ambiguous about what Turkey viewed as a serious domestic threat with foreign overtones.

Turkish domestic policy affected Turkish foreign policy, particularly Turkey's membership in the EU. Two EU members, France and Germany, did not support the United States invading Iraq. The Turkish Parliament's decision was evidence that Turkey shared an opinion with the two countries that did not approve Turkey's application for full EU membership at the 2002 Copenhagen Summit.²

Full membership in the EU would make Turkey eligible for full membership in the Western European Union (WEU), a regional security organization. As such, the March 1, 2003

² The Copenhagen Summit in December of 2002 arguably did not go as well as Turkey would have hoped. Turkey was given the date of December 2004 to begin the prospect of opening accession negotiations with the EU, depending on proper implementation of reforms in the interim (Önis & Yilmaz, 2005, 260). This effectually put the timeframe to 2005 at the earliest. This delay was crucial as the 2004 was the "big bang" accession of ten new member states, including Cyprus. Which would give Nicosia more leverage over the prospects for Turkish accession, in addition, the larger size of the EU would cause decision making processes to be slower and more cumbersome (Robins, 2003, pp. 556).

decision could weaken France and Germany's resistance to Turkey's application. The risk, however, was that the same decision could alienate other EU members that were not opposed to the United States invasion.

In his work entitled *Turkish Foreign Policy Framework and Analysis*, (2005) Mustafa Aydın discusses two kinds of variables, structural and conjunctural, which shape Turkish foreign policy. Structural variables are continuous and rather static. They encompass aspects of both foreign and domestic circumstances, but are not necessarily directly related to the international political realm and the daily changes in foreign politics. Rather, they encompass the long term influence of issues such as geopolitical position, historical experience, cultural background, stereo types, and long term economic necessities over the determination of foreign policy goals. Conjunctural variables on the other hand are dynamic and can change under the influence of domestic and foreign developments. These variables are the blending of interrelated developments in both international relations and foreign politics. Examples of conjunctural variables are end of the Cold War shifts in balance of power, political changes in the domestic arena, personalities of individual policy makers, and daily scarcities of economic factors.

Turkey's participation in NATO in addition to International and regional organizations, and Turkey's alliance with the United States, have been important structural variables to Turkey's security and economic survival. In addition, conjunctural variables in both Turkish Domestic policy and in the international realm were so combined as to result in Turkish Parliament denying the United States access to Iraq through Turkey. Turkey could not sacrifice internal cohesion for external cooperation.

For this reason, the Turkish Parliament's decision was a realistic outcome; not right nor wrong. This thesis relies on archival data that explores how Turkey protected its territory, strategically aligned with allies, and participated in international organizations throughout Turkish history. Turkish history begins with the Ottoman Empire and evolves through the Turkish Republic.

In addition to archived data, the thesis has a foundation in personal interviews with Mr. Onur Öymen and Mr. Abdülkadir Ateş, two members of Parliament in the Republican People's Party. Both men were members of the Turkish Parliament during the time of the vote. The third interview was conducted with Mr. Timothy Betts. Betts was the Counselor for Political-Military Affairs at the US Embassy. All interviews were conducted in April, 2005. The interviews provided information to direct the research of this paper, and included personal and professional views of the interviewee and their perspective surrounding the Turkish Parliament's decision.

Through interviews and archival data, it is clear that the domestic situation and Turkey's relationship with the US foresaw a practical role for Turkey in the war between the United States and Iraq. Nevertheless, Turkish Parliament balanced domestic and foreign policies in its decision on March 1, 2003, declining to authorize US military forces from utilizing southeast Turkey as a staging ground for the invasion of Northern Iraq.

CHAPTER II

TURKISH - US RELATIONSHIP

2.1 Foundations: Late 1930s - 1950s

The Modern day Turkish Republic emerged in the aftermath of World War I. The few years after WWI were as significant to the Ottoman Empire's identity, size, and foreign policy as the Imperial experience itself. Prior to the war, the Ottoman Empire was a vast territory that extended north into the Balkans, and south into the Middle East. Following the defeat, the Ottoman Sultan signed the treaty of Sevres, which ultimately carved the Empire into small portions leaving only central Anatolia in the hands of the Turks, and left them with only one outlet to the Aegean Sea. (Robins, 1991, pp.3) According to Mustafa Aydın,

The Turkish nation carries the deep impression of the historical experiences of being reduced from a vast empire, to extinction, and then having to struggle back to save their national homeland and its independence. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 11)

In May 1919 Greek armies invaded western Turkey which sparked the Turkish War of Independence. The war lasted for four years and ended in 1922. Although the war was a military endeavor, it had political overtones. Turkish nationalists wanted to establish an independent and sovereign Turkey. Via victory in the War of Independence, a strong Anatolian Turkish identity emerged.

Through WWI and through the War of Independence with Greece, Mustafa Kemal (a general in the Ottoman army) proved his strength to establish and lead an independent Turkish

Republic. (Deringil, 1989, p. 65) Mustafa Kemal later changed his name to Atatürk, or Father Turk. The Turkish Republic had firm roots in the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923. Consequently successful negotiation of the Treaty owed its existence to İsmet İnönü. İsmet Paşa was a strong negotiator; he was stubborn and did not give in. Sovereignty was the main theme for Turkey. İnönü worked hard to persuade the allies that Turkey had just as much right to be a legitimate sovereign nation, and it was not to be treated like a colony. Unlike World War I, Turkey had been the victor against the Greek invasion, not the supplicant. (Deringil, 1989, p. 70; Mango, 1999, p. 548)

Atatürk planned an independent Turkish Republic, one that was modern, industrialized, Europe-oriented, and secular. (Robins, 1991, p. 4) Independence encompassed sovereignty, an international factor, as well as identity and unity, which were domestic factors. As such, Atatürk emphasized the centrality of the Turkish identity, a strong divergence from the Ottomans (Robins, 1991, p. 5).

Atatürk advocated modernization around the notion westernization, and industrialization. (Robins, 1991, p. 14) His reforms extended to instituting a strong notion of secularism in the new Turkish Republic. (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, p. 47) The endeavor replaced the Islamic Shari a law with the Swiss civil code in the legal system. He abolished the Caliphate, the historic Muslim spiritual leadership. Furthermore, Atatürk closed private religious schools and colleges. He removed the Islamic lunar calendar and implanted the Gregorian solar calendar instead. Atatürk also changed the day workers rested from Friday, the Islamic holy day, to Sunday, the day Western Christians honored. Finally, one of the most notable changes that the state underwent was changing the alphabet. Ottoman Turkish was written in the Arabic alphabet, the script of the

Koran. Mustafa Kemal commissioned scholars to set about changing the written Turkish language to a useable form of the Latin alphabet. Slowly, all the ways in which Islam was promoted in everyday life was suppressed by these changes. (Robins, 1991, pp 7) Though Atatürk made no formal attempt to eradicate Islam from society, such as closing mosques, he did discourage civil servants from attending them. Atatürk aimed at suppressing the subliminal messages of the religion beneath the secular requirements of the state; this brought Islam to a personal, rather than public level. (Ibid)

After The War for Independence, Atatürk pursued domestic reforms and peace in the Turkish Republic as he upheld independence and sovereignty in foreign policy. He was “seeking friendship with all and alliance or groupment with none” as Tefik Rüştü Aras stated. Aras was the Deputy and Foreign Minister to Turkey during the Atatürk era. He also was the President of the League of Nations in 1937. His statement implied neutrality in Turkish foreign policy, yet Turkey was not strictly neutral. Although Turkey entered limited neutrality agreements with many regional powers, Turkey also signed friendship and nonaggression agreements. The agreements as well as entering the League of Nations during July 1932 demonstrated Turkey’s commitment to collective security.

Following the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938, İsmet İnönü led the Turkish Republic as president. İnönü’s leadership added more caution, isolation, and neutrality to foreign policy throughout WWII. He was cautious not to enter the war until absolutely necessary out of fear that the Soviets would occupy Turkey. Although Turkey had an alliance treaty with France and Britain to join the war when it spread to the Mediterranean, Turkey managed not enter WWII until 1945, when it sided with the Allied powers. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 47)

Victory in siding with the Allied powers in WWII rather than Axis powers facilitated Turkey's membership in the United Nations.

Turkey realized that its neutrality during the war had left its future status ambiguous, in contrast to other European countries whose post war spheres had been clearly defined. (Aydm, 2005, pp. 49-50) However, Turkey was soon forced to align its resources with Europe and the United States because neutrality in the post war environment, due to the change from a balance of power structure to one of bipolarity, was no longer a viable option.

Turkey needed security against as the Soviet Union which made advances on the Straits, as this was an infringement on Turkish sovereign territory. One Soviet Union attempt was to establish a military base in the Straits, the waterway between the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea. (Bishku, 1999, pp. 13-28; Robins, 1991) Politically, the Soviet Union applied new conditions for renewing its friendship and nonaggression treaty with Turkey. The new conditions challenged Turkey's revision of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty that militarized the Straits in 1936. Beyond this, the Soviet Union endeavored to revise the Montreux Convention of 1936 that awarded Turkey international control over two straits, the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

The first post WWII institutional link between Turkey and the US came with the Truman Doctrine in May 1947. The US government assumed principal responsibility for aiding Greece and Turkey as Great Britain needed to focus its resources on domestic issues. It had been hit hard by WWII expenditures.

Policy makers in Washington, however, were divided on the question of military aid to Turkey. The Pentagon lobby supported making Turkey integral to the US Cold War strategy by providing military aid. Conversely, the State Department

objected, arguing that Turkey did not face serious communist penetration, nor domestic strife. (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 28)

Truman's famous speech on March 12, 1947 was the basis for the Truman Doctrine. He argued that the US policy must support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by external powers. The Pentagon also argued that Turkey and Greece were important for controlling the East Mediterranean region, and were the key to future orientation of the Near East (Ibid, pp. 29).

