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**Australia, Turkey, and the US, c.1975-2018: Testing the  
"Wobbly Cross"**

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## Declaration of Originality

I,  16.May.2019 hereby declare that the thesis here presented is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the source of ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributable to other authors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This MPhil compares Turkish and Australian foreign policy relations with the United States (US) between c.1975 and 2018. This comparison will investigate whether these bilateral relations resemble the “wavy cross” explored in my doctoral thesis. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s Turkish-American relations followed a fluctuating downward curve, while Australian-American relations followed a fluctuating upward curve. Turkey moved away from the US, Australia moved closer, a pattern like a “wavy cross”.

This thesis begins where my PhD concludes, c.1975. The thesis will test whether the divergence between global priorities of a great power and the local/national priorities of two middle powers, together with the imbalance in their bilateral relations, continued to affect the stability of the arms and the tendency of the “wavy cross”. Although the metaphor in my PhD is the “wavy cross”, wobbly seems more appropriate in illustrating the fluctuations of the arms. Each chapter examines reasons inducing the wobbles and sustaining the tendency of the Turkish and the Australian arms, to test the validity of the “*wobbly cross*”.

The rationale behind comparing Turkey and Australia is threefold. First, both Turkey and Australia are well known examples of middle powers, but little research has been conducted on their comparison. Second, my ultimate aim is to combine the PhD and the MPhil theses and make them a book. Third, for International Relations and Political History literature middle powers’ foreign policy actions is still an unclear area. Hopefully, this work could cast light on commonalities and differences of two significant middle powers’ foreign policies.

This is a Political History rather than an International Relations project, since it aims to compare foreign policies, primary records on policy makers’ statements, and actions which are a reliable basis for analysis. As I experienced during my PhD research, International Relations theories and patterns do not explain middle powers’ actions for such a big span of history.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AFAD: Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority

AUSMIN: Australia-US ministerial meeting

AWM: Australian War Memorial Records

CENTCOM: US Central Command

CIA: US Central Intelligence Agency

DECA: Turkish-American Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement ()

EC: European Community

FSA: Free Syrian Army

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force

ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

JCFAD: Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party ()

MFA: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MND: Turkish Ministry of National Defence

NAA: National Archives of Australia

NARA: National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCSROF: Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces

OFAC: US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control

PKK: Kurdistan Workers' Party

PM: Prime Minister

PYD/YPG: Democratic Union Party

RAAF: Royal Australian Air Force

RAN: Royal Australian Navy

RDF: US Rapid Deployment Force

RPP: Republican People's Party

SACEUR: NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces

SNC: Syrian National Council

TAF: Turkish Armed Forces

TGNA: Turkish Grand National Assembly

TGNAR: Turkish Grand National Assembly Records

TNC: Turkish National Security Council

TPMB: Turkish Prime Ministerial Bulletins

TPP: Trans-Pacific Partnership

TRNC: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

UAVs: US Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

UN: The United Nations

UNSC: UN Security Council

UNSCOM: United Nations Special Commission

US: The United States

WMDs: Weapons of Mass Destruction



## **Introduction: Testing the “Wobbly Cross”**

This thesis compares two significant middle powers’ relations with a great power since c.1975. Since the end of the Second World War, Turkey and Australia have been prominent allies of the US. Each alliance, Turkey-US and Australia-US, is conceived as the arm of a cross, because they followed opposing trends. Each arm had sporadic ups and downs in their US relations, here called wobbles. This “wobbly cross” was examined for 1945 to 1975 in my PhD thesis.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this MPhil thesis is to test whether the tendencies exposed then continued later.

In the “wobbly cross”, the Turkish arm follows a downward sloping trend which demonstrates Turkey’s trending away from the US, while the Australian arm follows an upward sloping trend illustrating Australia’s trending towards the US. The “wobbly cross” depicts these contrasting arms since the early 1940s. Neither arm of the cross is simply linear: each wobbles and even dips as its US relations oscillate. The wobbles illustrate changes in relations between a middle and a great power. Essentially, they reflect middle power national security concerns versus a desire for self-reliance and national autonomy.

The “wobbly cross” suggests that, regardless of a middle power’s political, cultural, or institutional differences, inherent factors shape its relations with great powers. The thesis explores these factors with two concepts: imbalance in relations, and divergence of priorities. Imbalance is a result of a middle power’s political, diplomatic, economic or military need of a great power, set against a much lesser great power need for middle power support. Acknowledging this imbalance requires the middle power to be a loyal ally, thereby avoiding wobbles on its arm. National priorities are narrower and more context-oriented. Great and middle powers’ national interests might converge, yet their priorities might diverge. This thesis argues that these two concepts greatly determined the wobbly diagonal shape of Turkey and Australia’s relations with the US. Even if a middle power acknowledges an imbalance in its relations with a great power, if

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<sup>1</sup> There called the “wavy cross”. Gürol Baba, *The “Wavy Cross”: Australia, Turkey and the US 1945-1975*, Canberra: The Australian National University, 2010.

the priorities diverge, the two cannot develop full cooperation. Australia provides an example of convergence while Turkey exemplifies divergence.

To make this argument, the thesis confines itself mainly to the political and diplomatic manifestations of the two concepts above, for want of time and space not seriously addressing other factors such as bilateral trade, the US global role, and in Australia's case a common language and similar traditions. I am aware of these factors, but chose instead to investigate closely the diplomatic and political sources in the archives of all three countries. I believe these secure my argument, even though it might be extended to those other realms.

My argument is necessarily based on the evidence available, for the case studies here are about recent events. The thesis examines many sources not previously accessed. There may well also be evidence not yet accessible which will amend this account; for example the Turkish view of bilateral relations is more detailed than is available from US sources. Nonetheless, since the thesis is outlining the broad scope of policy and practice, it argues that the evidence available and the events portrayed sustain the "wobbly cross".

I express my argument in five parts, each of which has two chapters, a case study on Turkey, and one on Australia, except for the first part which bridges the 1970s, where my PhD finished for want of then available sources.

The first part points to the difference in the level of trust between Turkey's and Australia's relations with the US. A clear imbalance in Turkish-American relations was magnified by Turkey's deteriorating economy. Although the US lifted an arms embargo imposed after Turkey's Cyprus intervention (1974) and recommenced US aid, the Turkish administration still blamed the US for aggravating its economic crisis. The arm trended away from the US. The major Australian imbalance was its need for US strategic support in the Indo-Pacific, to stabilize the region and ensure Australia's national security. Following the Guam Doctrine's emphasis on self-reliance,<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Gough Whitlam followed an active and partly autonomous foreign policy which to an extent ran counter to US

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1

priorities. This induced wobbles, but the following Malcolm Fraser government eased them due to the traditional strength of bilateral relations, and sustained the arms' trend.

The second part examines the 1980s, during which the influence of broken trust continued in Turkey-US relations. It became clear that Turkey's national priorities were economic while the US' were military. The more each party pushed its own priority, the more wobbles were induced. Moreover, the age-old problems of Cyprus, the Kurds, and Armenia re-surged in this era, so Turkey continued to trend away from the US. Australia's relations with the US strengthened because of the attitudes of the conservatives, despite Prime Minister Bob Hawke's careful push for a self-reliant foreign policy. Hawke acknowledged the imbalance in Australia-US relations due to the former's continuing need for ANZUS' day to day benefits in military and intelligence equipment, and its deterrent value.

The third part looks at Turkey, Australia and the US during the Gulf War (1990-1991). Both Prime Minister Turgut Özal and Hawke tried to support US policies in Kuwait, but only Hawke was able to align his country's priorities with the US. Özal acknowledged the imbalance due to his need for US support to strengthen the Turkish economy and Turkey's clout in the Middle East. Yet his insistent efforts to secure more commercial and economic support from the US by using the Gulf Crisis were rejected by the US administration. Anti-American Turkish parliamentary and bureaucratic opposition then gradually weakened Özal's political influence. By the end of the Gulf War, Özal finally understood that Turkey's significance for the US was merely security-oriented. The trend of the Turkish arm was maintained. Australia acknowledged the imbalance because of the value and the tradition of ANZUS. Hawke used ANZUS requirements, Australia's custom of following US policies, and UN resolutions to convince parliament and public opinion to support his decision to commit the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to the Gulf War.

The fourth part investigates relations during the preparatory stages of the Iraq War (2001-2003). As in the Gulf War, Australia was more successful in aligning its priorities with the US for two major reasons. First, the Gulf was far from Australia's strategic priorities, so it did not create an overwhelming parliamentary

and public reaction against Prime Minister John Howard's decision for military commitment. Second, Howard successfully used a rhetoric for Australia's commitment by linking UN resolutions with the gravity of the terrorist threat to Australia. The Australian arm maintained its trend. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was in a more vulnerable situation. He acknowledged the imbalance due to his need for US support to strengthen his position domestically and internationally. Although he became popular both in Turkey and in Washington, he could not suppress anti-American opposition in Turkey. Like Özal, he therefore could not align Turkey's priorities with the US. The Turkish parliament's crucial rejection of the resolution authorizing the US to use Turkish soil and bases for its Iraqi operation induced one of the biggest wobbles on the Turkish arm. Erdoğan's subsequent efforts could not change its trend.

The last part examines the effect of the Syrian Crisis on Turkey, Australia and the US. On Syria, Turkish and American priorities continued to diverge. Although high-level communications constantly emphasized the importance of Turkish-American cooperation in Syria, in practice Turkish and US policies diverged. The crisis posed a direct and acute threat to Turkey via trans-border terrorist insurgencies, a massive number of Syrian refugees, and ISIS. Turkey's relations with the US were still imbalanced due to its need for US support to suppress these threats. Erdoğan tried to convince the US of the gravity of these threats, but failed. Turkey and the US only effectively cooperated on fighting ISIS, which was the foremost US priority. The US' neglect of Turkey's priorities continually induced wobbles and sustained the Turkish arm's tendency. Australia followed US priorities in Syria both in the UN Security Council and in the field. Supporting the US was paying a security insurance premium for the Indo-Pacific region, which is becoming a theatre of US-China rivalry.

Apart from my PhD no previous attempt has compared Turkish and Australian policies in relation to the US, even though great power-middle power relations are often examined in international relations. This thesis aims to add untold stories to the public record and to offer new insights via this comparison. It validates my PhD's central argument that the relations between middle and great powers are essentially imbalanced and unequal, because the great power has priorities extending far beyond those of its middle power partners, whose own

priorities the great power is prone to misunderstand or see as unimportant, and to disregard or even sacrifice if they run counter to its own priorities. Middle powers therefore live permanently on the edge of uncertainty.

## PART 1:

### Turkey-US & Australia-US in the 1970s: incurable and curable wobbles

In the 1970s, Turkey had difficulty in aligning its priorities with the US. The two parties might have similar national interests, such as NATO's general effectiveness, and stability in the Middle East, but divergent priorities made it difficult for both to utilize their similarities. The priorities conflicted predominantly due to the Cyprus embargo. They made the Turkish arm of the cross quite wobbly, and the wobbles incurable. In the second half of the 1970s, the Turkish arm continued its tendency to show Turkey moving away from the US.

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In 1975 the US Congress imposed an arms embargo on Turkey in retaliation for Turkey's intervention in Cyprus.<sup>1</sup> Although the punitive measures taken against Turkey only amounted to US military material, bilateral relations quickly, and significantly, deteriorated.<sup>2</sup> US officials described this situation:

The venom injected into US-Turkish relations by the controversy over military aid is likely to poison other important bilateral dealings as well. It will be difficult ... to conduct fruitful discussions on sensitive issues.<sup>3</sup>

The arms embargo worsened the relations so quickly because of Turkey's heavy dependence on US military aid, without which Turkey could not sustain its defence budget. Since 1950, the US Military Assistance Program provided over \$3 billion worth of military equipment to Turkey. Up to 1975:

The US has supplied the Turkish Army with over 95 percent of its medium tank inventory, all of its personnel carriers, and all of its post-World War II field artillery. About 85 percent of Turkey's aircraft have come from the US. Almost all major naval combatants are former US

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<sup>1</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975

<sup>2</sup> For details of the influence of the US arms embargo on Turkish-American relations see Richard C. Company, *Turkey and the United States: the Arms Embargo Period*, New York: Praeger, 1986; see also FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Paper Prepared in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 227, 20 August 1975; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Memorandum of Conversation, 23 September 1975; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 5 November 1975.

<sup>3</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975.

vessels supplied through the MAP or built in Turkey under a cost-sharing program. More than 18,500 Turkish military personnel have been trained over the past 25 years with US assistance, nearly all in the US.<sup>4</sup>

With the increased burden, the Turkish military was unable to properly maintain its defence equipment and modernization program.<sup>5</sup> The burden on the budget also sparked domestic socio-political tensions.<sup>6</sup> Turkey had to find alternatives.

Turkish leaders looked for both domestic and foreign solutions to alleviate this pressure. They tried to diversify the components of Turkey's military arsenal by focusing on domestic production, by buying arms from other NATO members such as West Germany and Italy, and by receiving 'help from wealthy Middle Eastern countries, [e.g.] Libya and Iran'. Turkey also considered opening negotiations with the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries for military equipment.<sup>7</sup> The problem, however, persisted as none of these measures could replace the loss of US material. The US, on the other hand, did not show any substantial interest in Turkey's economic situation.<sup>8</sup> Turkey's quest for alternatives and the American administration's indifference further undermined an already damaged trust.

Turkey soon saw that these alternatives were not as useful/profitable/valuable as the US alliance. Turkish government needed to get US attention, to re-start the aid inflow. For this, the Turkish leaders used the strategic value of its military bases. Turkey's ultimate priority was to convince the US to lift the arms embargo.

On 17 June 1975, the Demirel Government revoked the 1969 Defence Cooperation Agreement, an umbrella agreement concerned with the overall defence of the western alliance, and several related arrangements, and downgraded US facilities in Turkey to "provisional status".<sup>9</sup> Demirel also

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<sup>4</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975.

<sup>5</sup> For details see FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975.

<sup>6</sup> *Milliyet*, 20 January 1975.

<sup>7</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975.

<sup>8</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, 21 February 1975.

<sup>9</sup> US National Security Council Institutional Records, NSSM 227 US Security Policy Toward Turkey, 08/1975, National Security Council Institutional Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

suspended four US electronic intelligence facilities responsible for monitoring the Black Sea for the US Sixth Fleet's operations, and for USSR naval endeavours. The bases were also providing US aircraft an 'extensive use of Turkish air space to fly from Europe into the Mediterranean'.<sup>10</sup> On 27 July, Demirel restricted US military operations in İncirlik, the 'main US NATO operating base in Turkey and the sole US ... airlift terminal for Turkey', to purely those needed for NATO purposes.<sup>11</sup>

Demirel's moves were partly successful. In order to regain access to these intelligence facilities, the Ford administration concluded a new defence cooperation agreement with Turkey on 26 March 1976, which allowed their resumption and established 'the level of US assistance to Turkey during a four-year period at \$250 million per year'.<sup>12</sup> The aid inflow re-started but the amount was not enough for Turkey's growing economic instability.

During the 1970s, Turkey spent around 30% of its budget on defence.<sup>13</sup> Budgetary pressure further increased on the back of the OPEC oil embargo in 1973. Since the Turkish economy depended on imported oil, the rise in oil prices from \$2.3 to \$11.60 per barrel caused alarm. As a last resort the Turkish Central Bank began to print money and borrow short-term. Due to the losses of state enterprises the public sector deficits only increased, raising inflation to around 40% in the second half of 1977. Turkey's economy was on the verge of bankruptcy.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "NSC Meeting, 9/17/1975", the National Security Adviser's NSC Meeting File, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Memorandum from the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Ford, 21 August 1974.

<sup>11</sup> US National Security Council Institutional Records, NSSM 227 US Security Policy Toward Turkey, 08/1975, National Security Council Institutional Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library; Briefing Paper Case File, ca. 7/9/1975, Turkey - Military Aid (1)" of the Loen and Leppert Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

<sup>12</sup> Statement by the Honorable Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State before the House International Relations Committee, 29 March 1976, "State Department - Kissinger Speeches and Statements (1)" Ron Nessen Papers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Memorandum of Conversation, 25 September 1975.

<sup>13</sup> Ron Ayres, "Turkish Foreign Relations," *Journal of Revolutionary Socialists of the Middle-East*, 17 August 2013, <https://libcom.org/library/turkish-foreign-relations>, (Accessed 3.9.2018).

<sup>14</sup> OECD, "November 1978 OECD Economic Survey: Turkey," 5, [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-turkey-1978\\_eco\\_surveys-tur-1978-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-turkey-1978_eco_surveys-tur-1978-en), (Accessed 3.9.2018).



A bankrupt Turkey would not serve US priorities in the region, which were twofold: to sustain the performance of NATO's south-eastern wing, and to maintain US control over the bases in Turkey. Turkey should be helped and the embargo eventually lifted.<sup>15</sup> US concerns overlapped with Turkey's ultimate priority.

In the second half of 1977, the Turkish and American administrations intensified their efforts to deal with the economic crisis. In mid-October, The Carter administration firstly renewed arms sales to Turkey.<sup>16</sup> Then the Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, who came to power in 1978, initiated a series of economic stabilization programs focusing on foreign investment and price regulation, none of which were in consultation with the IMF or the World Bank. Under the programs, six international banks provided \$500 million (in total) to the Turkish Central Bank. Due to the lack of IMF and OECD's support and their insistence on austerity measures, Ecevit's attempt failed, resulting in \$2 billion worth of state-owned enterprise loss.<sup>17</sup>

Ecevit's failure caused another significant wobble on the arm, particularly when he accused the US of causing Turkey's economic crisis. He stated that 'the stagnation in relations between the two countries had done great damage to the Turkish economy'.<sup>18</sup> The wobble increased American concerns. Especially, US Department of Defense officials were anxious about Ecevit's failures and underlined the necessity to take extra measures. They told President Carter that the 'military situation on the Southern Flank of NATO [was] one which [offered]

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<sup>15</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, National Security Study Memorandum 227, 16 July 1975; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Paper Prepared in Response to National Security Study Memorandum 227, 20 August 1975; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Report Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research No. 281, 14 January 1976; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Action Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hartman) to Secretary of State Kissinger, 3 November 1976; FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. 30, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 8 November 1976.

<sup>16</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, editorial note.

<sup>17</sup> For the details of Ecevit's economic stabilization program see Faruk Ataay, *Kriz Kiskacında CHP Hükümeti (1978-1979)*, PhD Thesis, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2005, 141-222; Mahmut Durmaz, *The U.S. arms embargo of 1975--1978 and its effects on the development of the Turkish defense industry*, MA Thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2014, 47.

<sup>18</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 23 January 1978

little comfort'. Therefore, the finalization of a Defence Cooperation Agreement with Turkey was 'becoming more and more important'.<sup>19</sup>

By the end of 1978, Turkey's economic problems and the longstanding NATO force commitments had become an acute burden on the Turkish-American alliance. The US lifted the arms embargo on 10 December 1978, but then failed to induce any improvement in the Turkish economy. According to US calculations the 'the gap between requirements and available resources [of Turkey was] 1.8 billion [dollars], which was estimated as the total gap with up to 500 million [dollars] required in new money to be provided by some form of consortium'. In analysing Turkey's predicament, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski stated:

[I]t was important to recognize that the economic situation in Turkey was showing signs of developing into a political crisis. In spite of its inadequacies, [...] the Ecevit Government was the best we could hope for in Turkey in the foreseeable future and its collapse could bring a period of political confusion which might culminate in military intervention.<sup>20</sup>

The continually worsening economic situation in Turkey made the US to take further steps. The US agreed to conclude a Broad Multilateral Cooperation scheme for relieving Turkey's economic distress. In a letter to President Carter, Ecevit offered his appreciation for this help.<sup>21</sup> Yet the scheme was not a panacea. In 1979 the economic crisis kept escalating, which intensified socio-political strains in Turkey. The US took another step. At the beginning of 1979 the US, Germany, and twelve other countries announced an aid program to solve Turkey's economic problems.<sup>22</sup> Ecevit's failure to effectively utilize the funds from this aid program brought Demirel back to power in late 1979. In an effort to bring about an economic recovery, Demirel recruited Turgut Özal, who was an

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<sup>19</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Brown to President Carter, 18 January 1978.

<sup>20</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting, 28 December 1978.

<sup>21</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Letter from Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit to President Carter, 19 January 1979.

<sup>22</sup> Dankwart A. Rustow, "Turkey's Travails", *Foreign Affairs*, 58:1, 1979, 98.

expert at the World Bank.<sup>23</sup> None of the measures instigated by Demirel and Özal, however, helped alleviate Turkey's situation. In 1980, Turkey headed towards its most serious economic impasse.<sup>24</sup>

The convergence of Turkish priorities and US concerns temporarily eased some of the wobbles on the Turkish arm. The convergence occurred not because mutual trust was re-developed but because a need of each other became acute. The US needed Turkey as a staunch ally. Turkey needed the US as a protector, financial/military aid supplier, and regional/international intelligence source. Because of this imbalance, Turkey ignored the deeper issues with the US and accepted American aid bundles. Ironically, the Turks first appreciated the aid bundles, then misused them, and then accused the US of not providing enough aid. The convergence of priorities neither cured the wobbles nor moved Turkey closer to the US.

Australia's relations with the US during the 1970s were quite different. Although there were wobbles on the Australian arm, none of them were incurable. From 1972, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's policies attempted to give Australia some autonomy. Whitlam's clash with President Richard Nixon induced wobbles on the Australian arm. Yet the strong background of the relations proved that a leader-oriented tension could not push Australia away from the US. With Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, the wobbles were cured and the Australian arm continued its tendency.

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The Whitlam government's (1972-75) foreign policy pointed to a more autonomous and more regionally aware Australia. That meant reducing US influence on Australian foreign policy. The détente period<sup>25</sup> helped Whitlam. He

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<sup>23</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, 12 October 1979.

<sup>24</sup> Arif Özsağır, "Askeri Darbe ve Müdahalelerin Ekonomik Performans Üzerine Etkisi: Türkiye Örneği", *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, 12:4, 2013, 759-773.

<sup>25</sup> Détente was the period of the easing of Cold War tensions between the US and the Soviets from 1967 to 1979. The era was a time of increased trade and cooperation with the Soviets and the signing of the SALT treaties. See: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/détente>, (Accessed 4.9.2018).

hoped that the détente would help Australia ride 'on the wave of great events rather than swimming against the tide'.<sup>26</sup>

Whitlam's self-reliant foreign policy was encouraged by Nixon's promulgation of the Guam Doctrine on 25 July 1969. Nixon implied that the US expected its allies to take care of their own defence, and stated that 'we must avoid that kind of policy that will make countries in Asia so dependent upon us that we are dragged into conflicts such as the one that we have in Vietnam'.<sup>27</sup> He added:

I want to be sure that our policies in the future, all over the world, in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the rest, reduce American involvement. One of assistance, yes, assistance in helping them solve their own problems, but not going in and just doing the job ourselves.<sup>28</sup>

The Whitlam government's ride started by overturning three significant legacies of conservative policy: recognizing the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government and closing the Australian Embassy in Taipei; pulling out the last Australian military personnel serving in Vietnam, and abolishing conscription.<sup>29</sup> The US either opposed these measures or found them embarrassing. Marshall Green, later the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs but then the Ambassador to Canberra, called Whitlam a 'whirling dervish' as he was 'moving on matters of vital interest to the US without the prior consultation that [the US] have come to expect from Australia'.<sup>30</sup>

Whitlam's attitude was unusual, but none of the above-mentioned measures raised alarms in the Nixon administration as much as his condemnation of the US final bombing campaign in Vietnam (December 1972).<sup>31</sup> Whitlam's criticism of the

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<sup>26</sup> J. D. B. Miller, "Australian Foreign Policy: Constraints and Opportunities-II", *International Affairs*, 50:3, July 1974, 425-426.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffrey Kimball, "The Nixon Doctrine: A Saga of Misunderstanding", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36:1, 62.

<sup>28</sup> Jeffrey Kimball, "The Nixon Doctrine: A Saga of Misunderstanding", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36:1, 64.

<sup>29</sup> For details see Whitlam Institute, *The Whitlam Legacy, Gough Whitlam's Mission to China*, 1971, Vol.3, University of Western Sydney, July 2013; National Archives of Australia (NAA), M170, 71/46, Personal papers of Prime Minister E G Whitlam, Proposed visit to China, 11 May 1971, and 71/59, China report, Press Club, Canberra, 26 Jun 1971; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 October 2014.

<sup>30</sup> National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, (NARA), Memorandum, Green to Rogers, 30 December 1972, 'Australia and New Zealand: Prospects', SNF, 1970-73, Box 2106, RG 59.

<sup>31</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 23 May 1972, 2877; Hansard, Senate, 18 October 1972, 1682.

bombings induced one of the most visible wobbles on the Australian arm.<sup>32</sup> The US bombings -code name Operation Linebacker II- created massive collateral damage by killing 2000 civilians. The *Washington Post* named the operation 'the most savage and senseless act of war ever'.<sup>33</sup> Whitlam's letter to Nixon 'criticising the bombings—his first piece of substantial correspondence with the White House as prime minister —so enraged Nixon that it plunged the relationship into a virtual six-month freeze'.<sup>34</sup>

In a later interview Green emphasized that there was a hostile atmosphere in Washington towards Australia, particularly during the first half of 1973.<sup>35</sup> The growing 'mistrust and misunderstanding' pushed the alliance into a 'new and deeply unstable phase'.<sup>36</sup>

This did not stop Whitlam. Another wobble on the arm began to show up when he started to question the importance of ANZUS. On 27 January 1973, Whitlam stated that '[f]or all its enduring importance, adherence to ANZUS does not constitute a foreign policy'. It represented a 'security guarantee in the ultimate peril, reliance upon it as the sole objective of our foreign policy would in fact place our foreign policy in suspension —until the peril emerged'. Whitlam was aiming to transform Australia's US -oriented forward defence into a 'regional community'- oriented approach. He believed that this approach could build up a zone of peace and neutrality in South-East Asia.<sup>37</sup> The White House found this idea 'half-formed'.<sup>38</sup>

Whitlam tried to put his idea into practice by expressing his intention to remove Australian troops from Singapore by early 1975. Nixon named this as a serious dent in the Western presence in South-East Asia. He commented that Whitlam

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew O'Neil, *Asia, the US and Extended Nuclear Deterrence*, New York: Routledge, 2013, 103.

<sup>33</sup> *Washington Post*, 28 December 1972.

<sup>34</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon At War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 153; Telcon, Nixon and Kissinger, Camp David Study Table, 29 December 1972, White House Tapes, Reference 158B, Conversation No. 158, 15, Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

<sup>35</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1988.

<sup>36</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon At War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 186.

<sup>37</sup> Gough Whitlam, "Address to the Opening of the Australian Institute of Political Science Summer School", Canberra, 27 January 1973, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 44:1, January 1973.

<sup>38</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. E-12, Memorandum, 1 February 1973.

was turning his back on Australian responsibilities in the region, which was turning Australia into a less dependable ally.<sup>39</sup>

For the expectation of ameliorating relations, Nixon sent Green as the ambassador. Green's appointment was unusual. In the previous 20 years, US ambassadors to Canberra were mostly presidential friends. Whitlam considered Green's appointment as indicating success for his policies. He said that 'the US has shown that at last it takes us seriously'.<sup>40</sup>

As expected, Green managed to ameliorate relations. After his meetings with Whitlam, his correspondence with the White House convincingly emphasized that 'the president's failure to invite' Whitlam to the US would not only 'insult' Australia, 'but put at risk the US defence facilities and \$5 billion worth of American economic investment'.<sup>41</sup> With the additional influence of the American press, Green managed to persuade Nixon to meet Whitlam on 30 July 1973.<sup>42</sup>

At the end of the meeting, Whitlam accepted that 'it is widely understood that Australia's effectiveness in its relations with Asia depends upon a reputation for good relations with the US'.<sup>43</sup> Yet in a talk at the National Press Club in Washington it seemed that Whitlam did not change his idea about ANZUS. He underlined that ANZUS should not be the 'be-all and end-all' of bilateral relations. 'We are a friend and partner of the [US] particularly in the Pacific but with independent interests of our own'.<sup>44</sup> For Whitlam the visit was 'cordial, friendly and informative'. It was also 'successful both in asserting and explaining the more independent and diversified Australian stance in international affairs'.<sup>45</sup> Nixon's ultimate aim was to 'keep Whitlam in line',<sup>46</sup> which was partially

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<sup>39</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. E-12, Memorandum of Conversation, 2 May 1973.

<sup>40</sup> *New York Times*, 11 March 1973.

<sup>41</sup> NARA, Telegram 3304, Green to Secretary of State, 16 June 1973, SNF 1970-73, Box 2105, RG 59.

<sup>42</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon At War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 232.

<sup>43</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. E-12, Memorandum of Conversation, The President and Prime Minister Whitlam, 30 July 1973.

<sup>44</sup> Gough Whitlam, "Speech to National Press Club, Washington DC, 30 July 1973", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 44:8, August 1973, 527-530.

<sup>45</sup> *Australian*, 1 August 1973.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum, Kissinger to Nixon, 29 May 1973, NSC Files, Nixon Presidential Materials, VIP Visits, Box 910, Richard Nixon Presidential Library.

successful. Both leaders had different expectations and conclusions. Therefore, the visit's honeymoon ended quickly.

