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**US Foreign Policy towards Turkey in the 21st
Century**

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Abstrakt

Po skončení studené války se Turecko ocitlo v mocenském vakuu vzniklém rozpadem Sovětského svazu. Americko-Turecké vztahy se v té době staly podružnými a devadesátá léta jsou tak vnímána jako „ztracená dekáda.“ Během té doby však došlo k úpadku tradičních sekularistických stranv Turecku a objevil se prostor pro stranu, která bude ctít demokratické zásady (alespoň do určité míry) a zároveň bude postavena na muslimských základech. Touto stranou se stala AKP se svým předsedou Recepem Tayyip Erdoğanem. Zhruba v paralelně se v USA stal prezidentem George W. Bush a obě země navázaly novou spolupráci zejména po teroristických útocích v září 2001. Přestože AKP podporuje boj proti terorismu (Turecko čelí útokům ze strany Kurdů) a Turecko podpořilo misi v Afghánistánu, vztahy se postupně zhoršovaly. Turecký odpor k válce v Iráku a špatná komunikace ze strany politických špiček obou zemí vedl k ochlazení vztahů. Důležitou roli ve formování vztahů hraje také Turecký přístup k zahraniční politice v regionu. Turecko se v minulé dekádě snažilo o nulové problémy se svými sousedy, což vždy nebylo možné a nevedlo to k velkým úspěchům. S nástupem Baracka Obamy do Bílého domu se situace začala zlepšovat. Obama od začátku dává jasně najevo, že Turecko je pro něj důležitým partnerem pro stabilitu v regionu. Do bilaterálních vztahů však promlouvají další externí faktory, a přestože se spolupráce prohlubuje, k ideálnímu stavu se vztahy stále nepřiblížily.

Abstract

With the end of Cold War Turkey found itself in power vacuum created by the fall of Soviet Union. American-Turkish relations at that time lowered its priority-status and 90s in general are perceived as a “lost decade” for the relations. During that time, traditional secular parties in Turkey experienced a loss on electorate. Therefore space emerged for a new party which will respect (at least partly) democratic rules and at the same time will be based on Muslim traditions. The party was AKP lead by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Almost simultaneously George W. Bush became the President of the United States and both countries started to cooperate closely especially after 9/11 attacks. Although the AKP supports fighting terrorism (Turkey has problems with Kurdish terrorism) and Turkey supported Afghan mission, relations of both countries started deteriorating soon. Turkish stances towards Iraq War, together with bad communication by political elites of both countries lead to colder bilateral relations. Turkish approach towards foreign policy in the region is one of the leading factors for the quality of relations. During the past decade, Turkey tried “zero-problem” policy with its neighbors, which was not always feasible and led to little success. With Barack Obama taking the office the relations started enhancing. Obama keeps emphasizing that Turkey is an important ally to him and for the stability in the region. The bilateral relations are still influenced by many external factors and although the cooperation is more extensive, the ideal partnership has not been achieved yet.

Klíčová slova

Spojené Státy, Turecko, Blízký Východ, zahraniční politika, geopolitika

Keywords

United States, Turkey, Middle East, foreign policy, geopolitics

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V Praze dne 15. 5. 2015

Radim Brach

Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych rád poděkoval PhDr. Janu Bečkovi Ph.D. za vedení práce a rady vedoucí k její konečné podobě.

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V čem se oproti původními zadání změnil cíl práce? Původní cíl zkoumání vývoje vztahů mezi USA a Tureckem zůstal nezměněn. S časovým odstupem je možné zkoumat vývoj vztahů i za pomoci expertních zpráv a sekundární literatury, která dříve nebyla dostupná. S větší znalostí tématu je potřeba zasadit zkoumanou problematiku do širšího kontextu, která kromě otázek bilaterální spolupráce a vojenské koordinace bude brát v potaz i otázky multilaterálních smluv a zahrne i problematiku energetické bezpečnosti.
Jaké změny nastaly v časovém, teritoriálním a věcném vymezení tématu? Časové vymezení zůstává beze změny - tři prezidentská období mezi lety 2001 a 2013. Teritoriálně se práce zabývá oblastmi, které podléhají bezpečnostní spolupráci USA a Turecka. Větší důraz bude obsahově kladen na vývoj vztahů během Obamovy administrativy - jeho vyzvání k vytvoření "Modelového partnerství" a usilování o spolupráci. Toto rozšíření, které zkoumá současné aspekty vzájemných vztahů naopak upozadí problematiku "Arménské otázky"
Jak se proměnila struktura práce (vyjádřete stručným obsahem)? V současné době neočekávám významné změny struktury. <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Úvod2. Historické pozadí vztahů USA a moderního Turecka3. Bush era<ol style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Boj proti terorismu3.2 Irácká svoboda4. Obamova vláda<ol style="list-style-type: none">4.1 Restart vztahů4.2 Arménská otázka4.3 Blízkovýchodní vztahy5. Závěr
Jakým vývojem prošla metodologická koncepce práce? V práci bude použita komparace dvou případových studií. Případné dílčí změny očekávám v následujícím semestru.
Které nové prameny a sekundární literatura byly zpracovány a jak tato skutečnost ovlivnila celek práce? Vzhledem k aktuálnosti zkoumaného tématu jsou dominantním zdrojem jednotlivá

prohlášení a projevy, k nimž bezpochyby patří i následné analýzy ze strany think-tanků. Tyto zdroje budou hlavní částí použité literatury. Práce bude brát v úvahu případnou tendenčnost těchto materiálů.

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Charakterizujte základní proměny práce v době od zadání projektu do odevzdání tezí a pokuste se vyhodnotit, jaký pokrok na práci jste během semestru zaznamenali (v bodech):

Během studia dalších materiálů dochází k rozšiřování vědomostí a díky tomu i k identifikování nejdůležitějších aspektů Americko-turecké spolupráce. Za použití zdrojů Tureckých autorů se daří analyzovat názory vládních i nevládních či opozičních představitelů, což by mělo vést k vyváženosti a větší objektivitě práce. Situace na Blízkém východě a ve východní Evropě jasně ukazuje, že vztahy Spojených států s Tureckem musí zůstat jedním z podstatných bodů americké zahraniční politiky.

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Introduction

The United States has been playing a crucial role in the international politics for more than a half of the 20th century, and one of the regions posing the biggest challenge to the peaceful development of the world was, and in bigger part still is, the Middle East. Trying to explain the relations of the United States with any country located in the eruptive Middle East region or its immediate proximity is a daunting task which always requires taking many diverse factors into account. The development of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey has proven that even countries with a vastly different religious and cultural background can be important partners for one another for many decades. Although there are both highs and lows in the partnership, it is undeniable that the two countries have been able to cooperate in the name of mutual profit and, since the end of World War II, have been strategic partners for one another.

After the end of the Cold War, when the United States remained the sole superpower around the globe, Turkey too needed to re-evaluate its position in global affairs. Apart from the participation in the first war in Iraq, the political representation of Turkey did not choose to play an active role and was rather struggling with an internal identity crisis. As neither the administration of George H.W. Bush, nor the one of Bill Clinton reached for closer ties with their partner on Bosphorus, the 1990s are generally perceived as “lost decade” in the bilateral relationship as well as in the Turkish international development.

In contrast to an uneventful end of the century, the new millennium has brought a brand new set of challenges on both the Turkish and the American side of the Atlantic Ocean: Terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States, the economic crisis of 2000/2001 in Turkey, the election of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP), the denial of access for American troops to Turkey for intervention in Iraq, etc are all events that will be discussed throughout the paper. The first decade offered mainly two presidents on the American side – George W. Bush and Barack H. Obama, two presidents who can hardly be more different in their approach to international affairs.

The neorealist president Bush created unilateralist foreign policy for the United States, especially with respect to the Arab world, which was not positively perceived almost anywhere in the world. Western civilization truly sympathized with

the American public and elites after the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., and allies across Europe supported the intervention against Al-Qaeda radicals in Afghanistan. It was the American warmongering that reversed the multilateralist momentum created mainly among the NATO allies of the United States. The decision to intervene in Iraq not only bound the United States to two parallel expeditionary conflicts. The less justification there was for the war itself (which was supported only by the United Kingdom and Israel), the more energy it drew from the Bush administration, and the lengthier conflicts it created. During the presidency of George W. Bush the United States found itself in the position of the sole but declining superpower, unable to successfully disengage from the Middle Eastern invasions, and incapable of creating any wider multilateral consensus.

Immediately after the election night of 2008 the approval of American politics started to grow, and Obama's visit to Ankara and Istanbul in April 2009 meant the peak of US-Turkish relations since the fall of the Soviet Union. Turkey, as well as many liberal thinkers, welcomed president Obama's suggestion for the restart of the relations between Washington and Moscow, which would indirectly but positively influence sometimes rather ambiguous position of Turkey between the two Cold War adversaries. The significance of Turkey's strategic geopolitical location will be discussed in various parts of the work, and Ankara praised president Obama for bringing an invigorating air into the long-lasting strategic relationship by visiting Turkey on his first transatlantic tour. This not only sent an important message to Ankara, that the new administration counts on Turkey as on one of its crucial partners in wider region, but also proved that Ankara is predominantly seen as Atlantic partner, rather than a model Muslim country.

Having included Turkey into his "European tour" president Obama sent a strong signal, that unlike his predecessor, he believes in the fact that Turkey should play a more significant role, than just the one of the local regional partner. President Obama was also praised by the Turkish political elites as well as the general public when he suggested creating a "model partnership" between the two countries in April 2009. This was followed by his speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly which was also warmly welcomed. As the president-elect, Obama was praised by Turkey as the successor in the Oval Office, who is supposed to "be seen within the larger context of a global quest for new leadership...[and to repair] the reckless policies and

misadventures of the Bush administration.”¹ Ankara expected Obama to leave the path of unilateralism and use of hard power, which eventually happened.

The beginning of the new millennium brought a number of changes for Turkey, too. The Turkish economic crisis and monetary reform was one of the last moments of the rule of the “traditional-type” secularist parties and meant the rise of AKP, which has been dominating the Turkish politics ever since the elections 2002. It is important to say that the leading role in this political force and main Turkish politician, at least of the last decade is current president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It was him who established the party at the end of the last century and who tirelessly fought against secularists and military elites. As many scholars² agree, the issue of bilateral relations between the United States and Turkey cannot be seen as strictly bilateral politics. On the contrary, it is influenced and substantially shaped by circumstances in Turkey’s neighboring countries. Since coming to power, Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been trying to reestablish Turkey as a regional power among the Muslim countries of the Arab World, which makes the cooperation with the United States more difficult in several areas.

One of the biggest challenges to the partnership between Turkey and the United States is Turkey’s energy dependence on Iran and Russia. The geographical proximity of the Russian Federation makes it the biggest trade partner not only within the region but in the whole world. Iran is Turkey’s partner in nuclear energy, much to Americas’ dislike.³ Due to the strategic location between Caucasus/Middle East and Europe, Turkey’s importance for Europe stems from all the natural gas and crude oil transportation through its territory further to the Mediterranean and the rest of the continent, which marks Turkey as strategic point on the map of the world in 21st century.

Although the US-Turkish partnership under Obama administration has been experiencing rather positive moments, it is clear that policies of both countries cannot be always fully convergent – eg. on topics such as Northern Cyprus, Armenian Genocide or approach to Iran’s nuclear program. From this point of view one can

¹ SETA Policy Brief, “The Obama Presidency: A View from Turkey” (Ankara, Turkey: SETA Foundation, January 2009), 3.

² see – “A model partnership:” Flanagan, Lesser, Phillips, Kirişçi.