The Truman Doctrine was proposed to create a buffer zone of "cushions of distance" against Soviet expansionism. \$400 million dollars in United States aid was divided between Greece and Turkey. (Merrill, 2006) The Truman Doctrine gave Turkey \$100 million dollars³ to modernize and reorganized the Turkish army. Turkey also bolstered its infrastructure through communication and transportation and logistical capabilities. (Ahmad, 2004, p. 30)

The Truman Doctrine was not a commitment to Turkey's defense against a soviet attack, but instead an expansion of the United States' containment policy. Turkish armies were to slow down the Soviet land offensive, in an effort to give the US and Great Britain time to launch a strategic offensive. (Ibid, pp. 28, 30) The Truman Doctrine, however, did not dissipate Ankara's desire for a pact that would ensure Turkey's protection in a Soviet Union attack. The Truman Doctrine was not a United States commitment to defend Turkey. According to George F. Kennan, the Soviet Union threat against Turkey was more political than military. (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 30-31)

Whereas the Truman Doctrine sought to create a buffer zone against Soviet expansionism through political and military means, the Marshal Plan intended to distribute economic aid to

³ This was only one-fourth of the total aid package, the rest went to Greece.

Western European countries. The Plan aimed to rehabilitate the countries. While Turkey was never originally envisioned in this plan, it obtained partial aid to boost its agricultural sector on the argument that as an outpost to Soviet expansion, Turkey had a heavy defense budget. (Harris, 1972, pp. 31-34)

The lack of assurances towards Turkey's protection through the Truman Doctrine raised its desire for an agreement resembling an alliance. President İnönü wanted a binding commitment to Turkey's defense should it be attacked either by a political defense pact or a formal association of military staffs. (Ahmad, 2004, 30)

Turkey strongly desired acceptance in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization when it formed in 1949. NATO is a regional alliance among (present day) 26 countries in North America and Europe, is responsible for collective defense wherein an attack on one member equates to an attack on all members. Thus, NATO advocates solidarity, safeguarding freedom through political and military means, democracy, individual liberties, the rule of law to resolve conflicts peacefully, and common interests (www.nato.int). When NATO began official operations in December 1950, Turkey was still not a member.

Turkey's interest in becoming a member of NATO was for security purposes. (Robins, 1991, pp. 12) The status of joining a powerful organization such as NATO was also seen as an opportunity to help the country out economically. (Harris, 1975, pp. 45)

After the Soviets made an attempt to overtake for the Straits, Turkey realized that the threat of Soviet expansionism was a strong one. Joining an organization such as NATO, which had the main goal of preventing such expansionism, was important to the safety of the country's geographic marginality. Turkey was suspicious of all states, and entered for the

protection it offered. In addition, Harris argues that Turkey saw NATO as a way to boost economic aid to the country. Money was needed to build up the Turkish army in order to be on par with the rest of Europe. It was assumed that NATO would have some cash benefits as well. (Ibid)

NATO's initial reason for denying Turkey membership was that the organization was unprepared for "new commitments." (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 30-31) Though Turkey was disappointed with NATO's rejection, the newly elected government in Ankara still elected to offer military assistance to the United States during the Korean War in 1950. (Harris, 1972, p. 39) While Turkey's assistance in Korea gained attention in Washington, the organization still denied Turkey's second request for membership in NATO. This time, NATO did not accept Turkey because the country was in the Mediterranean, not the North Atlantic, region. Furthermore, NATO posited that Turkey's membership in NATO could anger the Soviet Union, which shared a border with Turkey.

Following the Korean War, Turkey's participation in the conflict showed implicit commitment to the west, United States therefore supported both Turkey and Greece's membership in NATO in February 1952. (Aydın, 2005, p. 31) "For the time being, the lines of Turkish foreign policy were clearly drawn. Ankara remained totally committed to the U.S. led alliance until the early 1960s. (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 32)"

2.2 Strained Relationship: 1960s - 1970s

"[T]he Turkish-American Friendship, which began with the Truman Doctrine and flourished through the 1950s, began to cool down in the 1960s and deteriorated in the 1970s. (Aydın, 2005, p. 34)" This tested relationship with the United States in the 1960s is often attributed to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis,

and the 1964 Cyprus crisis which culminated in the famous Johnson letter. However, in his book, *Superpowers and the Third World: Turkish-American Relations and Cyprus*, Bölükbaşı states that Turkish-US relations continued to be as strong as they were in the 1950s. (1988, pp. 49)

In 1962, the United States consented to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey because the Soviet Union had agreed to remove its missiles from Cuba. The United States did not consult with Turkey although the unilateral decision protected the United States as well as Turkey for two reasons. (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, pp. 61-62) The first reason is that the missiles could not defend Turkey anyway. The second reason is the Soviet Union exacerbated the threat the missiles imposed when they were in Turkey.

The withdrawal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey did not however, weaken confidence in the United States' reliability and alliance solidarity. (Bölükbaşı, 1988, pp. 49) Instead Turkish ships refused to deliver goods to Cuba in a show of solidarity, public discourse centered on the fact that the missiles were outdated and little help to Turkey's security. Cumhuriyet Newspaper reported that the removal of the missiles was a good will gesture in order to relax superpower tensions (Ibid).

The bigger test arose when Turkey planned to protect Turkish Cypriots following Cypriot President Makarios' proposal to amend the constitution. (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 32) Turkish Cypriots feared these amendments would lead to revision of the entire constitution and Turkish Cypriots would become a minority on the island and lose their communal rights. (Bölükbaşı, 1988, pp. 53)

Prime Minister İnönü's caution kept Turkey from intervening on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots. (Ibid, 66) Ankara instead continuously urged Makarios to abide by the constitution

via written correspondence. (53) Before finally deciding to intervene, İnönü informed the United States of his intentions. The United States opposed the intervention because it could spark a war between two NATO countries and involve the Soviet Union (Moran, 1999, pp. 59-63). On June 5, 1964, the *Johnson Letter* implied that the United States would not prevent Greece from attacking Turkey if Turkey intervened in Cyprus. (Bölükbaşı, 1988, p. 77) Additionally, the United States, and more than likely other NATO allies, would not protect Turkey in a Soviet Union attack. The implications motivated Turkey to reduce its dependence on the United States and to adopt a “multidimensional” foreign policy. (Bölükbaşı, 1999, pp. 25-26) The plan refuted the mutual interests Turkey assumed it shared with the United States. As Bölükbaşı (1988) asserts:

Before 1964, Turkey had assumed that its geopolitical and regional interests were identical with those of the U.S. Both post - World War II leaders, İnönü and Menderes, considered Turkey’s alliance with the U.S. essential to Turkey’s security (p. 245).

However, after the foreign ministry’s re-evaluation of Turkey’s foreign policy in 1967, the government decided to tread a middle path between reliance on the United States and Europe. Turkey has continued to pursue essentially the same cautious policy since the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. (Ahmad, 2004, pp. 33) Cyprus was therefore the catalyst that forced Turkey to reexamine foreign policy in a rapidly changing world. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 67)

Turkey continued to reassess its bilateral partnership with the United States during another Cyprus Crisis in 1974. Turkey justified protecting Turkish Cypriots’ constitutional rights with the 1960 Treaty of Guaranty. In doing so, Turkey disrupted its relationship with the United States. The United States reacted with an arms embargo on Turkey because it alleged that Turkey

did not use the arms for internal security or legitimate self-defense. (Bölükbaşı, 1988, pp. 212-219)

The foregoing two crises in Cyprus as well as one other Cyprus crisis demonstrate how a relationship between unequal allies works: (Bölükbaşı, 1988)

During each of the three Cyprus crises, the U.S. relied on influence as an instrument of its policy to discourage Turkey from landing forces on Cyprus. The appeal to reason, to allied solidarity, to self-interest, and the hint of support or opposition on other issues played a substantial role in U.S. influence attempts. Needless to say, the U.S. power lent credibility to American mediation efforts; yet it was not sheer American power which was taken into account by Turkey, but rather, how it was used and for which purposes. In other words, there were times when the greater power of the U.S. translated into greater influence over Turkey, but there were also times when it did not. (pp. 5-6)

As Turkey reduced its dependency on the United States in favor of a more multi-dimensional foreign policy, it strengthened ties with the Soviet Union. Turkey's new multi-faceted foreign policy was directly related to the Cyprus crisis and sought friendships with those who supported Turkey's Cyprus policy. (Bölükbaşı, 1988, pp. 119)

In addition, support of the Soviet Union on the Cyprus issue would secure support of the communist bloc on Cyprus, or at the very least, put the Soviets in a neutral status, and thereby deny support for the Greek position. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 73) The Soviet Union directed more aid to Turkey than to any other country in the world except Cuba. (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, p. 67) Whereas the aid eased the tension between Turkey and the Soviet Union, the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 reconnected Turkey with the United States. (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, p. 67)

2.3 End of the Cold War: 1980s - 1990s

Reconnecting with the United States resulted in advantages Turkey derived through the 1980 Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA). The Agreement permitted Turkey to upgrade its military, primarily the air force. In addition, the United States benefited because Turkey acquired and continues to favor United States military weapons. (Athanassopoulou, 2001, p. 148)

As the Cold War peaked in 1984, the Western European Union (WEU) adopted new political as well as military objectives, and changed its structure through the Rome Declaration. The objectives gave the WEU a pivotal role between NATO and the UN. NATO, however, assumed considerable responsibility for protecting Western Europe throughout the Cold War.⁴

During the Cold War, the EEC, later the EC, admitted Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986. The Turkish EU relationship was strained from the beginning. As Turkey sought to modernize the country through westernization and

⁴ The Western European Union or WEU, came about from the desire for the creation of a European Army which would operate within the framework of the NATO alliance, and the subsequent failure of the European Defense Community in 1953. The WEU has origins in the signing of the Brussels Treaty of 1948. In 1954 a special Conference convened in London in which the Brussels Treaty was amended to allow Germany and Italy to join, the conclusions of the conference were formalized by the Paris Agreements in October and thus created the WEU. The organization was a reflection the European nations' hopes for peace, cooperation and security combined with social and economic development.

During much of the Cold War, the WEU became a dormant organization, its chief functions were farmed off to other organizations. Security of Western Europe came under the umbrella of NATO. In 1984 at the peak of the Cold War, the WEU celebrated the 30th anniversary of the modified Brussels Treaty, and adopted the Rome Declaration which identified the organizations new political objectives and structural changes. Today the WEU plays a pivotal role as a key player between the UN and NATO. It has a strong political-military nature which allows it to be involved in both aspects (www.weu.int; Tsohatzopoulos, 1998, pp 4-6).

admittance to western clubs, the EU seemed to be a natural step. However, the relationship was never based on common strategic and geopolitical goals, as was the Turkish- US relationship. Therefore as political goals began became more important than economic liberalization, Turkey was left behind. Larrabee and Lesser (2003) explain:

In opening up its ranks to three South European countries, the EC gave priority to political considerations – particularly the desire to stabilize democracy in these three countries – over economic concerns. It thus introduced additional criteria for membership for future members such as adherence to democratic principles, respect for human rights, and the rule of law (pp. 48-49).