At the beginning of 1974, the Whitlam government increased its focus on American military activities at the North West Cape base, which were carried out without any reference to Australia. One example was passing instructions to the US Polaris missile-armed submarines in the Indian Ocean. Whitlam had similar suspicions on Pine Gap and Nurrungar, the other two intelligence installations.<sup>47</sup> Deputy Prime Minister Lance Barnard was sent to Washington to investigate how to increase Australia's ability to examine communications going through the bases. In his private talks with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Barnard proposed a joint statement which would curb the Australian government and public opinion's criticisms of US installations.<sup>48</sup> Yet the US did not make any substantial concessions on the North West Cape agreement except some sort of 'joint operation and management'.<sup>49</sup> At the end of the visit, Pine Gap and Nurrungar were converted into joint facilities while the number of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and civilian personnel serving at the North West Cape was increased. The title of the senior RAN commander became Deputy Commander.<sup>50</sup> Whitlam did not push any further. He had no desire to terminate any of the agreements on the North West Cape, Nurrungar or Pine Gap, even when they were reaching their expiry date.<sup>51</sup> A significant wobble was eased.

Another wobble appeared in February 1974 when Australia announced its intention to normalise relations with North Korea.<sup>52</sup> The State Department was

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<sup>47</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon At War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 271; *Age*, 16 March 1973.

<sup>48</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. E-12, Memorandum of Conversation, Secretary Schlesinger's Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Barnard of Australia, 9 January 1974.

<sup>49</sup> Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 45:1, January 1974, 74-75.

<sup>50</sup> NAA, A1838, 250/9/1 PART 16, Record of Discussions between the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, L. H. Barnard, and the United States Secretary of Defence James R. Schlesinger, 9 January 1974.

<sup>51</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 3 April 1974, 905; Hansard, House of Representatives, 21 August 1975, 468.

<sup>52</sup> Gough Whitlam, "Timeline", <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/timeline/>, (Accessed 21.3.2019).

harsher this time. It 'interpreted Australian actions on North Korea' as a threat 'to the American posture in Asia'.<sup>53</sup>

In May 1974, another issue causing a strain in relations was Whitlam's unhappiness with the 'closeness of ASIO's [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation] ties with its US partners that he gave instructions' to the Director General of Security, Peter Barbour to 'sever them'.<sup>54</sup>

The continuing strain in Australian-American relations was examined in US National Security Memorandum 204. The memorandum emphasized the 'growing divergence between Australia and US policy in Asia and elsewhere' regarding 'US defense installations' and the 'risks involved in continuing sharing of intelligence with Australia'. The memorandum also asked how to minimize 'the potential damage of such divergencies'.<sup>55</sup> The memorandum 'never made it to Nixon. By the time it was scheduled for discussion, the president had fallen victim ... to the Watergate scandal and resigned from office'.<sup>56</sup>

In November 1975, another intelligence community related issue strained the bilateral relations. Whitlam accused the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) 'of having made politically motivated financial contributions'.<sup>57</sup> On 4 November, US Ambassador visited Whitlam and 'categorically denied that the CIA had passed funds to any organisation or candidate for political office in Australia, nor, he claimed had any other US government agency done so'. The Director of the CIA, William Colby also publicly and strongly denied that the 'CIA had taken any part in Australian politics'. Yet, 'Whitlam repeated the allegation that he knew of two instances in which CIA money had been used to influence domestic Australian politics'.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 282.

<sup>54</sup> John Blaxland, *The Protest Years, the Official History of ASIO 1963-1975*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016, 437.

<sup>55</sup> FRUS, 1969-76, Vol. E-12, National Security Study Memorandum 204, 1 July 1974.

<sup>56</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon at War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 289.

<sup>57</sup> John Blaxland, *The Protest Years, the Official History of ASIO 1963-1975*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016, 446; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 November 1975; *Australian Financial Review*, 3 November 1975.

<sup>58</sup> John Blaxland, *The Protest Years, the Official History of ASIO 1963-1975*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016, 447; *Australian*, 8 November 1975.



Whitlam aimed to amplify Australia's voice in the Australia-US alliance but did not wish to reduce the alliance's effectiveness or put an end to it. Some of his attempts created seriously visible wobbles on the arm but none of them were incurable.

The Fraser Government (1976-83) eased these wobbles. Fraser's fix was for two major reasons. Firstly, the strain in relations was not structural. It was a leadership issue. 'Both leaders, though in their own way at the height of their political power, could not adequately understand the dilemmas the other faced. Instead, Nixon's rage at Whitlam, and Whitlam's frustration at the course of American foreign policy ... only seemed to raise temperatures rather than advance understanding.' Nixon was 'desperate' to get out of Vietnam; 'Whitlam [was] eager to reset Australia's international stance'.<sup>59</sup> Secondly, since the bilateral relations had such a strong background resting on common values, two leaders' battle did not much harm.

Fraser began to announce official statements of assurance. First, via official reports and cabinet decisions, Fraser re-assured the US about the continuing significance of the alliance. After the election, he 'removed the uncertainty hanging over the US intelligence community's relationship with ASIO'.<sup>60</sup> His Government's Defence White Paper of November 1976 emphasized that alliance between the two powers provided 'substantial grounds for confidence that in the event of a fundamental threat to Australia's security, US military support would be forthcoming'. The paper added that 'Australia's security might be ultimately dependent upon US support'. Regarding bilateral defence relations, the paper underlined the 'many important practical advantages' that the US alliance had already provided, e.g. 'intelligence, defence science and technology, military staff contacts regarding tactical doctrine and operational procedures, and military exercising with forces using high technology which [was] not otherwise available'.<sup>61</sup> In March 1977, a cabinet minute confirmed that Australia would

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<sup>59</sup> James Curran, *Unholy Fury: Whitlam and Nixon At War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2015, (Kindle Edition), 181-182.

<sup>60</sup> John Blaxland, *The Protest Years, the Official History of ASIO 1963-1975*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2016, 450.

<sup>61</sup> Australian Defence, Presented to Parliament by Minister for Defence the Hon. D. J. Killen, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, November 1976.

'seek assurance from' the US that Australia would be 'treated as a member of their inner group of allies'. The Minute emphasized significant US influence on Australian foreign policy in stating that 'the conduct of Australian foreign policy requires that Australia develop insights into American foreign policy perceptions and play a part in shaping attitudes that particularly affect Australia's vital interests, either directly or indirectly'.<sup>62</sup>

The US authorities welcomed Australia's efforts to retain close ties. Relevant Congressional committees noted that 'Australia' mattered particularly regarding its 'important responsibilities in the South West Pacific'.<sup>63</sup>

The US authorities utilized the developing closeness with Australia by enjoying greater jurisdiction on intelligence bases. In 1978 it was revealed that the US replaced an out-dated satellite dish at the North West Cape station without the necessary authorization from Australian authorities.<sup>64</sup> Fraser's Minister for Defence, Jim Killen, initially denied any such occurrence by stating that 'no installation ... at North West Cape [would] occur without the Australian Government having first been formally approached'.<sup>65</sup> Two weeks later, Gordon Scholes, MP, disclosed a detailed summary of the event in parliament.<sup>66</sup> The US upgraded the satellite terminal equipment and the Fraser Government did not appear overly concerned.

Fraser also utilized the developing closeness. As a result of his visit to the US in December 1978-January 1979, aiming to 'strengthen' the 'relations at the highest possible level',<sup>67</sup> the two governments signed a memorandum of cooperative logistic support for covering Australia's deficiency in national defence capabilities. The defence items listed in the memorandum included weapon systems and their spare parts, ammunition, explosives, modification kits, and

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<sup>62</sup> NAA, A12909, 1081, Australia-United States Relations, Cabinet Minute, 15 March 1977.

<sup>63</sup> NAA, A12909, 1244, United States Foreign Policy and Australia, Cabinet Minute, 23 May 1977.

<sup>64</sup> Statement by Bill Hayden, MP, No. P40/78, Parliament House Canberra, 14 May 1978.

<sup>65</sup> Press Statement by the Minister for Defence, Jim Killen, MP, No. 70/78, 16 May 1978.

<sup>66</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 31 May 1978, 2801.

<sup>67</sup> NAA, A12909, 2830, The Prime Minister's Visit to the United States, December 1978-January 1979, Cabinet Minute, 12 December 1978.

repair services.<sup>68</sup> The US would provide this equipment in both peacetime and emergency, which alleviated 'the need for large-scale stockpiling' by the Australian Defence Force.<sup>69</sup> The memorandum provided a guaranteed<sup>70</sup> access to US war material.

### *The Wobbly Cross:*

The 1970s supported the "wobbly cross" thesis. Turkey's tendency to move away from the US continued even after its arms embargo was lifted. Neither side created an atmosphere to mend broken trust. The US lifted the embargo and increased the amount of aid and Turkey pretended that the relations were normal. Yet Turkish governments blamed the US for their own failures to stabilize the economy. Australia, despite Whitlam's autonomy quest did not move away from the US. Not only did Australian administrations not challenge US priorities in the Asia-Pacific but also they did not ask for anything substantially additional. Unlike Turkey-US relations there was no significant dent in the mutual trust between Australia and the US. The quick change in government from Whitlam to Fraser bolstered the relations and both sides utilized this closeness.

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<sup>68</sup> For the details of the Memorandum see R. J. Cameron, *Year Book Australia*, No. 68, Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1984, 57; 3; Kevin J. McGuire, Thomas D. Pilsch, John W. Stark, *Possibilities for Increased Australian-American Cooperation in the Indian Ocean*, Washington DC: The War College, National Defense University, April 1983, 35.

<sup>69</sup> The Defence of Australia (1987 Defence White Paper), [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/1987](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/1987), (Accessed 15.06.2018). See also NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975.

<sup>70</sup> The guarantee implied in the Memorandum was not certain. During the Carter Administration, Australia complained about the delays in the already-paid for US equipment supplies for peacetime conditions. Thomas Durrell-Young, *An Analysis and Commentary on the Australian, New Zealand and United States Defence Relationship, 1951-1986*, PhD Thesis, Geneva: University of Geneva, 1987, 133.

## **PART 2**

### **Relations in the 1980s**

#### **a. Turkey: dialogue of the deaf**

The Turkish arm continued its wobbly tendency throughout the 1980s due to ongoing divergencies in Turkish and American priorities. In addition to these inconsistencies, the 1980s highlighted another significant aspect of the wobbly cross: acknowledging imbalance. This era particularly underscored the imbalance in relations between a great and a middle power. Theoretically, if the middle power acknowledged an imbalance, the wobbles were eased and bilateral relations were strengthened. Yet Turkish-American relations did not conform to this. Turkey was both economically and militarily in need of US aid. To rejuvenate relations, Turkish leaders had to acknowledge this imbalance. Until 1983, the Junta did that by accepting almost all US demands with tiny reservations. Junta leaders did not push too much for their own priorities, which was to maximise American diplomatic and economic support. After 1983, the Prime Minister Turgut Özal also acknowledged the imbalance but insisted on achieving his priority, which was changing the bilateral trade regime to increase Turkey's share of the US market. The junta's attempts worked better, since Turkey's economic weakness prevented the recalibration of bilateral trade. The US welcomed Turkey's renewed subservience and restarted the aid flow, but did not increase its significance. Thus, accepting the imbalance did not change the tendency of the arm. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, trust in bilateral relations was seriously damaged; secondly, none of the parties tried to fix the divergence in national priorities (Turkey wanted more American aid while the US wanted Turkey's unconditional support for its/NATO's policies in the eastern Mediterranean); thirdly, for the US, Turkey was important militarily but not economically, whereas for Özal the reverse was so; fourthly, some age-old issues in bilateral relations (Armenia, Cyprus, and the Kurds) resurged. Neither the Junta/Özal nor the US was unwilling to rejuvenate relations. Even if the Turkish leaders utterly acknowledged the imbalance, since their priorities were so

disoriented, the parties did not understand each other. The unchanged tendency of the arm continued to reflect Turkey's trend away from the US.

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In 1980, Turkish governments could not ease the intensifying economic crisis, already acute at the end of the 1970s. Moreover, the domestic situation in Turkey was aggravated by the violence amongst several ideological factions. The Süleyman Demirel government could not cope with that.<sup>1</sup> To meet the economic emergency, Demirel was in need of 'approximately \$4.5 billion ... over the next five to six years'. US unwillingness to cover this debt over so short time,<sup>2</sup> ended with the coup on 12 September 1980.<sup>3</sup>

Ideologically and practically, the junta leaders were very pro-American. Right after the coup the Junta made a very clear public announcement about its closeness to the US. In his speech on 12 September,<sup>4</sup> the Chief of the Turkish General Staff and the head of Junta, General Kenan Evren, firstly stressed the 'danger of external involvement in the growing anarchy' in Turkey. He implied that 'the ideological factions' behind this anarchy were 'directed or inspired' by the USSR and/or Islamic revivalists in Iran, which were US adversaries. Secondly, Evren 'strongly reaffirmed Turkey's active support for a settlement in Cyprus problem', which the US had been trying to solve since 1974. Thirdly, Evren assured the world that 'Turkey's ... ties with NATO, relations with the [European Economic Community] and [the] Council of Europe, and bilateral relations with Western democracies' were solid. Evren further appreciated the 'special role in preserving world peace' played by the US.

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<sup>1</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, 9 March 1980.

<sup>2</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from Secretary of State Muskie to the Department of State, 25 June 1980.

<sup>3</sup> For details see Washington National Records Center, OSD Files: FRC 330-82-0217B, Box 18, Turkey 1980.

<sup>4</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 19 September 1980.

In their following conversations<sup>5</sup> with US officials, the Junta leaders continued to emphasize their pro-western, particularly pro-American, stance. They underlined that they would 'keep Turkey democratic, secular and pro-Western' and 'protect [the] Turkish parliamentary system'. They also promised to continue 'the economic reform program'<sup>6</sup> begun earlier. The acting head of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), İlder Türkmen, clarified Evren's expectations from the US. In his conversation with the US Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, Türkmen declared Turkey's 'strong attachment to the [NATO] alliance and also to democracy'. He added that 'Turkey [was] looking forward to continuing productive cooperation with the US and with the other NATO allies'. The Junta leaders expressed their readiness to sort out the issues of the 1970s and to accept US demands in order to rejuvenate US-Turkish relations. They were clearly open to accept the imbalance in relations. Muskie expressed the 'supportive attitude of the US toward the new Turkish government'.<sup>7</sup>

As understood from Muskie's words, the US was interested in supporting Turkey, which was highlighted in US official reports on Turkey. The reports underlined Turkey's importance for defending NATO's interests in the eastern Mediterranean. One significant report from the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Congressional Research Service to the US House of Representatives stressed that Western communication lines in the region passed through the Turkish straits, which were crucial in defending NATO's southern flank. Military installations, particularly İncirlik Air Base, the storage depots near the Syrian border, and intelligence collection stations in Turkey, became even more important following the loss of similar elements in Iran after the 1979 Revolution and increasing instability in the Middle East. A widely held view in the Pentagon also pointed out that after the loss of Iran and the USSR's invasion of

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<sup>5</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 19 September 1980.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the economic reform program of the 1980s see Robin Barlow & Fikret Şenses, "The Turkish export boom: Just reward or just lucky?", *Journal of Development Economics*, 48:1, 1995, 113-120; Ziya Öniş & Steven B. Webb, "Political Economy of Policy Reform in Turkey in the 1980s", *World Bank Policy Research Working Papers*, WPS 1059, December 1992, 28-36; For a general overview see also Anne O. Krueger & Okan H. Aktan, *Swimming against the Tide: Turkish Trade Reform in the 1980s*, San Francisco: ICS Press, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Secretary of State Muskie to the Department of State, 27 September 1980.

Afghanistan, Turkey was the only real barrier against a potential Soviet invasion of the oil fields in the Persian Gulf.<sup>8</sup> On 6 March 1980, the National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, reported that 'Turkey [was] a NATO ally whom we value highly and with whom we want to work closely to assure the security of the eastern Mediterranean region.'<sup>9</sup>

In US strategic calculations Turkey was important for five reasons: the Turkish straits, Incirlik Air Base, providing a large barrier to stop the Soviet penetration into the northern Iraqi oil fields, and co-operating with Greece for the stability of the eastern Mediterranean. These show that Turkey's significance was only security-oriented and strictly related to its loyalty to NATO's priorities.

Turkey needed to be strong both economically and militarily to defend these priorities, so the US appealed to its allies to increase their economic and military assistance to Turkey.<sup>10</sup> The US State Department's spokesman, John Trattner stated:

[f]or the last several years, Turkey has been beset by increasing politically motivated terrorism and severe economic difficulties. We have admired the Turkish people for their persistent efforts to deal with a deepening economic and political crisis ... the [US], along with Turkey's other NATO allies and friends, has provided significant levels of assistance to help stabilize its economy and provide for the common defense. This assistance will continue.<sup>11</sup>

The Junta's readiness to be a loyal ally convinced the US to recognize and support it as the official governing authority of Turkey.

The wobbles on the arm were temporarily eased and US-AID visits to Turkey were restarted. The first visit was in October 1980, which reviewed 'a broad range of security assistance issues' covering 'price reductions on US military

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<sup>8</sup> Congressional Research Service, Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, *Turkey's Problems and Prospects: Implications for US Interests*, Washington DC: US Government Printing Service, 1980.

<sup>9</sup> Office of Staff Secretary, Series: Presidential Files; Folder: 3/8/80; Container 153, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>10</sup> Office of Staff Secretary, Series: Presidential Files, Folder: 3/8/80, Container 153, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>11</sup> US Department of State, "Coup d'état in Turkey 12 September 1980", *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol.80, Number 2044, November 1980.

equipment, F-4 aircraft and [allowing] Turkey to liquidate its \$50.7 million trust fund shortfall over a five year period'. During these talks, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Turgut Özal requested \$400 million in Foreign Military Sales credits for FY82.<sup>12</sup> Unlike US-Turkish negotiations in the 1970s, the US did not refuse Özal's demand.<sup>13</sup>

These mutual efforts seemed promising, but did not change the tendency of arm, since the relative priorities were still not converging. The US' top priority was to strengthen NATO's south-eastern flank, which required strict American control over strategic installations in Turkey. Increasing Turkish defence capabilities was required only for the effectiveness of these installations. Another related priority was Greece's re-integration to NATO, which Turkish governments had been vetoing since 1978.<sup>14</sup> The Junta's priorities were twofold: achieving American diplomatic support to consolidate its international recognition, and increasing American aid for dealing with the ongoing economic crisis.<sup>15</sup> The Junta acknowledged the imbalance but its priorities were economic and national, the US was happy about this acknowledgement but its priorities were security-oriented and regional.

One major example of how indisputably the Junta acknowledged the imbalance was removing Turkey's veto on Greece's re-integration. Evren expressed his personal view that Turkey should actively support Greek re-integration in NATO in order to increase the organisation's internal stability.<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of the Junta's readiness, US officials acted carefully. They took a pro-Turkish attitude in order to eliminate any Greek-Turkish conflict in the future. The US National Security Council knew that the 'Turkish military favour[ed]

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<sup>12</sup> FY82 gives the amount of US military sales to Turkey in 1982. For details see "U.S. Military Aid and Arms Sales to Turkey Fiscal Years 1980-1999", [https://fas.org/asmp/profiles/turkey\\_fmchart.htm](https://fas.org/asmp/profiles/turkey_fmchart.htm), (Accessed 22.3.2019).

<sup>13</sup> "Memorandum for the President, Significant Actions, Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense (4-10 October 1980)", Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>14</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Brown to President Carter, 18 January 1978.

<sup>15</sup> A. Eralp, M. Tünay, B. Yeşilada (eds.), *The Political and Socioeconomic Transformation of Turkey*, Wesport: Praeger, 1993, 218-219.

<sup>16</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Embassy in Turkey to the Department of State, 19 September 1980.



Greek reintegration into NATO'. Yet in a conversation with President's advisor Brzezinski, Council representative Paul Henzer emphasized that Turkey should not be bullied or made to feel that Greece's re-joining into NATO was a top priority for the US. The first priority should be underlined as restoring 'domestic tranquillity to Turkey, keeping [its] economy functioning well and setting a constitutional reform process in motion'. With this approach, Turkey could be 'secured as a valuable ally and effective member of NATO and rebuilt as a bastion of "strength in the Middle East" '.<sup>17</sup> The US Department of State additionally underscored the importance of aid for keeping the Turks in line. The Secretary of State proposed that the new military and economic aid bundle should be conditional on Turkey's approval of Greece's re-integration into NATO.<sup>18</sup> This was a good example of the damaged trust in American considerations about Turkey.

To finalize Greece's re-integration, on 17 October 1980, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Bernard Rogers went to Ankara. Before Rogers' arrival, President Carter sent a letter to Evren to make sure that the Turkish authorities would not change their mind. Carter stated that Greece's re-integration into NATO was 'essential' and had to be resolved swiftly. Indeed, 'if a solution [was] longer delayed it [might] well become impossible', which 'would be a tragedy'.<sup>19</sup> Under Rogers' auspices 'Greece and Turkey had agreed on a formula [what became known as the "Rogers Plan"] for the reintegration of Greece into the military structure of NATO'.<sup>20</sup> The NATO Defence Planning Committee did not waste time and on 20 October reintegrated Greek forces into the military structure of the alliance.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Memorandum from Paul B. Henze of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski), 12 September 1980; see also National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 75, Turkey: 9/80-1/81, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

<sup>18</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Secretary of State Muskie to the Department of State, 27 September 1980.

<sup>19</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Turkey, 3 October 1980.

<sup>20</sup> FRUS, 1977-80, Vol. 21, Telegram from the Embassy in Greece to the Department of State, 18 October 1980.

<sup>21</sup> NATO Update, <https://www.nato.int/docu/update/80-89/1980e.htm>, (Accessed 10.04.2018). For details of the Rogers Plan see İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Siyasal Bağları, Vol. II, 1945-1990*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991, 467-468; NATO Defence Planning Committee Final Communiqué, 9-10 December 1980, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c801209a.htm>, (Accessed 10.04.2018).

The US used the Junta's acknowledgement of the imbalance to increase its military control in Turkey. In 1982, it began to put pressure on the Junta to open a US Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) base in Turkey. At the end of 1979, the US had established the RDF due to concerns about a possible USSR intervention in Iran. The RDF was originally a force of 200,000 troops established in the US in 1980. Reagan renamed it as the US Central Command (CENTCOM), increased its troop numbers to 300,000 then linked it to NATO SACEUR. For increasing the RDF's operational management, the Reagan administration asked its Middle Eastern allies, e.g. Saudi Arabia, for pre-positioning facilities, which would be smaller than fully-fledged military bases but large enough to provide operational material to RDF personnel.<sup>22</sup>

The US used increasing Soviet activities in Afghanistan and the Gulf to convince the Junta to open an RDF base. In 1982 the head of the CIA with National Security Council member Paul Henze visited Turkey. Both emphasized the eruption of the Soviet threat after the Afghanistan invasion.<sup>23</sup> The Junta was not convinced for several reasons. First, the anti-American leftist groups in Turkey were still influential on public opinion, and a new US military installation might have caused serious public reaction. Second, the Junta was suspected US plans to use the RDF to achieve political ends. Third, a new base might hinder Turkey's recently developing relations with Iran, Iraq, and Libya. Fourth, almost all Gulf countries were opposed to the concept of an RDF force. Yet the Junta was still in need of US support for its survival. In a Memorandum of Understanding, it gave the US conditional approval for the RDF's equipment and storage facilities in 1982. The memorandum stated that the RDF would be utilized solely within a NATO framework, that RDF personnel would use the equipment in the bases only with Turkey's approval, that all RDF operations would require both Turkey's and

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<sup>22</sup> For details see Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, *Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications*, February 1983; Jeffrey Record, *The Rapid Deployment Force and U.S. military intervention in the Persian Gulf*, Cambridge: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1983.

<sup>23</sup> Turkish Prime Ministerial Bulletins (TPMB), 5 October 1982; *Cumhuriyet*, 16 October 1982; *New York Times*, 16 October 1982.

NATO's approval, and that the bases' costs would be covered by the US.<sup>24</sup> Yet the imbalance prevented the Junta from saying no.

In December 1983, the Junta left the government to Özal. He was a profit-driven pragmatic leader with relatively little interest in defence issues. In return for Greece's reintegration to NATO and more American control over Turkish bases, he attempted to change the conditions of the Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA).<sup>25</sup> His aim differed from those of previous leaders: to increase Turkey's profits from bilateral trade, so reducing the need for American aid. He believed that a new DECA, with reduced limitations on Turkey's exports to the US, could eventually provide that.<sup>26</sup> But neither the Senate Foreign Relations Committee nor the Congress accepted such a change.<sup>27</sup> Özal's push for his own priority wobbled the arm.

In 1985, Özal visited the US three times to negotiate DECA. Since his emphasis was on bilateral commerce, he tried to show the similarities between his and President Ronald Reagan's economic ideals: free enterprise, free trade, and minimizing government interference. Reagan was 'delighted' by Özal,<sup>28</sup> but Özal's give-and-take strategy was not palatable.<sup>29</sup> Özal repeatedly underlined the restrictions of the DECA agreement on bilateral trade and noted to US officials, '[i]f I give the US bases, I expect it to increase trade in return .... Otherwise, [Turkey] will have to beg for aid all the time'.<sup>30</sup> In another press release in New York he reiterated, 'I am not going to ask for more aid. To live on help, aid, is no

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<sup>24</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 2, 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 46-48.

<sup>25</sup> DECA (29 March 1980) committed the US to military and economic support of Turkey, without specifying the level/amount of economic or military aid. The agreement also established a joint US-Turkey military commission to foster military, commercial, scientific, and technological cooperation. For the full text of the agreement and its three supplementary agreements see US Department of State, *US Treaties and Other International Agreements, Vol. 32, Part 3, 1979-1980*, Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1986, 3323-3388. See also Nasuh Uslu, *The Turkish-American Relationship between 1947 and 2003: The History of a Distinctive Alliance*, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003, 293-294.

<sup>26</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, Vol. 2*, Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1994, 304-305.

<sup>27</sup> *New York Times*, 3 April 1985.

<sup>28</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 April 1985; "Remarks Following Discussions with Prime Minister Turgut Ozal of Turkey", 2 April 1985, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

<sup>29</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 1 April 1985.

<sup>30</sup> *Pulse*, 23 December 1985.

longer important for Turkey. If you want a strong Turkey, if you want to help us, help us on trade'.<sup>31</sup>

Turkey's economy was too weak to increase bilateral trade to the extent that Özal desired, but this did not deter him. On 17 September 1985, three months before DECA's first year ended, he called on the Americans for renewed negotiations. Congress once again blocked any radical changes to DECA. At the end of the negotiations, on 18 December, DECA was renewed for another five years without any essential changes or any new US commitments.<sup>32</sup> What Özal achieved after almost one year of negotiations was a Bilateral Investment Agreement, which aimed to establish equality between Turkish and American companies in investment management, operation, and entrepreneurship.<sup>33</sup> Özal had to accept the imbalance. Although the Agreement failed to address Özal's demands, it was the first agreement of its kind signed by the US and Turkey.<sup>34</sup> Reagan's delight in Özal's liberalism did not transform into a trade agreement. For the US, developing bilateral trade with Turkey on Özal's terms was not a priority.

Divergent priorities also persisted on three old but major issues: Armenia, Cyprus and the Kurds. In all these, wobbles became more visible when Turkey showed its discontent openly.

The Armenian issue re-erupted with a Congress debate over defining the events in 1915 in the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire as "genocide". Until the mid-1980s, the US administration supported Turkey's case that the Ottoman Army was not responsible for the massacre of Armenians in the Armenian provinces. With decreasing US Presidential support for Turkey's case, in September 1984 the Armenian lobby managed to pass through the House of

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<sup>31</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 1 April 1985.

<sup>32</sup> US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *United States Political-Military Relations with Allies in Southern Europe, 15-30 October 1986, to the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, US House of Representatives, Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1987, 35-36; *New York Times*, 19, 26 March 1987.

<sup>33</sup> Turkey Bilateral Investment Treaty, Signed 3 December 1985, Entered into Force 18 May, 1990, 99<sup>th</sup> Congress 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Senate Treaty Doc. 99-19; "Reagan's message to the Senate Transmitting the Turkey-United States Investment Treaty", 25 March 1986, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; TPMB, 3 December 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 2, 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 69.

Representatives a decision for 24 April to be termed as "Man's Inhumanity to Man Day".<sup>35</sup> The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee also passed a decision emphasizing that US foreign policy should prevent events like the "Armenian Genocide" in the future. The House of Representatives voted on the Armenian decision proposal on 4 June 1985, but did not pass.<sup>36</sup> The Armenian lobby brought the proposal back to the House on 23 April 1987.<sup>37</sup> The MFA, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), and the parliamentary opposition expressed their outrage.<sup>38</sup> The Özal government reacted by recalling its US ambassador.<sup>39</sup>

With the election of George H. Bush, who had promised the Armenian lobby to look into the "genocide proposal", the US Senate Justice Commission ratified the 1985 proposal. The TAF and the MFA reacted in anger and outrage and took measures restricting American military activities, for example hindering the US fleet visiting Turkish naval bases, suspending Turkish-US Defence Council meetings, and even preventing flights from İncirlik base.<sup>40</sup> The measures were eased after Democrat Senator Robert Byrd prevented the Armenian lobby from taking the proposal to the Senate via filibustering.<sup>41</sup> This did not stop President Bush. He said '[o]n this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacres, I wish to join with Armenians and all peoples in observing April 24, 1990, as a day of remembrance for the more than a million Armenian people who were victims. I call upon all peoples to work to prevent future acts of inhumanity against mankind, and my comments of June 1988 represent the depth of my feeling for the Armenian people and the sufferings they have endured'.<sup>42</sup> The filibustering could not ease the wobble.

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<sup>35</sup> The US House of Representatives and Senate Joint Resolution 247-98<sup>th</sup> Congress, 24 April 1984; "National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man", <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/98/hjres247>, (Accessed 29.4.2018).

<sup>36</sup> "Armenians(2)", James W. Cicconi Files, Box 6, F1997-006/9, D. Cohen, 24/08/2004, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

<sup>37</sup> Harut Sassounian, "Sassounian: All 3 Branches of U.S. Government Recognize Armenian Genocide", *Armenian Weekly*, 5 June 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 2, 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 62-63.