³ Stephen J. Flanagan, “The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership” (statement presented at hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., USA, May 14 2009), 3.

argue that there is no time for strict bilateralism, and multilateralism is the approach the two countries should embrace. Obviously the most self-presenting forum for cooperation is NATO, American support for Turkey's bid in the European Union, IMF, or UN Alliance of Civilizations, in which Turkey plays active part.

Methodology, Outline, Literature

The research hypothesis proposes that US-Turkish relationship is predominantly determined by the extent of communication on all levels (or lack thereof), and the realistic adjustment of expectations from the mutual relationship. The hypothesis stems from my belief that long-term priorities of both countries are rather convergent, but the difference in approach to consultations and cultural dialogue is the main difference that distinguishes one US president from another. There are various research questions connected with the given topic that I will be answering throughout the whole thesis. What are the tools facilitating Obama's administration to improve bilateral and multilateral relations with Turkey? What are possible the opportunities and challenges to deeper cooperation between the countries? How can these challenges be overcome to strengthen the relationship? What is the influence of external factors for the bilateral partnership?

Turkey has undergone many changes within politics and society since the beginning of the millennium and it is the task for the United States policymakers to correctly analyze her reforms and modernization. It is important to give enough praise for this process to the EU, which through its constant pressure for legislative reforms brings Turkey closer not only to the membership, but in general closer to Western values, rights, and freedoms.

Within a several months into the new millennium both countries have undergone crucial changes that shaped their further development and perceptions of their long-lasting values. To be able to compare policies of both presidents, the thesis will use time frame stretching from George W. Bush's inauguration to the end of president Obama's first term. The reasons for this time span are manifold.

Firstly, Barack Obama's election was in many ways perceived as the end to unilateralist understanding of American power by President Bush. Not only his policies were unpopular among Americans themselves, but he was raising disagreement or even anger in many countries around the world. The support for

expeditionary missions was extremely low both from among the citizens or strategic partners around the globe. In other words Barack Obama was elected as an anti-thesis to the Bush administration, which creates enough possibilities for comparison of these presidents.

Secondly, with the American invasion to Afghanistan, mutual debates and interactions have risen significantly and the United States once again realized that Turkey is an important partner for the stabilization of the region for its proximity to the focal territory as well as its religious similarity. Since the Bush administration diplomatic and military ties have been reinvigorated and president Obama only continues in his trend, which provides with opportunities to analyze the development in strategic partnership.

Thirdly, the analysis of the relationships will end with the end of Obama's first administration. The time frame was set this way in order to create natural ending point of studied events which the change of administrations offers. Moreover, the analysis will be aiming at working not only with primary sources and newspaper articles, but also, and more importantly, with scholarly articles and monographies, which can only hardly cover the up-to-date development in the international arena.

Lastly, the three administratives of presidents Bush and Obama freely correspond with the prime-ministership of Erdoğan. He was the head of the AKP since its establishment in August 2001, having won the 2002 elections and being Prime Minister until 2014, Erdoğan has been the most vocal and pivotal figure of Turkish politics both internally and internationally. In the political system of Turkish Republic, it is the Prime Minister that is the main driving force, and therefore the time overlap between years 2001 and 2012 will serve the topic very well.

From the methodological point this thesis will be based on the historical analysis approach, examining predominantly public primary and secondary sources. Throughout the thesis, descriptive and analytical tools will be used to present and interpret activities and events from the studied period. Due to the fact that relevant measurable data is not available for studying the relationship of the two countries this paper will be built on a qualitative approach, rather than quantitative one, for the analyzing purposes of the dynamics of the cooperation. In each chapter the thesis will aim at presenting data that will be further analyzed and put into the wider regional or global context. Given the fact that Turkey does not possess any significant fossil fuel

reserves, but on the other hand plays significant military role in the region, the paper will mostly focus on political, military, and diplomatic relations. Economic and trade dimension of the partnership will be also studied, but will be given only a limited amount of space.

At this point I would like to define some of the terms that will be used in throughout the whole paper, in order to prevent any possible ambiguity of the text. Firstly, the term Middle East will be used across the chapters and I will restrain from using the term in any other than the conventional sense – therefore this term will be used to describe following countries (in alphabetical order): Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Some scholars or organizations tend to include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, and Georgia into the same group of states.⁴ For the purposes of this study, Cyprus will be treated as single unit thanks to its complicated history and its membership in the European Union.

Similarly, special group will be dedicated to the Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. These countries not only share common history under the rule of the Soviet Union, but are culturally different from the rest of the Middle East region. Furthermore, the complicated relations, especially between Armenia and Azerbaijan together with Turkey, make the case of a separate nomenclature a must more than a choice. Similarly, I will be using the term Turkish neighborhood (or alternatively only “neighborhood”) to identify countries lying in close proximity to Turkish territory but belonging to different groups of countries. This term encompasses following countries and regions: Bulgaria, Cyprus (both Greek and Turkish parts), Greece, Caucasus, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The reason for the use of these terms lies in the fact that many of these countries are not linked together by any other than the geographical factor and the whole group of countries is a rather heterogeneous one.

Although the main focus of the work will be the explanation and analysis of US-Turkish relations in the 21st century, it is important to give the reader at least a brief historical context, which will be done in the first chapter of the thesis. This part will compose of listing the main events of US-Ottoman relations as well as basics of

⁴ CIA World Factbook, “Middle East”, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/wfbExt/region_mde.html (accessed March 5, 2015).

the history of late Ottoman Empire. A higher importance will be given to the history of modern Turkey, especially after World War II, which is the period that started forming the current Turkish relations not only with the United States, but also with West Europe. The aim of the first chapter is not to overwhelm the reader with historical facts, but rather create a firm base for the analysis of current events and intricacies.

The following two parts will be organized in the chronological order – the second chapter will study both administrations of George W. Bush while the third chapter will describe and analyze the first administration of Barack Obama. Within each of the chapter it is impossible to follow only the chronological course of events, therefore I will divide the individual subchapters into parts that will be dealing with one particular topic. The last chapter will study Turkey's and United States' approach towards the potential membership of turkey in the European Union. This topic is not only important for Turkey, but also the United States has its stakes in the partnership of these two entities. It is multilateralism, which is believed to be the future of the transatlantic partnership of the United States with both EU and Turkey.

The "Bush Era" chapter will concentrate on policies that predominantly connected with the wider interpretation of the "War on terror" concept, therefore it will not only study the Afghan intervention, but also the widely criticized operation of "Iraqi Freedom." The "Obama Administration" chapter will be organized in a similar manner. Firstly it will study the restart of the US-Turkish relations as was announced by the President in March 2009. The following part will study problematics of the Armenian genocide and its impact on the current relations of Turkey with Armenia, Azerbaijan and the United States. The individual steps of different actors will be analyzed in this part. Last part of this chapter will study the impact of the Turkish relations with the Middle East countries on the bilateral US-Turkish partnership. In this chapter different hot topics will be discussed, varying from the Turkish approach and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the Iran nuclear program and cooperation with Turkey and Brazil.

The last chapter will evaluate the progress of talks on Turkish accession to the EU. This part will evaluate the input of the individual players in the process, mainly the influence of the Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül. The role of the pivotal EU member states such as Germany, France, and Great Britain will be studied together with the US support for Turkish bid in the EU. The possible scenarios for cooperation

within the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership will be suggested as well as the alternatives without Turkey taking part in the agreement.

For the purposes of writing this thesis I have been using mainly English-written secondary literature produced by American and Turkish authors. One of the main authors that influenced the content of the work is Dr. Ian O. Lesser of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). He is Senior Director of the organization and member of a number of other organizations. Before joining GMF he worked for RAND or the United States Department of State. He specializes, among other, on transatlantic relations and Turkey. His book *Beyond Suspicion: Rethinking US-Turkish Relations (2007)* provides thorough expertise on the topic that will be studied in the following chapters.

Apart from Lesser himself, GMF offers a coherent series of policy papers “On Turkey”, which are written by various scholars and professors such as Ahmet K. Han, Emiliano Alessandri, Joshua W. Walker, or Soli Ozel. Amberin Zaman, who has written on Turkey extensively is a journalist based in the United States and writes her articles in *The Daily Telegraph* or *The Economist*. In her analyses and policy papers she is critical to the current ruling elites as her agenda is based on minority rights in Turkey and the Turkish-Armenian relations. The whole series is a priceless source of information on the current issues that move Turkey’s international agenda and offers to the reader a valuable analysis in a non-exhausting way.

Valuable source of information is provided by Stephen Kinzer and his two books, which concentrate on the politics of Middle East especially with an accent on the United States. Kinzer is a former journalist and correspondent to leading American newspapers and magazines. He has spent significant amount of time in Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc... and has met and interviewed many of key figures of the region. His book *Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds* describes in detail modern Turkey’s political and social development. Kinzer pays a lot of attention to the relations with the United States and other international actors. The other book used for this study is *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances*. In this book Kinzer studies four countries of the region and puts more emphasize of his personal memories and interviews, which he puts into wider context of the historical events.

Some parts of the thesis use knowledge and experience of Zbigniew Brzezinski – political scientist and adviser, who served as a counselor to Presidents Johnson and

Carter. Brzezinski without any doubt has extensive knowledge on international affairs and foreign policy. His books *Strategic Vision*, and *The Choice* offer global insight into US policymaking. These books do not concentrate on bilateral relations of Turkey and the United States, but still offer deep understanding of global affairs with implications for American-Turkish cooperation.

1. Historical context

For a better understanding of contemporary issues between Turkey and the United States it will be beneficial to outline a brief history of bilateral relations between the two countries. It is by no means an attempt to tell a comprehensive history of the Turkish nation in the context of the volatile region, but rather a brief mix of historical events on which current relations are based. Although Turkey became of strategic importance for the United States mainly after World War II, the first contacts date back to the times of the early Union, but at that time the relationship was far from a strategic or model partnership. The first American naval visit dates back to 1800 when U.S. Navy frigate arrived to Istanbul, but throughout the nineteenth century reason for travelling to this cradle of civilization was predominantly commercial one.⁵ One of the main commercial articles of so called “Turkey trade,” was trade with petroleum products and its exports to the Ottoman Empire.⁶

Another, and for many rather surprising, article of trade was a military equipment. Ottoman Turkey has been one of the leading buyers of American surplus weapons and ammunition from the Civil War period and the second half of nineteenth century was marked by travels of American missionaries, especially to the European part of the Ottoman Empire. It is already the time, when Turkey realized her military inferiority and had established embassies in various Western European capitals to embrace western knowledge and culture.⁷ At this point, the American-Turkish (Ottoman) relations were rather insignificant, but for current affairs it allows both

⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 216.

⁶ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 17.

⁷ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 5.

parties not to have any stereotypes from the Ottoman-Christian struggle. During the time of the Ottoman modernization it was not the United States that would be the main “model country,” but rather France, which was geographically much closer. The Ottoman Empire also appreciated French unitary political system over American federalism, which could pose a threat to the sovereignty of the country.⁸ During the second half of the nineteenth century, Turkey increased the extent of Westernization and implemented many laws and practices based on Western European heritage, together with adopting basically a secular educational system.⁹

Another significant episode of Ottoman history leading to the creation of Turkish state was World War I. With different treaties concluding the Great War, a wave of self determination was spreading around Europe not missing the Ottoman Empire. The Sèvres treaty, which was signed in 1920, meant factual dismemberment of the vast territory. Turks blamed President Wilson for coming up with an idea that would leave them only a small part of the original empire and allow for new states to tear away.¹⁰ This motivated different nations in the Balkans, Caucasus and Kurds to struggle for their own respective states at Turkish expense (as seen from Istanbul and later Ankara). Although decades passed since the event, the experience is still alive in the Turkish discourse and the “Sèvres syndrome” was discussed especially in connection with the Iraq War and alleged American support for Kurds and their bid for an independent state.¹¹

The period after World War II is definitely the most determining for current perception of mutual relations. With the rise of the Communist power in Eastern Europe, the non-communist stability of Greece and Turkey became the top priority of Allies directly after dealing with post-war Germany.¹² Because the British could not afford to finance the region any more after 1947, President Truman announced the “Truman Doctrine”, which provided for massive financial aid for both military and

⁸ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 18.