The broadened EEC criteria replaced its prior emphasis on trade liberalization and economics. The new focus was on values and norms in an integrated political union. On these principles, the EEC officially rejected Turkey's second application two years after Turkey applied in 1987.

The alliance between the United States and Turkey contributed to the UN's first success following the end of the Cold War. The UN supported a coalition that liberated Kuwait after Iraq invaded it in 1990 when the first Gulf War began. In 1991 and 1992, Turkey collaborated with the UN and NATO after deciding whether to involve itself in Middle Eastern affairs or remain aloof. The question of whether or not to enter the war was never one that Turkey needed to struggle with for long. As a member of the UN, it was expected that Turkey comply with all economic and trade sanctions put on Iraq. Another decision pertained to allowing the international coalition to access Iraq through the Turkish border. To do so, Turkey had to offer the Incirlik Air Base. (Hale, 2000, p. 220)

Beyond military decisions, Turkey was compelled to impose trade sanctions against Iraq. An additional drain on Turkey's revenue would occur after Turkey suspended commercial

dealings with Iraq and closed the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline along its northern border with Iraq on August 8, 1990. This caused economic hardship not only to Iraq, but to Turkey as well (Ibid).

The coalition of forces successfully drove Iraqi troops to retreat from Kuwait. During this time, Turkey's president Turgut Özal showed strong and intense support of joining the war. However, the powers of the president are limited in cases of war, and the decision to send troops abroad and receive foreign troops on Turkish soil is voted on by the Turkish Parliament. Özal asked multiple times for parliamentary permission for the country to send its troops, and subsequently receive coalition troops on Turkish soil. The Turkish Parliament did finally pass the motion on September 5, 1990, however opening Incirlik Air Base for coalition operations was more of a difficult question as this was not strictly a NATO operation. (Hale, 2000, pp. 220) However, Parliament in the end did give permission to use the base in a decision made on January 17, 1991.

Via the Gulf War, President Özal saw an opportunity for Turkey to play an active role in the region, and hopefully reassert its geopolitical significance which had been perceived as waning since the end of the Cold War. (Larrabee and Lesser, 2003, pp. 165) In addition, Özal also saw this as a chance for Turkey to have a place at the peace table in the event of the defeat of Baghdad.

Once Iraqi forces had been driven from Kuwait, the United States urged the Shiites in south Iraq and the Kurds in north Iraq to unite in a revolt against the Baathist government. The government was under Saddam Hussein's leadership. Without adequate United States support, the Shiites and the Kurds failed to defeat Hussein's forces. A victory could have divided Iraq, weakened the region, or provoked civil war that would attract

Iran's intervention. (Rudd and Thompson, 2003) The defeat produced an outcome whereby approximately 500,000 Kurdish refugees fled into Turkey and a larger number into Iran. (Hale, 2000, p. 222) Turkey was faced with a dilemma. They couldn't deny the refugees assistance, nor could they allow them to settle and inflate the current Kurdish situation.

To assist the returning Kurdish refugees, and to show Turkey's strategic importance to the west, especially since the communist threat had attenuated, Turkish President Turgut Özal proposed to the UN that peace keeping forces led by the US control territory in northern Iraq as a *safe haven*. (Hale, 2000) In addition, the Incirlik Air Base on Turkey's southern coast supported British, French, and American pilots as they patrolled a no-fly zone. The lack of coherent leadership in the no-fly zone created a vacuum in the region

The vacuum benefited the Kurdistan Workers Party, (*Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan*, or PKK) active in southeastern Turkey to resist Kurdish oppression. The PKK relied on violence and increased its power under Abdullah Öcalan's leadership. Violence escalated into a "low level civil war" with the Turkish military during the 15 years between 1984 and 1999. (Barkey & Fuller, 1997, p. 65; IISS, 2003, p. 1) The PKK motive is to weaken and divide Turkey using guerrilla warfare as necessary. (Cizre, 2003) In February of 1999, however, the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States helped Turkey locate and capture Öcalan. (Hale, 2000, p. 224)

Turkey's other fear was that the United States would create a Kurdish state in southeast Turkey and in northern Iraq. The fear extended to the possibility that NATO would relinquish some of its commitment to security in the region to the WEU. Recall that Turkey was not a full EU or WEU member. Turkey's fear heightened in 1992 with the renewed 1980 Defense and

Economic Cooperation Agreement. The renewal reduced the United States military presence in Turkey significantly by 1994. (Hale, 2000, p. 219)

The EU initially functioned as the European Economic Community (EEC) The EEC changed its name to the European Community (EC) to reflect more accurately a transforming mission under the 1993 Maastricht Treaty. As such, the EC expanded into the transport policy, taxes and excise duties, social policy, employment policy, education, culture, health, consumer protection, research, the environment, and development aid. Gradually, the EC became the EU.

In 1995, the EU accepted Turkey as a candidate member. Under this status, Turkey incurred sizeable trade deficits and lacked significant authority to influence policy. (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2003, p. 80) Moreover, without full EU membership, Turkey could not rely on the WEU for protection. The 1990s ended with Turkey in a subordinate role in the EU. The Cold War had ended at the beginning of the decade, which eliminated Turkey as a buffer to the Soviet Union. Tanrısever (2003) clarifies Turkey's role:

The collapse of the bipolar international system significantly shaped the positions of Turkey and Russia toward each other in the early 1990s. The strategic importance of Turkey's military role in the Western camp declined mainly because of the collapse of the Soviet threat to the West (p. 133).

The Cold War allowed for the two spheres of influence the US and USSR, to be balanced in the bipolar international. While turkey is not one of the great powers of the twentieth century, it has still been able to play a significant role in world politics. Geopolitical location has placed Turkey in a major position of importance in the international realm, one that can hardly be matched by any other medium power. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 5)

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the United States emerged as the hegemonic in a unipolar system. According to one theory, the hegemon as a single leader stabilizes the unipolar system and provides collective goods. (Crossette, 2000, p. 93) In comparison, Turkish foreign policy has become more unpredictable with the waning of the bipolar system. At the end of the Cold War period, Turkey's strategic position changed radically. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 100) This, along with domestic issues, such as the military coup in 1980, caused the Turkish and European relationship to deteriorate rapidly, and Turkish foreign policy itself showed a strong impetus to grasp at opportunities that emerged. Starting with the military coup in 1980, Turkey saw changes in political structure, economic system, social strata, cultural patterns, religious expression, and foreign policy. (Ibid, 2004, pp. 84)

2.4 Turkey and the US in the new Millennium

In February of 2001, the worst economic crisis in its history hit Turkey. The Lira lost 60% of its value against the dollar. (Hale, 2000, pp. 341) Turkey was forced to go to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) where it received multi-billion dollar grants to stabilize the economy. Meanwhile the sharp rise in unemployment caused public support for the government to fall. (Ibid)

The United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in retaliation against Al-Qaeda after it bombed the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. The United States also aimed to remove the Taliban government and to restore democracy, or at least a pro-Western government. The Taliban harbored the suspected terrorist, Osama Bin Laden, the culprit behind the September 11 attack. As a secular

Muslim country, Turkey abhorred the Taliban, the Taliban's tolerance for Osama Bin Laden, and groups like Al-Qaeda. (Hale, 2000, p. 341) They represented Islamic fanaticism and outraged most Islamists in Turkey. The Turkish public, however, did not advocate Turkey's direct military involvement in Afghanistan. The rationale was that the September 11 attack did not affect Turkey directly.

Disregarding public sentiment, on September 25 Turkey granted United States forces to use Turkish air bases and air space for the Afghanistan mission. By February 2002, the Turkish troops joined the International Security Assistance Force to provide a "native" presence and an authentic Muslim force in the region. (Hale, 2000, p. 343) Although the United States discussed providing economic aid to Turkey, the United States did not officially earmark funds for Turkey.

Turkey was still recovering from the economic crisis, when the Justice and Development Party (JDP, the English translation for *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, henceforth: AK Party, or AKP) won the popular election in November 2002. In a landslide victory, the AKP won the election with 34% of the popular vote. The victory meant that one party would represent a majority in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, 363 out of 550 seats. The AKP has Islamic roots as it emerged from the banned Refah or Welfare Party. The AK Party operates as a Center Right Party to distinguish itself from its predecessor. In addition, the AKP campaigned under the notion that it would help Turkey gain accession to the EU. (Robins, 2003, pp. 549) The leaders of the party are Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül.

The AKP, won on a strong populist platform using “bottom up” policies through increased popular participation.⁵ Conversely, the AKP enjoys unique access to popular support, as it has a strong majoritarian view. (Ayata, 2004 pp. 254) In addition to this strong support from the Turkish public, the party has strong backing by the United States government as well. (Robins, 2003, pp. 560)

After the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the United States switched its focus to Iraq and appealed to Turkey for assistance. Whereas the first Gulf War during the early 1990s endeavored to free Kuwait from Iraq, the Iraqi invasion during the early 2000s was an attempt to topple Hussein’s Baghdad regime. While the United States did not explicitly promise aid for Turkey’s participation in the first Gulf War, the US promised \$6 billion in cash grants, or \$26 to \$30 billion in loan guarantees with long-term repayment and low-interest loans for Turkey’s assistance in the Iraq War. (Çandar, 2004, p. 48)

The aid would ease the war’s damage to the Turkish economy, damage Turkey experienced after the first Gulf War. As significant, the aid would accommodate Turkey’s recovery after the 2001 economic crisis. The aid could also be seen as a way to help the AKP fulfill its election promise of economic recovery. The party also wanted to maintain its status with the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. As the new Turkish government, the AKP was inclined to back the United States in the Iraq War.

⁵ Ayata argues that “The moderate Islamic AKP, along the same lines as the DP [Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes 1950-60] is seen as introducing new political elites with popular backgrounds into the political scene to challenge the power of established elites, and as having greater respect for traditional values. The DP and the WP[Welfare Party]/VP[Virtue Party]/AK[AK Party] Party have both claimed unique access to popular support (pp. 254).”