<sup>39</sup> TPMB 1,10 August 1987.

<sup>40</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol.2, 1980-2001*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 63-64; Congressional Record (Bound Edition), Vol.135, Part 11, (14 July 1989 – 24 July 1989), Senate, 19 July 1989.

<sup>41</sup> *New York Times*, 28 February 1990.

<sup>42</sup> "Statement on the Observance of the 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Massacres", Public Papers, 20 April 1990, President George H. W. Bush Presidential Library.

Another wobble was induced by the Cyprus issue, which had been lingering between Turkey and Greece since the 1960s. By the 1980s both parties were in need of US interference to ameliorate the continuing strain. Greek-Turkish relations were so tense that any American decision favouring one party would upset the other.

The US administration's mediating efforts on Cyprus were additionally hindered by the diverging views of the Presidency and the Congress. For security and strategic reasons, the Presidency favoured Turkey. With the influence of the Greek lobby, the Congress was against Turkey. In particular, the Reagan administration favoured a more conciliatory and constructive approach towards Turkey rather than taking punitive measures.<sup>43</sup> Yet supporting Turkey became difficult for Reagan when the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) proclaimed its independence in November 1983. The Greek lobby used the TRNC's proclamation to urge the suspension of promised US aid to Turkey.<sup>44</sup> The Lobby's activities were partially successful. The Congress cut aid to Turkey by \$200 million.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, in November 1983, the US administration condemned the TRNC's declaration of independence and put pressure on Pakistan and Bangladesh not to officially recognize the declaration.<sup>46</sup>

Reagan tried to mediate. He did not push Turkey to reverse the claim of independence, nor did he completely cut off aid. He tried not to lose the Greeks either.<sup>47</sup> One of his moves was the announcement of the Cyprus Peace and Reconstruction Fund of \$250 million on 8 May 1984.<sup>48</sup> Its aim was to converge Turkish and Greek interests by funding joint projects on the island. The project

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<sup>43</sup> *New York Times*, 5 February, 22 November 1983.

<sup>44</sup> For details see Nancy Crawshaw, "Cyprus: A Failure in Western Diplomacy", *The World Today*, 40(2), 1984, 78; Süha Bölükbaşı, "The Cyprus Dispute in the Post-Cold War Era", *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 18:1, 1994, 4; Christalla Yakinthou, "The EU's Role in the Cyprus Conflict: System Failure or Structural Metamorphosis?", *Ethnopolitics*, 8:3-4, 2009, 319.

<sup>45</sup> The US Government Publishing Office, History of Bills, H.R.4505 A bill to prohibit all US military assistance for Turkey until the Turkish Government takes certain actions to resolve the conflict on Cyprus, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Vol. 129, 1983.

<sup>46</sup> The US Congress, Statutes at Large, 98<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Concurrent Resolution (H. Con. Res. 220), 98 Stat. 3441 - Condemnation of the "Turkish Federated State of Cyprus", 3 February 1984.

<sup>47</sup> *New York Times*, 10 May, 10 July, 25 September 1984.

<sup>48</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 9 May 1984.

was dead in the water. Greece rejected it by claiming that giving 19% of funding to the Turkish Cypriots was not fair due to their population ratio.<sup>49</sup>

At the end of the decade, the US tried once more to reduce tension on the island. The US considered Greek Cypriot President Rauf Denktaş as a roadblock against any solution and proposed to replace him with Asil Nadir, perceived as a more conciliatory figure. Özal supported it but Nadir refused.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the 1980s, US efforts prevented the Cyprus issue from becoming a new armed conflict but did not straighten the wobble on Turkey's arm.

The Kurdish question was also a result of divergent Turkish and American priorities on the Northern Iraqi and Turkish Kurds. The US had retained an interest in the Kurds since the 1950s. Ever since Turkey had resented the US-originated Peace Corps activities among the Kurdish populations in the eastern and southeastern provinces. Turkish pressure served to reduce the Corps' activities. In 1979, the CIA reported that Turkey failed to invest enough in the Kurdish provinces, and that the Kurds were undermined by internal strife and without strong leadership would be unable to develop autonomously.<sup>51</sup> During the 1980s, with the intensification of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) activities in Turkey's southeast, US official reports increased their focus on human and socio-political rights in Turkey's Kurdish provinces. They predicted that unless the Turkish government expanded these rights, the PKK's activities would intensify.<sup>52</sup> Although these reports outraged Turkish public opinion, the Turkish official

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<sup>49</sup> "Letter to the Speaker of the House and the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Reporting on the Cyprus Conflict", 9 July 1984, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

<sup>50</sup> Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi- Turkish Grand National Assembly Records (TGNAR), Term 18, Vol. 37, 22 December 1989; *Cumhuriyet*, 23 December 1989.

<sup>51</sup> For the details of Peace Corps' activities in Turkey see Murat Soysal, "Barış Gönüllüleri ve Türkiye'deki Faaliyetleri", *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, No. 56, Bahar 2015, 113-146; Turkey Peace Corps Program, Agreement effected by exchange of notes signed at Ankara 27 August 1962, Entered into force 27 August 1962, United States Treaties and Other International Agreements, Vol. 13, Part 2, Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1963, 2263-2265.

<sup>52</sup> For the details of the US policies towards the Kurds in Turkey see Marianna Charountaki, *The Kurds and US Foreign Policy: International Relations in the Middle East since 1945*, London: Routledge, 2011; Tim Jacoby, "Political violence, the 'War on Terror' and the Turkish military", *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 3:1, 2010, 99-108; Henri J. Barkey & Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.

reaction was more measured. In February 1988, the Turkish MFA merely expressed its discomfort about the US reports.<sup>53</sup>

The US had a far greater interest in the Northern Iraqi Kurds, as they were producing 65% of Iraq's oil. In the 1970s, under Mulla Mustafa Barzani's<sup>54</sup> leadership Kurdish-American relations were particularly close, so close that the Nixon administration supported the Kurdish uprising in 1972.<sup>55</sup> In the 1980s, the Kurds exploited the power vacuum created by the Iran-Iraq War and rose up once again. At the end of the war, Kurdish leaders visited Washington expecting to forge a bilateral arrangement with the US.<sup>56</sup> Their failure to conclude an agreement pushed them under the repressive measures of Saddam Hussein. 50,000 Kurds became refugees on the Turkish border, leading to intense debates and disagreements between Turkey, Iraq, and the US. Turkey was particularly against US policies towards the Northern Iraqi Kurds, which were creating one of the biggest refugee crises in the region.<sup>57</sup> The causes, activities and outcomes of this wobble on Turkish-American relations will be examined in the next chapter on the Gulf War.

In this era, Kenan Evren and Turgut Özal acknowledged the imbalance between the US and Turkey. Both leaders had economic imperatives but only the latter openly pushed for them. This made the Turkish arm less wobbly until 1983, though the general tendency did not change. Acknowledgment of the imbalance did not align the national priorities of the US and Turkey, which were military-regional and economic-national respectively. Turkey was significant and useful for the US as long as it acted within NATO's aims or US priorities. The Turkish

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<sup>53</sup> *Milliyet*, 12 February 1988, *Cumhuriyet*, 18 February 1988.

<sup>54</sup> Mulla Mustafa Barzani was the first chairman of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Iraqi Kurdistan. He was active in Kurdish nationalist politics from 1930-70s. For details see Kerim Yıldız, *The Kurds in Iraq the Past, Present and Future*, London: Pluto Press, 2004, 15-23; Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending*, New York: Palgrave, 2008, 13.

<sup>55</sup> Bryan R. Gibson, *Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War*, New York: Palgrave, 2015, 143-163.

<sup>56</sup> David Romano & Mehmet Gürses (eds.), *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria*, New York: Palgrave, 2014, 51, 158, 189-190.

<sup>57</sup> For details see *New York Times*, 7 September 1988; *Washington Post*, 9 September 1988; Vera Beaudin Saeedpour, "Kurdish Times and the New York Times", *Kurdish Times*, Summer 1988; 25-41; Bill Park, "Iraq's Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US Policy", *Parameters*, Autumn 2004, 18-30; Philip Robins, "The overlord state: Turkish policy and the Kurdish issue", *International Affairs*, 69:4, 1993, 657-676; William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf crisis", *International Affairs*, 68:4, 1992, 679-692.



administration, on the other hand, estimated its importance for US foreign policy aims as far greater than it actually was. In this era, bilateral relations were developed to an extent but proved to be strained by the '*dialogue de sourds* [dialogue of the deaf] in which minds [could not] meet, not necessarily because of ill-will, but because the attention of each side [was] fastened on matters and interests which [were] largely or entirely unrelated'.<sup>58</sup> The wobbly cross was validated again since in the 1980s the Australian arm followed a reverse tendency.

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<sup>58</sup> David Vital, *The Inequality of States*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, 29.

## **b. Australia: alliance overshadows self-reliance**

While the 1970s, especially after Whitlam, showed how Australia aligned its national priorities to the US, the 1980s demonstrated a deepening of imbalance in relations between the two. There was an imbalance in the 1970s but it was curbed by Whitlam's realist and nationalistic policies. Even if the imbalance in the 1980s was not as great as between Turkey and the US, it was significant. More importantly, Australian governments' acknowledgement of it protected the Australian arms tendency. Under the influence of the Soviet menace in Afghanistan, Australian conservatives emphasized that only the US could save the country from any Soviet nuclear attack. This made Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser intensify his efforts to develop the already-very-close relations with the US. His efforts gave the US more freedom to carry out military exercises within Australia's jurisdiction. Again, with the effect of the Guam Doctrine, the Hawke government prioritized developing self-reliance in Australian defence capabilities. Although Hawke did not adjust this priority, he had to acknowledge the imbalance soon enough. After that, his government's statements and little steps for self-reliance did not induce any wobbles or change the arms' tendency. In short, during the 1980s, the US alliance overshadowed Hawke's self-reliance.

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In the 1980s, the first significant booster to Australia-US relations was the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. The Soviet move increased Australian conservatives' threat perceptions. Fraser delivered a speech in the parliament declaring that it could trigger a war between India and Pakistan, threaten ASEAN countries' stability, and force China to respond which could lead the Soviet Union to 'enhance its strategic posture in the West Pacific in areas which directly affect Australia's security'.<sup>1</sup> The remedy was simple: boost closeness with the US. In March 1980, the Minister for Defence, Jim Killen, stated:

We must rely on our principal ally, the United States, to carry the main responsibility in [the security of the Asia-Pacific]. But we can, through

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 19 February 1980, 23-24.

our policies, and by practical measures in support of the United States, show our concern at Soviet aggression and our resolve to defend our interests and independence, and to raise the cost [to] the Soviet Union of interference with them.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the 1980s, Australia was already a close and a significant ally of the US. At the ANZUS Council meeting, in February 1980, Council members emphasized the prominence of Australia's cooperation 'with the South Pacific states' for the security of the region.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the US was in need of 'facilities in Australia as part of its strategic defence program'.<sup>4</sup> Yet this closeness did not seem enough for the Fraser government.

Heightened threat perceptions led the government to take extra measures. In March 1980, ADF's air and naval forces frequency of deployment was increased in the Indian Ocean. Fraser also offered the US the use of facilities in Australia that might support US operations.<sup>5</sup> In 1981, US B-52 bomber aircrafts began navigational training flights over northern Australia and transit through Darwin on surveillance flights over the Indian Ocean.<sup>6</sup>

Australia probably gave the US more than was required. The priorities were really close and the Australian Opposition's discomfort did not affect it. The opposition was concerned about the nuclear-armed status of the B-52s. The Deputy Opposition Leader, Lionel Bowen, argued that the US administration should 'satisfy Australian public opinion' over whether US military aircraft in Australia were armed with nuclear weapons.<sup>7</sup> The US neither confirmed nor denied the B-52's status.<sup>8</sup>

The Australian conservatives' silence on the B-52s nuclear status was because they believed that Australia should give the Americans every facility to support

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<sup>2</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 25 March 1980, 1137.

<sup>3</sup> "ANZUS Communiqué issued in Washington by the ANZUS Council", 27 February 1980, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 51:2, February 1980, 32.

<sup>4</sup> T. B. Millar, "Global and Regional Changes and their Defence Implications in Australia to the Year 2000", *Working Paper No. 27*, ANU Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, November 1980, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 25 March 1980, 1137.

<sup>6</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 11 March 1981, 664-666.

<sup>7</sup> "Statement by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow minister for Foreign Affairs", the Hon Lionel Bowen, 29 March 1981, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/>, (Accessed 16.6.2018).

<sup>8</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 2 April 1981, 1234.

their counter-measures against the Soviets. On 23 April 1981 the Foreign Minister, Tony Street stated that Australia believed that the Soviets constituted 'both an expansionist ideology and military power on an unprecedented scale', which could be deterred by strengthening 'America's military capability'. This was a familiar argument but the Australian government believed that the US possessed the sole capability to counter any potential Soviet threat.<sup>9</sup> In the same year, the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence report, "Threats to Australia's Security: Their nature and probability" reiterated this claim. The report underlined that the Australian Government 'thoroughly' supported the Committee's view: 'the ANZUS Alliance acts as a deterrent against those potentially hostile actions [of the USSR] against Australia which are of such magnitude that they are beyond Australia's own capabilities'.<sup>10</sup> The government echoed that these actions could stem from the Soviet Union's formidable nuclear potential, so Australia should support US 'efforts to reinforce the credibility of its nuclear deterrent force through measures designed to enable an adequate response'.<sup>11</sup>

During Vice-President George Bush's visit, Fraser emphasized his government's belief in the significance of US deterrence against the Soviet Union. Fraser underlined Australia's anxieties due to the Soviet's 'provocation and aggression' in Afghanistan, Poland, 'its support for Vietnam's continued occupation of Kampuchea', and its direct and indirect operations in Central America, Africa and the Middle East. Against these moves, he added that Australia 'has been greatly encouraged by the determination of President Reagan to effect the revival of Western power, a power even more vital to the defence of freedom more than any time since the end of Second World War'.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Tony Street, "The Reagan Administration and its implications for the Australia-United States relationship", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 52:M41, 23 April 1981.

<sup>10</sup> NAA, M1551, 45, Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence - Threats to Australia's security - Their nature and probability, October 1981; NAA, A12909, 5840, Submission No 5840 - Government response to the report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD) entitled "Threats to Australia's Security" - related to Decision No 19304(FAD).

<sup>11</sup> NAA, A12909, 5840, Submission No 5840 - Government response to the report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JCFAD) entitled "Threats to Australia's Security" - related to Decision No 19304(FAD).

<sup>12</sup> "Visit by Vice President of the US", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 53:5, May 1982, 277; NAA, A9491, 35, Prime Minister's Brief - Visit of Vice-President Bush of the United States, 29 April-3 May 1982.

The Liberals' belief that US nuclear capabilities was enough to counter the Soviets, moved Australia closer to the US. The tendency of the arm was sustained.

The Fraser government dismissed the Opposition's criticisms of US actions. In May 1982, in his letter to Fraser, Victorian Premier John Cain stated that his government would not permit US nuclear-powered/armed warships to visit Victorian ports. In June, Fraser replied that denying US nuclear-powered warships from visiting Australian ports would contradict the terms of ANZUS, and added, to say that 'no nuclear weapons are carried in a particular warship' was 'simply not possible' since such identification would turn US warships into targets.<sup>13</sup> The Labor opposition leader, Bill Hayden, echoed Cain's claim that the US should assure Australia that the warships were not nuclear armed.<sup>14</sup> The Opposition could not present a strong reason to push US authorities to inform Canberra about status of the vessels. The US warships continued their visits. With the intensified closeness in bilateral relations the US had more freedom to act within Australia's jurisdiction.

In February 1983 Bob Hawke replaced Hayden as the Labor and Opposition Leader, then won the general election on 5 March. Although he knew the ANZUS alliance was indispensable, he tried to increase Australia's self-reliance. During his visit to Washington in June 1983, Hawke stated that 'Australia is not and cannot be a non-aligned nation, [w]e are neutral neither in thought nor in action'.<sup>15</sup> A few days later in Canberra, Hawke reiterated that Australia's relations with the US 'with its many dimensions, are of fundamental importance'. Equally, Australia's 'foreign policies would inevitably have differences of emphasis ... [o]n such issues as Indochina, China, Japan, and Central America'. Australia's 'first priority should be given to [its] relations with [its] neighbours of the Asian and

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<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Fraser, "Media Release, Victorian Government Threat to Ban Nuclear Ships", 7 June 1982, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-5829>, (Accessed 18.6.2018).

<sup>14</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 June 1982.

<sup>15</sup> "Speech by the Australian Prime Minister the Hon R. J. Hawke, to the Washington Press Club", Washington, 15 June 1983, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-6136>, (Accessed 18.6.2018).

Pacific region'. Hawke further emphasized that US proposals regarding the Pacific should be 'compatible with ... mutual obligations under ANZUS'.<sup>16</sup>

Hawke continued to take little steps for self-reliance. In July 1983, the communiqué of the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the ANZUS Council lightly supported Hawke's steps: '[t]he Council acknowledged that the ANZUS Treaty does not absolve each Government from the primary responsibility to provide its own security to the extent which its resources allow'.<sup>17</sup> In parliament the Minister for Foreign Affairs Bill Hayden clarified the communiqué's claim. He said that ANZUS did not offer any automatic security guarantee; its operation remained entirely at US discretion. He stressed the need to strip 'away the misconceptions, and the unrealistic expectations which surrounded the Treaty'. The Treaty needed to be strengthened and brought back 'to the terms of reality'.<sup>18</sup> These words did not induce a wobble since they were not put into practice.

Before long, Hawke's attempts at self-reliance were undermined by the imbalance. The request of the British aircraft carrier, HMS Invincible, to dry dock in Sydney for repair showed how vulnerable the imbalance was. Australian Defence Minister Gordon Scholes asked whether the carrier had nuclear weapons on board. HMS Invincible's captain response was to neither confirm nor deny, which resulted in Australia's refusal to let the ship dry dock.<sup>19</sup> US Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz stepped in. Wolfowitz questioned what the Australian government's 'attitude would be if an allied ship got into serious difficulty in Australian waters and had to steam to a local power for repairs'.<sup>20</sup> In February 1984 Scholes had to revise his government's decision. 'Australia would not in any way endanger the safety of any allied or friendly ship or crew in need of access to Australian facilities'.<sup>21</sup> In February 1985 Minister assisting the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans clarified Australia's position: 'it

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<sup>16</sup> "Address by The Prime Minister, Hon R. J. Hawke, to the National Press Club", Canberra, 27 June 1983, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-6141>, (Accessed 18.6.2018).

<sup>17</sup> "ANZUS Council Communiqué", 19 July 1983, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 54:7, July 1983, 348.

<sup>18</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 15 September 1983, 900.

<sup>19</sup> *Guardian*, 9 December 1983.

<sup>20</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 13 December 1983.

<sup>21</sup> "Visits by Allied and Friendly Naval Ships", *Australian Defence News Release*, No.31/84, 26 February 1984, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/>, (Accessed 18.6.2018)

is and has been the Government's position that the question of port access is to be regarded as an inextricable part of an alliance relationship'.<sup>22</sup> No wobbles were induced.

The HMS Invincible incident altered the Hawke government's stance. It began to focus more on ANZUS' significance than its transformation. At Pennsylvania State University, Scholes emphasized US potential to 'come to Australia's support', 'once a particular level of threat was reached'. Therefore ANZUS's function should not be 'over-simplified'. He also stressed that 'agreements relating to the visits to Australian ports by [US] naval units ... and access to Australian training facilities for [US] ground forces' were significant components of ANZUS.<sup>23</sup> The Minister for Aviation and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Kim Beazley, clarified Australia's continuous need to maintain its alliance with the US by quoting the Prime Minister's words: '[a]lthough Australia might be remote for the areas of the world where any nuclear war may be fought, it would be unrealistic to suppose that Australia would not be profoundly affected by such a conflict'. Beazley repeated that ANZUS had 'significant deterrent value' and represented 'the formal basis of a wide range of practical defence co-operation'. Australia's geostrategic location, and the uncertainties around it, needed to be 'tied up into US nuclear war fighting strategies'. Australia should be 'committed to support these measures'.<sup>24</sup> With this acknowledgment of the two nations relative imbalance, the tendency of the arm was consolidated.

At the end of 1984, closeness was increased by exchanges of visits between Australian and US defence industry representatives. 'Some 70 US participants, representing 23 US logistic support agencies and 11 US prime contractors, visited' Australia. With '460 separate' Australia defence firms, they 'attended the series of one-day fairs'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hansard, Senate, 22 February 1985, 83.

<sup>23</sup> "Australia's strategic outlook and defence policy, Speech by the Minister for Defence, Mr Gordon Scholes, MP, at the Australian Studies Centre, Pennsylvania State University", 24 June, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 55:6, June 1984, 589.

<sup>24</sup> "Australia's defence strategy, Speech by the Minister for Aviation and Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, MP, at the University of Queensland", 10 July, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 55:7, July 1984, 692-97.

<sup>25</sup> "Australia-US defence co-operation, News release issued by the Minister for Defence Support, MR Brian Howe, MP", 4 December, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 55:12, December 1984, 1303.

While Australian-American relations were strengthening, New Zealand's new government shook the ANZUS alliance. In July 1984, David Lange's Labour replaced the ruling National Party. Due to the inflexible anti-nuclear policy of Lange's government,<sup>26</sup> the US greatly reduced its level of intelligence sharing with New Zealand and refused to take part in ANZUS joint exercises with New Zealand elements.<sup>27</sup>

The New Zealand attitude demonstrated self-reliance, but it was too extreme for Hawke. On the contrary, in early 1985 his government secretly permitted the Americans to install devices into the Tasman Sea bed to measure the new US MX (Peacekeeper) Inter Continental Ballistic Missile's performance. During the tests US officials used Australia as a shore support facility,<sup>28</sup> which showed how the US continued to utilize the imbalance. When details about the agreement and its arrangements were leaked, parliamentary and public outcry forced the Hawke Government and the US to stop the tests.<sup>29</sup>

The termination of the tests could have induced a wobble but Hawke did not let that happen. He diverted attention away from the Tasman Sea by focusing on the indispensability of ANZUS. In Los Angeles on 9 February 1985, Hawke stated that 'notwithstanding the recent decision by the New Zealand Government regarding visits by nuclear warships, that the ANZUS Treaty remains, and that the alliance relationship between Australia and the [US] continues as strongly as ever'. The bilateral relationship under ANZUS, 'and the rights and obligations assumed under the Treaty, were undiminished by recent events'.<sup>30</sup> On 4 March 1985 he reiterated, 'the Australian-[US] alliance under ANZUS remains as strong as ever. In the case of New Zealand, we propose to pursue [its] important

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<sup>26</sup> "US-NZ Defence Relations: Implications for Australia", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:2, February 1985, 117-119; 122.

<sup>27</sup> Since this chapter does not focus on US-New Zealand relations, for the details of that ANZUS crisis see Michael C. Pugh, *The ANZUS crisis, nuclear visiting and deterrence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; see also NAA, A1838, 919/18/1 PART 3.

<sup>28</sup> "MX intercontinental ballistic missile tests", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:2, February 1985, 121; "Visit by the Prime Minister to the US –joint communiqué", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:2, February 1985, 135.

<sup>29</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, *ANZUS in Crisis: Alliance Management in International Affairs*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988, 42-43.

<sup>30</sup> "Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke, MP, to the Australian-American Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles", 9 February 1985, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:2, February 1985, 61.



defence relationship on a bilateral basis'.<sup>31</sup> In May 1985, Hayden, reiterated, 'in the absence of ANZUS, [Australia's] access to advanced technology would be akin to that of some backwoods nation'. It would also lead to the increase of Australia's defence budget by 'more than \$4000 million or some 70[%]'.<sup>32</sup>

Acknowledging the imbalance did not mean that the Hawke government completely shelved the idea of a shift towards self-reliance, via a couple of small steps. In January 1985, Beazley underlined the absolute necessity of ANZUS, but also stressed that Australia needed to develop a 'self-reliant defence posture based on the principle of developing independent national capabilities' for its defence and 'direct interests'.<sup>33</sup> As the first step, Australia did not endorse the US Strategic Defence Initiative or so-called Star Wars program.<sup>34</sup>

Another step was the examination of 'the content, priorities and rationale of defence forward planning'.<sup>35</sup> The former Deputy Director of the Joint Intelligence Organization, Paul Dibb conducted a review of Australia's defence capabilities, threat perceptions and force structure priorities. Dibb reported in mid-1986, although his report took almost a year to finally be turned into a Defence White Paper in March 1987.<sup>36</sup> Dibb listed Australia's primary national security interests: avoiding global conflict; bolstering Australia's strategic position in the South Pacific; promoting a sense of strategic community between Australia and countries in the proximity of direct military interest (Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the neighbouring island states of the Southwest Pacific and New Zealand); defending Australian sovereign territory from military attack, and the

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<sup>31</sup> "US-NZ defence relations: postponement of ANZUS Council meeting, News release issued by the Prime Minister, Mr Bob Hawke", 4 March, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:3, March 1985, 244-245.

<sup>32</sup> "The ANZUS Treaty: its value and relevance, Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Bill Hayden, MP, at the Victorian Fabian Society conference on ANZUS, Lorne", 5 May, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 55:5, May 1985, 390.

<sup>33</sup> "Role of Australian Defence Force, Speech by the Minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, MP, at the Army Command and Staff College, Queenscliff, Victoria", 31 January, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:3, March 1985, 183.

<sup>34</sup> "US Strategic Defence Initiative", *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:3, March 1985, 223-224.

<sup>35</sup> "Australian defence policy: the way ahead, Speech by the Minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, MP, the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington", 2 April, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 56:4, April 1985, 299.

<sup>36</sup> The Defence of Australia (1987 Defence White Paper), <https://www.apf.gov.au/> (Accessed 15.7.2018). See also NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975.

protection of Australia's maritime interests in nearby waters and proximate sea lines of communications. For Dobb, Australian governments had the option to contribute forces to support 'more distant diplomatic interests and the military efforts of others' – one of which was the US – but argued that 'this should be seen essentially as a gesture of support, not as a contribution that could materially affect the outcome'.<sup>37</sup> Dobb believed the true value of ANZUS was not the provision of an unconditional security mechanism but 'the access ... to US intelligence, defence science and advanced weapon systems', which were 'unique'<sup>38</sup> and in many ways 'irreplaceable'.<sup>39</sup> The primary issue concerning ANZUS was the relative divergence of members' strategic interests.<sup>40</sup>

Although Dobb's analysis did not advise Australia to move away from the US, his criticisms of the efficiency of ANZUS disturbed Australian Conservatives. That was his particular emphasis: '[t]here are no guarantees inherent in' ANZUS; and '[t]he parties will continue to approach each situation in accordance with their respective national interests'.<sup>41</sup> The conservatives were quicker than US officials to express their reaction. Firstly, they stressed that the ANZUS alliance had greatly bolstered Australia's forward defence.<sup>42</sup> In parliament, they questioned whether Dobb's review would turn Australia's 'friends into enemies'<sup>43</sup> and sway the electorate into thinking that ANZUS was of little use and Australia's alliance with the US was unnecessary.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> NAA, K967, 8, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities [Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dobb]

<sup>38</sup> Paul Dobb, "Australia's Alliance with America", Melbourne Asia Policy Papers, Vol. 1, No. 1 University of Melbourne, March 2003, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Dobb, "Australia's Defence Relations with the United States", testimony to Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Defence Subcommittee, 2 April 2004, FADT 58.

<sup>40</sup> NAA, K967, 8, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities [Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dobb]

<sup>41</sup> NAA, K967, 8, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities [Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dobb].

<sup>42</sup> Forward Defence aimed to confront Australia's potential enemies only in conjunction with its major allies and only in theatres distant from its shores. It was the essential planning rationale for the succession of Australian foreign military commitments overseas from the late 1940s to the late 1960s. For the details of this strategy and its implications on Australian defence planning, and force structure see Ross Babbage, "Australian defence planning, force structure and equipment: The American effect", *Australian Outlook*, 38:3, 1984, 164-167.

<sup>43</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 June 1986, 4545.

<sup>44</sup> Hansard, Senate, 4 June 1986, 3334.

Dibb's review induced a temporary wobble. In open official correspondence, the US administration did not put any direct pressure on Australian policy makers. At the Australia-United States Ministerial Talks in August 1986, US Defence and State Department officials accepted Dibb's 'main principles' and 'responded favourably' to the report.<sup>45</sup> Yet, at the extra session with Beazley, US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger 'conveyed the formal US objections' to the report. Weinberger stated that 'the Dibb's Report's view of the Australian role in the ANZUS Alliance was unacceptable to the US'. The US 'believed the report's underlying threat assessment was wrong' and that it 'could jeopardise the future of the alliance'. Weinberger added that 'the US could not accept the Dibb interpretation of the alliance under which Australia would make an adequate contribution by simply hosting US warship visits and the US intelligence and communications facilities'. The other US objection related to the Soviets. The US could not accept the view in the Dibb Report that deterrence of the Soviets was a matter for the US alone'. The US view was that the Soviet Union 'can only be deterred by the joint contribution of all US allies, including Australia'.<sup>46</sup> 'Subsequent to the meeting, Beazley and other Australian officials stressed that the Dibb report essentially was only a force-structure document and not official Australian policy'.<sup>47</sup> In a news release Hayden reassured the US again. He stated that there was 'no uncertainty of continuance of alliance ties between Australia' and the US.<sup>48</sup>

US officials refrained from putting too much pressure on Australia since on 17 September 1986, the American administration suspended its treaty obligations toward New Zealand. Putting extra pressure on Australia would jeopardize ANZUS *en masse*.<sup>49</sup> The temporary wobble disappeared.

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<sup>45</sup> NAA, M3793, 167, Australia-United States Ministerial Talks, San Francisco, 11 August 1986.

<sup>46</sup> *Australian*, 14 November 1986.