⁹ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 5.

¹⁰ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 216.

¹¹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 19.

¹² Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945. From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 32.

civilian purposes, together with security guarantees.¹³ This was an important step towards the future cooperation between western countries and the Mediterranean region.

During years and decades after the end of World War II Turkey became one of the battlefields of the Cold War, both politically and through military engagement. After being confirmed as the recipient of support from Truman Doctrine, Turkey became member of the OECD in 1948 and the Council of Europe in 1949. The membership in these organizations and an application for NATO membership was by many perceived as a realization of Atatürk's dream of Turkey as a part of Europe.¹⁴ Turkey also had a traditionally good relationship with Jews and it became the second Muslim country, after Iran, to recognize Israel's independence in 1949.¹⁵ After being rejected with the NATO application by the United States and Great Britain for not being enough Western-European or Atlantic, Turkey finally got her membership in 1952.¹⁶

During 1960s and 1970s two main events that were shaping American-Turkish relations and have implications even for current agenda and during this era Turkish policymakers were questioning West's and NATO commitments towards Ankara, although no changes of policies were made from the Turkish side. The first event was Cuban (or in the eastern-bloc terminology "Cuban") Missile Crisis in 1962-63. In early 1960s it was mainly the military perception that determined the extent of the cooperation between the two countries, and the Cuban Missile Crisis was the first significant test of the partnership between NATO and Turkey. To lower the tension the United States agreed to remove Jupiter missiles from Turkey in exchange for the Soviet Union not installing their missiles in Cuba. From the strategic point of view it was a great deal for the United States. The Jupiter missiles were outdated, inefficient and could hardly protect Turkey from any Soviet military aggression. Nevertheless,

¹³Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the cold war 1945-1975*. New York: Wiley, 1976, 54.

¹⁴ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 58.

¹⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 200.

¹⁶ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 60.

from the Turkish point of view the missiles had an important “psychological value.”¹⁷ The Turkish felt in a way betrayed by their close ally and this historical experience is hidden but present even nowadays.¹⁸ Both in 1991 and 2003 Turkey asked for air defense reinforcements and had to wait surprisingly long time to get the Patriot missiles.

In 1964 Turkey announced its plan to defend ethnic Turks in Cyprus and asked Washington for support. President Johnson’s infamous and diplomatically brutal letter was a huge disappointment for Ankara. Johnson warned Turkey that if Turkish troops are deployed to Cyprus the United States would no longer feel obliged to defend Turkey under NATO agreement.¹⁹ This meant that in case the Soviet Union gets involved in Cyprus against Turkey, the United States would not allow to be drawn into the conflict, too. Moreover, Turkey was forbidden to use any military equipment for the intervention, which was donated by the United States earlier. In a way this was seen by Turkey as yet another “betrayal” in a short time, but on the other hand it stabilized already explosive atmosphere.²⁰ The second Cyprus crisis broke out in 1974 when Turkey eventually intervened in Cyprus. This event was even more disruptive for American-Turkish relations than the previous crisis, and led to four year arms embargo and Congressional criticism of Ankara’s Cyprus policy.²¹ Cyprus events lead to strong anti-American sentiments among Turks and for the first time after World War II Ankara felt the need to lower the dependence on the United States and to improve the relations with the Soviet Union.²²

The regional stability was strengthened when Greece reentered NATO in 1980, from which it was expelled in 1967 after the military coup in the country. Having Turkey and Greece both in NATO meant that the threat of military conflict in Aegean

¹⁷ Yücel Bozdaglıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 61.

¹⁸ Ahmet K. Han, *The Double Souls of Turkey and its Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 13, 2013), 1.

¹⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 216.

²⁰ Yücel Bozdaglıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 63.

²¹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 20.

²² Yücel Bozdaglıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 67.

Sea is much lower.²³ During the Cold War era, being in NATO implied also various commitments.

Turkish territory might have been used for nuclear strikes against Soviet territory, risking retaliation against Istanbul or Ankara, and NATO guarantees meant that the United States might have been required to risk nuclear retaliation against its own territory in defense of Turkey.²⁴

On the other hand, before the fall of the Iron Curtain Turkey enjoyed strategic importance. Although this time period was filled with tension and potential annihilation of the mankind, it is important to stress that Turkish contribution to the Western world was significant and during that time the American-Turkish relations were never truly and deeply tested. After Turkish troops participated in the Gulf War in 1991, Turkey got into kind of strategic vacuum which was removed with the beginning of the new millennium.

2. The Bush Era

What was Turkey's role during the presidency of George W. Bush? Why did the relations go so wrong? And did they go wrong? These are some of the questions that will be discussed in the following part of the thesis. In the beginning of the new millennium, the United States policymakers were debating what kind of country Turkey is, whether the Turkish elites will continue embracing an Atatürk type of secularism, or if the politicians will be more reflecting the general pro-Muslim notion of the public opinion.

2.1 The Rise of AKP

In 2002, general elections were held in Turkey and Erdoğan, upon his release from jail, led AKP to its historic victory. Although during this first of its three consecutive elections victories AKP gained "only" 34% of popular vote, but thanks to the election mathematics, division of seats and the Turkish electoral system that

²³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 216.

²⁴ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 20.

requires a party to have over 10% of the votes in order to be able to enter the Parliament, it provided AKP with the majority of seats in the Turkish parliament and gave the opportunity to create a single-party government.²⁵

The first victory of AKP was historic in many respects. Firstly, it was unprecedented in a way that it was the first time that a party which openly admitted its connection to Islam has won the elections and was not overthrown by the military, who is a strong guard of secularism in Turkey. Kemalism became an unofficial ideology of the Turkish modern state as Atatürk became the leader of the nation after the World War II. In one respect, it is the military, which sees itself as the heir of Kemalist ideology and protects secularist notion of the country indirectly and directly by performing several coups since World War II. Maintaining secularism and national unity has been seen as one of the key elements of national interest throughout 1990s and following years.²⁶

It is also very important to try to define somehow AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party) as a fairly new power on the political map of Turkey. It was founded in 2001 after Erdoğan, who was at that moment the Mayor of Istanbul, and his supporters tried to take over the power in the Islamic party. They failed in the attempt and therefore decided to establish new party, to become a pro-western alternative to the Islamic party. AKP defines itself as a “conservative democratic²⁷” party, or as the “synthesis between Muslim identity and modern values, [...to become] an active leader in promising modern values, [...and giving] the world a new and inspiring ‘renaissance’ perspective.”²⁸ Another way of AKP and their leaders, of describing the party, is to point at Islamic roots or background, rather than to proclaim its connection to Muslim faith as such.²⁹

Certainly the AKP government, with its religious background, has brought a different balance to national perceptions and policies, although one arguably

²⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 22.

²⁶ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 136.

²⁷ Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 248.

²⁸ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 138.

²⁹ Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities* (The Washington Quarterly, Summer 2004), 53.

animated more by populism and traditional values than by religion per se. The AKP phenomenon might usefully be described as “recessed Islamism,” an idea that captures the expanding but still constrained role of religion in mainstream Turkish politics.³⁰

The rise of AKP is surely connected with the instability of Turkey’s financial system in 2000-2001 and downfall of traditional elites and parties within Turkey’s politics. “In 2001 [...] the banking crisis [...] led to economic panic and devastated many families. That intensified the conviction of many frustrated secularists that traditional political parties offered them no hope.”³¹ At this stage it was Anatolian small and medium sizes enterprises that started playing a more important role and unlike Istanbul-based secularist elites had more traditional views and opinions. These new political actors are the products of post-cold war development in Turkey and are gradually more and more seen around AKP and ruling offices.³²

These “Anatolian tigers,” which emerged from educational, economic and social reforms show their support to parties that do not turn their back on religious values or traditional heritage that prevailed in the territory for many centuries. Although Atatürk’s reforms and modernization were aiming at the suppression of religion in the public sphere, it did not succeed at changing the mindset and habits of general population, mainly outside cosmopolitan Istanbul and Ankara. This was an absolutely new situation for Washington, as there was little knowledge of what will be the policies of a new single-party government. The United States already had its painful memories with Islamist politics stemming from the Iranian revolution in 1979 or Al-Qaeda terrorism.³³

On the other hand, the Turkish Islamist tradition has been developing over the years and it would be unjust to say that it is a Muslim rule in the fundamentalist sense. AKP embraced a moderate approach to politics and is rather pragmatic in its policies, especially while being under the constantly watchful eye of the secularist-military. The new driving force in Turkish politics and society is not based only on traditional elites,

³⁰ Lesser, “Turkey: ‘Recessed’ Islamic Politics and Convergence with the West,”

³¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 77.

³² Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 41

³³ Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey’s Strategic Model: Myths and Realities* (The Washington Quarterly, Summer 2004), 54.

but also among religious-nationalist figures within the country, which leads to an even higher polarization of the country between the “secularists” and “Islamists.” The sentiment that AKP will turn Turkey from her secularist politics and change it into more religious country has been here always since first AKP election victory in 2002.³⁴

Turkey’s election of AKP is clear signal that democracy and Islam are not ideas which would negate one another, but that it is individual political system and society who determine convergence of the principles. One can argue about populism of AKP and its leaders, but there is no doubt that they created a break-through by the fact that the country has been lead to sustainable democracy by a political party based on an Islamic background.³⁵ “The success of Erdoğan and his AKP does not represent the triumph of Islamist politics in Turkey, but precisely the opposite: its death. Democracy has become Turkey’s only alternative. Even pious Muslims recognize, accept, and celebrate this.”³⁶

By having AKP – moderate Muslim party – ruling and being active member of politics in Turkey, there is no need and space for Islamist alternative, as majority of people is able to participate in elections and chose freely their government to reflect their opinions. Turkey has had a constitution and democratic society for almost one century now and the general public is very reflective to political events in the country. As Brzezinski argues, the promotion of democracy is not always needed to be done by imposing it on other countries in a way that it ignores other historical and cultural traditions (eg. Muslim ones). Turkey is one of the examples where patience and cultural sensitivity bore the fruit of gradual democratization. If the process “takes place through organic growth and not through dogmatic imposition by an alien force, Islamic societies also gradually absorb and assimilate a democratic political culture.”³⁷

There is a significant controversy about this ideological ambiguity of current Turkey – on the one hand it defines itself as strictly secular country, but on the other

³⁴ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 40.

³⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 137.

³⁶ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 138

³⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 225.

hand it broadens the possibilities for religious activities and justifies the reforms as a step towards wider democracy for the country. Nevertheless, the approach of the United States towards Turkey's secularism is rather ambivalent too. The US policymakers like to praise Turkey for being model secular democracy in Muslim world, but at the same time are prone to label Turkey's secularism as too strict for other Muslim countries.³⁸

Although Turkey sees herself as a predominantly secular republic with a west-European model of government (or at least this was the aim during the time of the establishment of the country in 1923), the United States sees her rather differently, which to a certain level hurts American-Turkish relations. The Bush administration has been presenting Turkey as a model country with emphasis on the Muslim dimension, rather than on secularism.³⁹ Secretary of State Colin Powell did manage to infuriate the Turkish population and especially the military in April 2004 when he defined Turkey as a "Republic of Islam" during an interview in Berlin.⁴⁰

US immediate support for AKP as the ruling party is even more interesting, due to the fact that the AKP current president Erdoğan was at the time of elections ineligible for holding public office as he was banned from politics in 1999. But even before Erdoğan became the Prime Minister he already had paid one visit to Washington D.C., where he met President Bush and the eagerly discussed the problematics of global and regional terrorism. At this moment it seemed that a fresh and working healthy was established. Nevertheless, the US administration was about to realize soon that Turkey's support for the "war on terror" cannot be taken for granted.⁴¹

As for the imprisonment, according to the final sentence Erdoğan had to serve 120 days in prison (out of his 10-month sentence) and was banned from holding public office for life. However, sentencing Erdoğan for reciting an old Turkish poem (by labeling it as an attack on secularism and inciting religious hatred) gave Erdoğan not

³⁸ Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 249.