CHAPTER III

MARCH 1, 2003

Robins (2003) argued that between December 2002 and March 2003, Turkey “underwent the most extraordinary reversal in its foreign relations” (p. 565). In summer 2002, the Turkish military prepared to invade Iraq with the United States and its *Coalition of the Willing*. (IISS, 2003, pg. 1) In February 2003, the Turkish Parliament passed a motion to allow the United States to modernize Turkish military equipment, bases, roads, and infrastructure. All the components appeared to be in place for the Turkish Parliament to pass the motion for Turkish troops to enter a war outside the country, and to allow foreign troops on Turkish soil.

On March 1, 2003, a simple majority in the Turkish Parliament voted to permit the United States to retaliate against Saddam Hussein in Iraq through northern Turkey. The results of the vote were met in Washington with initial pleasure as it appeared as though the motion had passed (Betts, 2005, interview). It was later learned that while it had won in the Parliament with a simple majority of the vote, a two-thirds majority was needed for the motion to pass. According to speaker Bülent Arınç, the measure required three additional votes for an absolute majority. (Verma, 2001) The outcome was 264 yay, 350 nay, and 19 abstentions.

3.1 Turkey Votes No

That Parliament rejected the motion is more an expected outcome than a surprise as Turkish domestic and foreign politics unfolded. In addition to the United States, the stakeholders in Parliament's vote were the AKP as the Turkish civilian government, the Turkish General Staff as the military, and Turkish democracy itself. While the reasons behind the no vote are many, this thesis posits three main reasons in which each of the above noted stakeholders, on the Turkish side, have a vested interest. Moreover, this vested interest has direct correlations to the Turkish-US relationship. The first reason is the reluctance on the part of the AKP as it measured the response from the Turkish population, the military, and the democratic process itself. The second reason is the European Union's multifaceted position on the war, and Turkey's relationship with the organization thus far. Finally, the ambiguity on the side of the US regarding the future of Northern Iraq must be taken into account by all three stakeholders.

3.2 The Power of the Populous and the AKP

The AKP won the elections in November 2002 on a platform of Economic stability and commitment to EU accession. (Pan, 2003, pp. A12) With the country coming out of the worst economic crisis in its history, it was hoped that this majority could have a positive effect on economic policy, ensure the security of Turkish markets, and stabilize the value of the currency. Included in the negotiations with the US over the Turkish northern front was a sizeable economic package. As Phillip Pan points out in his article for the Washington Post on March 1, 2003 that the AKP is vulnerable partly because of the populist platform on which it ran. It promised to get Turkey out

of the elitist politics blamed for the recent economic crisis.⁶ If the AKP went against public opinion, which was strongly against the war, on an issue related to the economy, it could easily alienate its voters. (Ibid)

The United States had been pushing for Turkish cooperation on Iraq since Vice President Dick Cheney visited Turkey in spring of 2002. When the AKP came to power in November of 2002, Erdoğan remained cautious and non-committal, he did not want to alienate the US, who had responded quite positively to the AKP victory. Previous to the elections, Erdoğan expressed a willingness to leave the Iraq decision to the military. (Robins, 2003, pp. 560 – 561)

In the first three months of AKP rule, the political agenda was very full. Not only was the country winding down from one of the largest landslide elections in recent history, but the economic crisis was still on the forefront of peoples minds. In addition, the EU summit in Copenhagen was to take place in December. (Çağaptay, 2003, January 27; Robins, 2003, pp. 552-555) The AKP government was also in a peculiar position regarding the head of the party. As Erdoğan could not officially be a part of the government, his senior deputy Abdullah Gül stepped in to take the Prime Minister's seat until the law could be changed allowing Erdoğan to assume his place as Prime Minister. This form of "double headed governing" continued until March of 2003. (Robins, 2003, pp. 552) While Gül took on politics at home, Erdoğan campaigned internationally for Turkey's success at the upcoming EU conference. (Robins, 2003, pp. 252) The war in Iraq was another topic on the AKP's already overloaded agenda. (Çağaptay, 2003, Jan. 27)

⁶ In 2001, accusations of corruption by Sezer on the part of Ecevit for not investigating corruption in three state banks, brought rumors of imminent falls in the market. Confidence collapsed, and the market fell, they let the Lira go. While the IMF helped to bail out the market, many lost jobs and personal revenue, this caused a sharp decline in the faith in the government (Hale, 2000, pp. 340).

Likewise, the members of the AKP were reluctant to anger the US as it was a strong supporter of the party in the recent election. Nor were they convinced of going against popular opinion. According to polls, over 94% of the population was against the war for various reasons. (Taşpınar, 2003)

Left wing and right wing parties alike demonstrated in opposition to Turkey's involvement in the war. Islamists outside of the AKP were against it because it meant war with another Muslim country. Liberal intellectuals were following the "European fashion" calling the war illegal, as a part of US hegemony, and as a neo-colonial attempt to dominate the Middle East. (Çağaptay, 2005, April 14)

For the members of the AKP in Parliament, this decision to go against popular opinion was difficult. The people had elected the AK party into power, and as politics can be volatile, they did not want to alienate their voting base by agreeing to an unpopular war. Furthermore, the party did not want to be blamed for supporting the war if things went wrong. (Pan, 2003, pp. A1) Gül held off the vote as long as possible, and preferred to wait until after the February NSC meeting in which the council was projected to uphold its previous recommendation of passage. (Robins, 2003, pp. 564) The NSC did not ease the decision for the Turkish Parliament, as Pan states on the eve of the vote,

Turkey's powerful National Security Council, composed of its senior generals and political leaders, had been expected to break the gridlock today, but it ended a critical meeting tonight without issuing a decision about the deployment of US forces. (Pan, 2003, A12)

The major opposition party in Parliament, the Republican People's Party (RPP) or *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP; imposed party discipline on the members of Parliament and voted en bloc to account for a large majority of the negative vote. (Robins, 2003, p. 564) Likewise, parties with smaller representation voted against the motion. With a sizeable majority, 362 of the 550 Parliament

seats, the AKP could have in theory approved the motion. Erdoğan and Gül urged their party to support the measure. (Verma, 2001) They were optimistic about the outcome of the vote. As Erdoğan states in an interview on February 27th,

After having conducted all these discussions and consultations, anything contrary to that decision [negative decision...from the AKP parliamentary faction in connection with the motion] would not emerge from my party faction. (Erdoğan, 2003 February 27, TRT 2 Televizyonu)

However, the leader did not impose party discipline, nor hold a resolution in the party caucus to that effect. “Indeed, so convinced were the AKP opponents of the bill that it would pass anyway, that many either voted with their consciences or abstained. (IISS, 2003)”

With Turkish democracy as a major stakeholder in the event, in the end the true nature of the Turkish democracy was upheld. What caused the motions’ failure was the major opposition party, CHP, voting en bloc against the motion; in addition there were splits within the AK Party lines as well as abstentions.

[A]ltogether around 90 AKP deputies voted against the motion... Even Erdoğan, taken aback and spinning for all he was worth; declared the vote to be a triumph of democratic politics. (Robins, 2003, pg. 564)”

3.3 The EU Factor

On August 8, 2003, the seventh EU reform package went into effect. (Çağaptay, 2003, August 12) Collectively, the reform packages have vastly liberalized Turkish Politics. Some examples of which are the facilitation of Kurdish broadcasting and in use of the language in education, abolishing the death penalty, subjecting Turkish courts to European courts, new laws

guaranteeing freedom of speech, and curbing the role of the military in civilian politics (Ibid). These liberalizations were set forth generally in the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993, and specifically in the Accession Partnership document out of the Helsinki Summit of 1999, which laid out detailed political reforms that Turkey would need to implement before accession negotiations could start. (Hale, 2000, pp. 349)

The United States had been a strong supporter of Turkey's entrance into the Customs Union, and for full membership into the EU. The support has come from the United States' desire to firmly anchor Turkey within the West. (Eralp, 2004, pp. 66) The US' influence in the international arena, however, has not contributed to an invitation for Turkey to join the EU as a full member. Turkey has argued persistently that its policies are compatible with the EU mission. Additionally, the United States has consistently campaigned for an acceleration in Turkey's bid for membership. (Lesser, 2004, p. 90)

The EU, however, has not set a date for Turkey's full accession. One rationalization is that the United States' persuasiveness with the EU regarding Turkey has lost some of its potency. During the Cold War, Turkey was a pivotal state for the US as a strong strategic ally in the region. The US planned to anchor Turkey into the west by integrating it into its institutional settings. For Europe, there were potential costs of Turkish accession into the EU in terms of employment prospects, community wide budgetary transfers, agricultural policies, decision making processes, etc. The EU is a much more inward-oriented organization with more emphasis on democracy and common culture, in contrast to the US which is much more security oriented. (Önis and Yılmaz, 2005, pp. 270) Therefore, from the EU standpoint, Turkey can be seen as a liability easier than as a security asset. Önis and Yılmaz go on to state:

Subsequent American Administrations, right up to the Iraq War, tended to view difference with Europe as being marginal rather than of fundamental significance... differences pertaining to the nature of market economy and democracy were matters of detail...The Copenhagen Summit of December 2002, however, clearly displayed the limits of American power in so far as decision-making regarding EU membership was concerned. (Ibid, pp. 271)

Turkey's relationship with the EU as a candidate for membership, as well as the US' support for Turkey's accession plays an important role in the decision on March 1, 2003. As the AKP, in a complete reversal from its Welfare Party roots, strongly supports and is actively seeking Turkish accession to the EU, the rift that occurred within the EU regarding support for the war in Iraq caused issues for the party. Members of the EU such as Great Britain, Spain, and Italy supported the Iraq War, whereas France and Germany were strongly against the invasion. (Çandar, 2004, pp. 50) With the Copenhagen Summit coming in the same relative period as the Iraq War resolution, the AKP needed to tread carefully as not to alienate potential support for accession.