<sup>47</sup> Frank P. Donnini, *ANZUS in Revision, Changing Defense Features of Australia and New Zealand in the Mid-1980s*, Alabama: Air University Press, 1991, 71.

<sup>48</sup> "News release issued by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bill Hayden, MP", 12 August, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 57:8, August 1986, 740.

<sup>49</sup> Since this chapter does not focus on US-New Zealand relations, for the details of ANZUS crisis see Michael C. Pugh, *The ANZUS crisis, nuclear visiting and deterrence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; NAA, A1838, 919/18/1 PART 3.

Neither Dibb's report nor the change in the very structure of ANZUS altered the Australian arm's tendency. On 20 February 1987, in the parliament, Beazley implied that Australia's possible future role might be to mediate American and New Zealander interests in the South Pacific. He said that '[o]ur activities in the South Pacific are being developed in close consultation with our allies the United States and New Zealand, both of which are also giving increased priority to their defence contacts with the South Pacific region'.<sup>50</sup> In an evaluation of Dibb's impact on Australian Defence Policy in 2016, Beazley underlined that 'Dibb made clear that self-reliance with its foreign policy-liberating, security-guaranteeing, industry-enhancing value, would not be affordable without the American alliance'.<sup>51</sup>

The 1987 Defence White paper<sup>52</sup> referred to Dibb's report carefully and successfully. Dibb and the White Paper emphasized the need to prioritize Australia's area of direct military interest for defence.<sup>53</sup> The White Paper made clear that such regional action would require the development of common concern with the countries of the South Pacific and Southeast Asia 'to strengthen regional stability and to limit the potential for external powers to introduce tension or conflict' into this region.<sup>54</sup> Although the paper underlined a 'range of other threats' that Australia 'should expect to handle independently', it did not forget to emphasize the indispensability of the US alliance. The paper stressed that in peacetime ANZUS had 'day-to-day benefits' and a significant 'deterrent value'. With ANZUS, Australia had access to 'extensive US intelligence resources', received a 'preferred status in military equipment purchasing', a 'privileged access to the highest level of US defence technology', and maintained

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<sup>50</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 20 February 1987, 433.

<sup>51</sup> Kim Beazley, "Paul Dibb's Impact on Australian Defence Policy" in Desmond Ball and Sheryn Lee (eds.), *Geography, Power, Strategy and Defence Policy*, Canberra: ANU Press, 2016, 90.

<sup>52</sup> Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, Presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon. Kim C. Beazley, M.P., March 1987, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987.

<sup>53</sup> NAA, K967, 8, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities [Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dibb]; NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975; NAA, A1945, 244/2/10, Radford/Collins Agreement; NAA, K967, 8, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities [Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dibb].

<sup>54</sup> NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975; Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, Presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon. Kim C. Beazley, M.P., March 1987, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987.

'confidence that in the event of a fundamental threat to Australia's security, US military support would be forthcoming'.<sup>55</sup>

The continuing tendency of the Australian arm almost synchronised US and Australian foreign policies on three events. The first was East Timor on which neither the US nor Australia was 'ever willing to say or do anything that would seriously have offended Jakarta for the sake of the apparently lost cause of East Timorese self-determination'. The second was uranium. Due to the 'difficult financial circumstances of late 1986, [the Australian] Government resumed supply [of uranium] to France, despite France's continued testing of nuclear bombs in the Pacific'. On both issues 'Australian policy was entirely in line with US hopes'.<sup>56</sup> The third issue was the Non-Proliferation Treaty, on which 'both sides affirmed their commitment to the [treaty], noting with concern that some non-nuclear weapon States, not parties to the NPT, appear to be holding open the option of developing nuclear explosives, with consequent risks for regional and global peace and stability'.<sup>57</sup>

In 1987, another significant example of closeness between Australia and the US was Australia's decision to send clearance divers to the Gulf for the protection of shipping. The security of navigation in the Gulf was deteriorated after Iranian vessel's, *Iran Ajr*, act of laying mines in September 1987,<sup>58</sup> Iraqi aircraft's attack to the Australian fishing vessel, *Shenton Bluff*, in October 1987, and in the same month Iran's missile strike to US-registered Kuwaiti tanker, *Sea Isle City*.<sup>59</sup> In

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<sup>55</sup> NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975; Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia 1987, Presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon. Kim C. Beazley, M.P., March 1987*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987.

<sup>56</sup> Coral Bell, *Dependent Ally*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988, 180; Hansard, House of Representatives, 17 March 1987, 893; Hansard, Senate, 15 April 1986, 1712, 5 June 1987, 3707, 22 October 1986, 1719.

<sup>57</sup> "Australia-US Relations, Opening statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, MP, Australia-United States ministerial meeting, Sydney", 22 June, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 58:6, June 1987, 300-301. See also "Australia-US relations: ministerial talks-joint communiqué, News release issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs", 12 August, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 57:8, August 1986, 741-742; "United National Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, Speech by the Australian Permanent Representative to the UN, J.R. Kelso, Geneva", 25 March, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 58:4, April 1987, 179-181.

<sup>58</sup> Edward J. Marolda & Robert J. Schneller, *Shield and Sword: The United States Navy and the Persian Gulf War*, Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1998, 37.

<sup>59</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 162.

October, the US Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard Armitage called Beazley and enquired about Australia's possible participation for the protection of shipping in the Gulf,<sup>60</sup> which was not a formal request. Australian Department of Defence's 'preferred option' was sending a clearance diving team.<sup>61</sup> Hayden and Beazley agreed on this option, by stating that Australia could not accept a 'free ride' on the efforts of friendly countries to maintain navigational security in the Gulf.<sup>62</sup> On 10 December, Beazley announced government's decision to send a clearance diving team of up to twenty personnel to the Gulf.<sup>63</sup> Even though the divers 'were never deployed' the decision was important because since Vietnam, the Australian government 'approved the deployment of military forces to' a 'limited combat situation' and although the US 'had not formally requested Australian support, the government had clearly reacted to the American suggestion'.<sup>64</sup> The arm's stability was sustained.

In 1988 Hawke took advantage of the stability of the arm with a few more extra steps for self-reliance. These focused on maintaining regional security in the South Pacific, including developing Australian naval capacity on 'long range ships' and submarines, [and] the latest combat aircraft', improving 'surveillance capabilities', relocating 'major facilities closer to [Australia's] neighbours in the north and west', developing 'defence cooperation with neighbours to achieve shared strategic goals', and 'undertaking military deployments'.<sup>65</sup> In February 1988 Beazley informed parliament that Australia aimed to deploy its F/A-18 and F-111 aircraft to Malaysia and Singapore for at least 16 weeks of the year to show Australia's 'continuing willingness to commit a significant proportion of [its] Air Force to the support of regional security'.<sup>66</sup>

In 1988, relations were so close that none of these individual steps induced any wobble. At bilateral ministerial talks on 29 June 1988, US representatives

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<sup>60</sup> Kim Beazley, "Operation Sandglass: Old history, contemporary lessons", *Security Challenges*, 4:3, 2008, 29.

<sup>61</sup> NAA, M3591/1, 35, Cabinet Submission, 11 November 1987.

<sup>62</sup> NAA, A1838, 1731/11/31 PART 75, DFAT coordination comments on Department of Defence Cabinet Submission on protection of shipping in the Persian Gulf.

<sup>63</sup> NAA, A1838, 1731/11/31 PART 76, Minister for Defence News Release No 198/87.

<sup>64</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 168.

<sup>65</sup> Hansard, Senate, 23 February 1988, 441.

<sup>66</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 23 February 1988, 499-506.

'reaffirmed [their] understanding' of Australia's 'emphasis on defence self-reliance and modernisation ... based on broad concepts of strategic responsibility and regional cooperation'.<sup>67</sup> The next day Beazley re-emphasized the significance of Australia's alliance with the US. He stated that the alliance gave 'Australia the technological edge ... to enable less than 1% of the Earth's population to guard 12% of its surface. Without that help, Australia cannot sustain a self-reliant defence posture'.<sup>68</sup>

An important reason for the stability of the Australian arm even if Hawke's efforts for reliance was the impact of the Guam Doctrine. According to it, Australia was to be expected to be self-reliant, so Hawke's efforts were not totally at the expense of the Australia-US alliance.

In this era, there were two additional reasons why Australia wanted to maintain the tendency of the arm. The first was available money to spend on Australia's defence. In this decade the defence budget sat at around 3%. Even if the Hawke government wanted to increase defence spending, it was not politically or fiscally feasible. Moreover, the debate over who or what constituted a recognizable threat to Australian national security proved to be a point that successive governments failed to agree upon. The second was Australian defence policy makers' and practitioners' habits. Australian defence forces were 'accustomed to close cooperation' with the US. 'Personnel exchanges, training schemes and courses, joint exercises of all kinds', 'compatibility in weapons systems and procurement'<sup>69</sup> consolidated this habit. Gareth Evans summarized it in his lecture at the University of Texas on 9 October 1990. He argued that the US-Australia alliance has been serving firstly as 'transition mechanisms' for 'keeping the process of confidence building and common security moving forward', secondly as 'fail-safe mechanisms' against future conflicts. More importantly, Evans emphasized that the US presence in Asia-Pacific has been a reassurance for

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<sup>67</sup> "Australia-United States ministerial talks, Text of Joint Communiqué issued in Washington", 29 June, *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, 59:7, July 1988, 284.

<sup>68</sup> The Hon. Kim C. Beazley, "Australia and the Asia Pacific Region: A Strategy of Self-Reliance and Alliance", address to the Washington Center of the Asia Society, 30 June 1988, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Harry G. Gelber, "Australia, the Pacific, and the United States in the 1980s", *Comparative Strategy*, 3:2, 1981, 110-113.

Australia and a solid requirement for the new security architecture of the region.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1980s the Australian arm of the cross did not change its tendency or experience any permanent wobble. The priorities of Fraser's Liberals overlapped with the US' in relation to the potential Soviet nuclear threat. Fraser's enthusiasm to deepen relations for confronting this threat increased US military jurisdiction in Australian facilities. Although Hawke's ultimate aim was self-reliance, he had to acknowledge the imbalance. Fraser and Hawke's posture consolidated the tendency of the arm throughout the 1980s. Neither Dibb's report nor Hawke government's small steps and statements for self-reliance induced any serious wobbles. Both the US protective umbrella and its political influence continued on Australia.

### *The wobbly cross:*

Comparing Australia and Turkey vis-à-vis the US the wobbly cross was validated in this era as well. Even if both countries tried to deepen their relations with the US, for several reasons the results were contradictory. First, the mutual trust between Turkey and the US had been damaged since the mid-1960s, and none of the parties took the initiative to mend it. For, Australia the relations had not only been reinforced after Whitlam but were also operating on common values and old alliance habits, which were strongly embraced by Australian Liberals. Second, there was a clear divergence in the priorities of Turkey and the US, which caused significant disorientation. Turkey's expectations from the US were economic, the US' were military. The more each side pushed their own priority, the more wobbles were induced and the distance between them grew. On the other hand, while during Hawke's term there was some divergence in priorities due to his search for self-reliance, imbalance prevented Hawke from pushing his own priorities too hard. His acknowledgement of imbalance prevented wobbles and maintained the tendency of the arm. Third, there were age-old issues between Turkey and the US, for example the Kurds, Cyprus and Armenia, which

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<sup>70</sup> Gareth Evans, "Alliances and Change", Inaugural R.J.L. Hawke Lecture, the Edward A. Clark Center for Australian Studies, University of Texas, 1990, 7-15.



resurged in this era. This definitely was not the case for Australia and the US. Fourth, Turkey was economically and militarily in a much more fragile position than Australia, which weakened it in taking steps for its national priorities without inducing wobbles. For both countries, however, the US used the imbalance to increase its military jurisdiction. This put Turkey in a much more difficult situation than it did Australia, as will be seen in the Gulf War (1990-1991).

## PART 3

### Relations during the Gulf War (1990-1991)

#### a. Turkey: mismatching priorities

During the Gulf crisis<sup>1</sup>, the imbalance in relations between Turkey and the US led Özal<sup>2</sup> to work on their divergent priorities. Although he did not shelve his economic and commercial aims, Özal strived to adjust Turkey's priorities to the US', at least in military terms. Özal's problem was that the imbalance had already intensified the bureaucratic and parliamentary opposition's antipathy towards US policies, ignoring Turkey's priorities. With his parliamentary majority he orchestrated Turkey's Gulf crisis diplomacy singlehandedly<sup>3</sup>, aggravating the opposition's antipathy. Yet, he had the parliamentary majority, with which he acted more freely. He believed that adjusting priorities would not only increase US aid flow but also expand Turkish-US bilateral trade and political cooperation in the Middle East. Once again, he missed the point. The US was not interested in deepening politico-economic relations. Its was still focused on defence and security. Özal's attempts to adjust Turkey's priorities alienated the Turkish bureaucracy to such an extent that he was not able to implement his policies. Because of Özal's acknowledgement of the imbalance and his efforts to adjust national priorities this arm was less wobbly but its tendency did not change.

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Özal's foreign policy principles<sup>4</sup> determined his actions throughout the Gulf crisis. As an opponent of the status quo and a pro-American liberal, his policies

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<sup>1</sup> For details of the crisis see Robert F. Helms & Robert H. Dorff, *The Persian Gulf crisis: power in the post-cold war world*, Westport: Praeger, 1993; Phyllis Bennis & Michel Moushabeck, *Beyond the storm: a gulf crisis reader*, New York: Olive Branch Press, 1991; Gad Barzilai, Aharon Klieman, & Gil Shidlo (eds.), *The Gulf crisis and its global aftermath*, London: Routledge, 1993; Aqil Abidi & Kunwar Singh (eds.), *The Gulf Crisis*, New Delhi: Lancers Books, 1991; Elaine Sciolino, *The outlaw state: Saddam Hussein's quest for power and the Gulf crisis*, New York: Wiley, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Turgut Özal became the President in November 1989. Throughout the Gulf Crisis the Prime Minister was Yıldırım Akbulut from Özal's *Anavatan Partisi* (the Motherland Party).

<sup>3</sup> *New York Times*, 20 January 1991.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief summary of Özal's tendencies in foreign policy and international society see Berdal Aral, "Dispensing with tradition? Turkish politics and international society during the Özal decade,

seemingly aimed to converge Turkish and American national priorities. For this aim, his clearest example was Turkey's deployment to the Korean War. For Özal, Turkish-American military cooperation in Korea was the reason for US sympathy with Turkey. He thought that Turkey should take calculated risks, as in Korea, if it wanted to deepen its relations with the US.<sup>5</sup> The Gulf War could be the second Korean War.

His second principle was neo-Ottomanism,<sup>6</sup> merged with economic opportunism. Özal aimed to use this paradigm to expand Turkey's foreign policy scope to the fullest extent of the Ottoman Empire for carving out economic and commercial advantages.<sup>7</sup> According to him, Turkey should take an active part in the Gulf Crisis, not only because the Gulf used to be an Ottoman territory but also because the crisis could make Turkey a key player in the economic negotiations on northern Iraq after Saddam Hussein's defeat.<sup>8</sup> Via strengthening bilateral ties with the US, those negotiations could open this market to Turkey's developing construction sector.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from these principles, Özal felt obliged to deepen Turkey's relations with the US due to the unclear security challenges of the early post-Cold War. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a serious power vacuum emerged in the Middle East, which was open to all sorts of state and non-state rivalry. The Gulf Crisis was one of the consequences of this vacuum, which might have generated a wide variety of threats in Turkey's very neighbourhood.<sup>10</sup> One of these threats

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1983-9", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 37:1, 2001, 72-88; Cengiz Çandar, "Turgut Özal Twenty Years After: The Man and the Politician", *Insight Turkey*, 15:2, 2013, 27-36.

<sup>5</sup> Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal'ın Anıları*, İstanbul: Birey Yayıncılık, 2001, 130.

<sup>6</sup> Neo-Ottomanism was a trend in Turkish politics aiming to revive Ottoman traditions and culture in foreign policy formulation and implication. For details see David Barchard, *Turkey and the West, Chatham House Papers*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985; Yılmaz Çolak, "Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:4, 2006, 587-602.

<sup>7</sup> For a similar view see İhsan Sezal & İhsan Dağı, *Kim Bu Özal?*, İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 2001, 418.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991, 70-73; Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, Westport: Praeger, 1999, 77-78; William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000*, London: Frank Cass, 2000, 220-221, 223.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991, 10.

<sup>10</sup> For details see Ian O. Lesser, *Southern Region Perspectives on Security and International Affairs*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1991; Shireen Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier? Turkey's Post-Cold War Geopolitical Posture", *International Spectator*, XXXIV, 1999, 67-68.

was the resurgence of the PKK, which had bases in Syria, Iraq and Iran.<sup>11</sup> After the 1979 revolution, relations with Iran were also tense due to its on-and-off manipulation of radical Islamic groups and the Kurds in Turkey's southeast and northern Iraq.<sup>12</sup> Turkey's relations with its eastern and south-eastern neighbours were strained as well. Syria was supporting PKK militia.<sup>13</sup> With Iraq, there were serious issues due to Turkey's water policy on the Euphrates River. Since mid-1980s the Iraqi administration had claimed that Turkey was restricting the amount of water flowing to Iraq.<sup>14</sup> Armenia's territorial claims against Turkey were also worrying.<sup>15</sup> These regional complications troubled the Akbulut government. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey's sense of security came from the US alliance, operating within NATO. NATO's role began to decrease with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup> For Turkey's immediate security only the US was left. The imbalance was clear. Turkey was in need of US support to counter these non-traditional and ambiguous threats. Özal had to acknowledge it and work for closer relations with the US.

During his attempts to use the Gulf crisis for tailoring Turkey's priorities, Özal wanted to restrict the Turkish bureaucracy and the opposition's interference. From the beginning of the crisis, Özal conducted foreign policy mostly via telephone conversations with US officials, including the President George H.W. Bush.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For details see Nadejda K. Marinova, *Ask What You Can Do for Your (new) Country: How Host States Use Diasporas*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, 57; David Romano & Mehmet Gurses, *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria*, New York: Palgrave, 2014, 124-126, 255; Ernest Tucker, *The Middle East in Modern World History*, New York: Routledge, 2016, 319-320.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000*, Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001, 11-13; Süha Bölükbaşı, "Turkey copes with Revolutionary Iran", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 13, 1989; Nihat Ali Özcan & Özgür Özdamar, "Uneasy Neighbors: Turkish-Iranian Relations Since The 1979 Islamic Revolution", *Middle East Policy*, 17:3, 2010, 101-117.

<sup>13</sup> Inga Brandell (ed.), *State Frontiers: Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2006, 167-168; Daniel Pipes, *Syria Beyond the Peace Process*, The Washington Institute Policy Papers, Washington: Washington Institute, 1996.

<sup>14</sup> TPMB, April-June 1990.

<sup>15</sup> Ali Balcı, "1990'lar Basınında 'Ermenistan Tehdidi'nin' İnşası: Milliyet Gazetesi Örneği", *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, 6:2, 2011, 297-322.

<sup>16</sup> S. Victor Papacosma & Mary Ann Heiss (eds.), *NATO in the post-Cold War Era: Does it Have a Future*, London: Macmillan, 1995, 41-56, 329-339; Clay Clemens, *NATO and the Quest for post-Cold War Security*, London: Macmillan, 1997, 154-162; Mark Webber, James Sperling & Martin A. Smith, *NATO's post-Cold War Trajectory*, London: Palgrave, 2012, 1-22.

<sup>17</sup> Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, Westport: Praeger, 1999, 78; Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991, 71.

In these conversations he made very clear that the Akbulut government, which was under Özal's heavy influence, was ready to take part in any type of US defence scheme. Yet in his hidden agenda he wanted to deepen politico-economic relations. Özal's hidden agenda was unworkable. The US was not interested in a Özal style politico-economic collaboration. Özal misread this from the very beginning. As in 1970s and 80s, the US wanted to keep its relations with Turkey within the military and security realms.

US demands on Turkey regarding the Gulf crisis were all defence-oriented and to facilitate the operation against Saddam Hussein. The US was not planning to boost Turkey's role in the Middle East, as Özal calculated. US general demands were threefold: sending a Turkish battalion to Saudi Arabia, keeping a certain number of Turkish troops along the Turkey-Iraqi border as a precaution for suppressing the Iraqi forces, and using Turkish air bases for US air assaults in Northern Iraq.<sup>18</sup> The specific demands, on the other hand, targeted the Iraqi economy. President Bush aimed to convince Özal to close the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık oil pipeline from Iraq, which would have been a massive blow to the Turkish revenues from Iraqi oil transfer. On 3 August 1990, Bush telephoned Özal and said that 'as an important member of NATO', 'I wanted to know the conditions under which' Turkey 'might close' the pipelines. Özal did not reply.<sup>19</sup> Next day, Bush called him again and reiterated the same demand. This time Bush emphasized that Turkey and the US should 'stand together on the economic front', which required both Turkey and Saudi Arabia to close the pipelines in order to 'crumble' Saddam 'faster'. Bush stressed that he disagreed with the Turkish Foreign Affairs' view to 'remain neutral', he said that there could 'be no neutrality in these circumstances'. Again he asked for Özal's view. Özal avoided the question and said that Turkey needed solid UN sanctions on oil in order to 'do something'.<sup>20</sup> Yet, Özal shut down the pipeline on 7 August, a day after the UN

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<sup>18</sup> Morton Abramowitz, *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy*, New York: The Century Foundation Press, 2000, 155.

<sup>19</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with President Özal, 3 August 1990, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 20.7.2018).

<sup>20</sup> The White House, Memorandum of Telephone Conversation with President Özal, 4 August 1990, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 20.7.2018).

Security Council's decision 661,<sup>21</sup> which embargoed 'the import into their territories of all commodities and products originating in Iraq or Kuwait'.<sup>22</sup> Özal took this decision 'without prior consultation' with the government or parliament.<sup>23</sup> Turkey's prospective economic losses were apparently not on Bush's priority list.

Özal's misinterpretation of US priorities was clear in his statements about the above-stated US demands. In an interview with the *US News Journal*, he stated that the US demands underlined that Turkey was a 'bridge between two different worlds' and that if this 'bridge' was 'cut, these two worlds could topple into conflict'.<sup>24</sup> In another interview with *NBC* television, Özal interpreted US demands as its re-assessing 'Turkey's importance'.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the US did not re-assess Turkey's importance, it was still the same, restricted to the strategic assault bases on Turkish soil. Özal was overestimating Turkey's role, which took him a few months to realize.

The US, on the other hand, read Özal's priorities accurately. He was not entirely different from previous Turkish leaders. After all, he was in need of more US aid. The imbalance was clear and the US responded it. On 17 August 1990, the US Ambassador to Ankara, Morton Abramowitz, spoke with Turkish Foreign Affairs and Treasury officials. Abramowitz conveyed the US administration's consent to cover Turkey's prospective losses from its efforts in the Gulf War.<sup>26</sup>

While Özal was tailoring Turkey's priorities, the opposition in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), and the security bureaucracy, particularly the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) were opposing him.

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<sup>21</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 8 August 1990; UN Security Council Resolution 661, 6 August 1990, <http://www.ijl.org/>, (Accessed 18.7.2018); UN Security Council Provisional verbatim record of the 2933rd meeting, held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 August 1990, <http://repository.un.org/>, (Accessed 18.7.2018).

<sup>22</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Turkish Foreign Policy During the Gulf War of 1990-1991", *Cairo Papers of Social Science*, 1998, 21-22.

<sup>23</sup> Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991, 69-70.

<sup>24</sup> TPMB, 14 August 1990.

<sup>25</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 13 August 1990; TPMB, 13 August 1990.

<sup>26</sup> TPMB, 17 August 1990.

On 12 August, when TGNA discussions began on Özal's proposal to cooperate with the US in Iraq, the fury of the opposition was unleashed. The TGNA rejected Özal's proposal.<sup>27</sup> The fury spread to the TAF, which thought Özal's actions would topple Turkey into war. In a circular telegram, the Turkish General Staff notified all ministries and public offices to be on *levy en masse* due to any unpredictable developments in the Gulf.<sup>28</sup>

The opposition attacked Özal from various sides, particularly over his alleged adventurism. The head of the *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti* (Social Democrat Populist Party), Erdal İnönü, criticized Özal for 'acting by himself' and insisted that the TGNA should take necessary measures to stop Turkey toppling into war.<sup>29</sup> In another statement, he accused Özal of provoking a war in the Middle East.<sup>30</sup> At a press conference, he stated that Özal wanted to give himself powers not allowed by the constitution, and intended to act on behalf of the whole parliament.<sup>31</sup> The leader of the centre-right *Doğru Yol Partisi* (True Path Party), Süleyman Demirel, stated that Turkey would be labelled a 'second Israel' due to the prospective loss of millions of civilians, if Turkish military elements joined the American effort in the Gulf.<sup>32</sup> In another statement he said that, unlike Özal's analogy of being a bridge in the Middle East, Turkey would become a stepping-stone for the US.<sup>33</sup> Demirel also accused Özal of trying to bypass the TGNA in deploying troops overseas.<sup>34</sup> The head of the *Demokratik Sol Parti* (Democratic Left Party), Bülent Ecevit, stated that deploying troops to the region would endanger Turkey's security.<sup>35</sup> *Yeşiller Partisi* (The Greens Party) representatives emphasized that Özal and the Akbulut government should 'refrain from getting into an adventure in the Gulf'.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi- Turkish Grand National Assembly Records (TGNAR), Term 18, Vol. 46, 12 August 1990.

<sup>28</sup> TPMB, 14 August 1990.

<sup>29</sup> TPMB, 15 August 1990.

<sup>30</sup> TPMB, 23 August 1990.

<sup>31</sup> TPMB, 2 September 1990.

<sup>32</sup> TPMB, 22 August 1990.

<sup>33</sup> TPMB, 27 August 1990.

<sup>34</sup> TPMB, 2 September 1990.

<sup>35</sup> TPMB, 26 August 1990.

<sup>36</sup> TPMB, 15 August 1990.

To alleviate these opponents, Özal gave statements to international media. To the Spanish *El País* newspaper, he said that Turkey would not consider deploying Turkish troops to Iraq.<sup>37</sup> In an interview to the *BBC*, he emphasized that without the TGNA's approval, Turkey could not join any international coalition even if it were organized under the auspices of the UN.<sup>38</sup>

These statements did not mean a change in his aim of following US priorities. Yet for this aim he still needed the TGNA's support. He tried again. On 3 September, the Akbulut government, under Özal's influence, turned the Turkey-US cooperation proposal into a resolution and submitted it to the TGNA. The resolution covered the overseas deployment of Turkish troops and foreign troops' deployment on Turkish soil according to the 92<sup>nd</sup> article of the Constitution.<sup>39</sup> Both İnönü and Demirel stated that giving such an authorization to Özal would be 'equal to the declaration of war' on Iraq.<sup>40</sup> Ecevit emphasized that Özal could not justify sending Turkish troops into such an adventure.<sup>41</sup> On 5 September, with the support of Özal's *Anavatan Partisi* (the Motherland Party's) backbenchers, the bill was passed with 136 negative and 246 affirmative votes.<sup>42</sup>

At once Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut stated that this authorization did not mean permission to wage war, and that it would be used in the interests of the Turkish state. Akbulut's words did not appease the opposition. İnönü claimed that with this authorization Özal and the Akbulut government would potentially open a second front on Turkey's southern borders, so his Party would take this decision to the Constitutional Court. Demirel was equally critical. He firstly criticized that the decision was made in a closed session, and secondly condemned Özal's personal attitude in acting on behalf of the whole government and the parliament.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> TPMB, 20 August 1990.

<sup>38</sup> TPMB, 22 August 1990.

<sup>39</sup> TPMB, 3 September 1990. For Article 92 see Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf), (Accessed 20.7.2018).

<sup>40</sup> TPMB, 3 September 1990.

<sup>41</sup> TPMB, 4 September 1990.

<sup>42</sup> TGNAR, Term 18, Vol. 47, 5 September 1990, 115.

<sup>43</sup> TPMB, 5 September 1990.



One day after his success in the TGNA, Özal uncloaked his hidden agenda in a speech broadcast on US television channels. He emphasized that the economic losses Turkey would face due to the coming war could reach up to \$3.5 to \$5 billion. To cover these losses, Turkey would not only need more aid, but must also develop bilateral commercial relations.<sup>44</sup> On 7 September, Özal reiterated his words about developing Turkish-American trade on American Public Television.<sup>45</sup>

Özal wanted to ensure US gratitude for his efforts. On 25 September he visited Bush. During the talks Bush specifically appreciated Özal's leadership and promised Özal to 'expand the ties' on political, military, economic, and cultural matters. Bush added that the US would continue to support Turkey's European Community (EC) membership. Özal stressed that Turkey wanted 'more trade than aid', for example starting negotiations for a new agreement on textiles.<sup>46</sup>

NATO also appreciated Özal's success. The General Secretary, Manfred Wörner, told the Turkish Anatolian News Agency, that Turkey would be the keystone of a new security structure in the Middle East after the Gulf Crisis.<sup>47</sup> In his statements to Turkish newspapers *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet*, the Under-Secretary of the US Department of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, repeated Wörner's words and added that the US was confident in asking Turkey for help when it was required.<sup>48</sup>

At the end of Özal's visit, the US announced that Kuwait would give \$75 million, the World Bank would give \$300 million and Japan would give \$300 million to Turkey to cover its losses.<sup>49</sup> Özal's response was what the US wanted to hear. He told *Newsweek* that Turkey would join a US-led coalition under the UN's auspices.<sup>50</sup> Özal received some appreciation, although in the form of aid. No agreement was concluded to develop bilateral trade. There were no wobbles on

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<sup>44</sup> TPMB, 6 September 1990.

<sup>45</sup> TPMB, 7 September 1990.