³⁹ Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 249.

⁴⁰ US Department of State, "Press release."

http://germany.usembassy.gov/germany/policy/powell_berlinmitte.html (accessed March 5, 2015).

⁴¹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 24.

only public support, but also an unpronounced aura of political martyr of Islam. The poem, which was delivered in 1997 went first without any significant notice, but was later used to strip Erdoğan of all his elected office as Mayor of Istanbul. In the poem Erdoğan recited:

The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers...⁴²

Not only that the imprisonment did not disqualify Erdoğan in the eye of general public, but upon his arrival to prison he was supported by thousands of people to see him off. In the Orwellian style he proved that some people *are more equal than others*, having had his cell carpeted and having his meals brought in from outside everyday to the prison to ensure the highest quality of living for him. Erdoğan has used his imprisonment for studying various books, and upon his release from jail turned out to have changed many of his more radical views to believe that “[d]emocracy and Islam belief [are] not incompatible. [...] In fact, he told his comrades, the most fervent desire of most Turks was to enjoy both.”⁴³ In 2002, Erdoğan spent months on the road to travel the country and to campaign, and four years after being sent to prison he became the Prime Minister of Turkey.

One of the problems of the pro-western orientation of secularist parties in Turkey is the fact that AKP does not call for burning bridges with the West and European Union. On the contrary, it was Erdoğan and his party, who were supporting set of reforms and potential membership of Turkey in the EU.⁴⁴ Therefore secularists have lost one of possible cleavages that could have been used to gather popular support. During the rule of AKP there has been rise of people describing themselves primarily as Muslim opposed to Turkish. In 2006 44.6% percent described themselves as Muslim first, in comparison to 19.4% of those claiming they are Turkish first. For comparison, the values in 1999 were 35.7% and 20.8% respectively.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the important message for the United States at that point was, and still, is that there are

⁴² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2270642.stm>

⁴³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 20.

⁴⁴ Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities* (The Washington Quarterly, Summer 2004), 57.

⁴⁵ TESEV Official website, <http://www.tesev.org.tr/assets/publications/file/RSP%20-%20Turkey%2011%202006.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2015)

no signs from Turkey that the public would be calling for any type of radical Islam rule or implementation of Shariah law. The demand for this Islamic rule dropped more than by half between 1999 and 2006 from 21% to 9%. From this point of view the United States can be sure that Turkish *vox populi* is not getting more radical, but, on the contrary, it is getting gradually more moderate.

One of the main taboos Erdoğan violated soon after the elections in 2002 when he announced that he wished to legalize wearing headscarves in universities. Not only Kemalists, but also liberals were panicked and Erdoğan's answer was just that he is promoting public and religious freedoms to get closer to Europe. At this point it is important to emphasize that both, wives of Erdoğan and Gül come from traditional families and wear headscarves not only during their public appearances but in their everyday lives.⁴⁶ It is therefore little surprise that majority of founding female members of AKP wear headscarf, too, as one can see on the official AKP website.⁴⁷

On the other hand, it is not rare in Turkey, even under the AKP rule that young women would be expelled from the university just because they wear headscarf and refuse to take it off upon the arrival to the university. This would be less surprising in traditional heartland Anatolia, but the rule is being enforced across the country even in cosmopolitan Istanbul. This is a striking difference if compared to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or Afghanistan. Turkish secularism enabled women to attend universities, but became so radicalized that only those, who are willing to uncover themselves are actually allowed to attend the classes.⁴⁸

Is the new regime in Turkey truly democratic, or should people in the country worry about the future? There have been a lot of changes in the dynamics of Turkish politics with a changing approach towards religion and secularism. The positive thing is that the transition was calm and that there is a natural opposition mistrusting the government, which provides the necessary process of controlling the ruling party. Many people realize that given the development in the region at the dawn of the century, AKP offers a certain amount of stability and predictability, although it is not always the best possible option. The United States could calmly observe the decline of

⁴⁶ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 136

⁴⁷ AKP Official website <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/yonetim/kurucu-uyeler> (accessed March 5, 2015)

⁴⁸ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 79.

radical tendencies both of Islamist wing or secularists, but at the beginning of 2003 the lowest point of bilateral relations during Bush administration was still lying ahead.

2.2 Iraq War

During the Bush administration bilateral US-Turkish relations were based predominantly on political and military cooperation, while a person-to-person approach or cultural exchanges were largely neglected. Especially since 9/11, a big priority was given to the security dimension of relations with any country. The vague definition of terrorism, based on simplistic terms, enabled the United States to create ad hoc coalitions for combating chosen enemies. Not only did not this approach allow the United States to create any comprehensive strategy for fighting terrorists (mainly defined as “Islamic radicals), but also alienated many of traditional partners in the international arena.

The United States’ current global military dominance as perceived by President Bush is not a matter of choice, but at one moment it will eventually fade. What had been upon US policymakers to decide was the approach to this domination. One of the possibilities was to share the hegemony by inciting other powers to get involved in the global rule. The global consensus would strengthen not only American leadership but also universal dedication to fight terrorists of various types.⁴⁹ Just after 9/11 he introduced The National Security Strategy, later called the “Bush Doctrine,” in which he describes the fight against radicals, and anyone who is trying to produce weapons of mass destruction. Strangely enough the doctrine explains how terrorist organizations and dictators will be fought to achieve global peace. The Afghan war started on October 7, 2001 and Turkey gave full support to the US for this war,⁵⁰ participating in ISAF operations and even leading it twice.⁵¹ “Worldwide declarations that ‘We are all Americans’ were not only expressions of genuine empathy; they were also expedient affirmations of political loyalty.”⁵²

⁴⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 1.

⁵⁰ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 2-3.

⁵¹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 46.

⁵² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 1.

For the United States 9/11 was a missed opportunity to become a global leader with widespread support of the majority of countries, but the arbitrariness of American conduct led to gradual US isolation and growth of the burden. “The task of statesmanship is to translate this underlying public consensus on security into a long-term strategy that will mobilize, not alienate, global support.”⁵³ The situation clearly needed some of the American idealism, and will for sharing values combined with more pragmatic and strategic approach towards other countries – mainly in the region – in order to be able to create more stable security environment.

The United States and Turkey both have similar stakes in the problematic parts of the world and they share their enthusiasm for stability in the Middle East region. Unfortunately a high level of mistrust was created by unilateralist style of President Bush. Iraq is one of the delicate countries, in which Turkey has big interests, due to the fact that there is a large community of the Kurdish population in northern Iraq, who are in long term struggle with the Turkish central government especially via PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan – Kurdistan Workers’ Party) movement. Although non-state actors, be it PKK or Al-Qaeda, cannot achieve such military or economic capability as traditional state armies, they create a substantial amount of instability, fear and trauma in the international system and thus they pose a significant threat to local and global powers such as Turkey and the United States.⁵⁴

With the new security environment the strategy has changes, and so did the United States as a partner in the US-Turkish relationship, therefore the foreign policy has been transformed, too. The counterterrorism took over the agenda and the United States became less predictable.⁵⁵ The problem with Turkey is that the country had been rapidly developing and those in the American policymaking structures that once knew the country may find themselves having fully outdated information. With all the misunderstanding and possible mistrust to Turkey, due to Turkey’s engagement with

⁵³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 4.

⁵⁴ Ibrahim Kalin, “US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010), 93-97.

⁵⁵ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 53.

Hamas, Syria, Iran and Russia, US leaders did not feel interested in discussing any strategy in respect to Iraq with their partners in Ankara.⁵⁶

After the November 2002 Turkish general election Abdullah Gül put together the AKP one party government. At that time, Erdoğan was still banned from holding any political office, only to have the ruling controversially dismissed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA – Turkish Parliament). Interim Prime Minister Gül initiated different meetings at the beginning of 2003 to help solve the Iraq Crisis and to play an active role, but little materialized from these high-level talks.⁵⁷ The United States created a coalition of approximately 40 states that aimed at ending the Iraqi dictatorship and deposing Saddam Hussein. Accessing the Turkish territory would be significant asset to the invasion by providing soil for opening second (north/western) front.

In February 2003, the TGNA adopted a bill for the modernization of sea-ports and airports in İskenderun, Mersin, İncirlik, Diyarbakır, Afyon, Çorlu, Sabiha Gökçen and Batman, which was widely perceived as a positive step towards the support of the United States and its allies. Unfortunately for the United States, the newly elected parliament did not wish to continue serving as US “overseas territory” automatically doing what is expected from it. The Turkish government was offered over \$20 billion in loans to stabilize her economy, in exchange for allowing sixty-two thousand soldiers, two hundred fifty-five planes and sixty-five helicopters to be stationed in eastern Turkey.⁵⁸ The US military was counting on using Turkish airspace and facilities during the “Operation Iraqi Freedom;” because the possibility to attack Iraqi territory from this direction would be a significant strategic advantage.

Representatives of the United States both from political and military elites were surprised when on March 1, 2003 the TGNA rejected a motion to enable the US troops to use Turkish ground for invading Iraq.⁵⁹ This unanticipated move not only led to the disappointment of both parties but also brought about a crisis and probably the

⁵⁶ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 58.

⁵⁷ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 3.

⁵⁸ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 215.

⁵⁹ Ibrahim Kalin, “US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010), 103.

lowest point of Turkish-American relations under Bush administration. Former ambassador of the United States to Turkey, Mark Parris, said in 2007:

Surely we do not hold Turkey responsible for it but – given the fact that the war is still on and 3000 US citizens have been killed, it would be unrealistic to say that the March 1st rejection was forgotten totally. During the long process of the ‘Iraq War’ the only thing that is remembered about Turkey on USA side is the rejection of the bill. Nobody knows that Turkey let USA to use its air corridor, İncirlik air base and provided other valuable support. [...] The outcome of the situation affected the views about Turkey negatively.⁶⁰

The refusal has met with dominantly positive reflection in the eye of the Turkish public – the majority of the people refused the war in Iraq as such, and believed that the United States are driven just by its “oil hunt”. “Sentiment against the invasion of Iraq was intense in Turkey, and some members of Parliament even hoped they could prevent its occurring.”⁶¹ Moreover there was a significant amount of people from the public for whom it was almost unthinkable to have such a high number of alien soldiers on the territory of their sovereign country. If we compare the situation to the one in the United States, one can hardly imagine that American lawmakers would allow even a marginal number of foreign troops in US territory. After 9/11 NATO sent AWACS aircraft with an international crew on board as a solidarity move and Washington was very careful about informing and admitting there is a foreign military presence in US airspace. Therefore it is virtually impossible that the US Congress would approve any substantial troops’ deployment within the borders of the United States.⁶² It was a serious mismanagement, mainly but not solely, from the American side to anticipate that the Turkish parliament would allow a big number of units to use the Turkish territory and facilities for attacking other sovereign country, no matter whether it is ruled by a dictator or not.

Another important aspect of the Turkish lack of enthusiasm for American invasion of Iraq was a potential instability and chaos created by deposing the Iraqi

⁶⁰ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 3.

⁶¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 215.