From the perspective of the military, the vote was a dangerous political endeavor. As a long standing and popular institution in Turkey, dating back to Atatürk and Turkish modern history, the military sees itself as the guardian of Turkey's stability. (Aydınlı, Akyaz, Özcan, 2006, pp. 78, 79)

The military's perceived competence, coupled with longstanding fear of invasions, war and state collapse, helped to elevate the military to the level of Turkey's all around protector from both external and internal threats. (Ibid, 79) One of the major criteria for Turkish accession to the EU has been a reduction in the role of the military in civilian politics. The prominence of the military in public policy is one critical factor negatively affecting Turkey's full inclusion to the EU. (Cizre, 2003, 225) The military has used the NSC as a platform for their own

political agenda. (Ibid, 224) In October of 2001, Parliament passed 34 constitutional amendments that brought the Turkish constitution more in line with Article 10 of the EU Convention on Human Rights. In one of these amendments, civilians were given majority of seats in NSC and the wording was changed from the government “giving priority to” decision by the NSC, to the government “evaluating” decisions made by the NSC. (Hale, 2000, pp. 350, 351)

As Erdoğan and Gül procrastinated on the decision going to Parliament in order to “evaluate” the decision by the NSC, the military needed to consider the repercussions of their actions in this vote. By instructing the Parliament in the vote, the military would not be complying with the reforms set forth the by the EU. The AKP was anxious to show the public that it was fully in support of EU accession. The military was “excited” to do the same as it saw its support for EU to be consistent with its role as a pioneer of modernization. (Aydınlı, Akyaz, Özcan, 2006, pp. 85) In addition, the military needed to continue to muster popular support and did not want to be blamed for an unpopular war. (Pan, 2003, pp. A1)

3.4 US Ambiguity and Northern Iraq

“The seeds of the no vote were actually planted in March 1991, with the creation of ‘safe havens’ that allowed the return of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurds who had fled their country and sought refuge in Turkey and Iran. (Kibaroglu, 2003, pp. 22)” The Gulf War left Turks with a sense of disappointment. The cost of the war was substantial for Turkey, and nothing was “gained” for the country aside from mounting military debt.

Add to this the political vacuum left in the Kurdish-controlled areas that had become breeding grounds for the PKK.

(Hale, 2000, pp. 166) On top of this, the Gulf War also left Turkey with suspicions regarding American policies and intentions in the region, and most specifically towards Northern Iraq. As “Operation Provide Comfort” became “Operation Northern Watch” on January 1, 1997, the NATO peace keeping troops, made up of US, UK, continued to use İncirlik as a base for operations. Permission to continue the use of this base was granted every six months. (Kibaroglu, 2003, pp. 22) The cooperation continued even while the long struggle with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was still continuing. This separatist group within Turkey constitutes a threat to the sovereignty and safety of not only the Turks, but to the Republic of Turkey itself. This threat culminated in a 15 year (1984-1999) “Low level civil war” between the Turkish military and the PKK. (IISS, 2003, pp. 1)

The no-fly zone in northern Iraq was considered by many Turks as a first step in a long term US plan to create an independent Kurdish state (Ibid). Kibaroglu posits two reasons for continued permission of the use of Turkish bases for the operations. First was the fear of a new wave of refugees from Iraq. The second reason was the implicit and tacit approval of successive US administrations of Turkey’s sporadic but large-scale incursions into northern Iraq in the 1990s. The incursions were in pursuit of PKK terrorists. While Europe criticized these maneuvers, the US turned a blind eye. (Ibid)

In regards to the autonomous zone in Northern Kurdistan, and the possibility of an independent Kurdish state, the United States has been even more cryptic as far as what it would like to see happen in the region, especially in light of the first Gulf war and events directly prior to the March 1st vote.

One cryptic message sent in February of 1991, at the end of the first Gulf War, to the region was the calling for rebellion by the Shiites and Kurds, and then not immediately coming to their

aid. The US did not come to the aid of these two groups as it feared with some support the rebellions would win and Washington was more afraid of a divided Iraq than of Saddam Hussein. A divided Iraq would have weakened the general order of the region, or worse caused a civil war in which Iran would have been able to intervene. Via its efforts to keep Iraq united, the US caused a huge refugee crisis in Turkey and Iran. In April of 1991, UN Security Council Resolution 688 called on Iraq to end its repression on its own people. This paved the way for the US and coalition forces to institute "Operation Safe haven", north of the 36th parallel and a no fly zone in Northern Iraq. This no-fly zone thus caused a political vacuum in the region. This in turn led to a de-facto autonomous Kurdish State. (Tripp, 2002, pp. 257, 258) By not initially interfering in northern Iraq based on a fear of a divided Iraq open to Iranian intervention, the United States in effect did just as it feared and broke up the unity of the country.

The No-Fly zone was considered by many in the Turkish military circles, and like minded political followers, to be a long-term plan to create an independent Kurdish state. The suspicions grew when the above noted groups witnessed the close coordination between the US Special Forces and other US agents with the Kurdish militia throughout the 1990s. It is claimed that thousands of Iraqi Kurds went through special training programs abroad, specifically at Guam. Here, they learned about the fundamentals of administering a state bureaucracy including the military. (Kibaroglu, 2005) Statements by those such as Prime Minister Ecevit told of sincere doubts as to the real intentions of the US regarding Iraq. (Ibid)

Finally, the last straw perhaps came in October of 2002. The US made efforts to reconcile the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) run by Jelial Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) run by Masoud Barzani, in Northern Iraq to support the

reopening of the Kurdish Parliament, which of course raised Turkey's fears once again of an independent Kurdistan in Northern Iraq. This "refueled Turkish fears that there is a fundamental conflict between the two countries over Northern Iraq. (Kirişci, 2004, pp. 308)"

The United States stated that it was interested in the territorial integrity of northern Iraq. "Whatever statement is made by Turkey and the United States over the next few days, one of the key principles will be a unified Iraq, an Iraq with territorial integrity, an Iraq with no Kurdish state. (Grossman, 2003, February 23, Interview with CNN Turk, transcript cited on US Embassy in Ankara webpage)" However, based on events following the first Gulf War, and relations with Iraqi Kurds leading up to the vote by US, there were significant reasons for Turkey not to trust the US and its allies

One of the proponents of the above noted tension leading up to the vote regarding the United States' lack of concrete assurances, is the Washington Institute's Soner Çağaptay. He often states that the US was not transparent enough over the Kurdish Issue (Çağaptay and Parris, 2003) and that there was a lack of discussion regarding Kurdish statehood. (Çağaptay, 2003)

The lack of assurance regarding a Kurdish state in northern Iraq could be ignored by neither the AKP nor the Turkish military. Additionally, the two major Kurdish factions in the Northern Iraq the PUK and KDP strongly opposed to Turkish intervention in the upcoming war. Therefore, as expected, the Kurdish members of Parliament in the AKP were against the resolution and voted to reflect this. (Bölükbaşı, 2007, email correspondence) Unfortunately, sufficient archival data reflecting this particular faction in the AKP could not be found, this would therefore make an interesting subject for future research.

CHAPTER IV

FOLLOWING THE MARCH 1st, DECISION

The reaction in the US following the Parliament's decision on March 1, 2003, was not positive. The Bush administration blamed both the AK Party government and the Turkish military for the failure. Many in Washington believed the AKP to be at fault saying that they had failed to demonstrate good leadership, and even speculated that they secretly did not want to approve the motion with their 264 deputy majority. (Güney, 2005, pp. 351) Similarly, William Safire of the New York Times blamed the defeat squarely on the AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Safire claimed that Erdoğan had "transformed [a] formerly staunch US ally into Saddam's best friend. (Safire, 2003, March 24, pp. A15)"

However, the leaders of the AKP were never officially opposed to cooperating in Iraq, and many AKP members informally suggested that the source of the failure comes from the Turkish military leaders. (Taşpınar, 2003) Arguably, the group that was more strongly criticized for its role in the failure was the Turkish military. Wolfowitz, in an interview with CNN Turk in early May, suggested that Turkey should apologize for its mistake in not allowing the US troops entry and the use of a northern front from Turkey. He went on to chastise the military for failing to exercise leadership by not actively lobbying the parliament for a positive vote. These comments caused an uproar in Turkey, and provoked the Turkish military to question whether a more assertive role on the part of the military would have been

compatible with Turkey's more democratic process. (Park, 2004, pp. 495)

Almost immediately following the vote, the US government began pressing Ankara for a second resolution to reverse the defeat of the first motion. (O'Sullivan, 2003) However, the realities of Turkish politics came into play. The AKP government was voted into power on a platform of rescuing the Turkish democracy from corrupt policies of the political elite, therefore, the government could hardly reverse the vote without appearing corrupt and undemocratic itself. Ankara did try to mend relations with Washington, and a measure was eventually passed in the Parliament to allow military over-flights into Iraq by US forces (Ibid). No doubt this was not the former full land forces passage bill that the US government was looking for, but it did allow for some US troops and supply trucks to pass through Turkey. (Olson, 2005, pp. 144) However, instead of the initially proposed \$6 billion dollar aid package, the new proposed package reduced the aid to \$1 billion dollars .(O'Sullivan, 2003)

The measure passed in Parliament in late March of 2003 also allowed for the Turkish army to enter northern Iraq. (O'Sullivan, 2003) The possible sending of troops into northern Iraq became a major point of contention between the two countries. Bush warned Gül that a possible skirmish between Turkish and US troops may be unavoidable if Turkey sent troops into Iraq by itself to protect its national interests. (Güney, 2005, pp. 351) Turkish Parliament Speaker Bülent Arınç maintained that Turkey would make decisions on its own regarding northern Iraq. (Ibid, 352)

Leading up to the war, the Turkish military vigorously negotiated for a memorandum with the US military that would give Turkey a certain amount of freedom of action in northern Iraq. The agreement would have allowed the Turkish military to

set up a buffer zone to limit the passage of Kurdish refugees into southeastern Turkey. In addition, it would have given Turkey the right to send forces into the Iraqi cities of Kirkuk or Mosul in the event of fighting between Kurdish and Turkoman factions, or if the Kurds made any attempt to change the demographics in the cities. (Kapsis, 2005, pp. 386) The memorandum was never signed, however, and when the US and coalition troops invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003, the Turkish military did not trust the US forces to serve Turkish interests in the area.

Two serious incidents happened the in the spring/summer of 2003. The first incident occurred on April 23, 2003. American soldiers stopped a Turkish aid convoy at a checkpoint in Kirkuk. The aid workers turned out to be Turkish Special Forces soldiers in civilian clothing. They were armed with rifles, grenades and night goggles, and were trying to make their way to Kirkuk to deliver the weapons to Iraqi Turkoman forces. (Kapsis, 2004, pp. 387)

The second incident occurred on July 4, 2003 in Sulaymaniyah. American troops arrested and detained Turkish special operations forces. The Turkish special Operations forces were hooded and detained on the grounds that they were conspiring to assassinate elected Kurdish officials in northern Iraq. (Çağaptay, 2003 & 2005) Çağaptay argues that many Turks saw this as a clear sign that Washington favors Iraqi Kurds over a long standing NATO ally. (Çağaptay, 2004) Similarly, the Turkish military is still angry over these incidents.