<sup>46</sup> George Bush, "Remarks Following Discussions with President Turgut Özal of Turkey," 25 September 1990, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 30.7.2018). See also TPMB, 25 September 1990; *NPR Morning Edition*, 25 September 1990; *Washington Post*, 27 September 1990.

<sup>47</sup> TPMB, 27 September 1990.

<sup>48</sup> TPMB, 29 September 1990.

<sup>49</sup> TPMB, 1 October 1990.

<sup>50</sup> TPMB, 2 October 1990.

the arm but its tendency did not change. Özal's, not Turkey's, relations became closer to the US.

During the visit, Özal acted as the sole representative of the Turkish Republic. He did not even invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Bozer, to join the talks with President Bush. Özal's rugged individualism heightened the frustration in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of National Defence (MND). As a result, on 11 October 1990 the Minister of Foreign Affairs Bozer and on 18 October the Minister of National Defence Safa Giray resigned.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the MPs, the Turkish bureaucracy too was reluctant to help Özal.

Özal saw this danger and used the Secretary of State James Baker's visit on 7 November to relieve the distress in the bureaucracy. During the visit, Özal implied that 'Turkey would not join a ground offensive' due to its bureaucracy's growing worries.<sup>52</sup> Baker saw the pressure Özal had been dealing with. At the end of the visit, a joint communiqué emphasized that military operations could not be a solution to the crisis. The spokesman for the MFA, Murat Sungar, reiterated that Turkey and the US shared the decision to solve the crisis by peaceful means.<sup>53</sup>

The real situation was not stated in the communiqué. Baker came to Turkey to convince Özal to deploy Turkish troops to the Iraqi border. He used the aid card to secure Özal's support for this. He promised Turkey \$1.1 billion worth of Saudi Arabian aid.<sup>54</sup> Özal's political and economic distress was increasing. The imbalance put pressure on Özal again. He could not say no, either to the oil or to the deployment. In a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 November, Özal agreed to deploy Turkish troops to the Iraqi border.<sup>55</sup> Özal's efforts were not bringing Turkey closer to the US but merely reflecting the imbalance.

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<sup>51</sup> TPMB, 11, 18 October 1990.

<sup>52</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 5 November 1990; *Bloomington*, 6 November 1990; TPMB, 6-7 November 1990; Barry Rubin & Marvin Feuerwerker, "Turkey: Supporting United States but not Ready to Fight, Policywatch 31", *Washington Institute*, 7 November 1990.

<sup>53</sup> TPMB, 7 November 1990.

<sup>54</sup> TPMB, 12, 14 November 1990.

<sup>55</sup> "The White House, Memorandum of Conversation with President Özal", 20 November 1990, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1990-11-20--Özal.pdf>, (Accessed 29.7.2018).

After the memorandum, the Turkish bureaucracy and opposition took another step to stop Özal. On 3 December 1990, the Head of Turkish General Staff, Necip Torumtay, resigned.<sup>56</sup> After the resignation, in parliament, İnönü warned that there was a possibility of a new coup. He added that Özal should share crisis management authority with the parliament.<sup>57</sup>

These responses did not deter Özal. At the end of 1990, Turkey deployed approximately '120.000 men, with air support, armour and transport' on its '150-mile border with Iraq'. Although these elements never moved into Iraqi soil, they 'pinned down about eight Iraqi divisions in the north of the country which could otherwise have been used against the coalition forces in the south, and were thus of some value to the coalition cause'.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time, Özal increased the level of pro-Americanism in his statements. In December, he stated that 'Turkey should send a symbolic military force to Saudi Arabia, and if war breaks out, allow the [US] to use an important NATO air base in southern Turkey'.<sup>59</sup> Seemingly Özal had not yet realised that his pro-American comments were not meeting US priorities or pushing the US closer to Turkey.

The opposition reacted strongly again. The Deputy Head of the True Path Party, Hüsametdin Cindoruk, said that if Turkey entered the war, not only Özal and his party group but the whole parliament would be responsible. Ecevit emphasized that Özal would be fully responsible if Turkey toppled into war.<sup>60</sup> This time Akbulut tried to de-escalate. After the Cabinet meeting on 8 January 1991, he said that if there were no Iraqi assault on Turkish soil, Turkey would not attack.<sup>61</sup> Özal, tried again. In his speech to *CNN*, he emphasized that Turkey would not be

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<sup>56</sup> TPMB, 3 December 1990; *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*, 10 December 1990.

<sup>57</sup> TGNAR, Term 18, Vol. 52, 11 December 1990.

<sup>58</sup> William Hale, "Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis", *International Affairs*, 68:4, October 1992, 684-685; Lawrence Freedman & Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, 353.

<sup>59</sup> *New York Times*, 5-6 December 1990.

<sup>60</sup> TPMB, 25 December 1990.

<sup>61</sup> TPMB, 8 January 1991.

the second front of the Gulf War.<sup>62</sup> Özal was squeezed between the opposition and his ambitions.

While Özal was trying to alleviate this domestic pressure, the US Congress approved President Bush using military power against Saddam's regime.<sup>63</sup> Özal had no choice but to support this. In an interview with American *ABC* Television, he stated that the US Congress' decision would bring peace to the region.<sup>64</sup> Akbulut's words were more reassuring. He said that Turkey could give necessary logistic support to the US, including using the İncirlik base.<sup>65</sup>

Opening İncirlik to the US outraged the opposition. At a press conference Demirel expressed his concerns at the American use of Turkish bases. He said that these bases would become targets for Iraqi missiles. Similarly, Ecevit stated that starting a war before the UN Security Council's resolution of 2 August became effective would be a crime against humanity.<sup>66</sup>

On 16 January 1991, Operation Desert Storm started with a US air assault. After Baker's visit on 12-13 January 1991, which was about allowing American F-111s to strike Iraqi targets,<sup>67</sup> Özal asked for extra authorization for US use of Turkish bases and airspace from the TGNA. One day before voting in the TGNA, Bush sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State authorizing the provision of up to \$32 million in defense articles from the stocks of the Department of Defense to Turkey plus military education and training.<sup>68</sup> Once again the US successfully used the imbalance via aid card. The voting was on 17 January, and the bill passed with 250 votes.<sup>69</sup> The Motherland Party's majority helped Özal again. On the same day Özal talked to *CNN*. He was fishing for appreciation. He underscored the Akbulut government's success in securing the authorization to

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<sup>62</sup> TPMB, 11 January 1991.

<sup>63</sup> TPMB, 12 January 1991; *New York Times*, 13 January 1991.

<sup>64</sup> TPMB, 13 January 1991.

<sup>65</sup> TPMB, 14 January 1991.

<sup>66</sup> TPMB, 14 January 1991.

<sup>67</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 13 January 1991.

<sup>68</sup> George Bush, "Memorandum on Determination to Authorize Drawdown Under Section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act for Turkey", 16 January 1991, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 29.7.2018).

<sup>69</sup> TGNAR, Term 18, Vol. 55, 17 January 1991; *New York Times*, 18 January 1991.

enable Allied forces to use Turkish bases and airspace.<sup>70</sup> The US was so sure of Özal's success that before the voting ended American jets had already taken off from İncirlik.<sup>71</sup> Once again it was Özal's orchestration was supported by his majority in parliament.

The opposition was outraged, but Özal largely ignored it. While opposition parties were stating that the 17 January authorization would topple Turkey into war,<sup>72</sup> Özal gave one of his most ambitious statements. He claimed that there would be a need for specific powers to keep the region under control after the crisis and only Turkey had these powers.<sup>73</sup>

Opposition in parliament spread to other segments of the Turkish state and society. The TAF was against opening a second front<sup>74</sup>, and particularly wanted to have the final decision on sending Turkish jets to assault Iraq.<sup>75</sup> The Turkish public was also outraged. Turkish media drew parallels between Germany dragging Turkey into the First World War and the possibility of being dragged into the Gulf War by the American use of Turkish bases.<sup>76</sup> The Turkish construction and petroleum businesses were also unhappy. Closing the Kirkuk pipeline cut off 1,5 million-barrels of oil a day.<sup>77</sup> Turkish construction companies operating in Iraq and Kuwait had to evacuate, which not only damaged the commercial relations developing since 1973, but also their socio-cultural bonds.

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Özal and the Akbulut government were not successful at calming public reaction.<sup>79</sup> Ten Turkish NGOs organized a group called *Savaş Hayır* (No to War), which presented several petitions to public authorities to stop the Özal and the

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<sup>70</sup> TPMB, 17 January 1991.

<sup>71</sup> TPMB, 18 January 1991; *Washington Post*, 19 January 1991.

<sup>72</sup> For details of the opposition's reactions see TPMB, 17-23 January 1991; *Washington Post*, 21 January 1991.

<sup>73</sup> TPMB, 22 January 1991; *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 January 1991.

<sup>74</sup> Sabri Yirmibeşoğlu, *Askeri ve Siyasi Anıları*, İstanbul: 1999, 140.

<sup>75</sup> Mustafa Aydın, "Turkish Foreign Policy During the Gulf War of 1990-1991", *Cairo: Cairo Papers of Social Science*, 1998, 25.

<sup>76</sup> *Milliyet*, 6 October 1990.

<sup>77</sup> M. Hulki Cevizoğlu, *Körfez Savaşı ve Özal Diplomasisi*, İstanbul: Form Yayınları, 1991, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kışkacında Dış Politika, Körfez Savaşı*, Ankara: Liberte Yayınevi, 2000, 25.

<sup>79</sup> TPMB, 15 August 1990.

Akbulut government's decision to deploy troops to the region.<sup>80</sup> The Turkish Human Rights Association also condemned Özal and the government for transferring the Turkish bases' command to the US.<sup>81</sup>

Özal's hand was weakening. Opponents raised more than he could suppress. They showed how much Turkey was moving away from the US during the crisis, mostly because of Özal's individualism.

What Özal achieved at the end of the crisis from the US is still not clear due to the inaccessibility of Turkish Presidential Records and Özal's private conversation minutes with Baker and Bush. Yet it is obvious that Özal did not achieve anything substantial. He managed to sustain the inflow of American aid under the existing conditions. DECA was extended for another year in return for the American use of the bases, without any extra negotiations with the Turkish administration.<sup>82</sup> The US administration promised to keep the annual aid level not below \$545 million together with giving \$1.4 million in American Eximbank credit.<sup>83</sup> In November 1990, the US administration announced an increase in Turkish textiles quotas, and gave Turkey 40 used F-4 Phantom fighters.<sup>84</sup> To cover Turkey's losses in closing Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline and joining the embargo against Iraq, the US increased assistance to Turkey by \$82 million for 1991.<sup>85</sup> With this increase, the total amount of US aid reached the amount of the mid-1980s - which was over \$500 million.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> TPMB, 14 September 1990.

<sup>81</sup> TPMB, 19 January 1991.

<sup>82</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 18 September 1990; TPMB, 18 September 1990; Mahmut Bali Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives on Turkish-US Relations concerning Persian Gulf Security in the Post-Cold War Era: 1989-1995", *Middle East Journal*, 50:3, 1996, 344-347.

<sup>83</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 2 October 1990.

<sup>84</sup> Ekavi Athanassopoulou, *Strategic Relations between the US and Turkey, 1979-2000*, London: Routledge, 2014, 99.

<sup>85</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 14 January 1991; *Milliyet*, 14, 25 January, 3 February 1991; Greece and Turkey: Current Foreign Aid Issues, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/86-065.htm>, (Accessed 15.7.2018).

<sup>86</sup> *Milliyet*, 3 February 1991; *New York Times*, 13 March 1991. For details see Tamar Gabelnick, William Hartung, & Jennifer Washburn, *Arming Repression: U.S. Arms Sales to Turkey During the Clinton Administration*, New York: World Policy Institute and Federation of Atomic Scientists, October 1999; "Remarks Following Discussions with President Turgut Özal of Turkey", 25 September 1990, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 28.7.2018).

Özal did not receive a real diplomatic support from the US to thaw the Turkey-EC relations.<sup>87</sup> In November 1990, Özal stated that 'by being the first country to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions at the onset of the Gulf Crisis, [Turkey's] chances of [EC] membership had increased'.<sup>88</sup> Bush's 25 September promise to provide diplomatic support for Turkey's EC membership proved to be illusionary. The transformation of Turkish-EU relations 'never materialized'.<sup>89</sup> Particularly on the EC side, 'there was no discernible movement ... toward accommodating Ankara on the issue of closer EC-Turkish economic and political ties'.<sup>90</sup>

Regardless of Özal or the Turkish opposition President Bush was not interested to deepen relations with Turkey. Abramowitz commented that not only Özal could not deliver a clear message about his priorities, but Bush was not much interested anyway.<sup>91</sup>

Özal's misreading of US priorities clearly surfaced during Bush's visit to Turkey on 20-22 July 1991. Bush was the first US president to visit Turkey since Dwight Eisenhower in 1959. He arrived 'with promises of new military assistance'. Even though both leaders spelled out the term 'strategic cooperation', Bush's main aim was to smooth over the Cyprus issue between Turkey and Greece. Bush stated, '[a]s I've just come from Greece, let's talk about ways of building a path to peace on Cyprus and making possible ... reconciliation between Turkey and Greece'. Cyprus was not on Özal's priority list. For him the US should 'support ... Ankara's position that Turkish Cypriots should be equal negotiating partners with the majority Greek Cypriots'. Özal's priority list included 'more military aid, [and] an order to build another 160 sophisticated F-16 jet fighters under a joint arrangement'. US aid to cover Turkey's losses did not coincide with Özal's wish. Özal declared that the \$3 billion Turkey received from the US and other nations

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<sup>87</sup> For details see Sabri Sayari, "The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis", *Middle East Journal*, 46:1, 1992, 18; Ziya Öniş, "Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era: In Search of Identity", *Middle East Journal*, 49:1, 1995, 53-57.

<sup>88</sup> *New York Times*, 18 November 1990.

<sup>89</sup> F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change*, Santa Monica California: RAND, 2010, 7; *New York Times*, 29 March 1991.

<sup>90</sup> Sabri Sayari, "The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis", *Middle East Journal*, 46:1, 1992, 19.

<sup>91</sup> Morton Abramowitz, "Dateline Ankara: Turkey after Özal", *Foreign Policy*, 91, 1993, 179.

was not sufficient to meet Turkey's war-related expenses.<sup>92</sup> Once again, Özal had economic and nationalist priorities while the US had defence-related and regional priorities.

Turkish-American relations during the Gulf crisis was mostly about the juggling between Özal's and US administration's priorities. Since 1983 Özal had been trying to increase Turkey's significance via developing bilateral trade, in which the US was never interested. Özal tried to use the Gulf crisis to show Turkey's acknowledgement of the imbalance and its readiness to comply with US priorities. Yet this acknowledgement and readiness were not Turkey's - they were his. Özal's other misinterpretation was about Turkey's significance in US strategic plans for the Middle East. The US did not consider cooperating with Turkey in post-crisis Iraq, either politically or economically as Özal hoped. His personal push for expanding Turkey's support for American priorities did not change US attitudes. The *Guardian* labelled Özal's calculation 'cynically simple'. 'Either Turkey, by having a stake in the war, can deter others from dividing up Iraq after it is over or it can join in dismemberment' of post-war Iraq.<sup>93</sup> His hidden agenda was unworkable since the priorities mismatched. The tendency of the arm did not change, Turkey continued its distancing trend from the US.

The Australian arm showed an opposite tendency.

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<sup>92</sup> George Bush, "The President's News Conference with Turkish President Turgut Özal in Ankara, Turkey," 20 July 1991, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 29.7.2018); George Bush, "Remarks at a Dinner Hosted By President Turgut Özal in Istanbul, Turkey," 21 July 1991, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>, (Accessed 29.7.2018); *New York Times*, 21 July 1991; *Washington Post*, 22 July 1991; Sami Kohen, "Bush Visit Moves US and Turkey into New Era of 'Strategic Cooperation'", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, 10:3, 1991, 46.

<sup>93</sup> *Guardian*, 23 January 1991.





## **b. Australia: too eager to cling**

US-Australia relations during the Gulf crisis show how Prime Minister Hawke effectively adapted Australia's priorities to the US. From the very beginning of the crisis the US considered Australia a natural ally. Although Hawke government statements constantly emphasized that Australia contributed to the US-led Coalition's efforts to restore international peace and security under UN auspices, Australia's obvious motive was supporting US priorities. Australian media and several public figures highlighted this reason throughout the crisis. The UN resolutions helped the Hawke government to convince the House, Senate, and Australian public that Australia was supporting the UN, but from the beginning of the crisis Hawke was very eager to adhere almost all US demands, which maintained Australian arm's tendency and prevented wobbles.

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Australia-US cooperation started at the beginning of the crisis. On 2 August 1990, UN Resolution 660 condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait as a breach of international peace and security.<sup>1</sup> On the same day President Bush 'signed an executive order ... freezing Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets in the US and in US overseas branches and called on other governments to take similar action'. On 3 August, the Deputy Director of the State Department's Office of Northern Gulf Affairs, Joseph McGhee, told the Australian Embassy in Washington that 'Australia was one of the first to be approached' to follow the executive order.<sup>2</sup> For the US, Australia was a natural ally.

In 1990, the Australian arm was so stable and relations were so close that Australia would support almost any US-initiated decision. First, the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Michael Duffy, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gareth Evans, condemned the invasion 'unreservedly'.<sup>3</sup> Second, Australia

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<sup>1</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 660, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/660>, (Accessed 10.10.2018).

<sup>2</sup> The Australian War Memorial Records (AWM), 330, PKI/505/48, Cable 0.WH119409 Washington to Canberra, 3 August 1990.

<sup>3</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, Cable 0.CH592856 Canberra to Washington, 3 August 1990.

recognized UN Resolution 661 affirming economic sanctions on Iraq,<sup>4</sup> while implying that the sanctions 'would mean a loss of \$350-450 million net annual export revenue' which with the 'outstanding debts to Australia' would bring the loss '\$750 million'.<sup>5</sup> Yet supporting the US was more important. On 6 August, in Cabinet, Evans stated that considerations of trade had to be put aside when 'dealing with fundamental questions of war and peace and human rights'.<sup>6</sup> The Hawke Cabinet unanimously recognized the sanctions. The decision 'was reached in less than one hour',<sup>7</sup> regardless of its 'serious implications' in the cessation of wheat exports.<sup>8</sup>

The US was appreciative. The US National Security staff viewed Australia's action of 'immediately announcing comprehensive sanctions despite the very real financial cost' very 'favourably'. The White House 'equally' welcomed Australia's 'contribution', as a 'country so far removed geographically from the Gulf'.<sup>9</sup>

The US was quick to get Australia officially on board. On 8 August the 'US Navy made an informal approach to ... feel out the possibility of Australia contributing to a US sponsored MNF [Multinational Naval Force]'. For the White House 'an early agreement to contribute would mean a lot more ... than ... coming in late at the tail of a large field'.<sup>10</sup>

Even an informal US approach put Australia to work. On 9 August, Minister For Defence, Robert Ray, stated that there had been 'no formal request' from the US but the government was 'actively considering what' it 'might be able to do'.<sup>11</sup> On the same day, 'an ad-hoc interdepartmental committee chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Defence' asked about the possibility of a RAN [Royal

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<sup>4</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 661, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/661>, (Accessed 10.10.2018).

<sup>5</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, Cable 0.CH592856 Canberra to Washington, 3 August 1990.

<sup>6</sup> NAA, M3588/1, 14100-14299, Cabinet Minute, No. 14261, 6 August 1990.

<sup>7</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 August 1990.

<sup>8</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, CH050711 United Nations Sanctions against Iraq, 7 August 1990.

<sup>9</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, Cable 0.CE913907, Washington to Canberra, 8 August 1990; Cable 0.WH119659 Washington to Canberra, 9 August 1990.

<sup>10</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, Cable 0.WH119659, Washington to Canberra, 8 August 1990; Cable 0.WH119659 Washington to Canberra, 9 August 1990.

<sup>11</sup> *Melbourne Herald*, 9 August 1990; *Financial Review*, 10 August 1990.

Australian Navy] contribution to US efforts in the Gulf.<sup>12</sup> Hawke put it in a more international framework, by stating that Australian participation's 'primary purpose was to enforce the blockade on Iraq and Kuwait and to protect the movement of ... other oil producers in the area'.<sup>13</sup> Hawke repeated this argument in various wordings throughout the crisis.

Hawke was very ready to follow the US. On 9 August, in consultation with only five ministers (Deputy Prime Minister Paul Keating, acting Foreign Minister and Attorney General Michael Duffy, Minister for Defence Senator Robert Ray, Government Senate Leader Senator John Button, and Foreign Minister Senator Gareth Evans) he decided to commit Australian ships to support the MNF blockade of Iraq and Kuwait. All ministers agreed about 'the appropriateness' of the decision.<sup>14</sup> The RAN also considered it appropriate since Australian ships were 'American-made and contain the same communication and fighting equipment as the same ships in the US Navy'.<sup>15</sup>

The decision was not kept secret for long. The next day Australian media began to talk about Australia's possible involvement to Gulf. The *Age* reported that 'the RAN was debating whether to send FFGs [Guided Missile Frigates] or DDGs [Guided Missile Destroyer]'.<sup>16</sup> The *Australian* reported that 'Australia was likely to send two frigates, an oil tanker and a supply ship'.<sup>17</sup>

Hawke officially announced the decision on 10 August, after Bush's phone call.<sup>18</sup> 'Two frigates, HMAS *Adelaide* and HMAS *Darwin*, would depart for the Gulf on Monday 13 August and would be accompanied by the supply ship, HMAS *Success*'.<sup>19</sup> Hawke did not ignore the Bush effect: there 'had been earlier discussions at official levels initiated in the first place with the US' but after the

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<sup>12</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP (Senior Officers Study Programme) 1991 Decision Making During Gulf Crisis.

<sup>13</sup> *Canberra Times*, 11 August 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Milton Cockburn, "The Politics of Australian Involvement" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen, *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 43.

<sup>15</sup> *Age*, 10 August 1990.

<sup>16</sup> *Age*, 10 August 1990.

<sup>17</sup> *Australian*, 10 August 1990.

<sup>18</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During Gulf Crisis; For the text of the telephone conversation see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August 1990.

<sup>19</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During Gulf Crisis; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 August 1990.

'lengthy conversation' with Bush, together with Keating, Evans, Ray, Duffy and Button it was 'agreed that Australia would contribute to a multinational task force'.<sup>20</sup> The US influence was more than a telephone call. Hawke was already willing to follow Bush. Bush's comment in his book proves it: on the telephone, Hawke 'without equivocation said he was solidly behind' the US.<sup>21</sup> The decision's speed and Bush's words show that the call was only a catalyst for Hawke to announce the decision.

Media reports stressed the same point. The *Sydney Morning Herald* argued that 'President Bush's call had no influence on the decision. US officials [described] it as "thank you call"'.<sup>22</sup> The *Sun Herald* similarly reported that a 'spokesman' of Hawke 'confirmed' that 'Hawke had made an in-principle decision to commit the vessels the day before' Bush 'telephoned him'. The spokesman added that 'through the discussions [with the US] initiated by the Australian Government it would have become clear to the Americans that we had very much in mind an Australian involvement'. Similarly, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported, 'Hawke took the President's call during ... breakfast at the Lodge. They spoke for half an hour. ... When the call ended, Australia was a part of the blockade. It was as simple as that'.<sup>23</sup> The *Age* claimed that it was 'a measure of strength of the Australian-American alliance under Bob Hawke that Australia was the first non-European country to promise to help'.<sup>24</sup>

The government tried to dilute this impression. Evans stated that the reason was not the government's enthusiasm for following the US. In an interview on 12 August on *Channel 9*, the reporter asked Evans, 'why did we jump so quickly? How much of it was ... national self interest, and how much of it was ... the Americans are calling, and we've got to answer the call?'. Evans replied that it was 'overwhelmingly self-interest, and the question of acting, out of loyalty or at the US behest are simply ... didn't arise'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/ 505/48, Transcript of News Conference, Parliament House, 10 August 1990.

<sup>21</sup> George Bush & Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, New York: Vintage Books, 1999, 342.

<sup>22</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1990.

<sup>23</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 August 1990.

<sup>24</sup> *Age*, 11 August 1990.

<sup>25</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/ 505/48, Cable 0.CH593775 Canberra to Washington, 13 August 1990.

Developments before Bush's call proved the opposite. The real reason was Hawke's enthusiasm to follow Washington, which made him ready to support the US even before being requested. Bush's call was organized by the Australian Ambassador in Washington, Michael Cook. On 6 August the possibility of an Australian contribution 'to the idea of a multinational naval force to implement sanctions and deter further Iraqi aggression' was discussed between US government officials and Australian Embassy personnel in Washington.<sup>26</sup> The Hawke government wanted to understand American intentions. On 7 August Hawke's advisor Hugh White spoke to Michael Cook to assure him 'the government would be ready to respond if the Americans made a formal request'.<sup>27</sup> Cook was cabled on 9 August, right after Hawke and the five ministers' decision, and the Ambassador was requested to organize the call.<sup>28</sup>

The decision was taken to assist US priorities. The Hawke government's wish to satisfy the US was clearly expressed in Ray's statement: 'the US is our ally: if it were a United Nations force I couldn't imagine Cabinet saying no, but I'll leave that to them'.<sup>29</sup> The Hawke government's affirmative response to American requests had 'an almost automatic quality'.<sup>30</sup>

Cabinet still argued the opposite: Australian vessels would be supporting Security Council sanctions against Iraq. The vessels 'would remain under Australian national command, with the question of operational control to be determined later'.<sup>31</sup>

Although the Hawke government decided to support the MNF one day before Bush's call, 'in the eyes of' some members of the opposition it was a 'proof of Australia's readiness to anticipate America's needs'.<sup>32</sup> The Leader of the Australian Democrats, Janet Powell, asserted that the deployment was

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<sup>26</sup> Gareth Evans, "The Case for Australian Participation" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen, *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 12.

<sup>27</sup> NAA, M3571/1, 89, Note of Telephone Conversation with Cook, 7 August 1990.

<sup>28</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1990.

<sup>29</sup> *Australian*, 9 August 1990.

<sup>30</sup> *Australian*, 10 August 1990.

<sup>31</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During Gulf Crisis.

<sup>32</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 325.

'inappropriate' and that Australia 'should have responded only to a UN call for military assistance'. Powell added that the UN 'believes that there is no need for any kind of policing. If there was a need for a policing force then the UN should call for it, not the US'.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, ALP member Allan Morris said that the government 'should have waited until a [UN] process eventuated'.<sup>34</sup>

On 13 August the Emir of Kuwait's letter requesting Australia to take necessary steps to enforce the UN sanctions arrived in Canberra.<sup>35</sup> On 14 August Cabinet accepted the letter as a 'legally sufficient basis for enforcement of sanctions'.<sup>36</sup> Hawke used the letter to state his claim that Australia's commitment was under the auspices the UN. On 16 August, on the radio, he stated that the Emir of Kuwait personally requested assistance and that Australia 'had given immediate support to the decision of the UN Security Council to impose comprehensive sanctions'.<sup>37</sup>

The ALP's Left faction stated that Australian vessels should be under UN command not the US', that their role should avoid 'physical interaction', and that the government should 'resist all approaches other than the UN to escalate' Australia's involvement.<sup>38</sup> Evans and Ray briefed the Left faction leaders and separately Caucus foreign affairs and defence committee members to assure them that the Prime Minister would not escalate Australia's commitment or take any further decisions affecting this commitment before extensive consultation.<sup>39</sup>

After the brief Hawke sought parliamentary approval. On 21 August, he asked the House to 'support [his] Government's prompt action to implement UN sanctions' and its decision 'to send ships ... to the Middle East to assist ... in enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq under Article 51 of the UN Charter'.<sup>40</sup> Even if at the time of discussion at the Australian parliament, the UN 'had gone no

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<sup>33</sup> *Australian*, 13 August 1990.

<sup>34</sup> *Sun-Herald*, 12 August 1990.

<sup>35</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/48, Cable TOR 0802 New York to Canberra, 13 August 1990.

<sup>36</sup> NAA: M3588, 14300-144999, Cabinet Minute No. 14333, 14 August 1990.

<sup>37</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1990.

<sup>38</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August 1990.

<sup>39</sup> Milton Cockburn, "The Politics of Australian Involvement" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen, *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 47.

<sup>40</sup> NAA, M3850, 170, Speech by the Prime Minister - parliamentary resolution on the "Gulf Crisis", - 21 August 1990.

further than to mandate sanctions and call for member states to observe them'<sup>41</sup>, he 'effectively quelled disquiet within the [ALP] and achieved the belated endorsement of Caucus and Parliament'.<sup>42</sup>

By and large the Conservative opposition was not against the decision itself, but objected to the way it was taken and the confusion over Australian ships' role. For example, the leader of the Opposition, John Hewson supported Hawke's decision although he was concerned about 'the operational and legal complexities of the situation'.<sup>43</sup> Yet the opposition's concerns did not 'overshadow [their] whole-hearted support for the deployment'.<sup>44</sup> Unlike Turkey, there was no heavy anti-Americanism within the opposition.

On the *ABC* on 22 August, Hawke attempted to convince the public that Bush's call was not the real reason for his decision. 'My consideration of [Australia's commitment to the Gulf] started well before the conversation with President Bush. There had been discussions at the diplomatic ... and at the armed forces level. The discussions with George Bush was not the initiation, it was the end of a process'.<sup>45</sup> To strengthen this understanding, the Hawke 'government had throughout the planning and the initial execution of Operation Damask [striven] to be seen to be operating independently of the US in terms of national decision making, ie. not to be seen to be acceding to every request that emanated from the Pentagon or US State Department'.<sup>46</sup>

The speed of Hawke's decision showed the stability of the arm's tendency. In 'five days after the UN Security Council had imposed sanctions on Iraq the government had decided to commit forces'.<sup>47</sup> Eight days after the Iraqi invasion

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<sup>41</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 21 August 1990, 1121; Richard Leaver, "Australia's Gulf commitment: The end of self-reliance?", *The Pacific Review*, 4:3, 1991, 235.