⁶² Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Eruope Project, 2007), 28.

dictator Saddam Hussein. Northern Iraq territory, which is widely inhabited by Kurdish, serves best to Turkey if it is stable and without any turbulence regarding power struggles. Any turbulences, interference or even military intervention would from the Turkish point of view, pose the threat of bringing the Kurdish regime to power, and bring the provinces closer to separatism and bid for sovereign Kurdistan.⁶³ Unfortunately for American-Turkish relations in Iraq and elsewhere, the US military established working relationships with Kurdish peshmergas, who were helping American troops in their fight with Saddam Hussein and Shia militias. As it was later discovered, the United States never actually thought of inhibiting any Kurdish uprising against Turkey nor were they planning setting up a Kurdish nation-state.⁶⁴

The rock-bottom of American-Turkish cooperation (or rather lack thereof) was hit in summer 2003 during the “hood event” in Sulaimania in northern Iraq.⁶⁵ The incident happened on July 4, 2003 when US troops of 173rd airborne brigade detained a Turkish commando force in a Turkoman Front building and placed a hood over their heads. During the raid 11 soldiers were captured for allegedly possessing explosives and ammunition to assassinate a Kurdish leader to have them released 60 hours later in Baghdad. There were rumors that this event was an American revenge for the March 1st rejection and was widely covered in the Turkish media. There is no surprise that the event led to a skyrocketing of Anti-American sentiment among the Turkish population.⁶⁶

To make the matter worse, the US officials were not very successful in communicating with their Turkish counterparts. From the American side, there was certain ambiguity who should be dealing with Turkey. While American military relations with Turkey belong to European Command (EUCOM), Iraq belongs under Central Command (CENTCOM), which did not manage to grow good relations with Turkish officials. American military did not like the Turkish presence in Iraq, because any leak of that information would undermine the US credibility. An eventual leakage

⁶³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 215.

⁶⁴ Amberin Zaman, *WikiLeaks: The Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations and Turkey's Domestic Politics* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 15, 2010).

⁶⁵ Ahmet K. Han, *The Double Souls of Turkey and its Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 13, 2013),

⁶⁶ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

of the information to press and subsequent exaggerated commentary was seen as a serious issue for bilateral military and diplomatic relations.

Although the incident did not solve any substantial strategic objective, it definitely changed the way Turkish elites and the public perceived the United States. Although Turkish anti-Americanism was never aimed at individual people visiting the country,⁶⁷ the overall opinion was that the United States not only do not bring anything positive to Turkey but also pose a security threat to Turkish sovereignty.⁶⁸ With the rise of AKP policies and its populist approach to domestic and international issues, the public opinion is an important aspect of the policymaking process.⁶⁹ In general, spring and summer of 2003 can be retrospectively seen as a period in time when American-Turkish relations were on their long-time freezing point. On the other hand, as it was proven, many of the events that led to deterioration of the relations were based rather on mismanagement of mutual communication and cooperation, rather than on deliberate will to harm the other party. Since then we can see slow but gradual improvements of bilateral relations, although even subsequent events were sometimes received rather coldly by one side or the other.

Shortly after becoming the Prime Minister, Erdoğan proposed a new bill to TGNA in order to relieve pressure from American-Turkish relations. The bill announced on March 20 allowed for following:

For the subsequent duration of six month period as per the article 92 of the Constitution the Government will organize required deeds – the necessity, scope, limit and time of which will be determined by the Government who is responsible for preparing the Military Forces to defend the homeland and maintaining the national security as per article 117 of the Constitution – to deploy the Turkish Military Forces to northern Iraq, to operate these deployed forces in northern Iraq as per the principles, that will be determined when required, in order to sustain an efficient deterrence, and, in case of military operation to let the air elements of foreign military forces to use the Turkish

⁶⁷ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 218.

⁶⁸ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

⁶⁹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 12.

airspace in accordance with the principles and rules that will be determined by Turkish authorities.⁷⁰

In return for passing the bill, the United States offered \$8.5 billion of credit to Turkey and asked for their active participation of Turkey on the war by allowing the US troops to use her territory. Turks had little motivation for serving only as means of the invasion without being able to play an active role in combat and strategy-making processes which stemmed from a deeply rooted dislike for the presence of any other “order setter”⁷¹ in their historical neighborhood. On the contrary, Turkey did not accept the “lesser power status”⁷² and did not provide the expected extent of support as she did during the Afghan war. Although the Erdoğan government gained the parliament’s approval for deployment of the Turkish troops to Iraq, it did not do so, mainly because of Kurdish objections. Nevertheless Turkey did provide an extensive use of the İncirlik air base and Turkish airspace in general to provide logistical support for operations in Iraq. It is estimated that approximately 75% of the material shipped to Iraq was transported via Turkish territory, despite the prevailing opinion that Ankara is not helpful in Iraq. The Turkish government, on the other hand, tried to keep low profile about the issue, being afraid of the public reaction.⁷³ There is no doubt that the Iraq War caused series of problems for the relations between the two countries.

2.3 The Davutoğlu Factor

One of the most important actors in forming foreign policies of AKP and consequently of whole Turkey is Ahmet Davutoğlu who is the main creator of Turkey’s proactive approach towards relations in the neighborhood and even with more distant partners. In his book titled *Strategic Depth*, which was published in 2000, Davutoğlu debated geopolitics, globalization, and Turkey’s role in modern world.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 3.

⁷¹ Ahmet K. Han, *The Double Souls of Turkey and its Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 13, 2013), 1.

⁷² Ahmet K. Han, *The Double Souls of Turkey and its Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 13, 2013), 2.

⁷³ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 24.

⁷⁴ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 30.

This ambitious vision of Turkish role in the region and beyond, formulated by international relations scholar and guru of Islamist politicians, first arrived without being noticed outside the academic world but caught the attention of Erdoğan. Soon to be Prime Minister, Erdoğan, did not trust Turkish foreign ministry, which was in his opinion the headquarters of militant Kemalism. Therefore Erdoğan, upon becoming the Prime Minister appointed Davutoğlu his chief foreign policy adviser. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was dealing with daily diplomatic agenda, Davutoğlu was responsible for formulating long-term strategies.⁷⁵

In Davutoğlu's opinion, the value of the Turkish nation is based on its geopolitical locations, and its ability to create and maintain a complex web of international relations not only in its immediate neighborhood, but also in more distant regions. Turkey, therefore, has the great advantage of being situated in a diverse geopolitical environment – between different civilizations and cultures, connecting Eurasia with the Middle East and Northern Africa. Due to its geostrategic position, Turkey is destined to be the security and energy hub of the whole wider region, connecting the producers of fossil fuels with the consumers in the western world.⁷⁶ Turkish diplomats used to believe that they “live in a bad neighbourhood” and that “the Turk's only friend is another Turk.”⁷⁷ This has changed with the rise of AKP, when Davutoğlu started putting more emphasize on the Turkish Ottoman and Byzantine heritage, placing Turkey as the central country of the region. Although his doctrines are based on rebuilding ties based on the former Ottoman Empire, Davutoğlu himself strictly refuses the accusations of being “neo-Ottoman”.⁷⁸ This perception was shared also by the US embassy in Ankara, as was revealed by one of the WikiLeaks documents, leading to an eventual apology of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Davutoğlu, who was “chided for his ‘neo-Ottomanits’ proclivities in the confidential missives.”⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 219.

⁷⁶ Ibrahim Kalin, “US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010), 99.

⁷⁷ The Economist, *The Davutoğlu effect* (The Economist – print edition. October 2010).

⁷⁸ The Economist, *The Davutoğlu effect* (The Economist – print edition. October 2010).

⁷⁹ Amberin Zaman, *WikiLeaks: The Impact on Turkish-U.S. Relations and Turkey's Domestic Politics* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 15, 2010), 2.

Davutoğlu's foreign policy is based on five principles: "maintaining a balance between security and democracy, 'zero-problem policy with neighbours', developing relations with neighbouring regions and beyond, 'multi-dimensional foreign policy' and rhythmic diplomacy".⁸⁰ The Zero-problems approach means that Turkish-Greek relations stabilized significantly; the meeting of Erdoğan with Putin brought about a thaw in bilateral relations, inviting Israeli and Palestinian leaders to Ankara to sit next to one another was important step in trying to normalize the relations between these two nations.⁸¹ Turkey has strong interest in the diversification of relations and enhancing the cooperation and stability in Iran and Syria, which is the reason why Turkey rarely supports American initiatives for the use of force in the region.⁸² In general Turkey has stakes in the cooperation in the Middle East and neighborhood regions – be it Caucasus, Lebanon or Israel-Palestine. In Davutoğlu's view of the region, Turkey can serve as a diplomatic bridge for neighbors such as Bulgaria and Georgia.⁸³

Davutoğlu, who is still rising in his political career, from adviser, through the position of the foreign minister to being Prime Minister these days, envisioned Turkey as a "hyperactive peacemaker" first by resolving Turkey's problems with her neighbors. However, this is not to be the last step – the ultimate ambition is to create stable region by having "zero problems *between* neighbors".⁸⁴ A Stable region and cooperation would lead to prosperity of all participating countries.

"The main reason for failing to transform the great economic raw material potential of ME [Middle East] countries into a strategic power is that either the available human power of those countries is unqualified or the lack of a healthy legitimacy tie between the qualified people and the preferences of political system. [...] Countries like Turkey and USA will support them as well. Turkey and USA will be more secure because a ME with hopes will not

⁸⁰ Ibrahim Kalin, "US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010),99.

⁸¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 220.

⁸² Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 42.

⁸³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 220.

⁸⁴ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 197.

generate ideologies causing the deaths of our citizens. This transformation is one of the biggest and most difficult missions of the history.”⁸⁵

Davutoğlu’s ability to balance between East and West, grow relations within the Middle East, and cooperate also with the United States and Europe makes him potentially a strong actor in global international affairs.⁸⁶ Turkey’s newly found self-confidence “should be welcomed as signs of a more engaged and responsible partner in regional stability and long-term democratization.”⁸⁷ When the state of “zero problems *between* neighbors” is achieved the aim of Turkish politics should be to evolve from “strategic depth” to a “democratic depth”⁸⁸ which would bring Turkey yet closer to the west and make it an even more reliable partner.

Turkey clearly wants to strengthen the region by building a more stable cooperation and economic ties. Even if this new approach can be in a way irritating for the United States, as it may feel like losing control over the region, the odds are that a strong and independent Turkish foreign policy will eventually be beneficial for the region and consequently for the United States, too.⁸⁹ The Muslim world is looking for a leader and Turkey is definitely able to play the role, if the policymakers accept the view that Turkey is still perceived by the West as “Middle East power”. In earlier times, Atatürk’s motto “Peace at home, peace in the world” was perceived as the doctrine of Turkey’s isolationism. Now it has changed to active engagement with it.⁹⁰

2.4 Post-Iraq Agenda

The year 2003 was surely the bilaterally most dynamic from the eight that President Bush served in the Oval Office. Nevertheless, even the following years

⁸⁵ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 6.

⁸⁶ Ian O. Lesser, “US – Turkish Relations: New dynamics and next steps” (statement presented at hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., USA, May 14 2009), 13.

⁸⁷ Joshua W. Walker, *U.S.-Turkish Relations: Modesty and Revitalization* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 15, 2011), 3.

⁸⁸ Joshua W. Walker, *U.S.-Turkish Relations: Modesty and Revitalization* (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 15, 2011), 3.

⁸⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 199

⁹⁰ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 228.

brought about a development from both sides, but it is important to stress that the Iraq War was dominating the relations. Bush administration can, in general, be perceived as 8 years when mass media was exploited to spread fear among the citizens and the administration turned the United States into a crusader state. “The ‘war on terror’ became synonymous with foreign policy and the United States, for the most part, neglected to build a strategy that addressed its long-term interests in an evolving geopolitical environment.”⁹¹ The Bush policies have, to a significant extent led to growing anti-Americanism in many parts of the world, including Turkey.⁹² According to GMF poll, Turkish public was becoming gradually more critical towards Bush leadership “with only seven percent approving and 81% disapproving [president’s handling of international policies]”⁹³ which was the lowest approval from European countries in 2006. This survey, together with other similar ones,⁹⁴ show that the negative perception from Turkish public is primarily aimed at American international policies rather than the country and culture in general.⁹⁵ Turkey is a key regional player for successful managing of local crises. Nonetheless, no relations were so damaged by the Iraq War and American unilateralism than those between the United States and Turkey.⁹⁶ Previous republican administration failed to reflect Turkey’s power position and let the mistrust to Muslim culture affect this strategic relationship.