For Turkey, the war in Iraq was frustrating from its vantage point, on the outside looking in. There was no clearly defined policy for how the two NATO allies should work together. (Park, 2004, pp. 501) Additionally, the arrogant attitude that the US assumed following the defeat of the resolution in the Turkish Parliament served to create a stronger rift. This frustrating and

unstable position put the already weakened alliance at risk. Turkey's main concern was the security of the southeastern region of Turkey, and preventing the emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Additionally, Turkey aimed to prevent PKK militia from using northern Iraq as a staging ground for attacks on Turkey. In autumn of 2003, Washington agreed to take on the PKK in Iraq on Turkey's behalf, however, there was little will or capacity to do so as troops were spread thin throughout Iraq.

US Army had been overstretched due to campaigns in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and needed help with the occupation. The Bush administration ideally wanted to do this without relinquishing much power to UN and by bringing in a Muslim presence on the ground. (Taşpınar, 2003) The US therefore asked Turkey to help the war effort by providing peacekeeping troops in Iraq.

In an effort to end a period of 'strategic pause' between Ankara and Washington, a summit meeting between the AKP, Turkish General Staff (TGS), Turkish Foreign Ministry, and the Turkish National Intelligence Organization produced an agreement to 'in principle' to send Turkish peacekeeping soldiers to Iraq. (Çağaptay, 2003)

On October 7, 2003, the decision was made by Turkish Parliament to dispatch up to 10,000 troops to be deployed in the Sunni Arab region in central Iraq. However, there were fears that the Turkish presence might aggravate the already tense situation within neighboring Kurdish regions. Questions arose as to how much help these peacekeepers would be. Would they contribute to the stability of Iraq? One advocate, Aydıntaşbaş believed they would contribute a lot, as they are Sunni Muslims from the same neighborhood. Sunni Muslims in the region fear Kurdish and Shiite domination, and are afraid they will be punished for Saddam's misdeeds. Aydıntaşbaş also feels this would be a good

way to repair Turkish-US relations after the March 1, decision. (Aydıntaşbaş, 2003)

According to Taşpınar, the fear of an independent Kurdish state was the main reason why the Turkish military was reluctant to publicly endorse the American invasion of Iraq. This thinking was short sighted and counterproductive as it strengthened the Kurdish/US alliance. Similarly, the Turkish decision to send troops to Iraq was motivated by the narrow focus on the Kurdish question. While the troops will temporarily limit the strain on the Turkish-US strategic alliance, the decision had a strong potential to exacerbate these bilateral relations. (Taşpınar, 2003)

The proposed sending of troops was strongly opposed by the Turkish Public. Following the approval of the measure in the Turkish Parliament however, the US administration bluntly told Turkey that the project was being shelved. (Kibaroğlu, 2003, pp. 31; Taşpınar, 2003) The manner in which Turkey's gesture was rebuked by the US caused more friction between the two allies; however, the Iraqi Governing Authority had been the one making the decision, despite the United States' apparent frustration (Ibid).

Following the rebuff, Ankara repeatedly tried to engage US officials, but when these overtures were denied, a more distant, hands off approach was ultimately adopted. (Parris, 2005) As the war continued, the former strategic partnership between Turkey and the US failed to regain its fervor. Turkey continued to work on EU accession criteria and continued to adopt a more multidimensional foreign policy that encompassed neighboring countries Syria and Iran. Both countries have Kurdish populations, and both have been accused of providing safe havens for PKK in the past. However, with the rise of Iraqi Kurdish political profile, the two countries began to cooperate more with

Turkey against the PKK. This may also be a move on the part of Syria and Iran to win Turkey's heart. (Çağaptay, 2005, April 14)

The insurgency had concentrated an unprecedented amount of political power in the hands of the Iraqi Kurds. The PKK enjoyed a relatively safe haven in Iraq under the KDP and PUK. Armed clashes between the PKK and Turkey have been occurring inside Turkey since the removal of Saddam Hussein. In June of 2004, the PKK officially renounced the ceasefire that had been in place since the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. (Çağaptay, 2005, April, 14)

An important sensitivity in Turkey was regarding the status of the PKK. In a visit to Washington in 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan looked for assurances that the Kurdish terrorists groups within Iraq would be designated as such. Bush reassured Erdoğan that this was the case. Both the US and Turkey have agreed that the PKK is a terrorist group and must be eliminated, but the US failed to take concrete steps to prove that it was working to do so. (Güney, 2005, pp. 356)

Despite continued insistence that the US forces needed to work with Turkey to deal with the PKK terrorist group, Washington has continually been unwilling to deal with the problem. The main point of contention between the two countries is in how to deal with northern Iraq. The country as a whole is highly unstable, and the US sees the northern Kurdish area as the most secure, and hence wants to avoid hostilities that a Turkish incursion could cause. Turkey sees the opposite as PKK rebels continue to launch attacks in Turkey. The attacks increased in Turkey over the summer of 2007. Targets were Turkish military units, and tourist areas of Turkey. (Kapsis, 2005, pp. 382; Newsweek, 2007, November 5)

Lack of US action against PKK presence in northern Iraq has exacerbated feelings of resentment among Turkish population,

(Çağaptay, 2005) and Turkey's patience has been running out. Turkey's Parliament voted overwhelmingly on October 18, 2007 to authorize the military to invade northern Iraq in the hunt for Kurdish rebels. However, Turkish leaders met with Iraq's Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, in an attempt to diffuse the situation. Turkey claimed it had no immediate plans for military action in Iraq. (Stockman and O'Brien, 2007, pp. A1)

This vote comes at a very unfortunate time as on October 11, 2007, as US House committee voted to condemn the mass killings of Armenians in Turkey during WWI as genocide.⁷ This sparked angry reactions from Turkey, and even threats to withdraw support for the Iraq War. While the committee vote was nonbinding, and largely symbolic in nature, it still bode ill for Turkish/US relations. Turkish lawmakers warned that if the vote were to be approved in the full house, it might seriously compromise Turkey's support for the war effort in Iraq by not allowing the further use of İncirlik. (Arsu, 2007, pp. A3)

Both countries need to take steps to improve their relationship or both of their interests in Iraq will suffer. Turkey needs the US to help defeat the PKK and ensure that whatever Kurdish identity emerges in northern Iraq poses no threat to the territorial integrity of Turkey. The US needs Turkish cooperation to maintain stability and peace in northern Iraq. (Kapsis, 2005, pp. 382)

⁷ "In the Armenian genocide, a total of 1.5 million Armenians were killed, beginning in 1915, in a systematic campaign by the fraying Ottoman Empire to drive Armenians out of eastern Turkey. Turks have vehemently denied the designation, while acknowledging that hundreds of thousands of Armenians died. They contend that the deaths, along with thousands of others, resulted from the war that ended with the creation of modern Turkey in 1923. Identifying Armenian killings as genocide is considered an insult against Turkish identity, a crime under article 301 of the Turkish penal code (Arsu, 2007, pp. A3)."

4.1 Implications Regarding Northern Iraq – Kurdish Issue

At the core, Turkey's main fears regarding the war in Iraq center around fears an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and the implications it could have on the Turkish Kurdish population, as well as a resurgence of PKK violence in the country. Fear of an independent Kurdish state was one of the main concerns of the Military. However, their desire to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria, show support for the Turkish public who didn't support the war, and allow the AKP to take the blame for an unpopular vote, was behind the Turkish Military's reluctance to publicly endorse the US invasion. At the time of the Parliament's vote on March 1, 2003, Turkey had recently come out of a 15 year struggle with the PKK. "The conflict resulted in 30,000 casualties, which in Turkey, means almost every individual was personally affected. (Çağaptay, 2005, April, 14)" Additionally, The PKK had called a ceasefire in 1999, and Turkey had been enjoying stronger stability in the region.

For Turkey, a nightmare scenario involves Iraq's descent into civil war and the creation of a Kurdish state in the north with Kirkuk as its capital. The Kurds hold an historic claim to the city of Kirkuk and the addition of this area in a Kurdish state would bring strong economic viability. Kirkuk has proven oil reserves of 10 billion barrels, 10% of the country's total, which makes Kirkuk and adjacent oil fields second largest in Iraq after Rumayleh in the south. (Middle East Report, No 35, 2005, pp. 1) That Kurdish state, in contrast with the poverty of the southeastern region of Turkey, could fan secessionist sentiments among the Kurds of southeastern Turkey and could cause another civil war in Turkey possibly leading to the breakup of the Turkish Republic. (Middle East Report, No 35, 2005) Additionally, Turkey fears an independent Kurdish state with control over energy resources. (Ibid, pp.8)

In an effort to combat this nightmare scenario, Turkey over the last ten years had adopted a strong policy towards the Turkoman⁸ population in Iraq. Along with being located adjacent to vast oil reserves, Kirkuk's is also home to a sizeable Turkoman population. Turkey has strong concerns over the Turkoman population in the region. While this concern is not fabricated, it has certainly been manipulated. Ankara has used the group to facilitate its preference in northern Iraq to protect its vital interests there. By manipulating the Turkoman grievances, and stirring up emotions inside Turkey, the drive to protect the Turkoman population in Iraq has gained ground over the last ten years. (Middle East Report, No 35, pp. 10)

In Turkey itself, sending troops across the border is generally viewed as a legitimate response to an impending or actual Kurdish take-over of Kirkuk that would – in Turkish eyes almost by definition – threaten the rights of its Turkoman population. In fact, the very construction of a Turkoman 'issue' is rendering military intervention more likely, as popular mobilization in Turkey in defense of Turkoman rights may generate the kind of pressures that the government, or the military, would be hard pressed to ignore. (Ibid, pp. 11)

Turks commonly blame the US for the war and empowering the Iraqi Kurds, but the AKP government strengthened the US – Kurdish alliance by refusing to open a northern front. This forced the US to become dependent on the Iraqi Kurdish militias. Çağaptay Questions as to whether this was a strategy from the start? (Çağaptay, 2004) Following the fall of Saddam, Kurds became the main building block of US policy towards Iraq. The US exempted Kurdish *peshmerga*⁹ from its policy of disarming militias and instead trained them to be security forces. Approximately 75,000 total *peshmerga* militia played a strong role

⁸ Turkoman are said to hail from Central Asia, not Turkey, but they share a common Ancestry. Kirkuk is known in Turkey as a Turkoman town (Middle East Report, No. 35, pp. 9) .