<sup>42</sup> Milton Cockburn, "The Politics of Australian Involvement" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen, *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 21 August 1990, 1123-1127.

<sup>44</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 333.

<sup>45</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/49, Cable 0.CE920500, Canberra to Washington, 22 August 1990.

<sup>46</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis. Operation Damask was the code-name for Australia's contribution to the 1991 Gulf War, centred on a Naval Task Group which operated as a part of the multinational fleet in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

<sup>47</sup> David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment the Australian Defence Force's First War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 28.



of Kuwait, Australia dispatched two frigates and one supply ship, which were integrated into the 'carrier battle group centered on the USS *Midway* operating primarily in the Gulf of Oman'.<sup>48</sup>

The Australian bureaucracy was excluded from the decision making. 'There was no discussion with senior defence or foreign affairs bureaucrats, while the foreign and defence ministers were only consulted via telephone'.<sup>49</sup>

Hawke did not need to adjust Australian national priorities to any great extent, since the commitment was not contrary to Australia's defence psyche. First, ANZUS included an 'implicit understanding that Australian troops would be sent to the Middle East in any future global war'.<sup>50</sup> Second, the forward defence policy aimed to carry out joint actions with great power allies, accumulating political credits to be used in times of national emergency. Third, Hawke's previous self-reliance efforts stated the importance of US-Australia cooperation on joint training and supply/support arrangements.<sup>51</sup> Fourth, as a member of UKUSA Signals and Security Agreement,<sup>52</sup> Australia, should 'be seen to be playing its part'.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, even before the crisis, Australia was unhappy about Saddam's threats to use chemical weapons.<sup>54</sup> Evans called Saddam's statements on using these weapons as 'lunatic'.<sup>55</sup> In its news release DFAT also named Saddam's attitude towards Kuwait 'irresponsible and counterproductive to regional security'.<sup>56</sup>

The Australian public did not seriously protest at the government's decision. In general, it 'stood firmly behind the American alliance; popular support has rarely

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<sup>48</sup> Richard Leaver, "Australia's Gulf commitment: The end of self-reliance?", *The Pacific Review*, 4:3, 1991, 233.

<sup>49</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 September 1990.

<sup>50</sup> Philip Dorling, "The Origins of the ANZUS Treaty: A Reconsideration", *Flinders Politics Monographs*, No. 4, 1989.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Leaver, "Australia's Gulf commitment: The end of self-reliance?", *The Pacific Review*, 4:3, 1991, 233, 238.

<sup>52</sup> The Agreement aims at cooperation in signals intelligence between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. For details see Jason Dittmer, *Diplomatic Material*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, 49-71.

<sup>53</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 295.

<sup>54</sup> NAA, A9737, 90/0010664/2, Cable CH578529, Canberra to Baghdad, 4 April 1990.

<sup>55</sup> NAA, A9737, 91/00695/6, Cable CE860167, Canberra to Baghdad, 4 April 1990.

<sup>56</sup> NAA, M3128/9, 1650, DFAT news release, 6 April 1990.

fallen much below 70%.<sup>57</sup> The *Australian's* survey covering 24-26 August showed that 60% of Australians 'favoured sending ships to the Gulf, with 40% being strongly in favour'. More than half the opponents of sending ships favoured the use of military force to impose the sanctions, and just under half opposed sending more military elements to the Gulf.<sup>58</sup>

At the end of August, the US and Australia began to talk about the possibility of using force against Iraq. On 28 August Evans discussed US' considerations on military action with the US Secretary of State James Baker. Baker asked Evans whether he could provide 'specific details of Australia's position on enforcement'. Evans replied that 'Australia had stopped short of complete operational commitment to the use of force in part because of domestic political concern'. Evans carefully mentioned that Australia wanted to support the US but with a UN decision it would be easier.<sup>59</sup> Evans' statement to the public at the press conference highlighted the UN. 'Australia was not [in the Gulf] supporting' the US, it was 'supporting the international community. Australia is supporting the UN. ... We are supporting the US because what the US is doing here is absolutely right'.<sup>60</sup>

Baker's enquiry about Australia's commitment had a direct influence on Hawke's cabinet. On 30 August the Cabinet 'agreed ... that if it became apparent during the international discussions that the effective operation of the MNF would require it to have permission to use force in support of UNSCR [the UN Security Council Resolution] 661' the Prime Minister and Defence and Foreign Ministers 'were authorised to expand the operational role of the Australian TG [Task Group] to permit action to halt all designated vessels in order to inspect and verify their cargoes and ensure strict implementation of the UNSCR 661; this would include the use of minimum force, including direct fire if necessary'.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> David Campbell, "Australian Public Opinion on National Security Issues", *Working Paper*, No. 1, Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, April 1986.

<sup>58</sup> *Weekend Australian*, 1 September 1990.

<sup>59</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/49, Cable O.WH120459, Senator Evans' Discussions with US Secretary of State Baker, 29 August 1990.

<sup>60</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/49, Cable O.WH120411, Senator Evans: Gulf Crisis: Washington Press Conference, 29 August 1990.

<sup>61</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis. For details of Resolution 661 see Resolution 661 Iraq-Kuwait (6 August), <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/661>, (Accessed 2.11.2018).

In early October, the shadow Foreign Minister, Senator Robert Hill, called on the US Undersecretary of State for Political Military Affairs, Richard Clarke, to ask whether the US would be demanding more contribution from Australia. Clarke responded that an additional Australian contribution would be valuable because of its 'political message it could send to Saddam. The greater the array of countries contributing on the ground, the more powerful the message'. Baker added that 'it would send a much stronger political message if they were to commit ground forces, whether troops or aircraft'.<sup>62</sup> The US was confident that Australia would comply and it was not wrong.

In October, while US officials were considering increasing the commitment in the Gulf,<sup>63</sup> Ray and Evans visited Washington. For the expansion of US commitments, Australian frigates could provide a useful contribution as air defence escorts to protect the US Navy's high value ships.<sup>64</sup> On 8 October Evans and Ray met the Secretary of Defence, Dick Cheney, and Baker.<sup>65</sup> The US made no direct request of Australia but 'the issue of whether Australia should increase its presence in the Middle East surfaced'.<sup>66</sup> In the UN General Assembly Evans declared Australia's determination to support the Iraqi sanctions and 'acknowledged that military action could not be ruled out should all other means of resolving the crisis fail'. He added that Australia strongly preferred that such military action 'should be conducted with the explicit authority' of the UN.<sup>67</sup> Evans words clearly illustrated how closely Australia was following the US. The tendency of the arm was very stable.

On 28 October, the Americans clarified their request for Australia's extra contribution at the Multinational Naval Force Conference in Dubai. They wanted frigates with high anti-air warfare capability.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/52, Cable 0.WH121815, Washington to Canberra, 3 October 1990.

<sup>63</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis.

<sup>64</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis.

<sup>65</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis; AWM, 330, PKI/505/52, Cable 0.WH122026, AUSMIN Talks: Joint Communiqué, Washington to Canberra, 9 October 1990.

<sup>66</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis.

<sup>67</sup> Gareth Evans, "Press Conference", New York, 3 October 1990.

<sup>68</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis. See also *Journal of Commerce*, 28 August 1990.

The Hawke government was ready to comply. On 6 November Evans told Parliament that Australia could join an attack on Iraq.<sup>69</sup> Evans' statement was ahead of a US official draft resolution to the Security Council, on 8 November, to authorize the use of force.<sup>70</sup> The next day, Bush began to reinforce 'the forces that had been deployed for Operation Desert Shield'.<sup>71</sup> Bush's move showed that 'operations in the Gulf of Oman were declining in importance, and if Australia was to continue to play a useful role its ships to be permitted to move into the Arabian Gulf'.<sup>72</sup> The Hawke government saw this strategic necessity but politically they 'needed to hang' it 'on an appropriate' UN resolution. In the Senate on 15 November, Evans stated that if 'the sanctions strategy and associated diplomacy do not achieve the objectives to which the international community is committed, we have to be prepared to contemplate military action, if that is the only course left which will ensure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait'.<sup>73</sup>

The required UN resolution, No.678, was passed on 29 November. It authorised the use of force against Iraq unless it withdrew from Kuwait and implemented the other relevant resolutions before 15 January. Six members of the Security Council (the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, France, Canada and Romania) sponsored it.<sup>74</sup>

The Hawke government was again very quick to adhere. On 30 November, Hawke stated that increasing Australia's forces in the Middle East would not be ruled out.<sup>75</sup> Hawke was 'mindful of his previous commitment to consult widely within the parliamentary party if there was to be any change to Australia's military commitment'. On 3 December, before a Cabinet meeting, Hawke, Ray and Evans talked to the leaders of Labor's three factions.<sup>76</sup> To meet Centre-Left

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<sup>69</sup> Hansard, Senate, 6 November 1990, 3473.

<sup>70</sup> *Australian*, 9 November 1990.

<sup>71</sup> David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment the Australian Defence Force's First War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 113.

<sup>72</sup> Hansard, Senate, 4 December 1990, 4907; 21 January 1991, 30; 22 January 1991, 38.

<sup>73</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/53, Cable 0.CH605008, Canberra to Washington, 15 November 1990.

<sup>74</sup> United National Security Council Resolution No. 678, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/678>, (Accessed 17.10.2018).

<sup>75</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 December 1990.

<sup>76</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 December 1990.

and Left demands the Cabinet stated, 'it was not anticipated that Australia would make any other contribution of naval, air or ground forces to operations'.<sup>77</sup>

Hawke's control over his party was clear. The Labor Party walked 'remarkably in step behind' him. 'There have been some squawks on the Left and some agony in the Centre Left. But given the gravity of the decision and the history' of Labor Party's 'sentiment about foreign war, they have been extremely mild'.<sup>78</sup> Even if 'at the early stage of Australia's commitment there had been complaints by the leader of the Opposition, John Hewson, over the lack of consultation and quibbling about lack of detail over the precise function of the frigates in the Gulf, the Opposition did not criticize the Government for its commitment'.<sup>79</sup>

On 3 December Cabinet agreed that the naval task group would join operations in the Gulf under allied command, supported by an additional two medical teams.<sup>80</sup> On 4 December Hawke announced that 'the Government will now authorise the ... (ADF) to deploy ships of our task force from the Gulf of Oman into the Persian Gulf to exercise and operate with allied naval forces in preparation for that role. The ADF will also now participate in allied military planning'.<sup>81</sup> At this time the original task group returned to Australia and was relieved by a second task group.

Although Hawke pledged to the factions on not expanding Australia's second contribution, he left the door half-open for any future US requests. On 6 December, Hawke said that although any request for an increase in Australian contribution was not expected, 'in the unlikely event that one came we would consider it'.<sup>82</sup>

There were some critics, but the Australian media generally supported the decision. Some critics noted that the decision showed Australia's clear desire to

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<sup>77</sup> *Canberra Times*, 4 December 1990; David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 392.

<sup>78</sup> *Age*, 5 December 1990.

<sup>79</sup> Milton Cockburn, "The Politics of Australian Involvement" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen, *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 51.

<sup>80</sup> NAA, M3128, 101, Cabinet Minute, 3 December 1990.

<sup>81</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 December 1990, 4322.

<sup>82</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 6 December 1990, 4602.

please the US.<sup>83</sup> Others argued that sending military elements to the Gulf would detach Australia from its self-reliance quest since the Gulf was beyond Australia's direct military interest.<sup>84</sup> Proponents, for example the *Herald Sun*, commented that the government's action was proper. The *Age* called the expansion of the Australian commitment 'logical'. The *Australian* stated that Hawke's case was 'clear and convincing'.<sup>85</sup> The Australian public also supported Hawke. The *Age's* poll of thousand voters on 5-6 December showed that 80% supported his decision to use Australian ships in action.<sup>86</sup>

Evans responded to the critics that 'what we have to realise now is that in 1990 we are genuinely confronted with a 1930s-type situation [Hitler's threat] which needs [a] collective security response, which it didn't get in the 1930s, but for which the UN was established in 1945'.<sup>87</sup> The UN was again the government's official reference point.

On 24 December, the US Navy 'formally asked Australia to send two more [medical] teams'.<sup>88</sup> Australia agreed. 'Unlike the earlier teams which were primarily Navy, these latter two teams comprised seven Navy, six Army and seven Air Force personnel, and they included Permanent, Reserve, male and female members'.<sup>89</sup>

The situation in the Gulf escalated with Saddam's declaration on 30 December that Iraq's preparations for war were over and he would not leave Kuwait.<sup>90</sup> On 5 January 1991, Saddam announced that Iraq was ready for battle. On 9 January, Baker's meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz in Geneva did not defuse the crisis.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Tele Mirror*, 6 December 1990; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1990.

<sup>84</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 12 January 1991; Australian Department of Defence, *the Defence of Australia*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987, 6.

<sup>85</sup> *Herald Sun*, 5 December 1990; *Age*, 5 December 1990; *Australian*, 5 December 1990.

<sup>86</sup> *Age*, 8 December 1990.

<sup>87</sup> *Sunday Age*, 9 December 1990.

<sup>88</sup> *Australian*, 4 January 1991.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Flynn, "The Medical Teams in the Gulf", *Australia's Navy, 1991-92*, 28; David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment the Australian Defence Force's First War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 150-151.

<sup>90</sup> *Reuters News Service*, 31 December 1990.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence Freedman & Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict*, London: Faber & Faber, 2013, 260.

It was clear that Australia would go into battle. The main tactical issue was to receive an advance warning about a coalition offensive in order to have enough time to formally approve Australian ships participation. On 14 January Evans met Baker in Ottawa to make sure that the US would give Australia an early warning.<sup>92</sup> Baker said the US could give 'one or two hours notice –through a political rather than a military channel'. Evans was satisfied.<sup>93</sup> He reported to Hawke that Australia 'had been consulted at the time, thus enabling it to make a final judgement on the political context of the decision'.<sup>94</sup>

In early January, the Australian bureaucracy was finalizing tactical requirements. On 14 January the Australian Defence Force Command Centre 'went on full-time war basis', and linked to the Pentagon and Whitehall via secure lines.<sup>95</sup> The Australian Defence Force would be at war for the first time, since Vietnam, once again in line with the US. In a brief to Cabinet, DFAT clearly underlined that Australia for 'good reasons' for its 'national interest' to be 'solidly behind' the US.<sup>96</sup>

Before Bush's deadline to Saddam expired on 16 January, Hawke told Cabinet, 'we must expect to be involved in war within 24 hours'. The ministers 'were supportive but many were understandably anxious'.<sup>97</sup>

Baker promised Evans that Bush would give early enough warning of the impending attack. On 17 January morning at 9.48 (Canberra time) Bush telephoned Hawke and told him that 'the first actions would start within an hour'.<sup>98</sup> On the night of 16-17 January (Kuwait time) Desert Storm's offensive action began. The Prime Minister 'signed a pre-prepared letter to the [Chief of Defence Force] authorising the Australian Task Group to participate in operation Desert Storm'.<sup>99</sup> On the same day he announced that as a 'consequence' of UN

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<sup>92</sup> NAA, M312/2, 101, Cable UN051641, Evans to Hawke, 14 January 1991.

<sup>93</sup> James Baker & Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace 1989-1992*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, 377-378.

<sup>94</sup> NAA, M3128/2, 101, Evans' phone discussion with Hawke, 14 January 1991.

<sup>95</sup> David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment the Australian Defence Force's First War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 154.

<sup>96</sup> NAA, A9737, 1991/070651 Part 13, M. Costello, Notes for Cabinet briefing 14 January 1991.

<sup>97</sup> Bob Hawke, *The Hawke Memoirs*, Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1994, 521.

<sup>98</sup> *Australian*, 18 January 1991.

<sup>99</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/79, Presentation to Joint SOSP 1991 Decision Making During the Gulf Crisis.

Security Council Resolution 678 'the Australian Task Force in the Gulf [was] now with the other members of the [UN] co-operating in armed action to fulfil the [UN] resolutions to enforce the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait'.<sup>100</sup>

There were public reactions to the operation. 500 protestors in Sydney, almost 2,000 in Melbourne<sup>101</sup> and 300 in Canberra staged demonstrations. On 18 January in Melbourne 20,000 people, on 19 January in Sydney 10,000 people, in Canberra 700, in Adelaide 10,000, in Brisbane 5,000, in Perth 5,000, and in Hobart 3,000 people marched.<sup>102</sup> Despite these reactions the *Australian's* poll taken on 18-20 January showed that 60% favoured Australia's naval presence, and 75% favoured military action.<sup>103</sup>

On 21 January Hawke asked the House to 'affirm its support for Australia's positive response' to the implementation of the Resolution 678. He listed a few reasons for this response, none of which mentioned the US influence. They were: establishing peace and stability in the Middle East, preventing the 'disruption of [the] international economy', and fulfilling UN Charter's goals 'to achieve the promise of a more free, more peaceful and more prosperous world order'.<sup>104</sup> Hewson<sup>105</sup> and the Opposition Leader in the Senate, Robert Hill<sup>106</sup>, supported Hawke, which helped his motion to pass in both houses with insignificant opposition.<sup>107</sup>

Australia was forewarned, although not very early. Two hours before the land offensive Bush again called Hawke, and advised that he had ordered General Schwarzkopf to start full-scale military operations.<sup>108</sup> On the same day, Hawke 'reaffirmed his support for the coalition's operations'. He also stated, 'Australia's Task Group is not currently taking any direct part in supporting the ground

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<sup>100</sup> AWM, 330, PKI/505/98, Statement by the Prime Minister, the Gulf, 17 January 1991.

<sup>101</sup> *Australian*, 18 January 1991.

<sup>102</sup> *Canberra Times*, 18, 20 January 1991; *Australian*, 22 January 1991.

<sup>103</sup> *Australian*, 22 January 1991.

<sup>104</sup> NAA, M3850, 176, Statements to Parliament by the Prime Minister on the Gulf Crisis 4 December 1990-January 1991.

<sup>105</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 21 January 1991, 9.

<sup>106</sup> Hansard, Senate, 21 January 1991, 8.

<sup>107</sup> For details see Hansard, House of Representatives, 22 January 1991, 268; Hansard, Senate, 22 January 1991, 268-269; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 January 1991; *Australian*, 22 January 1991; *Age*, 22 January 1991.

<sup>108</sup> NAA, M3571/1, 134, Transcript of Conversation with President George Bush, 24 February 1991.



operations, but as those operations develop [the] task force may deploy further north in the Gulf where it could face higher risks from mines and other Iraqi action'.<sup>109</sup> On 27 February, Hawke announced that Australian ships would leave the Gulf 'when the war ends'.<sup>110</sup> Thanks to Hawke's stance, there were no wobbles on the arm and its tendency did not change.

On 24 February the ground offensive to liberate Kuwait began.<sup>111</sup> Apart from a few individuals, for example Captain John Walters, 'second-in-command of a 170-strong company of the Grenadier Guards, and Major John Cantwell, serving as a 'liaison officer to the US 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division', Australian units 'were not involved in the land campaign'.<sup>112</sup> 'Forty Australians in the Task Group Medical Support Element' had moved into 'the northern Arabian Gulf to support the amphibious task force'.<sup>113</sup>

On 28 February, Hawke announced that the Gulf War was over.<sup>114</sup> The next day he called Bush and congratulated him on 'the magnificent victory'.<sup>115</sup> On 1 March, Hawke stated that the US 'played a special part' by employing 'its authority and its power to serve interests which were not America's alone, but were the interests of the world community as a whole'.<sup>116</sup> His statements clearly exhibited his pro-Americanism.

Australia's military contribution to the Gulf War was small. Its deployment cost over \$100 million. There was an additional approximately \$300 million to compensate Australian wheat producers' exports to Iraq, and in writing off

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<sup>109</sup> *Canberra Times*, 25 February 1991.

<sup>110</sup> *Canberra Times*, 28 February 1991.

<sup>111</sup> For the details on the Gulf War ground campaign see Frank N. Schubert & Theresa L. Kraus (eds.), *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm*, Washington DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1995.

<sup>112</sup> *Sunday Herald*, 10 March 1991.

<sup>113</sup> J. P. Hodgman (ed.), *Australia's Navy 1991-92*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1991, 28.

<sup>114</sup> *Canberra Times*, 1 March 1991.

<sup>115</sup> Telcon with Prime Minister Hawke of Australia, 28 February 1991, George H. W. Bush Presidential Library, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1991-02-28--Hawke.pdf>, (Accessed 20.11.2018).

<sup>116</sup> *Canberra Times*, 1 March 1991.

Egypt's wheat debt.<sup>117</sup> Australia also delivered \$16.2 million of humanitarian aid.<sup>118</sup>

The Australian Defence Force's commitment in the Gulf War 'was mainly driven by political considerations' rather than strategic and military. The Australian government considered that contributing to US Gulf operations was for 'Australia's wider security interests'.<sup>119</sup> A major criticism of Hawke's decisions was that Australia followed the US unthinkably and uncritically.<sup>120</sup> Richard Leaver commented that the victory in the Gulf showed that there was already a 'strong majority sentiment within Australia behind the American alliance' which was 're-awakened and spectacularly confirmed the pro-alliance sentiments of the silent majority'.<sup>121</sup> Hawke's policies throughout the crisis kept Australia's national priorities in step with the US.

Hawke was a key factor in continuing the trending of the Australian arm of the wobbly cross. During the crisis he bolstered Australia-US link. He 'prided himself on his close relationship with President Bush, and ... with the previous Secretary of State, George Shultz'.<sup>122</sup> Hawke later explained, 'From the very beginning of the crisis in the Gulf I believed that Australia had vital interests at stake'.<sup>123</sup> Those vital interests were, almost as an imperative, 'to support' the US and 'more broadly, the Western alliance'.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 18 January 1991. At the beginning of 1989, Australia was the largest wheat supplier to Iraq. For details see *Australian*, 9 August 1990.

<sup>118</sup> For details see AWM, 330, PKI/505/52, Cable 0.CE938660 Canberra to Washington 4 October 1990.

<sup>119</sup> David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment the Australian Defence Force's First War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 201.

<sup>120</sup> Janet Powell & Richard Bolt, "The case against Australian participation" in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen (eds.), *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 37.

<sup>121</sup> Richard Leaver, "Australia and the New World Order", in Murray Goot & Rodney Tiffen (eds.), *Australia's Gulf War*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1992, 232.

<sup>122</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 295.

<sup>123</sup> Bob Hawke, *The Hawke Memoirs*, Port Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1994, 511-512.

<sup>124</sup> David Horner, *Australia and the New World Order*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 296.

### *The Wobbly Cross:*

The main similarity between Turkish-American and Australia-American relations during the Gulf crisis was their leaders' enthusiasm to support the US. Yet their attitudes, the domestic political scenery and the orientation of national priorities were quite different, moving the arms of the cross following opposite directions. Özal isolated himself from the parliament and even from his own cabinet to singlehandedly coordinate Turkey's relations with the US, which backfired. Not only the parliamentary opposition, and the defence and foreign affairs bureaucracy but also some of his own cabinet heavily reacted against him. Unlike Hawke, he could not manage these reactions via UN resolutions. He was caught between his ambition to develop Turkish-American commerce and US defence-oriented priorities and expectations. Özal understood the divergent priorities only at the end of the Gulf crisis, which increased his distrust in bilateral relations again. Özal's attempts made him, not Turkey, closer to the US.

Hawke was luckier. Australia's relations with the US were much closer than Turkey's. There was also a well-established habit in the Australian parliament and bureaucracy to follow US priorities. Although many members of his cabinet, the parliament, the media and Australian public knew that Australia's contribution was to support the US, Hawke managed to display it as part of a UN effort. Unlike Turkey, the Gulf crisis did not pose an imminent threat to Australia, which made it easier for Hawke to manage the opposition. Since there was a very traditional cooperation culture between Australia and the US, it was not too difficult for Hawke to adapt Australia's national priorities to the US during the crisis. The wobbly cross was validated in this era as well.

## **PART 4**

### **Relations during preparations for the Iraq War (2001-2003)**

#### **a. Turkey: all down the drain**

During the preparatory phase of the Iraq War, Turkish-American relations resemble their relations during the Gulf War. The leader of the AK Parti (the Justice and Development Party - JDP), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, played a role similar to Özal. Until JDP's election victory in November 2002, Bülent Ecevit did not have enough political clout to suppress the continuing anti-Americanism in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), which was a must for adapting Turkey's priorities to the US. Therefore he could not promise to support US priorities in Iraq.

Erdoğan was a new hope for changing the Turkish arm's tendency and pushing Turkey closer to the US. Before the elections in November 2002, he managed to create a good impression in Washington and among conservative Turkish voters. He had a full agenda: he wanted to start his own reforms to increase democracy in Turkey via reducing the influence of the Kemalists to consolidate JDP's national and international legitimacy; and to finalize Turkey's EU membership process. Very similar to Özal, for each of these aims he was seriously in need of US diplomatic and economic support. He was ready to acknowledge the imbalance, and supporting US priorities in Iraq could have been a very good instrument to show this.

Even before he became the Prime Minister, Erdoğan showed his personal enthusiasm for supporting US policies in the Middle East. For this he tried to move Turkey's priorities more towards the US. Yet he met Özal's fate. Erdoğan's efforts could not suppress the anti-Americanism of the seculars in the TGNA. He was also restrained by the politico-strategic concerns of the Turkish military and bureaucracy regarding the PKK and the possibility of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. On 1 March 2003, the TGNA did not approve a resolution which would have allowed US troop deployment to open a second front in northern Iraq, and to send Turkish soldiers into Iraq. This was one of the biggest wobbles in bilateral

relations, which surprised and infuriated the Bush administration. Erdoğan managed to have the resolution passed on 20 March but this was too late to mend relations and ease the resultant wobbles on the arm. Erdoğan could not change the Turkish arm's tendency. Turkey kept trending away from the US.

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Turkey-US relations during the first phase<sup>1</sup> of the Iraq War were under the influence of goodwill following the September 11 attacks.<sup>2</sup> Turkey was the first Muslim nation to express its unconditional support for America's response to the attacks. To support Operation *Enduring Freedom* against al-Qa'ida, Turkey opened its airspace and İncirlik Base for the US Air Force. Turkey sent 90 Special Forces personnel to Afghanistan and assigned anti-terror personnel to Florida to support the US efforts.<sup>3</sup> 'Before NATO undertook command' of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation, 'Turkey led ISAF-II from June 2002 to February 2003 with 1400 troops'.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of 2002, the Ecevit government's expectations from the US were similar to Özal's: more commercial flexibility. Yet the Bush administration's 'inflexibility on [US] market access ... fuelled [Turkey's] criticism that the partnership lacked an economic dimension responsive to Turkey's needs'.<sup>5</sup> Ecevit's US visit in January temporarily alleviated this frustration. Ecevit told US officials that Turkish-American counter-terrorism cooperation should be

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<sup>1</sup> The Iraq War (2003-2011) had two phases: a brief conventional war in March-April 2003 during which the US-led coalition invaded Iraq and defeated Iraqi military elements; the longer second phase was the US-led occupation of Iraq fighting insurgencies. Violence declined in 2007 and the US formally completed its withdrawal in December 2011. For details see Rick Fawn & Raymond Hinnebusch (eds.), *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006; Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons*, Washington, D.C.: CSIS Press, 2003; Rodney P. Carlisle & John S. Bowman (eds.), *Iraq War*, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007; Thomas G. Mahnken & Thomas A. Keaney (eds.), *War in Iraq: Planning and Execution*, London: Routledge, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Serdar Kara, *Turkish American Relations post 9/11*, MA Thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2007, 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Prager, "Turkish American Relations: Historical Context and Current Issues", Georgetown University, 2003, <http://www.tusiad.us/>, (Accessed 30.12.2018), 10.

<sup>4</sup> TPMB, June 2002; "Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations", [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv\\_-european-security-and-defence-identity\\_policy-esdi\\_p\\_.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-esdi_p_.en.mfa), (Accessed 30.12.2018).

<sup>5</sup> Mark Parris, "Starting over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, April 2003, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>, (Accessed 30.12.2018).

supported with an 'economic partnership'. The US administration accepted this.<sup>6</sup> For finding 'compatible areas – e.g. textiles - for trade development' the Economic Partnership Commission was established.<sup>7</sup> During Ecevit's visit, Bush tried to get his support for a US operation against Saddam. Because of his domestic unpopularity, Ecevit could not give the promise.<sup>8</sup> He was prevented from adjusting Turkey's priorities with the US.

As in previous high-level good-will visits, the Ecevit-Bush talks brought additional American aid to Turkey but did not develop bilateral trade. '\$2,500,000 for ... 2002 and \$2,920,000 for ... 2003 [of US financial assistance was] authorized to be available for Turkey'.<sup>9</sup> After Ecevit's visit, with the influence of the Bush administration, the IMF decided to lend \$16 billion over the next three years to cover Turkey's losses for supporting the US in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

The US administration wanted to use the increased imbalance in bilateral relations for its plans to assault Iraq.<sup>11</sup> The Bush administration firstly tried to clarify whether Ecevit had changed his mind on supporting the US in Iraq. On 16 July 2002, Ecevit told US Deputy Defense Secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, that he could not support the US operation, since his domestic political situation was not improved. He avoided Wolfowitz's inquiry, saying that it was 'possible to ameliorate the situation [in Iraq] without military action'. He did not want to put extra pressure on his government by breaking off relations with Iraq. He added that 'we want to have good relations with all our neighbours – among them Iraq of course'. Wolfowitz was clearer. He said that the Iraqi regime was 'hostile' to the US 'and supporting terrorism, is a danger that [the US] cannot afford to live with indefinitely'. He added that he 'had not asked Turkey for any decisions but

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<sup>6</sup> President Bush, "Turkish Prime Minister Discuss War on Terrorism", 16 January 2002, George W. Bush Presidential Library; TPMB, January 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Helena Kane Finn, "After the Ecevit Visit: Can Turks Pull Together to Complete the Necessary Reforms?", *Washington Institute Policywatch*, 597, 24 January 2002.