The second term of President Bush was to bring about rapprochement between the two countries and one of the main steps towards a more coherent cooperation was confirmed on July 5, 2006 when State Secretary Rice and Foreign Minister Gül signed the *Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue* document in Washington DC. According to the document “both countries pledge themselves to work together on all issues of common concern, including promoting peace and stability in the broader Middle East

⁹¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 122.

⁹² Ibrahim Kalin, “US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010),97

⁹³ The German Marshall Fund of the United States – “Trends 2006,” 21.

⁹⁴ see Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 35.

⁹⁵ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 35.

⁹⁶ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 59.

through democracy; [...]”⁹⁷ Turkey and the United States agreed to work together in order to resolve permanently Arab-Israeli conflict. The goal was to achieve a two-state solution for Israel-Palestinian conflict; to stabilize unified Iraq; fight terrorism (including PKK); work on resolving of Turkish Cypriots issue; and strengthen energy security in wider region, including Caspian basin. The document also anticipated that there will be various communication channels opened – apart from establishing regular top-level discussions, several military and economic bodies were to be created.⁹⁸

Right after announcing the agreement, many Turks voiced their skepticism towards the document and about the fact that Turkey should become a model country for the whole region.⁹⁹ In the United States, Turkey was perceived only as a Muslim country and therefore a clear model for the region, while Turks themselves wanted to portray themselves more as European country in the Muslim neighborhood. As it was proven in the fall of 2007, the Turkish skepticism was not fully unfounded. The United States managed to “betray” Turkey as its ally after thirteen Turkish troops were killed in an attack by the PKK in Sirnak on October 7, 2007. After that, TGNA passed by vast majority a bill allowing the Turkish Army to conduct a cross-border operation in northern Iraq. The United States responded by urging Turkey to keep the negotiations with PKK going and suggested no military steps to be done, while still trying to bring PKK to justice. In other words the United States objected a Turkish military operation in Iraq, as it may not be suitable for its own interests. By this *Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue* failed already its first test.¹⁰⁰

Soon after this unsuccessful episode, the next chapter was about to be written for bilateral relations. Prime Minister Erdoğan made a visit to Washington DC in November 2007 to meet with President Bush and re-establish closer cooperation on various strategic topics. Erdoğan praised President Bush for recognizing PKK as a terrorist organization and both parties agreed on “instant intelligence sharing”

⁹⁷ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

⁹⁸ more details Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

⁹⁹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 69.

¹⁰⁰ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

concerning this agenda.¹⁰¹ Although there was a lot of agreement on important agenda, neither Erdoğan nor Bush went as far as naming the cooperation a “model partnership”, even though in essence it fulfilled all criteria. Nevertheless, this meeting can be seen as a solid basis for future cooperation and the first step on the way for establishing close partnership.¹⁰²

At that time, Erdoğan was travelling to Washington in a very strong domestic power position. The Turkish general elections were originally scheduled for November 2007, but a turbulent atmosphere initiated the elections to take place even earlier. In early 2007 Erdoğan announced that he will nominate Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül for the president’s office, who was about to be elected by parliament in 2007, too. Not surprisingly, there was a vocal secular opposition from politicians, public and military. General Büyükanit directly threatened the AKP by saying that “The Turkish armed forces remain as determined as ever to maintain a social, democratic and secular Turkey.”¹⁰³ Opposition parties in TGNA boycotted meeting to elect the new president, so no quorum could be reached. Erdoğan felt the popular support so instead of nominating a new candidate for the office, he called for new general elections.¹⁰⁴ During the campaigning he toured the country, and on July 22, 2007 his AKP achieved a grand victory. Erdoğan’s party received 46.6% of the total vote, getting 341/550 seats in TGNA.¹⁰⁵ Having this new political power, AKP did have little problems electing Gül as the new president of Turkey on August 28, 2007. Although military leaders refused to attend his inaugural reception. It took the military two weeks to congratulate Gül on the victory and still warned him, that the armed forces will remain alert to defend secularism in the country.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Ibrahim Kalin, “US – Turkish relations under Obama: promise, challenge and opportunity in the 21st century,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Vol.: 12 – Num.:1 (2010), 103.

¹⁰² Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 4.

¹⁰³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 182.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 137.

¹⁰⁵ Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 255.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 184.

The cooperation between Bush and Erdoğan was made easier by the stance of the American President on the issue of the Armenian genocide. Although the Armenian lobby is very powerful in American politics and emphasizes the need of American politicians to recognize it, President Bush never actually used the term *genocide*.¹⁰⁷ Turkish President Gül stepped forward for reconciliation when he visited Yerevan in 2008 to attend a football game between the national teams of both countries. Armenia and Turkey signed protocols for normalization of relation and reopening the land border, which was closed in 1990s after Armenia's war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Unfortunately, due to Mr. Erdoğan's insistence on resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, the protocols were not ratified.¹⁰⁸ The motions for recognizing the Armenian genocide have appeared in the Congress repeatedly since the beginning of this millennium, and are mainly supported by Representatives and Senator from California, where there is a numerous Armenian community. Every one of these attempts brings the opposition of Turkish politicians, stating that passing of the resolution would seriously damage the bilateral American-Turkish relations.

3. Obama

3.1 The "Model Partnership" Explained

The U.S. – Turkish relations were always built on strategic understanding of geopolitical importance of the other counterpart and some scholars would argue that there were only some three "golden eras"¹⁰⁹ of mutual partnership. Ian Lesser would go even further to argue that something like this has never occurred in the bilateral relations, although he is willing to admit that the "golden age" that was built during Clinton's administration has been lost under Bush administration in post-9/11 interventionist neo-conservative policies.¹¹⁰

President Obama has suggested in his speech at TGNA that the United States "will convey...deep appreciation for the Islamic faith, which has done so much over

¹⁰⁷ Tuba Dağcı Gül, "Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party's Era," *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 5.

¹⁰⁸ The Economist, *The Davutoğlu effect* (The Economist – print edition. October 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Tuba Dağcı Gül, "Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party's Era," *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012): 2.

¹¹⁰ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 17.

the centuries to shape the world -- including in my own country. The United States has been enriched by Muslim Americans.”¹¹¹ He also praised the promotion of “Muslim politics” without creating Islamic state and in similar manner former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton supported AKP policy of “Turkish model” of politics as possible example for new Arabic regimes.¹¹² “The three pillars of the AKP model – pragmatism, Muslim politics, and passive secularism”¹¹³ are cornerstones for functioning relations with the United States providing that promotion of ideological Arab Islam ideas will be limited to substantial questions and will avoid stooping to mere ideological issues. A Muslim secular state is the ideal partner for the United States in the Middle East.

Re-election of Obama into his second term has been welcomed in Turkey with joy and meant for Ankara certain continuity in policies that were established during the first term in office. The optimism was somehow reduced when the United States rejected the Palestinian bid for non-member statehood under the UN.¹¹⁴

The Model partnership for the two countries means leaving the concept of strategic partnership which was based on military and intelligence cooperation. The new approach should be much more complex, creating stronger ties that will not only embrace whole former partnership but also include creating of common values around the region, diversification of the relations to other sectors and, according to the Turkish understanding, also an “intensified cooperation (partnership) between USA and Turkey in order to establish a new regional order in the countries and regions around Turkey so that Turkey and USA actively cooperate in resolving of the crisis and conflicts related to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Armenia and Arab-Israel.”¹¹⁵

The practical usage of the “model partnership” will be seen in the years to come, but from this it is clear that the Turkish side welcomes it more than warmly. It is disputable to what extent it was part of Obama’s grand strategy (if there is anything

¹¹¹ Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama to The Turkish Parliament” (Turkish Grand National Assembly Complex, Ankara, Turkey, April 6, 2009).

¹¹² Ahmet T. Kuru, *Muslim politics without an "Islamic" state: can Turkey's Justice and Development Party be a model for Arab Islamists?* (Doha: Brookings, 2013), 1.

¹¹³ Ahmet T. Kuru, *Muslim politics without an "Islamic" state: can Turkey's Justice and Development Party be a model for Arab Islamists?* (Doha: Brookings, 2013), 7.

¹¹⁴ Gökhan Bacık, “Turkey and the United States: What to Expect in Obama’s Second Term” (German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 5, 2012), 1.

¹¹⁵ Ramazan Gözen, “Turkish - American Relations in 2009,” *Perceptions*, Vol.: 11 – Num.: 3-4 (2010): 65.

like this in his foreign policy), or if it was rather an *ad hoc* announcement which will have no deeper implications for the future. The Turkey has high expectations as was documented in a statement by Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs: The “model partnership is not a matter of choice, it is a must.”¹¹⁶

Why does the alliance between the United States and Turkey evolve? Most importantly there are very little common “essentials”¹¹⁷ – values and ultimate goals that would be shared by both parties. Washington and Ankara differ on the global politics views and it is the newly embraced pragmatism of President Obama that drives these countries together to a mutual cooperation. Obama has left the straightforward ideologically driven politics that were practiced by his predecessor. On the contrary he pursues the path of finding a pragmatically most suitable solution for the given situation. This also means that the United States became a rather unpredictable counterpart to many of its allies and these days the only certain value is the immediate profit for the United States. On the other hand it is one of the policy features that both countries share, as long as Turkey also seeks maximizing its influence and power in the region.

Although Turkey and the United States do not share many “essentials,” it would be an exaggeration to state that their alliance is based only on their common enemy as Bacik¹¹⁸ suggests in his paper. For both countries there is too much at stake to just leave the partnership develop on its own. The countries are pragmatic partners, they share common threats but they also both benefit and will benefit in the future from it in economic and cultural spheres. Furthermore, for Ankara there are no natural allies that could take the place of the United States without limiting Turkish power, leaving no alternative for ruling AKP. For the United States, on the other hand, it is advisable to cooperate with Turkey to a certain extent, rather than to remain on the outlook for partners elsewhere or else grow gradually more autocratic with its Islamic government.

3.2 Bilateral or Global Partnership?

¹¹⁶ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party’s Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012): 8.

¹¹⁷ Gökhan Bacik, “Turkey and the United States: What to Expect in Obama’s Second Term” (German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 5, 2012), 4.

¹¹⁸ Gökhan Bacik, “Turkey and the United States: What to Expect in Obama’s Second Term” (German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 5, 2012),

As it was mentioned above, many problems of the U.S.-Turkish relations stem rather from global issues and problems of the region than from the bilateral misunderstandings and colliding goals. On the one hand, the two countries are members of global institutions such as NATO, IMF and WB. On the other hand there are many issues that make the cooperation much more complicated especially as Turkey is located in the area which is very closely followed and influenced.¹¹⁹

Another touching issue in the field of multilateralism is question of Iran. On the one hand Turkey together with the United States opposes Iranian nuclear program, on the other hand Turkish government together with Brazil signed treaty with Iran about trade of nuclear material for peace usage. Turkey together with Iran works on limiting power of Kurds in eastern Turkey. Fighting Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan – PKK) has been one of the main issues of Erdoğan's government in the sphere of domestic security (although we can argue if it is only domestic or international security as Kurdish minority population spreads around different countries in the region.) The Iraqi Kurdish support to PKK's violence inside Turkey was also one of the factors influencing the U.S.-Turkish relations as the United States needed cooperation of Turkish government for redeployment of its troops.¹²⁰

The main policy of AKP's government, which Obama was dealing with, is so called “zero problem policy with neighbors,” which is aimed at normalizing relations with its neighbors in the region. This is potentially very beneficial policy for the United States given the premise that the policy actually works. What we have been witnessing during the Arab Spring uprisings around the region was the complete opposite. Turkey refused to support president Morsy, did not support Egyptian military regime, supports Syrian rebels and is not on good term with the Gulf monarchies.¹²¹ All assessed Turkish “zero problem policy” turned out to be “zero friend policy.”¹²²

¹¹⁹ Tuba Dağcı Gül, “Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party's Era,” *Alternatives* Vol.: 11 - Num.: 2 (2012), 2.