⁹ The Kurdish militia inside Iraq

in coalition trained Iraqi security forces. This is the most pro-US force in Iraq. (Katzman and Padros, 2005)

However, according to Yavuz and Özcan, these pro-Kurdish policies undermine US strategy of preserving the territorial integrity and creating a democratic country. A common belief among Turks and Arabs was that the US has undeclared intentions of breaking up Iraq into three ethno-religious parts. (Yavuz and Özcan, 2007, pp. 126) Or likewise, events in the region could easily slip from Washington's grasp. Either way, a three state system is not an impossibility.

Leslie Gelb, former Foreign Relations Council chairman, argues that as Iraq was created from three distinct Ottoman provinces by the British, therefore the state has no inherent unity. The Sunni Arab minority was the only group that held any power during the previous regime, and therefore they are the only group with stake in the country's cohesion. (Park, 2004, pp. 500)

Contrary to this fear however, following the fall of Saddam in April 2003, northern Iraq remained stable, and the Iraqi Kurds welcomed the fall of the regime. There was no mass exodus from the country as some had predicted, rather, there was strong lobbying of the US for granting Iraqi sovereignty and for empowering a 25 person Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) with advisory powers. The IGC served until June 28, 2004. The extensive high level Kurdish participation in politics in Baghdad, facilitated by the IGC, marked the first time in the history of Iraq in which Kurds entered politics on an equal footing with the Arab majority. (Katzman and Padros, 2005)

Before Iraq regained its sovereignty, a Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) or interim constitution was signed on March 8, 2004 which laid out a political transition process as well as citizens rights. Much of the debate over the TAL concerned rights and privileges of the Kurds. Many provisions in the

document ensured Kurdish autonomy such as the right to maintain autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and the ban on changes in Iraq's 18 provinces. Kurdish was deemed an official language in Iraq, along with Arabic. The KRG was also given the right to alter the application in Kurdish areas of some laws.

Fearing the Kurdish veto power over some areas of the constitution, Shiite Leaders, particularly Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani called on the UN to pass resolution 1546 which endorsed the handover of sovereignty to the Iraqis without any mention of the TAL. For the 2005 elections, the PUK and KDP joined forces to have a stronger vote. The Kurdistan alliance won 26% of the vote, and 75 seats in the Assembly. (Katzman and Padros, 2005)

Lesser argues that Turks misjudge the strategy and intentions of the US in Iraq with regard to Kurdish separatism. Successive administrations have made it clear that the US does not favor the breakup of Iraq, or an independent Kurdish state, especially one that might threaten the integrity and security of a NATO ally. The US could prove this by concerted action against PKK bases in Iraq, but demands are too large on the limited US resources, and despite its empathy with Turkey's complaints, the US chose to procrastinate. (Lesser, 2006)

This lack of US action against PKK presence in northern Iraq exacerbates feelings of resentment among Turkish population. (Çağaptay, 2005) Washington needs to remind Ankara, by showing them, of the long standing commitment to fighting the PKK. The US gave vital support to the Turkish military in the 1990's and in February 1999 with the CIA's help in capturing Öcalan. (Çağaptay, 2005)

Both Turkey and the US have an interest in expelling PKK from Northern Iraq. While the PKK is Turkey's most pressing security issue, the US puts a higher priority on eliminating Iraqi

insurgency and training Iraqi troops. It is impossible to know the exact number, but it is estimated that 5,000 PKK militants are based in the Qandil Mountains that border Iraq and Turkey. (Kapsis, 2005, pp. 388)

The State Department and Pentagon admit that the United States has neglected to address the PKK issue. Officials at the State Department have asked their Pentagon counterparts to at least take limited action against the PKK to send a positive signal to Turkey, but the military has said it does not have the troops to carry out the job. According to Pentagon officials, they have fully committed their personnel and resources to fighting the Iraqi insurgency. US military planners are understandably reluctant to provoke the PKK and add 5,000 more insurgents to their agenda. However, if the United States is going to rebuild trust with the Turkish military and public, it must help Turkey address its PKK problem. (Kapsis, 2005, pp. 388)

According to Çağaptay AKP should take an active role in combating anti-Americanism in its ranks. Criticisms in the Turkish media will continue, due to democratic process, but “Ankara should take issue with internal mischaracterizations of US actions in Iraq, in the same way the US government does not permit official mischaracterizations of Turkey. (Çağaptay, 2005)”

4.2 The Decline of the Turkish-US Relationship

The dynamics of the US-Turkish relationship following the Turkish Parliament’s decision has strong implications for future of the alliance between the two countries. The way in which each country structures its future foreign policies has roots not only in the decision on March 1, 2003, but will depend on the outcome of the Iraq War itself.

For decades, the Turkish US relationship was called “strategic.” The partnership was based on the need to contain Soviet power. During the Cold war, relations seemed relatively solid, but never really tested via mutual defense. Today, the strategic quality of the relationship is no longer taken for granted as a result of the divergent perceptions on the Iraq war and new international policies on both sides. (Lesser, 2006)

In spring of 2005, Mark Parris wrote that “[w]hile both sides bore responsibility for the fiasco [March 1st decision], ‘strategic partnership,’ meant something very different in both Washington and Ankara on the eve of March 1 than it had that morning. (Parris, 2005)”

Mark Parris calls the current partnership between the US and Turkey more “allergic” than “strategic.” Iraq has been an “unmitigated disaster for US-Turkish relations,” and ongoing disorder within the country has kept the war from evolving into a post-Iraq War phase. Along with the abortive appeal for assistance from Turkish troops, a failure to properly plan a post-combat phase of the Iraq War has reinforced Turkish doubts on American competence and perhaps intentions in the region. (Parris, 2005)

The establishment of mutual transparency and intelligence sharing regarding respective activities in Iraq would help foster mutual confidence and assure each other that they don’t have agendas for undermining one another in northern Iraq.

At the most basic level, the March 1 experience left scars. US civilian decision makers, military planners, and troop commanders were surprised and angered when Turkey did not permit US forces to attack Iraq from its territory forcing them to develop a “Plan B.” These sentiments may have been a factor in subsequent American unresponsiveness to Turkish appeals for

greater involvement in rebuilding Iraq, on the one hand, and for action against the PKK on the other. (Parris, 2005)

Additionally, with the fall of Saddam, the importance of Turkey as a platform for military objectives declined. The US enjoyed the access of new bases throughout northern Iraq. With the removal of this form of leverage, it was easier for Washington to ignore Ankara's views.(Parris, 2005)

Another outcome of the March 1st decision has been raising anti-Americanism in Turkey. The war was unpopular to begin with, and the Turks feel slighted that the US launched the Iraq war, despite the negative reaction from the Turkish Parliament and population. (Çağaptay, 2005) The war, reaction from incidents in early 2003, an US failure to give concrete support to the PKK issue has increased resentment towards US. A BBC survey on January 19, 2005, found that 82% of Turks opposed the Bush administration. This view is now common across political landscape, not just limited to fringe Islamist constituency. (Çağaptay, 2005)

Turkish – US relations are prisoners of geopolitics (Lesser, 2006). In a post Iraq war environment, geopolitics will still play a part in this dynamic relationship. However, instead of focusing on traditional military and security cooperation, Turkey's value to the US will be as a role model of a secular democracy in a Muslim society. (Park, 2005, pp. 505) Turkey's relevance to the US will be more dependent on identity and less on geo-strategic location and military capabilities. (Oğuzlu, 2004, pp. 98)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Analysis of a specific policy, or a specific situation, may require different emphasis on various factors. Foreign policy is not created in a vacuum, and therefore the formulation of the policy is often a response to immediate pressures from other states and the flow of events, rather than the result of long range planning. This makes it more difficult to get to the root of the matter. (Aydın, 2005, pp. 8) In addition, two kinds of variables, structural and conjunctural, help to shape Turkish foreign policy. Those variables can either be apparent in the decision making, process, or suppressed in a given situation. However, the presence of different variables induces different outcomes. This paper aimed to discuss the structural variables in place at the time of the vote, as well as how conjunctural variables came into play. In addition, the aftermath of the March 1st decision was discussed in relation to both the Kurdish issue and the US-Turkish relationship.

Although the United States claims it *understood* Turkey, (Peel, 2003) the political climate surrounding the Turkish Parliament's decision on March 1, 2003 regarding Iraq was misinterpreted as the US focused mainly on the structural variables that it knew of regarding Turkish foreign policy. In this situation, Iraq was not Turkey's aggressor. Hence, invading Iraq extended beyond Turkey's security and NATO's objectives

Historically, Turkey joined NATO-sanctioned military endeavors. NATO, however, did not legitimize the Iraqi invasion.

This was an important roadblock for Turkey in passing the motion in Parliament. Another obstacle was the number of foreign troops initially proposed, 80,000, the United States wanted to station in Turkey. (Çağaptay, 2003) Turkey is innately suspicious of a strong foreign military presence in the country, due to Sevres Syndrome and possible affronts to Turkish sovereignty by allowing so many troops on Turkish soil. While US forces have been stationed in Turkey for years on bases, these soldiers are not the threat. This measure would call for far more troops than have historically been present and they would most likely be stationed outside NATO bases as well. (Ibid)

Another source of miscalculations on the part of the United States might have come from inside Washington, DC. As Turkish lobbies in Washington come nowhere close to the numbers and strength of those of the Greeks, Armenians, and Israelis; Turkish interests have a strong supporter within the administration itself. These advocates understand the strategic importance of the Turkish-US bilateral relationship; they have a hand in policy making and have been strong advocates for Turkey where Turkish nationals have failed. However, since the opinions come second hand through allies in Washington, this sort of lobbying is not traditional. Ian Lesser calls this a “strategic lobby” within Washington. (Lesser, 2004, p. 93) He also argues that while the lobbyists protect Turkish interests in the US, but may have been an unfortunate source of miscalculation regarding the prospects for Turkey’s cooperation in Iraq.