<sup>8</sup> President Bush, "Turkish Prime Minister Discuss War on Terrorism", 16 January 2002, George W. Bush Presidential Library; TPMB, January 2002.

<sup>9</sup> "Security Assistance Act of 2001", *US Congressional Record*, Vol. 148, No.1, 23 January 2002, S39.

<sup>10</sup> *New York Times*, 5 February 2002; "Turkey: Request for Stand-By Arrangement", *IMF Country Report*, No.02/136, July 2002, International Monetary Fund, 2002; Mark Parris, "Starting over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, April 2003, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>, (Accessed 30.12.2018).

<sup>11</sup> "Energy Policy", *US Congressional Record*, Vol. 148, No. 10, 8 February 2002, S528.

had come to seek Ankara's perspective'. Turkey as 'a key NATO ally' with the İncirlik Base, the 'only established US Air Force forward-operating base in the region', would be 'crucial to any major operation'.<sup>12</sup> Pentagon's plans reiterated Wolfowitz's statement that Turkey was on a very valuable logistics line for assaulting Iraq from the north.<sup>13</sup>

On 15 October, a Wolfowitz headed US delegation visited the Turkish General Staff and clarified US demands, which were a pre-deployment of US military personnel for site surveys, stationing 80,000 US troops and 250 US jets in Turkey, authorizing the use of Turkish soil for logistics and unrestricted overflights, and using Turkey's six main and eight supplementary airfields. To alleviate Turkey's concerns about the security situation in northern Iraq, the US delegation stated that Iraq's unification would be protected, no Kurdish state would be established, and northern Iraq's oil resources would be under the control of a central government representing all ethnic groups of Iraq.<sup>14</sup>

Bush was clear about his priorities but Ecevit was not. In addition to his political weakness, Ecevit's health was deteriorating. By July, sixty deputies of his party resigned, including the deputy prime minister and the foreign minister.<sup>15</sup> His government did not have the necessary discretion to accept US requests and even if it had, he had lost his parliamentary majority to pass an act authorizing American troop deployment. The domestic situation was aggravated by a deepening economic crisis. Ecevit's need for more American aid was increasing.<sup>16</sup>

Yet the priorities still were not converging. Although Ecevit did not promise, his increasing need for American aid led him to authorize Turkish officials to cooperate with their US counterparts 'closely and frequently'. The undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry, Uğur Ziyal, visited the US in August 2002. The Vice-President, Dick Cheney, 'assured' him of US 'opposition to Kurdish control of

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<sup>12</sup> *BBC News*, 17 July 2002.

<sup>13</sup> *Washington Times*, 27 July 2003.

<sup>14</sup> *New York Times*, 28 November 2002; Mustafa Balbay, *Irak Bataklığında Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2007, 11.

<sup>15</sup> "Ecevit agrees to hold early polls", 16 July 2002, <http://edition.cnn.com/>, (Accessed 20.1.2019).

<sup>16</sup> For the details of Turkey's economic situation in 2002 see Haluk Özdalga, *Kötü Yönetilen Türkiye: örnek vaka DSP*, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005, 201-208.

Mosul and Kirkuk and stated that the oil resources would be controlled by the future central Iraqi government'.<sup>17</sup> The US prioritized using military installations in Turkey, while Turkey was trying to prevent any economic loss and if possible to increase American aid via using the crisis. Once again, US priorities were security, and Turkish priorities were economy-oriented.

The military bureaucracy of two countries began to work closely. The Commander of US Central Command, General Tommy Franks, and the NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and Commander of the US European Command, General Joseph Ralston, met the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Hilmi Özkök and relevant Turkish officers in Ankara on 21 October 2002. The talks were similar to previous discussions: the Iraqi Kurds, Kurdish militia issues, no-fly zone, and the territorial integrity of Iraq.<sup>18</sup> Özkök visited the US on 4-10 November. During the visit he stated that 'the US should avoid a war in Iraq but that Turkey's differences with Washington over the [forthcoming US operation] could be ironed out'.<sup>19</sup>

This military compromise did not alter Ecevit's and the Turkish MFA's decision, which was to permit the US to use Turkish air space and to send a limited number of Turkish special forces to support American troops.<sup>20</sup> Ecevit and the MFA did not want to open Turkish soil for a land operation and desired to protect Turkey's military influence in northern Iraq. This was not enough for the US. The Bush administration wanted a solid promise for passage rights for both land and air forces in order to open a northern front, access which would eventually undermine Turkey's influence in northern Iraq.<sup>21</sup> Turkish and American priorities did not converge on operation-specific issues.

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<sup>17</sup> "Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues", *US Congressional Research Service*, 2 May 2003, CRS-11.

<sup>18</sup> *Washington Post*, 22 October 2002; TPMB, October 2002.

<sup>19</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 7 November 2002; *Yeni Şafak*, 7 November 2002; *Hürriyet*, 18 September 2003.

<sup>20</sup> *Hürriyet*, 18 September 2003; Fikret Bila, *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları*, Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 2003, 192.

<sup>21</sup> For a similar view see Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 3, 2001-2012*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013, 270.



By November 2002, the Ecevit government could no longer resist heightened economic and political turmoil, triggering one of the biggest changes in Turkish political history. On 3 November 2002, the JDP won the general elections.<sup>22</sup> Erdoğan was JDP's leader but was banned from national politics because of an Islamist speech at the time of elections, so he could not be Prime Minister. His deputy Abdullah Gül formed the government.<sup>23</sup> With the JDP, the religious-conservatives came to power, starting the political shift from secular nationalism to religious conservatism in Turkey. This shift affected Turkish-American relations in an unexpected way.

Until then, the US had been working with a secular, Westernist, civilian-military Turkish bureaucracy, mostly known as the Kemalists.<sup>24</sup> Under the Kemalists the Turkish arm of the cross had been quite wobbly. The JDP's, and particularly Erdoğan's, political transformation aimed to reduce the influence of the Kemalists on Turkish politics. Erdoğan's objective was to give the Turkish socio-political fabric a more Islamist outlook. From the start this aim deepened the divide between the Kemalists and the religious-conservatives. Erdoğan's developing dominance in Turkish foreign policy, let JDP members began to replace the Kemalists.

The US did not object to this. Due to Turkey's wobbly distancing from the US from the mid-1960s, the US administration had been discussing a change in Turkey's political fabric. They thought it should be less Kemalist, more democratic, more human rights-oriented and more inclusive of ethnic (non-Turkic) identities in Turkey.<sup>25</sup> Erdoğan, as a pragmatic leader, proposed an even

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<sup>22</sup> For the election results see <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/03-kasim-2002-xxii-donem-milletvekili-genel-secimi/3009>, (Accessed 30.12.2018).

<sup>23</sup> For details see "Turkey's November 3, 2002 National Election", *US Congressional Research Service*, 14 November 2002.

<sup>24</sup> The *Kemalists* are accepted as the followers of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principles (*Kemalism*), which were formed at the Republican People's Party's (RPP) 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress in May 1931. Later, these principles became the 'six arrows' of the RPP (republicanism, nationalism, nation, secularism, etatism, revolutionism), then underlined in the Turkish Constitution in 1937. The *Kemalists* are reformist nationalists emphasizing collateral modernization and secularization of Turkish society. For details see Anıl Çeçen, *Kemalizm*, Ankara: Fark Yayınları, 1999; Toni Alaranta, *Contemporary Kemalism: from Universal Secular-humanism to Extreme Turkish Nationalism*, New York: Routledge, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> For details see Graham Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007.

deeper change. In his speeches he underlined his “new Turkey” model<sup>26</sup>, in which he used the term conservative democracy, rather than a direct reference to Islam. Erdoğan constantly underlined political liberalization and legal reforms to comply with the EU membership guidelines.

Erdoğan’s conservative, Islamist, and reformist party fitted quite well into Bush’s *Greater Middle East Initiative*. The Bush administration put forward the *Initiative* after 9/11 as a more active and pre-emptive policy defending the US against Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups, such as al-Qa’ida. This policy brought the Middle East into the centre of US foreign policy. It rested on a ‘two-pronged approach’: ‘an aggressive pursuit of identified terrorists and the regimes that support them through the so-called war on terror’, and the ‘transformation of governments in the region, thereby making them less likely to harbor terrorists or tolerate activities that promote terrorism’.<sup>27</sup> The Bush administration embraced Erdoğan’s government as a model of ‘balancing democracy and religion’. Supporting the JDP government aimed to prove that Bush’s policy was not ‘specifically un-Islamic’. Bush also considered Erdoğan’s attempts to carry out reforms for fulfilling EU membership criteria a ‘crucial element’ for encouraging other Middle Eastern countries ‘to implement reform[s]’.<sup>28</sup> Bush’s appreciation of the JDP had the potential to bring Turkey and the US closer.

Erdoğan tried to boost this potential. Even before the elections, he attended the Davos meeting in January-February 2002 to show his personal support for Bush’s global war on terrorism.<sup>29</sup> After the elections, as the JDP leader (not the Prime Minister), Erdoğan visited Bush on 11 December 2002. Bush stated:

We’re impressed by the leadership - your leadership and your party’s strong victory. We thank you very much for your commitment to democracy and freedom. We join you, side by side, in your desire to

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<sup>26</sup> Ömer Taşpınar, “Turkey: the New Model”, *Brookings Report*, 25 April 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Dona J. Stewart, “The Greater Middle East and Reform in the Bush Administration’s Ideological Imagination”, *Geographical Review*, 95:3, 2005, 400-404.

<sup>28</sup> Dona J. Stewart, “The Greater Middle East and Reform in the Bush Administration’s Ideological Imagination”, *Geographical Review*, 95:3, 2005, 400-404.

<sup>29</sup> *Yeni Şafak*, 05 February 2002; George W. Bush, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation”, For Immediate Release, Office of the Press Secretary, 11 September 2001, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>, (Accessed 30.12.2018); Barry Buzan, “Will the ‘Global War on Terrorism’ Be the New Cold War?”, *International Affairs*, 82:6 2006, 1103, 1109.

become a member of the European Union. We appreciate your friendship in NATO. You're a strategic ally and friend of the United States, and we look forward to working with you to keep the peace.<sup>30</sup>

Erdoğan named this meeting a 'turning point' in Turkey's history. He added that Turkey's 'bid [for the] European Union is the most important modernization project ... since the establishment of the republic'. It 'will serve as a great jump-start for democracy'. Bush replied that his administration was going to work 'hard on Turkey's behalf' for the EU membership.<sup>31</sup>

Erdoğan's conversation with Bush resembled Özal's with Reagan. Both were welcomed in Washington. Washington became 'eager to shore up ties with' Erdoğan, 'and, in the event of war with Iraq, secure his support for [the] Pentagon's plan for ousting Saddam Hussein'. The Pentagon still sought the northern front 'that could complement the main attack from Kuwait and therefore enable' the US 'and its allies to quickly overwhelm Iraq's overstretched forces'.<sup>32</sup>

Erdoğan's policies began to adapt Turkey's priorities to the Bush administration's. The JDP leadership began to prepare their constituencies. While Erdoğan was in Washington, JDP's top-level MPs like the Minister of Justice Cemil Çiçek and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Yaşar Yakış stated publicly that the JDP government could work effectively with the US.<sup>33</sup> US officials saw these statements as 'the green light' they had been 'waiting for'. Wolfowitz 'confidently' predicted that Turkey would help the US in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> Under Erdoğan's *de facto* leadership Turkey began to move closer to the US.

The Bush administration did not miss this opportunity. In January the US asked to use 'Turkish airbases near Istanbul and [the] Black Sea, permission to deploy 80,000 to 90,000 American troops on Turkish territory *en route* to Iraq, permission to station 250 planes at Turkish airports, and the use of 14 airports

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<sup>30</sup> "Remarks by the President in Meeting with the Chairman of Turkey's AK Party", Office of the Press Secretary, 10 December 2002, George W. Bush Presidential Library.

<sup>31</sup> "Remarks by the President in Meeting with the Chairman of Turkey's AK Party", Office of the Press Secretary, 10 December 2002, George W. Bush Presidential Library.

<sup>32</sup> *New York Times*, 9 December 2002.

<sup>33</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, 3 December 2002.

<sup>34</sup> *Gazette*, 4 December 2002; *Washington Post*, 5 December 2002.

and five sea ports'.<sup>35</sup> On 20 January the Chairman of US Joint Chiefs of General Staff, General Richard Myers, came to Turkey in order to 'finalize an agreement on America's military plans'.<sup>36</sup>

The JDP was not ready to adapt Turkey's priorities to that extent. JDP leaders tried to reduce this American pressure by pressing for diplomatic solutions over Iraq. Prime Minister Gül organized a "Meeting of the Neighbours of Iraq" on 23 January. He aimed to convince Iraq, his constituencies and Turkey's neighbours that the JDP was making every possible diplomatic move to prevent the American occupation of an Islamic country. During the meeting, Turkey informed the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan of American plans.<sup>37</sup> On 1 February, the Gül government sent a delegation, including Turkish Ambassador to Washington Deniz Bölükbaşı, to the US to express Turkey's increasing concerns, particularly about the PKK.<sup>38</sup>

Yet, at the end of the meetings, the Turkish delegation accepted the American use of Turkish soil for opening a front in northern Iraq. The US accepted that 31,000 Turkish troops would go into Iraq with heavy armour, including tanks, and link up with 1,500 Turkish special forces personnel already in northern Iraq. The US was planning to send 30,000 men into Iraq so there would be a numerical balance.<sup>39</sup> To alleviate Turkish concerns about the PKK militia, the US promised that PKK 'bases in northern Iraq would be eliminated'. 'Turkey would also receive \$6 billion in grants or \$[26] billion in long term loans.' Until these funds were available, Turkey 'was provided a bridge loan of \$8.5 billion'.<sup>40</sup>

The TGNA showed only limited support for the JDP delegation's agreement. On 6 February 2003, the TGNA merely permitted US modernization of Turkish airports

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<sup>35</sup> Karen Kaya, "The Turkish-American Crisis: An Analysis of 1 March 2003", *Military Review*, July-August 2011, 70.

<sup>36</sup> *New York Times*, 21 January 2003.

<sup>37</sup> *New York Times*, 24 January 2003; *International Herald Tribune*, 24 January 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Deniz Bölükbaşı, *1 Mart Vakası, Irak Tezkeresi ve Sonrası*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2008, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Deniz Bölükbaşı, *1 Mart Vakası, Irak Tezkeresi ve Sonrası*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2008, 46.

<sup>40</sup> Karen Kaya, "The Turkish-American Crisis: An Analysis of 1 March 2003", *Military Review*, July-August 2011, 70; "Turkey Country Briefing – Growing Commitments", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 February 2003; *Anatolia*, 26 February 2003.

and sea ports. It declared that upgrading Turkish ports should not be taken as a final decision to support a US assault.<sup>41</sup>

On 8 February 2003, Turkey and the US signed a Memorandum of Understanding to carry out necessary infrastructural investment for US troop deployment.<sup>42</sup> The US misinterpreted the Memorandum. The Bush administration thought that the Memorandum also covered the opening of Turkish soil for American deployment. Therefore, the Pentagon sent the 4<sup>th</sup> Division to Mersin and İskenderun offshore waters, with 7,200 vehicles and 80% of its equipment.<sup>43</sup>

Like the Özal government during the Gulf War, the JDP government tried to use the situation to bolster the economy. On 13-14 February, Yakaş and State Minister Ali Babacan met Secretary of State Colin Powell and Bush and asked for \$92 billion. The Turkish delegation stressed Turkey's losses during the Gulf War as a reason for such an extravagant amount.<sup>44</sup> Bush rejected it and said that \$6 billion in grants would be enough for Turkey's losses.<sup>45</sup> In Ankara, Erdoğan was attempting to put pressure on Bush to increase this aid amount by delaying TGNA's approval of the resolution.<sup>46</sup> The persisting inconsistencies between Turkey's economy-oriented and US security-oriented priorities were making it difficult to change the Turkish arm's tendency.

On 21 February, Turkish and US officials agreed on a package of \$15 billion in 'immediate economic and military aid' in exchange for allowing the authorization of 15,000 American troops to use Turkish territory. At the meeting in February, the amount was \$26 billion but 'much of that money was to be given over a

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<sup>41</sup> TGNAR, Term 22, Vol. 4, 6 February 2003.

<sup>42</sup> *Washington Post*, 10 February 2003; "Memorandum of Understanding No:22 – February 2003", Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministerial Statements, February 2003, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_22---8-subat-2003.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_22---8-subat-2003.tr.mfa), (Accessed 1.2.2019).

<sup>43</sup> *New York Times*, 20 February 2003.

<sup>44</sup> TPMB, February 2003; *Hürriyet*, 11 January 2007; *Washington Post*, 15,19 February 2003.

<sup>45</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 February 2003; *Financial Times*, 20 February 2003.

<sup>46</sup> According to Article 92 of the Turkish Constitution, the TGNA needed to approve a resolution authorizing the overseas deployment of Turkish troops and foreign troops' deployment on Turkish soil; *New York Times*, 20 February 2003.

number of years'.<sup>47</sup> The amount did not satisfy Erdoğan. Turkey was going to 'join a US-led "coalition of the willing", albeit unwillingly'.<sup>48</sup>

There were several other reasons for the JDP's reluctance. Firstly, a big majority of the Turkish public, the parliament and bureaucracy were against the war. Turkish public opinion saw the US operation as 'unlawful, immoral and unprincipled', and was particularly discontented with a large number of US troops on Turkish soil. The Turkish Armed Forces and Foreign Affairs were particularly annoyed. They wanted neither to worsen relations with the US, nor to be part of an attempt to remove Iraq's regime by force. Secondly, the JDP was inexperienced in foreign policy. Erdoğan was trying to push Turkey closer to the US but did not know how to suppress domestic anti-American opposition. Thirdly, even if the JDP's statements were pro-Western, its constituency and establishment were Islamic. Therefore it was difficult for its members and voters to accept a military occupation of a Muslim country.<sup>49</sup> Fourthly, Turkish public opinion's memories were still fresh about the refugee crisis and losses in oil and tourism revenues during the Gulf War. The new war might raise oil prices, decrease foreign investment and significantly affect tourism sector. Moreover, closing the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline would drastically reduce energy transfer revenue.<sup>50</sup>

The US operation's international legitimacy was also weak due to the lack of a Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force. Moreover, France and Germany declared their opposition to the US operation. Supporting the US would

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<sup>47</sup> *New York Times*, 22 February 2003.

<sup>48</sup> The "coalition of the willing" referred to the countries which militarily or politically supported the Iraqi invasion in 2003. Over 40 countries were on the original list of the coalition. For details see "Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting", Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, George W. Bush, Budget and Presidential Materials, 20 March 2003; Philip Robins, "Confusion at Home, Confusion Abroad: Turkey Between Copenhagen and Iraq", *International Affairs*, 79, 2003, 560.

<sup>49</sup> For similar views see Ramazan Gözen, "Causes and Consequences of Turkey's Out-of-War Position in the Iraq War of 2003", *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 36, 2005, 78; Karen Kaya, "The Turkish-American Crisis: An Analysis of 1 March 2003", *Military Review*, July-August 2011, 69; Barış Kesgin & Juliet Kaarbo, "When and How Parliaments Influence Foreign Policy: The Case of Turkey's Iraq Decision", *International Studies Perspectives*, 11, 2010, 26; According to *Hürriyet's* poll in early November 2002, 58.3% of respondents were against the Iraq War, and according to *Associated Press's* poll on 5 December 2002 83% of Turks were against authorizing US forces to use Turkish bases.

<sup>50</sup> For details see "Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues", *US Congressional Research Service*, 2 May 2003, CRS-10.

oppose the two major members of the EU, which could obstruct Erdoğan's efforts for Turkey's membership.<sup>51</sup>

The JDP, parliamentary opposition, Turkish General Staff and MFA were all also concerned about Iraq's territorial integrity. Firstly, the disintegration of Iraq could create a power vacuum, which the PKK could use to increase its insurgency into Turkey. Secondly, Turkey and the Northern Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party's relations were strained due to the latter's draft constitution for a 'federal Iraq in which the Kurds would have greater autonomy and control of oil-rich Kirkuk'.<sup>52</sup> Thirdly, Turkey aimed to protect Iraqi Turkoman rights in northern Iraq, in order to counterbalance the Kurds.<sup>53</sup>

These reservations raised American concerns about the TGNA's decision on the resolution. Before Gül sent the resolution to the TGNA, US diplomats invited some Turkish MPs to the Embassy to persuade them.<sup>54</sup> Gül also waited for the Turkish National Security Council (TNC) meeting on 28 February, but since the TNC did not want to take any responsibility, no clear decision came out of the meeting about the US operation.<sup>55</sup>

Gül ran out of time. On 1 March the TGNA discussed the resolution. 264 MPs voted for the motion, 250 against, and 19 abstained. According to the TGNA's internal regulation, any type of approval requires a majority, which was 267 affirmative votes in 2003. The resolution was rejected by three votes.<sup>56</sup>

The result was not only because of the disagreement between the JDP and the opposition. Even the top three members of the JDP, Gül, Erdoğan, and Bülent Arınç were not on the same page.<sup>57</sup> Of these three, Erdoğan was the most enthusiastic to support the US but he was not the prime minister, and did not

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<sup>51</sup> *Milliyet*, 24 January 2003.

<sup>52</sup> "Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues", *US Congressional Research Service*, 2 May 2003, CRS-6-7; *Hürriyet*, 23 August 2002; *Anatolia News Agency*, 6 September 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Colbert C. Held, *Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics*, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000, 104; *Sabah*, 23 July 2002.

<sup>54</sup> *Akşam*, 27 March 2006.

<sup>55</sup> *New York Times*, 8 May 2003.

<sup>56</sup> For the details of the discussions see TGNAR, Term 22, Vol. 6, 1 March 2003.

<sup>57</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 3 March 2003; *Financial Times*, 3 March 2003.

have enough influence on the parliament and the public opinion.<sup>58</sup> The decision induced one of the biggest wobbles on the arm.

Although the TGNA's decision was a shock to the Bush administration, in January 2003 there were discussions in the US Senate about the possibility of such a result. Congress Member Joseph R. Biden said:

over 85[%] of the Turkish people [were] unalterably opposed to Turkey cooperation with [the US] in being able to successfully prosecute that [Gulf] war. So what happens if we go to war and we launch from Turkey with the support of the new Islamic leadership without having changed the minds of the people in Turkey and/or the world, to suggest that this [was] not merely us, but that it [was] sanctioned by the world that we do this? Well, the roughly 35 to 40[%] of this Islamic Party that is radical Islamic will play to its populist instincts and cause incredible trouble for the existing administration in Turkey.<sup>59</sup>

The Senate's preparedness for the TGNA's decision did not reduce the size of the wobble. The arm swiftly and drastically trended down, which dented relations from several points. First the US media reported the Bush administration's resentment, and anger and its alienation from Turkey.<sup>60</sup> This annoyed JDP leaders, who thought that the US did not understand the restrictions they faced in and outside parliament.<sup>61</sup> Second, Turkey's rejection delayed decision making in the UN Security Council, both by encouraging Council members to lobby against the US decision and by making it more difficult for the US to win over undecided members. 'This reinforced perceptions in America that Turkey had left its strategic partner in the lurch'.<sup>62</sup> Third, the Pentagon had to revise its plans since there would be no northern front. Moreover, previous agreements and operational arrangements between Turkish and American officials became invalid, which automatically reduced Turkish military influence in northern Iraq.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *New York Times*, 18 February 2003.

<sup>59</sup> *US Congressional Record*, Senate, Vol. 149, No. 15, 28 January 2003, S1508.

<sup>60</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, 5 March 2003; *Christian Science Monitor*, 5, 14 March 2003; *Wall Street Journal*, 6, 26 March 2003; *Seattle Post*, 12 March 2003; *Los Angeles Times*, 12 March 2003; *Chicago Sun*, 23 March 2003; *Houston Chronicle*, 24 March 2003; *Washington Post*, 28 March 2003.

<sup>61</sup> *Financial Times*, 4 March 2003; *New York Times*, 5, 23 March 2003; *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, 21, 22, 25, 27 March 2003; *Independent*, 22 March 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Mark Parris, "Starting over: US-Turkish Relations in the Post-Iraq War Era", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, April 2003, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>, (Accessed 30.12.2018).

<sup>63</sup> *NTV*, 5 March 2003.



Fourth, the economic agreements became invalid as well. Turkey would no longer receive \$15 billion. Fifth, America's image in Turkey, not positive before the decision, worsened.<sup>64</sup>

Within this turbulence, Turkey faced another unusual change. During his Prime Ministerial term, Gül carried out necessary constitutional changes to nullify Erdoğan's political ban. Due to local electoral authorities' reports on irregularities in Siirt, the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey had declared the general election in Siirt null and void and ordered a by-election in March.<sup>65</sup> This was held on 9 March 2003 and the JDP won 84% of the votes.<sup>66</sup> Two days later Gül resigned, and Erdoğan formed a new government on 14 March.

Unsurprisingly, Erdoğan's first move was to begin discussions in the TGNA to open Turkish air space to the US Air Force, and to deploy Turkish troops to Iraq. On 20 March the resolution came to the TGNA once again. This time it passed easily, with 332 affirmatives, 202 negatives and 1 abstention.<sup>67</sup> Erdoğan's political clout in parliament was an obvious reason for this change.

Erdoğan's acknowledgement of the imbalance in bilateral relations did not reduce wobbles. After the first voting in the TGNA, the Pentagon and CENTCOM, which commanded the US operations in Iraq, began a harsher policy against Turkey. US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld refused to talk to Turkish officials on Turkish deployment in northern Iraq. Wolfowitz accused the Turkish General Staff of not influencing parliament, and said that Turkey should accept that the TGNA's decision was a mistake.<sup>68</sup> After the second vote, on 23 March, Bush stated, 'we have got more troops up north, and we're making it very clear to the Turks that we expect [the Turks] not to come into Northern Iraq'.<sup>69</sup> Because of

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<sup>64</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 13 March 2003; *Financial Times*, 28 March 2003; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 2003; *International Herald Tribune*, 26 April 2003; *New York Times*, 11 May 2003.

<sup>65</sup> *Hürriyet*, 8 December 2002.

<sup>66</sup> For details see Arda Can Kumbaracıbaşı, *Turkish Politics and the Rise of the AKP: Dilemmas of Institutionalization and Leadership Strategy*, London: Routledge, 2009, 1–2.

<sup>67</sup> TGNA, Term 22, Vol. 8, 20 March 2003.

<sup>68</sup> *Akşam*, 14 May 2003.

<sup>69</sup> "President Discusses Military Operation", Office of the Press Secretary, 23 March 2003, George W. Bush Presidential Library.

Turkey's lack of support, the US began to work more closely with the Kurds,<sup>70</sup> gradually excluding Turkey from operations in northern Iraq.

Losing the US' strategic focus and financial aid is always the worst nightmare of any pro-American Turkish administration. Therefore both the Erdoğan government and the Turkish General Staff strove to mend relations. After the second vote in the TGNA, Yakış said that the Turkish government miscalculated the importance of Turkey for US war plans, especially regarding setting up a northern front. He admitted that the TGNA made a 'very serious strategic mistake'.<sup>71</sup> Erdoğan was profoundly eager to mend the relations. On 31 March 2003 he published an article titled "My Country is your Faithful Ally and Friend" in the *Wall Street Journal*, which underlined Turkish-American long-standing friendship and strategic partnership. The article said that 'Turkey did not ignore' the US and the only reason for Turkey's desire to have a military presence in northern Iraq was to 'take precautionary measures for possible intrusions by PKK/KADEK terrorists'. Turkey's presence 'is envisaged with full cooperation and coordination with the US, as well as the Kurdish groups in the region'.<sup>72</sup> On 26 March, Özkök stated that 'Turkey was actively preparing to send more troops into northern Iraq, but that it would do so only if the threat against Turkey escalates - and in coordination with' the US.<sup>73</sup> On 1 May, in his message to Myers, Özkök said that NATO should take part in Iraq and Turkey could provide a serious contribution within NATO.<sup>74</sup> On 23 June, the JDP passed a secret enactment which opened Turkish bases, including İncirlik, to coalition forces under the auspices of the UN Security Council.<sup>75</sup>

On 7 October, the TGNA passed a resolution to send the Turkish troops to join the coalition in Iraq. CENTCOM did not refuse this but wanted to use Turkish forces in the most dangerous region, Fallujah. Turkish General Staff backpedalled, and did not send Turkish troops.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 3, 2001-2012*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013, 276.

<sup>71</sup> *Sabah*, 21 March 2003.

<sup>72</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 31 March 2003.

<sup>73</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 March 2003.

<sup>74</sup> *Taraf*, 30 March 2003.

<sup>75</sup> Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Vol. 3, 2001-2012*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013, 275.

<sup>76</sup> Derk Kinnane Roelofsma, "Analysis: U.S.- Turkish Troubled Relations," *United Press International*, 27 August 2003.

The rejection of the first resolution pushed Turkey from the US war plans, especially in northern Iraq. Turkey's restrained military influence in the region led Kurdish tribal leaders to claim control of Kirkuk. At the same time, the PKK's insurgence activities increased along the Iraq border.<sup>77</sup> The expansion of Kurdish influence in northern Iraq was Turkey's biggest concern, and it was happening.