¹²⁰ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 6.

¹²¹ Piotr Zalewski, “How Turkey Went From 'Zero Problems' to Zero Friends.” *Foreign Policy*, August 22, 2013.

¹²² Piotr Zalewski, “How Turkey Went From 'Zero Problems' to Zero Friends.” *Foreign Policy*, August 22, 2013.

The problem of the policy itself is clear: Turkey, having many neighbors and countries in its “sphere of influence” – if there is anything we call like this – faced the daunting challenge of satisfying all the counterparts at once, which is similarly difficult task as resolving Israeli – Palestinian disputes, which poses problems for the United States foreign policy for decades.

In other words, no matter if the strategy created by Ahmet Davutoğlu was grand or silly it was doomed to failure or at least not to work fully. He argues that Turkey needs to play more important role in the region, which stems from its strategic geopolitical position, and that Turkey’s foreign policy must be more proactive seeking engaging of all countries of the region politically and economically. Davutoğlu’s name is connected with the transformation of Turkish foreign policy, which he started carving already as the Prime Ministers Chief Advisor on Foreign Policy.¹²³ One of the examples that “zero problem policy” works to certain extent can be demonstrated by trying to normalize Turkish-Armenian relations by signing two treaties and Turkish president Abdullah Gül’s visit to Armenia in 2009.¹²⁴

Turkey’s strategic position between Europe and Asia can not only be understood strictly geographically and strategically, but can be also explained in broader and more figurative terms as the bridge between East and West, which was among others stressed by Obama during his 2009 visit to Ankara: “Turkey is bound to Europe by more than the bridges over the Bosphorous. Centuries of shared history, culture, and commerce bring you together. Europe gains by the diversity of ethnicity, tradition and faith -- it is not diminished by it.”¹²⁵

With the new United States National Security Strategy¹²⁶ from January 2012 Obama’s administration was seeking to move the focus of its foreign policy from Europe and Middle East to the Pacific area. This was on the one hand bad news for Europe, that it will not be as important for future deals as before, on the other hand it gave incentive to Turkey to play more significant role in the region “and [in] the

¹²³ Kemal Kirişçi, “The transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The rise of the trading state,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Num.: 40 (2009): 37.

¹²⁴ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 6.

¹²⁵ Barack Obama, “Remarks by President Obama to The Turkish Parliament” (Turkish Grand National Assembly Complex, Ankara, Turkey, April 6, 2009).

¹²⁶ Department of Defense, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense” (Washington, D.C., USA: Department of Defense, January 2012).

burden-sharing perspective of multilateralism and indirect and/or cooperative engagement (leading from behind) in crisis zones.”¹²⁷

There are many other issues that would deserve deeper studying, such as decades long disputes about Cyprus, or Incirlik Air Base, to which the United States would like to gain more stable, not *ad hoc*, access. These and other issues that influence functioning of the “model partnership” are unfortunately beyond the scope of content of this paper.

3.3 Trade and Diversification of Cooperation

Going beyond classical strategic cooperation was one of the main goals of President Obama when he announced “model partnership” to be established. With the United States and EU negotiating Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) Turkey has unique opportunity to become once again closer to its European and United States partners. The Administration and negotiating team of the United States will certainly pushing for inclusion Turkey into the treaty while we can expect opposition mainly from Germany and France that will be trying to protect their markets.

In the course of year 2013 high Turkish officials expressed their will to the United States to join the agreement, realizing how much is at stake. It is almost impossible to predict what the ultimate outcome of the deals will be, but it is clear that as the United States is negotiating different treaties around the world (e.g. Trans-Pacific Partnership), which are compatible with criteria of WTO, it would be very unwise to exclude Turkey from the process. On the contrary by denying Turkey the possibility to join some of the treaties the United States “risks pushing Turkey into the arms of those countries that challenge the Western economic order. It would also be damaging to Turkey’s own economic development and democratization process.”¹²⁸

Energy dependency is the main weakness of strategically placed Turkey that is dependent on Iranian, Russian and Azeri energy sources. It is therefore no surprise that the United States supports Turkish bid for obtaining civil nuclear capabilities to become self-sustainable or even exporting country of electric energy. The main

¹²⁷ Bülent Aras, “Turkish-U.S. Relations: The Way Forward” (German Marshall Fund of the United States, January 15, 2013), 2.

¹²⁸ Kemal Kirişçi, “Turkey and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership” (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, September 2013), 6.

disagreement these days between the two countries is about interpretation of Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). While Turkey as many other non-nuclear weapon states believes it should be entitled to fuel cycle capabilities (such as enriching and reprocessing),¹²⁹ the United States strictly opposes such interpretation.

The reasons to support Turkey's nuclear ambitions are twofold. Primarily it will serve as clear sign that the United States is not afraid of having the nuclear energy spread according to the NPT, which will give it global credit and it will enhance bilateral relations with Ankara. Secondly, Turkey, which is not energy rich will meet its energy demands and thus become even stronger partner for the United States in the region, not being prone to being "blackmailed" by potentially challenging Russia and Iran.¹³⁰ When nuclear power plants are eventually built in Turkey, the United States will have good prospect of profiting by being able to participate on building these huge constructions.

While speaking about diversification of relations and trade, one of the implications of Davutoğlu's "zero problem policy" is mutual support of Turkish soft power and also rising total trade balance. Spread of Turkish influence around the region, bid for normalization of relations with neighbors and growing trade go hand in hand.¹³¹ Turkey and the United States have to leave the Cold-War legacy of security/military framework only and start cooperating on diverse levels, such as business, non-governmental organizations of education in order to secure more stable and predictable cooperation between both nations, which will eventually lead also to weakening of anti-American mood among Turkish population.¹³²

3.4 Ambitions and Challenges

With the rule of AKP the country has been experiencing substantial economic growth that has established Turkey as one of the pivotal powers of the region. The government has the means to spend on public welfare and gigantic project such as

¹²⁹ Varnum, Jessica C., "Closing the Nuclear Trapdoor in the U.S.-Turkey "Model" Partnership," (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, June 2013), 2.

¹³⁰ Varnum, Jessica C., "Closing the Nuclear Trapdoor in the U.S.-Turkey "Model" Partnership," (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, June 2013), 3.

¹³¹ Kemal Kirişçi, "The transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The rise of the trading state," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Num.: 40 (2009): 50.

¹³² Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 5.

third bridge across Bosphorus, undersea tunnel connecting both parts of Istanbul and possibly nuclear power plant. The darker side of the regime is significant interference with individual rights and fewer freedoms for population. The police forces have been used at unprecedented extent to calm down demonstrations (such as Gezi Park earlier in 2013). The question is – where is Turkey going? There are two main possibilities – The government will listen to its people, at least partly and will take the popular challenge as a “wake-up call” for reforming or it will dig deeper into getting authoritarian Islamic rule over the country. The second option could very easily mean imminent threat to U.S.-Turkish Relations.¹³³

Another factor making the situation more complicated for the United States and Turkey is the relationship of both countries towards Armenia, which has very strong lobby in the United States and which was able to push through congressional statement about “Armenian genocide” after 1915. This was more than not-welcome by the Turkish side, which immediately started its diplomatic resistance. Normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations and resolving dispute of Nagorno-Karabakh is crucial issue in moving forward with the United States. It is no secret that Azeri government is opposing any gain of power and legitimacy by Armenia and is very negative towards any diplomatic contact between Ankara and Yerevan.¹³⁴

Not to be too negative on the cooperation, Turkey and the United States have many areas of common interest where their partnership can blossom – both countries would greatly benefit from stable situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, both partnering countries want to fight terrorism (although their views and definitions of terrorism differ) in the form that poses threat to particular country. As it was suggested before, possibilities in the sphere of bilateral trade and investment is huge and it would be strategic mistake of both governments to miss it or to leave it for some other partner. And traditionally there is space for closer or reformulated “military-to-military” cooperation that would eventually lead to tighter cooperation and deeper trust in its counterpart.¹³⁵

¹³³ Kemal Kirişçi, “How Erdogan Fell From Grace,” *The National Interest*, (June 4, 2013).

¹³⁴ David L. Phillips, “A Testimony by:” (statement presented at hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., USA, May 14 2009), 8.

¹³⁵ Stephen J. Flanagan, “The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership” (statement presented at hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., USA, May 14 2009), 5.

President Obama showed in his first visit to Turkey, which was part of his “Western-Europe tour” that he sees Ankara as a partner that is compatible with European Union and that he wishes to perceive Turkey as its closest ally in the Muslim Middle East.¹³⁶

4. The European Union

For the United States the European Union is probably the most important and most reliable partner in the field of international relations. It is therefore obvious that potential connection between EU and Turkey is not a nightmare for American foreign policymakers. On the contrary, this can be seen as one of the priorities that the United States can have in respect to those two entities. The closer geographic location that surely connects Turkey to the EU unfortunately works as a double edged sword, making any cultural and economic differences much more important than in respect to the United States. The process that brings Turkey closer to the EU is nothing new for the region it is only the terminology that alters. We could see these tendencies ever since the establishment of modern Turkey in 1923, but at that time the codeword was *modernization*. In other words Turkey was trying to copy western culture, mainly the one of France and Great Britain.¹³⁷ This westernization was aiming at embracing cultural and social aspects, which made Europe so modern.

Year 2004 brought in this aspect new invigorating air to the stale atmosphere between Ankara and Brussels. In this year, EU recognized progress that Turkey has achieved in previous years and decided to open accession talks. This was very important step on the path towards better inclusion of Muslims into European society. From the very beginning of the process it was clear that this particular case will demand a lot of dedication from both sides, not only because of the ninety thousand pages of different EU regulations to be implemented into Turkish legal code.¹³⁸ “While the hard power of the United States is destroying Iraq, the soft power of the

¹³⁶ Ian O. Lesser, “US – Turkish Relations: New dynamics and next steps” (statement presented at hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington D.C., USA, May 14 2009), 4.

¹³⁷ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 35.

¹³⁸ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 223.

EU is transforming Turkey.”¹³⁹ There is no doubt that Turkey dedicated a lot of energy to the goal of at least starting the accession talks. AKP was always sensitively responsive to the public opinion and during the first term of Erdoğan’s government, the atmosphere was strongly pro-European.

The problem of the accession talks from the beginning is the timing, as the EU goes through its own identity crisis and the United States under Obama’s administration was trying to shift its main focus to the Pacific region.¹⁴⁰ The process met with gradually more obstacles and vetoes from the European side which lead to slow loss of interest from the Turkish side. First major trouble appeared in December 2006 when European leaders announced that they were suspending progress on eight of 35 key chapters of the application process. Moreover they stated that future talks will be “open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand.”¹⁴¹ In other words this meant that implementing strict EU rules to Turkish legislation may not lead to eventual accession to this “club”.

Apart from the omnipresent notion that Turkey is Muslim country, there are other issues, which make Turkish accession to the EU more complicated. Firstly many member states are not happy about the geographical position of Turkey, bringing potentially the EU to the border of ever-explosive Middle East, and some even argue that having Turkey in the EU would be a “Trojan horse” for the whole Union. It is no secret that former President of France, Sarkozy was similarly critical to Turkish membership, saying that Turkey “has no place” in Europe.¹⁴² This critical language, ambivalence in approach and lack of EU enthusiasm had soon led to the fact that Turkish popular support for EU membership started to fall very soon.¹⁴³

To be fair to the both sides, Turkish interest in joining the EU was never unanimous even within the country itself. Military, which plays always important role in domestic issues, was never overly enthusiastic about joining the EU. They feared

¹³⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 223.