Whatever coercion the United States inflicted on Turkey was not enough compensation for its miscalculations regarding the political climate and the conjunctural variables present at the time. Examples of these indicators for a “no” vote are in the Turkish military’s behavior, an inexperienced AKP, an early split

within the party, and public opinion. Pan (2003) captures the intersection:

After weeks of hard bargaining over a package of economic aid and political assurances from the United States, leaders of the ruling Justice and Development Party have endorsed the U.S. deployment. They enjoy a comfortable 362-member majority in the 550-member parliament, but dozens of legislators are expected to buck the party line because public opinion polls show voters are strongly against involvement in any war against Iraq. By remaining silent, the Turkish military is also adding to the political uncertainty. (p. A12)

Whereas the Turkish military did not pressure the AKP vote, it estimated benefits either way. (Çağaptay, 2003) The motion's success would guarantee funding from the United States Government. The funding, critical to Turkey's economic situation following the 2001 economic crisis on top of extensive military expenses that would be incurred through participation on this war. Otherwise, the motion's failure would convince onlookers, notably the EU, that the military was not swaying Turkish politics. By adopting a low profile to comply with the Copenhagen Criteria, the Turkish military could avoid responsibility for war repercussions. (Robins, 2003, p. 563) Pan (2003) comments on the Turkish military's indecisiveness:

Turkey's powerful National Security Council, composed of its senior generals and political leaders, had been expected to break the gridlock today, but it ended a critical meeting tonight without issuing a decision about the deployment of US forces. (p. A12)

Although the Turkish military did not voice an opinion on the motion, other stakeholders resisted the motion. Aliriza (2003) assigns responsibility for the motion's defeat to a particular stakeholder:

At the same time, the powerful Turkish Military Establishment refrained from giving an unambiguously clear recommendation in favor of the motion, while the president of the Republic and the main opposition in the assembly, the Republican Peoples Party, were openly

against the motion. However, the reality is the vote went down because of AKP defections. (Aliriza, 2003)

Robins (2003) determined that around 90 AKP deputies voted against the motion this surprised even Erdoğan, but he recovered by declaring it a triumph for democracy (p. 564).

Erdoğan could not afford to alienate AKP voters. Over 90% of the population did not agree with a United States invasion of Iraq or with Turkey's involvement. (Pan, 2003) Arguments by the Turkish public included opposition to the motion because it pitted Muslim countries against each other. Other sentiments were that the war was illegal, a hegemonic tool, and a neo-colonial attempt to dominate the Middle East. (Çağaptay, 2003) In addition, the Republican Peoples Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* in Turkish, CHP) was against the motion, (Aliriza, 2003) but did not have strong enough representation in Parliament to sway the vote on their own.

Prior to the election, Erdoğan mentioned that he would be willing to let the Turkish military to make the decision. (Robins, 2003, p. 561) Erdoğan swayed toward a "yes" vote in Parliament during an interview with CNN Turk on February 27, 2003. While Erdoğan urged his party to vote for the motion, he did not hold a caucus. Rather, he left the vote to individual members. Moreover, Erdoğan did not want to alienate the United States because it had supported his party during the election. Additionally, a vote against the invasion, however, would limit Turkey's influence in shaping post-war Iraq.

Although stakeholders in Parliament's vote anticipated an outcome that would allow the United States to enter Iraq through Turkey, the decision was the opposite. The Turkish military, typically, has had power over the Turkish civilian government and over Turkish foreign policy.

The Turkish military staged coups in 1960, 1971, and 1980 as well as one quasi-coup in 1997. After the 1960 coup, the

National Security Council was formed. Initially, the participants included seven civilians and four military representatives. "In the military's view, civilian politicians, held back by populist concerns, often failed to respond promptly to security challenges. (Aydınlı, Özcan, & Akyaz, 2006, p. 82) As the years progressed, the military began to dominate the National Security Council and instructed rather than advised civilian government. (Aydınlı, Ozcan, & Akyaz, 2006, pp. 82-83)

The opportunity for dominance arose with coalition minority governments that changed frequently. (McBride, 2000, SS14-SS15) Moreover, the coalition government rendered civilian government ineffectual, fragmented, and paralyzed. Incessant quarreling among civilian government and quests for individual power among politicians reduced their legitimacy. The military held legitimacy through years of uninterrupted service, and historical importance in their foundations as protectorate of the secular nature of the country, and as a strong link between the United States and Turkey. Military relations formed the bedrock of the US-Turkish alliance. Over the years of strategic alliance, the US and Turkish officers worked together as colleagues, and thus gained strong first hand contact where other social and cultural links were limited. US military officers therefore, were often times Turkey's strongest allies in Washington. (Çağaptay, 2003)

The Turkish military has maintained a constant presence throughout the PKK's terror threats, anarchy, and multiple economic crises. The belief among top-ranking military officials that Turkey is not a unified country has been persistent. (Aydınlı, Özcan, & Akyaz, 2006, pp. 80) As such, the military suppresses cultural and religious divisions to preserve internal cohesion. If military officials permitted similar divisions within its institution, by extension, Turkey would suffer divisions.

The Turkish military's relationship with the United States has strengthened through longevity and multiple opportunities for cooperation. For example, the Turkish military fought with United States soldiers in the Korean War. The Turkish military has also taken part in NATO peacekeeping missions. In addition, the Turkish military functioned with United States military machinery, goods, and supplies. As important, the Turkish military has influenced Turkish security decisions, decisions that often were synonymous with Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey's position on the Iraq War was closer to the position France and Germany held than to the stance other European countries took. (Çandar, 2004, p. 50) Neither country, however, was particularly supportive of Turkey's application to the EU during the 2002 Copenhagen Summit. In the case of France, former French President and serving chair of the European Convention, Valery Giscard d'Estaing argued that only a small part of Turkey was geographically located on the continent of Europe, and that Turkish membership would mean the "end of the European Union." (Robins, 2003, pp. 554) The United States supported Turkey's bid for EU accession. The intensity of the support, motivated by personal security priorities, increased prior to the 2002 Copenhagen Summit. (Önis and Yilmaz, 2005, pp. 263) However, while the support that Turkey received in 1996 with the customs union was seen as helpful, In the post 9/11 environment and the "war on terror," Washington stepped up its resolve to involve Turkey in the EU because it saw Turkey not only in terms of its geo-strategic value, but also its role as a model democracy in a Muslim country. (Robins, 2003, pp. 555) The discourteous and patronizing way in which the US ultimately campaigned for Turkey's case in 2002 became an annoyance in Europe (Ibid).

This interplay between the EU and the United States caused more challenges for the Turkish members of Parliament in relation to the vote on March 1, 2003. In making this decision, the AKP MPs needed to tread carefully as they did not want to alienate any member of the EU who ultimately held the power for Turkey's future accession to the EU. However, the US had been a strong supporter of both the AKP victory, and Turkey's EU bid, therefore the MPs also needed to weigh the possible alienation of Washington as well.

The Turkish military also had a stake in this interplay, specifically in upholding the criteria set forth by the Copenhagen criteria in 1993 and the subsequent amendments to the constitution. In an effort to uphold the EU's requirements for a smaller amount of participation in civilian politics by the military, the NSC therefore refrained from issuing their final recommendation.

Additionally, the Turkish military had to consider the Iraq War's outcome. One outcome pertained to the possibility for a free and independent Kurdistan on Turkey's southern border. Another result was that a humanitarian crisis within Turkey's borders would reoccur.

Turkey did not trust the United States to protect Turkish interest in the northern Iraq border. This distrust related to what Turkey perceived as cryptic signals the United States sent regarding the Kurds after the first Gulf War. Turkey has been concerned about Kurdish autonomy since the Gulf War ended in 1991. Specifically, Turkey wanted to avoid an independent Kurdish state between the border Turkey shares with Iraq. The United States had assured in words, but not in actions that this would not occur. (Çağaptay & Parris, 2003)

The deep rooted fear of such a state coming to inception, and the possibility that it would inspire Turkish Kurds to do

likewise, dividing the Turkish Republic, has roots in the Treaty of Sevres. The fear is more specifically that the West still harbors a desire to carve up Turkey as it would have been under the treaty. This is a major structural variable in Turkish foreign policy.

A further indication of the US ambiguity over the Kurdish situation in Turkey is when it reprimanded Turkey for abusing Kurdish human rights. As such, the United States did not sell helicopters to Turkey to their use against the Kurds. The contradiction is that at the same time, the United States turned a blind eye to Turkish incursions into northern Iraq in its fight against the PKK, a terrorist group. (Kirişci, 2004, pp. 304-307)

The contradiction in the United States reaction to the Kurdish issue helps to explain Parliament's "no" vote. The military remained silent on the issue fearing it would be seen as imposing its will on the Turkish Parliament. The "no" vote also accounted for the Turkish military and the Turkish civilian shift towards a Euro-centric foreign policy. The vote implied that the United States represents Turkey's past and the EU offers Turkey with a future. Whereas Turkey has experienced high and low points as well as rejections, Turkey is determined to gain full membership in the EU.

The United States *coalition of the willing* for invading Iraq totaled 49 countries, few other than the United States provided troops. Neither the UN nor NATO sanctioned the invasion, nor did they play a part in assembling the coalition. This structural variable, along with conjunctural variables of the time, ultimately kept the Turkish Parliament from approving the United States-led Iraqi invasion. When the US received the "no" vote from the Turkish Parliament, the response was less than enthusiastic. Government officials and newspaper reporters alike used harsh words and blamed both the Ruling Justice and Development Party, and the Turkish military.

Washington pushed for a new resolution, and the Turkish Parliament delivered a yes vote the second time around; however, it was to a much more limited package. The US was forced to implement “Plan B” and utilize their Turkish over flight rights as well as other ports from which to launch the northern attack from.

The insurgency was swift, and for Turkey the “no” decision was a double edged sword. On one hand it pacified the public by keeping Turkey, for the most part, out of a very unpopular war. However, the decision caused a strong rift in the Turkish-US relationship, and denied the Turkish government a more hands on approach to one of their strongest security concerns.

What the vote has also done is bring a new awareness in the Turkish-US alliance. The partnership does not need to be called a “strategic alliance” anymore as the political climate has been changing. With the end of the Cold War, and the fall of Saddam Hussein, Turkey’s geopolitical location is not seen on such narrow terms anymore. What the relationship is likely to change into is one that is based on collaboration and identity. The US sees the Turkey as a model for a democracy in a Muslim country. Whether Turkey chooses this form of partnership is still to be seen.

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