¹⁴⁰ Emiliano Alessandri, *The Missing Transatlantic Link: Trilateral Cooperation in Post-Ottoman Space*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 17, 2012), 1.

¹⁴¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 224.

¹⁴² Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 51.

¹⁴³ Soli Ozel, *The Back and Forth of Turkey’s Westernness*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), 1.

that continuous reforms would undermine their power. “They concluded that their best response was hypocrisy: continue to support the EU project in public, but refuse to take the steps necessary to join.”¹⁴⁴ Although the political elites understood the need for change and transformation of the society, this is easier said than done. As Turkey was dealing with problems of terrorism at home and interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is little surprise that not enough energy was dedicated to the EU membership process. Turkish opposition failed in this area in a way that there was no pressure on AKP to progress on the accession talks.¹⁴⁵

Turkey, which has under the leadership of Erdoğan, Davutoğlu, and Gül, grown into fully independent country with own agenda became less interested in following EU orders, especially when she felt that “Europe is slamming door in Turkey’s face.”¹⁴⁶ The negative change of attitudes from both sides eventually led to alienation of Turkey and the EU. Under the given circumstances it is no surprise that AKP during its second term started turning back to the original and well known cooperation with the United States, especially after relations were set back on track in 2007. Similarly Turkey expected less of a pressure for democratization processes and other reforms.¹⁴⁷

One of the reasons why the membership process got effectively to a standstill is that Europe was probably never overly enthusiastic about having Turkey as a part of this “elite project”.¹⁴⁸ EU countries are very well aware of differences between them and Turkey and they are ready to emphasize them. What these countries fail to understand is that only with Turkey as a member of the EU, this potential entity can become truly global power with political and military might that would enable it to spread its values around the world.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, with its size of military, total population, and economic growth over past decade many western European countries

¹⁴⁴ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 135.

¹⁴⁵ Soli Ozel, *Going in All Directions*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), 2.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 201.

¹⁴⁷ Soli Ozel, *The Back and Forth of Turkey’s Westernness*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), 2.

¹⁴⁸ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset Middle East: Old Friends and New Alliances: Saudi Arabia, Israel, Turkey, Iran* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2011), 203

¹⁴⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 225.

are afraid of Turkey's potential leading role in the EU. "For the long run, the enlargement of Europe will remain a central common interest, best promoted through the political and geographical complementarity of the EU and NATO frameworks. Enlargement is the best guarantee that the security landscape of Europe will continue to evolve in a manner that expands the world's central zone of peace, promotes the absorption of Russia into the enlarging West, and engages Europe in joint American-European efforts to advance global security."¹⁵⁰

Another reason for complicated relations between Turkey and the EU are problems between Turkey and Cyprus. Fortunately enough, the question of Cyprus and its inhabitants is not a military-security issue any more, but politically the matter is still unresolved.¹⁵¹ As Cyprus is a member state of the EU, we can expect very little direct engagement in the matter from Washington, and Brussels should be the main actor to engage in reconciliation of both parties. Turkey did not offer any positive attitude when it refused to allow Cypriot vessels use Turkish ports¹⁵² as a step towards wider cooperation, therefore there is little surprise that the relations remain rather cold. One can argue that Europe in general took too much of a pace in the enlargement process and the member states "developed 'enlargement fatigue' and [...are] no longer ready to accept a country as large, poor and culturally different as Turkey."¹⁵³

President Obama voiced his support explicitly when he delivered a speech at TGNA in 2009, and since then he reaffirmed the dedication of his administration repeatedly. In Ankara, he received applause from the members of Parliament after saying following: "So let me be clear: The United States strongly supports Turkey's bid to become a member of the European Union. We speak not as members of the EU, but as close friends of both Turkey and Europe. Turkey has been a resolute ally and a responsible partner in transatlantic and European institutions. Turkey is bound to Europe by more than the bridges over the Bosphorous. [...] Turkish membership

¹⁵⁰ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 96.

¹⁵¹ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 78.

¹⁵² Soli Ozel, *Going in All Directions*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010), 3.

¹⁵³ Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 224.

would broaden and strengthen Europe's foundation once more."¹⁵⁴ Of course American support for Turkey's EU project is not the decisive factor whether or not Turkey will eventually join it, but surely enough it sends a strong signal to both partners in Europe that Washington has its stakes in deeper cooperation between all parties.¹⁵⁵ It is in US interests to see continue on the path of Westernization and gradually merge these bilateral relations into one trilateral partnership,¹⁵⁶ which will further strengthen security cooperation and also promote Turkey's bid for EU membership.¹⁵⁷

Steady decline of interest on the accession talks and prevalent inaction on both sides is a sign that Turkey's EU membership is not a top priority on either side. Therefore it is even more important that the United States engages more closely in the accession process that is otherwise on life-support.¹⁵⁸ In case that the United States engages in long term clash with Muslim world it is highly important to have American-European policies as similar as possible to maintain the power momentum.¹⁵⁹ Similarly neither the United States, nor the EU has any interest in bloc-building in the Middle East with Turkey on one side and some kind of Israel-Cyprus-Greece (-Russia) coalition on the other.¹⁶⁰ The question is whether or not the EU is able to accommodate in its structures a partner that becomes so active, important, and different.¹⁶¹ Turkish foreign policy has become truly independent lately and the EU may not be willing to go for having potentially trouble-making partner within. Erdoğan showed the maturity of Turkish political system when he responded to the suspension of several chapters talk in 2006 by saying that rather than being bitter over

¹⁵⁴ Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to The Turkish Parliament" (Turkish Grand National Assembly Complex, Ankara, Turkey, April 6, 2009).

¹⁵⁵ Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond suspicion: rethinking US-Turkish relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Southeast Europe Project, 2007), 94.

¹⁵⁶ Emiliano Alessandri, *The Missing Transatlantic Link: Trilateral Cooperation in Post-Ottoman Space*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 17, 2012), 3.

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¹⁵⁸ Emiliano Alessandri, *The Missing Transatlantic Link: Trilateral Cooperation in Post-Ottoman Space*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 17, 2012), 3.

¹⁵⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 59

¹⁶⁰ Emiliano Alessandri, *The Missing Transatlantic Link: Trilateral Cooperation in Post-Ottoman Space*, (New York: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, May 17, 2012), 3.

¹⁶¹ The Economist, *The Davutoğlu effect* (The Economist – print edition. October 2010).

the frozen chapters, he prefers to concentrate on the 27 opened remaining.¹⁶² If eventually Turkey becomes a member state of the EU, it will not be any time soon, but some will surely suggest Turkey celebrating its centenary in 2023 already as a member of the EU.

Conclusion

The new century has brought a set of challenges in the global environment and the United States was one of the countries that were struck the most. In the decade following the end of the Cold War, security environment was rather problem-free, and therefore not many active security measures were being implemented. The importance of Turkey fell down, as the Western allies did not know how to behave in the “power vacuum” that was created around Turkey. Secularists during that time were losing the support of the general public and new parties were slowly forming. In 2001 President Bush took his office to face the terrorist attacks, which led to the war on terror and the invasion to Afghanistan.

Almost simultaneously the government was changing in Turkey too, and after years of uninteresting governments, new and energetic leader took the office of the Prime Minister. It was Mr. Erdoğan together with AKP. Erdoğan promptly joined the alliance of states, which went to fight Al-Qaeda and became reliable partner in ISAF operations. Unfortunately for bilateral relations, the United States did not stop there and President Bush ordered for invading Iraq, which was opposed and criticized by Turkey and many other countries.

Relations turned much sweeter when President Obama took office, having Erdoğan still as Prime Ministerial counterpart. Obama started a dialogue with not only Turkish side, but tried to restart many troubled relations. As we now know, not every initiative was accomplished or has met with full success. As far as Turkey is concerned, President Obama called for a “model partnership” that would go further than “just” to military cooperation. Obama sought to establish and strengthen also economic and cultural cooperation. He rightly understood that these two countries can become true partners only when they get to know each other not only on the diplomatic level, but also on the people-to-people level.

¹⁶² Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 226.

The hypothesis suggested, and I sought to prove it in previous chapters, that the relations between Turkey and the United States are significantly determined by the quality of dialogue that is between the two countries. As we could see during Bush administration, there were various opportunities for cooperation between the governments and countries. I believe that it was lack of knowledge and understanding mainly from the American side that prevented closer cooperation. Even though that are a few current disagreements on local agenda, between Ankara and Washington, we can see that the relations are much warmer as long as both countries invest the energy and time to strengthen it. Similarly I believe that the dialogue between the EU and Turkey can benefit everyone involved. It is this Atlantic partnership between Turkey, the United States and the European Union that should be worked on, so that likeminded nations can work together to be able to fully influence global events.

Souhrn

Práce se zaměřuje na vývoj Americko-Tureckých vztahů v 21. století, konkrétně během prezidentských období George W. Bushe a prvního období Baracka Obamy. První část práce studuje historický kontext vztahů těchto dvou zemí – tedy od konce 18. století do post studenoválečné dekády. Tato část popisuje všechny aspekty vztahu – jak ekonomické a politické ukotvení v předválečné době, tak zejména jednotlivé kapitoly z vývoje poválečného, kdy se Turecko nesmazatelně připojilo k západnímu bloku skrz různorodé politické a obranné organizace.

Hlavní část práce studuje vztahy mezi politickými elitami v USA a Turecku. Část věnovaná oběma administrativám prezidenta Bushe mladšího popisuje spolupráci mezi oběma státy po teroristických útocích v roce 2001. Jak tato část zdůrazňuje, boj proti terorismu je společným průsečíkem zájmů obou zemí. Pro lepší porozumění problematice se část věnuje nástupu AKP k moci. To je zajímavé vzhledem k tomu, že je to první nesekulární strana, která vede Turecko demokratickým směrem a je schopna dlouhodobě konsolidovat moc a vézt Turecko nástrahami mezinárodních vztahů. Jedním z hlavních aktérů Turecké zahraniční politiky za vlády AKP je Ahmet Davutoğlu, který formuloval několik zásad pro bezproblémové soužití Turecka se svými sousedy. Vzhledem k různorodosti regionu je však tato politika z tureckého hlediska těžko dlouhodobě udržitelná.

Role prezidenta Bushe pro vzájemné vztahy tkví v jeho rozhodnosti a intervencionalismu. Zatímco v případě boje proti terorismu a invaze do Afghánistánu se jeho politika setkává s kladným přijetím a podporou ze strany Turecka, u invaze do Iráku tomu tak není. Turecko má obavy z nestability Iráku po svržení Saddáma Hussaina a z možného růstu síly kurdského etnika.

Oproti tomu prezident Obama hned ze začátku svého prezidentského mandátu vysílá jasný signál, že hodlá navázat hlubší dialog s tureckými protějšky a to nejen v politické sféře, ale také na poli obchodním a kulturním. Obama počítá s Tureckem jako s partnerem, který zná dobře region Blízkého východu a může tedy být prospěšný nejen Spojeným státům, ale všem svým partnerům v bližším i vzdálenějším okolí.

Poslední část se věnuje problematice vstupu Turecka do Evropské unie. Tento proces je od začátku provázen mnoha nejednoznačnostmi vzhledem k určitým kulturním rozdílům, ale také s ohledem na velikost země a její ekonomickou strukturu. Zájem o tuto spolupráci z obou stran postupně upadá, ale je to právě spolupráce mezi Spojenými státy, Evropskou unií a Tureckem, která by měla posílit všechny aktéry a přispět ke stabilitě a ekonomickému růstu.

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