Another big wobble was induced by the arrest of Turkish special forces, along with at least 11 civilians, on 4 July 2003, in Sulaymaniyah, northern Iraq. That is, after the successful invasion. The Turkish soldiers were arrested for the alleged reason that they were trying to assassinate the ethnic Kurdish governor of Kirkuk. They were captured, led away with hoods over their heads, and interrogated by American soldiers.<sup>78</sup> The incident ignited anti-American headlines in Turkey.<sup>79</sup> Turkish leaders 'vehemently denounced the detention of their troops'. Although the soldiers were released in Baghdad after a couple of days, Turkish officials stated that 'the American raid, and the heavy-handed way ... had caused lasting damage to the American-Turkish relationship'.<sup>80</sup> Özkök stated that the detentions 'created the biggest crisis of confidence' ever between the two armed forces.<sup>81</sup> A senior member of the Turkish General Staff, Hurşit Tolon, stated that 'it is a disgusting incident'. He added that 'a NATO member arresting soldiers from a fellow NATO country, staging a raid without even providing an explanation or informing us in advance is unprecedented'.<sup>82</sup> Erdoğan also called the arrests an 'ugly incident'. Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül said that 'none of it is believable', 'Turkey is working for Iraq's stability, not to destabilize Iraq'.<sup>83</sup> In retaliation, Turkey prevented humanitarian and logistical aid to northern Iraq and withdrew 'two liaison officers from U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Fla'.<sup>84</sup> Whether or not the assassination claim was true, the detention of

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<sup>77</sup> *Hürriyet*, 11 April 2003; "The Kurds in Post-Saddam Iraq", *US Congressional Research Service*, 1 October 2010, 2-3; Aliza Marcus, "Turkey's PKK: Rise, Fall, Rise Again?", *World Policy Journal*, 24:1, 2007, 75.

<sup>78</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 6-7 July 2003; *Age*, 7 July 2003; *Guardian*, 8 July 2003, Nasuh Uslu, *Çatlak İttifak: 1947'den Günümüze Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, Ankara: Nobel, 2016, 454.

<sup>79</sup> *Milliyet*, 4 July 2003; *Yeni Çağ*, 4 July 2003; *Yeni Akit*, 4 July 2003; *Turkishnews*, 4 July 2003; *Sabah*, 8 July 2003.

<sup>80</sup> *New York Times*, 7 July 2003.

<sup>81</sup> *Washington Post*, 8 July 2003.

<sup>82</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 7 July 2003.

<sup>83</sup> *Age*, 7 July 2003.

<sup>84</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 7 July 2003; *Washington Post*, 8 July 2003.

Turkish soldiers 'developed hard feelings'<sup>85</sup> which bolstered the tendency of the arm.

Regardless of Erdoğan's developing popularity in Washington and attempts to mend relations, Turkey and the US lost a lot of common ground during the preparatory stages of the Iraq War. Both Erdoğan's conservative constituencies and the Kemalists did not believe that the US operation in Iraq would bring any profit. Most Turkish public opinion also found the operation's international legitimacy questionable. Erdoğan hoped that the US operation in Iraq would increase his popularity, augmenting his international and domestic legitimacy. Although he won a significant level of support from Turkish voters, he had a lot to deal with in order to consolidate his power both nationally and internationally. Strong relations with the US would obviously have helped him. One major power bloc opposing Erdoğan was the Kemalists in the Turkish bureaucracy, which were also the US' most formidable allies. Erdoğan needed to develop deeper and stronger relations with the US than the Kemalists. Moreover, he was in serious need of US diplomatic support for Turkey's EU membership, which was the central plank of the JDP's election victory. Supporting the US in Iraq could have been a catalyst for all these aims.

Erdoğan resembled Özal regarding using the US Iraqi operation and its outcomes. Although Özal's attitude was more profit-oriented, both tried to show their profound personal support to the US, but both could not overcome the anti-Americanism in parliament and the public. Nor could they find a common language to share Turkey's concerns either. Therefore both failed to adapt Turkey's priorities to the US and to change the arm's tendency. Erdoğan's efforts to mend relations after the 1 March all failed, especially with the arrest of Turkish special forces. Turkey continued to trend away from the US.

In the coming decades, Erdoğan would develop a more comprehensive control over parliament and the public in order to suppress opposing views. Yet in time

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<sup>85</sup> For a similar view see "Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues", *US Congressional Research Service*, 2 May 2003.

he also developed his own anti-Americanism, clearly seen in Turkish-US relations during the Syria crisis from 2011.

## **b. Australia: all the way one more time**

Prime Minister John Howard's actions throughout the preparatory phase of the Iraq War bolstered the Australian arm's tendency. Under Howard's leadership 'Australia lined up with' the US 'in a way which went far beyond its formal obligations to its treaty partner'.<sup>1</sup> Howard accepted the imbalance in relations before the Iraq War and managed to adapt Australia's defence priorities to the US. During the preparations, his claims were almost identical to President George W. Bush's. Both stressed Saddam's alleged support of international terrorism, which was augmented by his alleged possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Howard also cited the 2002 Bali bombings to magnify the graveness of the terrorism threat to Australia. Although in Howard's speeches eliminating international terrorism was presented as the main motive, reinforcing the US alliance was the most important, possibly the only, reason for Australia's contribution to the Iraq War.

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The American operation against Iraq, particularly for removing the Saddam regime, was handled by the US Congress in 1998 under the Iraqi Liberation Act. President Bill Clinton signed it into law.<sup>2</sup> Right after September 11, the Bush administration began to develop strategies to attack Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, initiated discussions on *Vigilant Guardian*, code name for the operation against Iraq. In a couple of days, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, brought a detailed plan for the invasion of Iraq.<sup>4</sup> The plan relied on two justifications: Saddam regime's possessed WMDs, and it supported international terrorism.<sup>5</sup> Bush labelled Iraq

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<sup>1</sup> Alison Broinowski, *Howard's War*, Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003, 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Statement on Signing the Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998", 31 October 1998, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol.34, No.45, 9 November 1998, 2210-2211.

<sup>3</sup> Paul H. Barratt, "The case for an Iraq War inquiry in Australia", *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 26:3, 2014, 326-328.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Gordon & Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, London: Atlantic Books, 2006, 16-20.

<sup>5</sup> George W Bush, "President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat: Remarks by the President on Iraq", 7 October 2002, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html> (Accessed 19.2.2019).

part of an “axis of evil”, which became a symbol signal for the coming US operation.<sup>6</sup> In September 2002 the US National Security Strategy underscored this by stating US plans for pre-emptive strikes against rogue states or terrorist organizations. Iraq was one of them.<sup>7</sup>

Bush needed international legitimacy for his pre-emptive strikes on Iraq. He spoke of the terrorism threat that Iraqi WMDs were posing. Saddam had worked on a WMD programme,<sup>8</sup> and had used chemical and biological agents against military and civilian targets on numerous occasions.<sup>9</sup> On 3 April 1991, under the Resolution 687, the UN imposed a WMD inspection and disarmament program on Iraq, called the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM).<sup>10</sup> For years Saddam denied that he had WMDs, yet the UNSCOM inspectors claimed in 1995 that they ‘uncovered key elements of the proscribed programmes, including that of undeclared biological warfare agents production and weaponization’.<sup>11</sup> In the next three years, the UN inspectors faced Iraqi deception and non-compliance, which led the UN to withdraw its personnel in 1998.<sup>12</sup> In December 1999, Iraq admitted a new round of inspections under a new UN body, the Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission. This time Iraq cooperated with the UN much more effectively, but the UN Commission did not find WMD depots in Iraq.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> George W Bush, “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat: Remarks by the President on Iraq”, 7 October 2002, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021007-8.html> (Accessed 19.2.2019).

<sup>7</sup> “National Security Strategy of the United States of America”, The White House, 17 September 2002, George W. Bush Presidential Library.

<sup>8</sup> Ron Huisken, “Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction: A case of intelligence following policy”, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 18:1, 2006, 25-39; “Iraq’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs”, October 2002, [https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq\\_wmd/Iraq\\_Oct\\_2002.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd/Iraq_Oct_2002.pdf), (Accessed 15.2.2019); Jeffrey Richelson (ed.), “Iraq and Weapons of Mass Destruction”, *National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book*, No. 80, 11 February 2004; “Iraq: Weapons of Mass Destruction”, Transcript of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer’s speech, Parliament House, Canberra, 17 September 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Cornish (ed.), *The Conflict in Iraq, 2003*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 176-177; Peter M. Galbraith, *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006, 28-31.

<sup>10</sup> “Resolution 687”, Iraq-Kuwait (3 April), <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/687>, (Accessed 15.2.2019).

<sup>11</sup> “Security Council terminates weapons inspectors’ mandate in Iraq by vote of 14-0-1; remaining funds diverted for development; strict control of archives sought”, UN Security Council Press Release, SC/9064, 29 June 2007.

<sup>12</sup> “Letter dated 15 December 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council”, S/1998/1172, 15 December 1998, <https://www.un.org/Depts/unscom/s98-1172.htm>, (Accessed 19.2.2019).

<sup>13</sup> “Iraq: Weapons Inspections: 1991-1998”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 3 February 2005.

On 11 September 2001, Howard was in Washington meeting President Bush.<sup>14</sup> His purpose was to negotiate a free trade agreement, but the September 11 attacks gave him an opportunity to bolster US-Australia relations. 'During the return flight to Australia, Howard contemplated the invocation of'<sup>15</sup> Article 4 of the ANZUS treaty, which stated 'each Party recognises that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes'.<sup>16</sup> The attack did not occur in the Pacific, and ANZUS was not designed to provide security assurance to the US, but Howard stated that the attacks underlined 'the gravity of the situation' and required Australia's 'steadfast commitment to work with' the US in 'combatting international terrorism'.<sup>17</sup> It was the first time Australia invoked ANZUS. With this 'symbolic' gesture,<sup>18</sup> Howard wanted to emphasize the strength of the bond between two countries.

Regardless of how much he acknowledged the imbalance in Australia-US relations, Howard was a true believer in US priorities and 'for both material and cultural reasons' his government 'had chosen to prioritise the US as the centrepiece of its bilateral strategy'.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the Howard government explicitly accepted the US claim that Saddam's WMDs were posing an international terrorist threat, and so a grave danger to Australia. For Howard, Australia should share the costs and risks of eradicating international terrorism, so it needed to be 'in close consultation with the [US Administration] in the

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<sup>14</sup> "Exchange with Reporters Following Discussions with Prime Minister Howard", *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 37, No. 37, 17 September 2001, 1294-1295.

<sup>15</sup> Maryanne Kelton, *More than an Ally? Contemporary Australia-US Relations*, London: Routledge, 2008, 127; Donald A. DeBats, Tim McDonald & Margaret-Ann Williams, "Mr Howard Goes to Washington: September 11, the Australian-American Relationship and Attributes of Leadership", *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 42:2, 2007, 239.

<sup>16</sup> NAA, A1838, TS686/1 PART 1, Tripartite Security Pact - ANZUS [Australia New Zealand United States Treaty].

<sup>17</sup> John Howard, "ANZUS Treaty: Application of ANZUS Treaty to terrorist attacks on the United States", *Media Release*, 14 September 2001, <http://www.pm.gov.au>, (Accessed 16.2.2019).

<sup>18</sup> Robert Garran, *True Believer, John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004, 73.

<sup>19</sup> Maryanne Kelton, *More than an Ally? Contemporary Australia-US Relations*, London: Routledge, 2008, 127.



period ahead to consider what actions [it] might take in support of the US response to these attacks.’<sup>20</sup>

Howard reiterated this claim in parliament and asked for support for the coming US actions. On 17 September he asked the House to ‘fully [endorse] the commitment of the Australian Government to support within Australia’s capabilities United States-led action against those responsible for these tragic attacks’. Howard emphasized the tragedy of 11 September rather than international terrorism. He said ‘[a]s a proud, patriotic Australian, I was literally moved to tears by what occurred in the United States. I was filled with admiration for the spirit of the American people’. Howard’s close connection to US priorities was clear. He added that in Washington he ‘had the opportunity to express immediately to the US administration the willingness of the Australian government to work with the Americans in responding’.<sup>21</sup>

The Opposition agreed with Howard. On the same day at his speech, the leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley emphasized the tragedy, but with a heavier focus on international terrorism. Beazley said that Australia should ‘support’ the US ‘in this fight because the fight against international terrorism is our fight’.<sup>22</sup> He added:

Australia will need to commit itself to an international intelligence, police and military effort against those who planned the atrocities in New York and Washington and against those who supported and harboured the perpetrators. We must do this in this country in a bipartisan fashion and see this effort through, no matter what the result of the election later this year.<sup>23</sup>

Howard was quick to support US counter-terror efforts in Afghanistan as a response to September 11.<sup>24</sup> As well, he used Australia’s fight against

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<sup>20</sup> John Howard, “Application of ANZUS Treaty to terrorist attacks on the United States”, 14 September 2001, <http://www.pm.gov.au>, (Accessed 16.2.2019).

<sup>21</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 17 September 2001, 30739-30741.

<sup>22</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 17 September 2001, 30743.

<sup>23</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 17 September 2001, 30745.

<sup>24</sup> The US-Australia alliance in Afghanistan operations is beyond this chapter’s scope. For details see Amin Saikal, *The Afghanistan Conflict and Australia’s Role*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2011; Amin Saikal, “Afghanistan, terrorism, and American and Australian responses”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 56:1, 2002; Greg Sheridan, *The Partnership: The Inside Story of the US-Australian Alliance under Bush and Howard*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006, 40-56; Australian Department of Defence, “Australian Special Forces leave their

international terrorism in his election campaign. There, he presented 'his new nationalism' which emphasized 'unity' and 'reinforcing the idea that Australia's security relies on its traditional allies'. He also re-defined 'patriotism', which partly relied on supporting the US alliance. These emphases helped him to win the elections on 10 November 2001.<sup>25</sup> Howard's election victory showed that international uncertainty increased the Australian public's insecurity and reluctance to change the government.<sup>26</sup> Involvement in the Afghanistan conflict was not 'a direct strategic priority' for Australia but a 'by-product of larger interests', one of which was obviously 'maintaining strategic alliance with' the US.<sup>27</sup>

Howard had two main considerations regarding the American alliance. Firstly, 'earning credit from the Americans for a relatively small but effective military commitment to a cause which' he 'believed to be just'; and secondly, 'reassuring the Americans that they did not have to undertake every difficult task alone, thus encouraging them to continue to shoulder the burden of security'.<sup>28</sup> He wanted to show how valuable Australia was as an ally, with its great determination to support US priorities.

As the Iraq crisis escalated, the Howard government echoed Bush's main claims, though with a little twist. Government statements focused more on the global consequences of Iraq's WMDs than on solely removing Saddam, which was Bush's main concern. In June 2002, the Minister for Defence, Robert Hill, said

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mark on Afghanistan", *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia*, 24, 2002; Kim R. Nossal, "The unavoidable shadow of past wars: obsequies for casualties of the Afghanistan mission in Australia and Canada", *Australasian Canadian Studies*, 26, 2008; Graeme Dobell, "The alliance echoes and portents of Australia's longest war", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 68:4, 2014; Mats Berdal, "A Mission too Far? NATO and Afghanistan, 2001-2014" in *War, Strategy and History*, Daniel Marston & Tamara Leahy (eds.), Canberra: ANU Press, 2016, 155-178; Ian Langford, "Australian Special Forces in Afghanistan", *Australian Army Journal*, VII:1, Autumn 2010; Richard Tanter, "Documenting Our Forgotten War: Australia in Afghanistan", *Arena Magazine*, 90, August – September 2007 54-55.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Garran, *True Believer, John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance*, Crows Nest: Allen&Unwin, 2004, 8; James Curran, *The power of speech: Australian prime ministers defining the national image*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004.

<sup>26</sup> *Australian*, 12 November 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Amin Saikal, *The Afghanistan Conflict and Australia's Role*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2011, 202.

<sup>28</sup> Greg Sheridan, *The Partnership: The Inside Story of the US-Australian Alliance under Bush and Howard*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006, 65; Robert Garran, *True Believer, John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004, 5.

that Iraq was far from Australia but the proliferation of Saddam's WMDs via international terrorist groups still posed a threat to Australia's national security.<sup>29</sup>

The Bush administration appreciated Howard's support. On 13 June 2002, Bush stated his personal friendship with Howard and thanked him for 'his steadfast support' in 'fighting terror'. He also said that 'before' taking any 'military action' on Iraq, he 'would closely consult' Howard.<sup>30</sup>

Bush's words were soon put into practice. In June 2002, US officials commenced sharing CENTCOM plans with Australia.<sup>31</sup>

Although international terrorism, which was Bush and Howard's common focus, was a relatively new concept, Australia faced it in Bali on 12 October 2002. Over 200 people died, 88 of whom were Australians, and a further 209 injured.<sup>32</sup> The attack strengthened Howard's hand to justify the legitimacy of his decisions to support US counter-terror efforts. The next day he said that '[t]errorism is a worldwide menace and that's been brought home to us'.<sup>33</sup>

After the attack, the Howard government's claims grew much closer to Bush's. It began to stress the Bush-induced "link" between international terrorism and Saddam Hussein's regime, and the military measures to end it. In November, Hill claimed that Australia should not rule out sending 'land ground troops' to support pre-emptive strikes to disarm Saddam.<sup>34</sup> In December, Howard confirmed Hill's words, especially by underlining the importance of pre-emptive strikes for combatting international terrorism.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Hill, "Beyond the White Paper: Strategic Directions for Defence", Address to the Australian Defence College, Canberra, 18 June 2002.

<sup>30</sup> "Remarks Following Discussions with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters", George W. Bush, Presidential Document, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 13 June 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Palazzo, *The Australian Army and the War in Iraq 2002-2010*, Directorate of Army Research & Analysis, March 2011, 51, [http://www.defence.gov.au/FOI/Docs/Disclosures/049\\_1617\\_Documents.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/FOI/Docs/Disclosures/049_1617_Documents.pdf), (Accessed 16.2.2019).

<sup>32</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13-21 October 2002.

<sup>33</sup> John Howard, "Sydney: transcript of press conference: Bali tragedy; terrorism; medical assistance", 13 October 2002, <http://www.pm.gov.au>, (Accessed 16.2.2019).

<sup>34</sup> Senator Robert Hill, "Transcript of a Doorstop Interview", Parliament House, Canberra, 21 November 2002.

<sup>35</sup> *ABC*, 2 December 2002.

The government was tailoring Australia's priorities, but not yet to the extent of sending troops. In January 2003, the possibility of American military action grew stronger. Although Howard was rhetorically echoing Bush, he was still avoiding making any commitment to support the US militarily. In January 'only' 6% of 'Australians' were 'prepared to send Australian troops to war against Iraq without' UN 'backing'. According to an AC Nielsen AgePoll 'one in three believed [that] war against Iraq was not acceptable under any circumstances'.<sup>36</sup>

In January, Howard still wanted to increase diplomatic pressure on Saddam to make him comply with UN resolutions, not to remove him by force.<sup>37</sup> To back up diplomatic pressure, on 23 January 2003 the Howard government deployed HMAS *Kanimbla* and additional military elements, including the Perth-based Special Air Service regiment, to the Gulf.<sup>38</sup> Hill stated that 'the forward deployment of KANIMBLA and other ADF elements' would hopefully 'help to keep up international pressure on' Saddam 'to cooperate with' UN 'weapons inspectors and disarm'.<sup>39</sup> On 28 January, Howard kept repeating that his government's policy was 'to have this matter handled through the [UN] process to the maximum degree possible' and his government has 'not made a final decision about military involvement'. He added:

No final decision has been taken in any event by the United States. We have pre-positioned Australian forces because we believe that contributes, albeit in a much smaller way obviously than the pre-positioning of other forces, to reinforcing the diplomatic efforts. We also think it's fairer on our forces if we ultimately do decide to commit them, to commit them when they've had an opportunity of being pre-positioned. But our position hasn't changed. <sup>40</sup>

The lack of parliamentary approval for sending HMAS *Kanimbla* and other military elements triggered an Opposition reaction against Howard's enthusiasm for following Bush. On 27 January Labor leader Simon Crean said, 'Howard, in his

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<sup>36</sup> *Age*, 18 January 2003; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 January 2003.

<sup>37</sup> "Transcript of the Prime Minister John Howard MP, Press Conference", Parliament House, Canberra," 10 January 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Defence Department, "Defence Minister joins family to farewell special forces", Defence Media Release, MPSA 5/03, 23 January 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Hill, "HMAS Kanimbla farewelled from Sydney", *Media Release*, 23 January 2003.

<sup>40</sup> John Howard, "Press Conference", Parliament House, Canberra, 28 January 2003, <http://www.pm.gov.au>, (Accessed 16.2.2019).

undue haste to deploy the troops, has gatecrashed the war'. For Crean 'it's not patriotism, it's bad judgement because it's in Australia's interests that the United Nations determine the next step, not Australia simply following George Bush'. He added that 'when the telephone call comes from President Bush, John Howard will say "yes" to the deployment of these troops in battlefield conditions in Iraq'.<sup>41</sup> In Canberra on that day, 'activists were mocking Howard's staunch support of Washington's hardline stance against Iraq'.<sup>42</sup>

None of this deterred Howard. He 'favoured giving Iraq a little more time but not too much', and he was 'certainly not talking about months'.<sup>43</sup>

In February, Howard began to increase pressure to get parliamentary support for joining the 'coalition of the willing'.<sup>44</sup> In parliament he said that his government was predominantly after a peaceful diplomatic solution and would 'not make a final decision to commit to military conflict unless and until it is satisfied that all achievable options for a peaceful resolution have been explored'. He added that the events in 'Bali and those of 11 September' showed that 'we are living in a world where unexpected and devastating terrorist attacks on free and open societies can occur in ways that we never before imagined possible'. Howard also tried to convince the Opposition that Australia was not merely following the US. He said that '[o]ur close relationship with and our ready access to the US administration have meant that our views are heard and respected'. Yet he also emphasized the importance of the US alliance. He said that '[n]o nation is more important to our long-term security' than the US, and concluded:

Clearly the pre-positioning of Australian forces and the contingency planning with the United States military — to which ministers and I have referred frequently over recent months — have put Australia in a position where it can effectively, and in circumstances providing the best assurances of safety for our forces, contribute to a military operation against Iraq, should a final decision be taken for this to occur.

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<sup>41</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 28 January 2003.

<sup>42</sup> *De Moines Register*, 28 January 2003.

<sup>43</sup> *Age*, 29 January 2003.

<sup>44</sup> "Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting", George W. Bush, Budget and Presidential Materials, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 20 March 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 February 2003, 10642-10652.

The Opposition reacted strongly. Crean accused Howard of committing Australian troops 'solely on the say-so of George W. Bush' to a 'command structure that you cannot withdraw from if George Bush decides to go it alone'. He added:

What we have just heard from the Prime Minister is a justification for war, not a plan for peace. We have heard the Prime Minister unctuously in this House talk of his abhorrence of war and say that he wants peace, yet he has already committed our troops to war without a mandate from the Australian people, without a mandate from the parliament and without a mandate from the United Nations.<sup>46</sup>

Crean clarified Labor's position:

I do not support and Labor does not support that decision—and I have made that clear. We do not support the deployment of Australian troops in advance of any United Nations authority. I took my case directly to the troops themselves on the HMAS Kanimbla.<sup>47</sup>

The Shadow Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, noted the potential humanitarian costs of war in Iraq, about which the government did not outline any plans. He also stated that 'based on the evidence to date Iraq does not represent a basis for the formal invocation of the ANZUS alliance'.<sup>48</sup> Thus the Opposition did not completely rule out the possibility of Australia's military engagement in Iraq. What it asked for was to exhaust all UN channels first. The Opposition's limited support made it easier for Howard to push on.

Another important example of Howard's effort to follow US priorities was his statement supporting US Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech at the UN Security Council on 5 February. Powell put pressure on the Security Council by emphasizing Iraq's breach of its disarmament obligations under the UN Security Council Resolution 1441.<sup>49</sup> He said:

Leaving Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction for a few more months or years is not an option, not in a post-September 11th world. ... Today, Iraq still poses a threat and Iraq still remains in material breach. Indeed, by its failure to seize on its one last opportunity to come clean and disarm. ... We have an obligation to this

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<sup>46</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 February 2003, 10652.

<sup>47</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 February 2003, 10660.

<sup>48</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 4 February 2003, 10672-10673.

<sup>49</sup> Resolution 1441 (2002), Adopted by the Security Council at its 4644th meeting, 8 November 2002, <http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf>, (Accessed 18.2.2019).

body to see that our resolutions are complied with. We wrote 1441 to give Iraq one last chance. ... We must not shrink from whatever is ahead of us. We must not fail in our duty and our responsibility to the citizens of the countries that are represented by this body.<sup>50</sup>

The next day Howard reasserted Powell's claims in the parliament. He underlined that as 'a very compelling and credible Secretary of State' Powell put forward a 'very compelling case'. He added that Powell's presentation 'revealed ... a deliberate, systematic campaign of deceit, distortion and deception on the part of Iraq'. He echoed Powell by stating that 'self-evidently what the Secretary of State said ... is a damning indictment against Iraq and the strongest possible evidence that what the United States has been saying, what we have been saying, ... [and] many others have been saying is absolutely correct. Nobody can doubt Colin Powell's credibility; nobody can doubt the credibility of this presentation'. Then he asked the parliament, '[i]n the face of evidence like this, how can members in this parliament pretend that there is not a very compelling case against Iraq?'<sup>51</sup>

Opposition did not directly challenge Powell's claims. It criticized Howard for not securing full parliamentary support before the 'refit of the HMAS Kanimbla in preparation for its forward deployment to a possible war in Iraq', and holding 'discussions with the US about the role of Australia in the event of a US led military strike against Iraq' without the 'backing of' the UN.<sup>52</sup> The opposition was not against the idea of supporting the US but against the way it was done.

Howard was also in need of public support. For this, he used his international terrorism rhetoric to bolster his claims. In February he sent every household a package with a personal letter and a colour booklet titled "Let's look out for Australia: Protecting our way of life from a possible terrorist threat". Media reports underlined the fact that the booklet was not 'much help on how the average Australian can do their bit to combat terrorism'.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the amount

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<sup>50</sup> Colin L. Powell, "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council", 5 February 2003, US Department of State Archives, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/17300.htm>, (Accessed 18.2.2019).

<sup>51</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 6 February 2003, 11128-11129.

<sup>52</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 6 February 2003, 11129-11132.

<sup>53</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 5 February 2003; *Age*, 8 February 2003.

of money spent (\$15 million) on the kit caused resentment. One third of the kits were returned.<sup>54</sup>

The lack of public support did not change Howard's views. On 9 February, before his overseas visit to the US, the UN headquarters and the UK, he stated that if the decision to send troops to Iraq 'involves a short or even long-term popularity cost - so be it. I'm not going to tailor my view on this'.<sup>55</sup>

On 10 February, Howard's meeting with Bush illustrated the imbalance in Australia-US relations. After the meeting, in response to a question on 'whether you count Australia as part of the coalition of the willing?', Bush said that 'Yes, I do. You know, what that means is up to John to decide. But I certainly count him as somebody who understands that the world changed on' 11 September.

Howard was clearer. He said:

Australia's position concerning Iraq is very clear. We believe a world in which weapons of mass destruction are in the hands of rogue states, with the potential threat of them falling into the hands of terrorists, is not a world that Australia, if we can possibly avoid it, wants to be part of. And that is the fundamental reason why Australia has taken the position she has. ... The one real chance of a peaceful solution is the whole world saying the same thing to Iraq. And that's why we believe the closest possible cooperation and unity of objective and unity of advocacy is very important.<sup>56</sup>

In Canberra, DFAT supported Howard by underlining the importance of the US alliance for Australia's security. In February 2003, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer released "Advancing the National Interest: Foreign Policy White Paper".<sup>57</sup> The paper echoed the Bush administration's claims. It also stated that 'the very close bilateral relationship is an important asset in the Government's advocacy of Australian interests' and that the ANZUS alliance was 'fundamental' to Australia's national security.

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<sup>54</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 7, 12 February 2003.

<sup>55</sup> *Sunday Telegram*, 9 February 2003.

<sup>56</sup> "Remarks Following Discussions with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters", George W. Bush, Presidential Document, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 10 February 2003.

<sup>57</sup> "Advancing the National Interest: Foreign Policy White Paper", Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003.



None of this much diminished public reaction in Australia against the Iraq War. 'Tens of thousands of peace protesters packed Melbourne ... streets' on 14 February 'in a show of strength against a US-led war in Iraq'. According to media reports, it was 'the biggest protest in Australia since the anti- Vietnam War marches'. There were also anti-war demonstrations in Perth, Hobart, Canberra, Brisbane, Darwin, Adelaide, and Sydney.<sup>58</sup>

The Opposition also intensified its opposition to Howard's enthusiasm for following the US. Crean stated that the UN inspectors' report on Iraq's WMDs 'provided no basis for a military attack' and that Howard 'must rule out Australian support for the US-led cooperation'.<sup>59</sup>

Neither the parliamentary nor the public reaction changed Howard's mind. He said that 'Australia's security alliance with the United States was strategically more important than that with the United Nations in shaping security and foreign policy'.<sup>60</sup> Of the protests he commented, '[I] don't know that you can measure public opinion just by the number of people who turn up at demonstrations. I also suspect that there are a lot of Australians who do [not turn up], and they are perhaps not as noisy about it. And there are a lot of people in between'. He added, '[w]e should remember that in the end there is only one country that can help, with us, to guarantee our security and that's the [US]'.<sup>61</sup>

For Howard, if Australia did not help the US in Iraq to remove the Saddam regime, it would be a target of international terrorism in near future. Only the US alliance could protect Australia. On 13 March at the National Press Club, Howard asserted:

Of course our alliance with the United States is also a factor, unapologetically so. ... Alliances are two-way processes and our alliance with the United States is no exception and Australians should always remember that no nation is more important to our long-term security than that of the United States. ... Australia is a western nation. Nothing

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<sup>58</sup> *Courier - Mail*, 15 February 2003; *Weekend Australian*, 15 February 2003; *Sunday Mail*, 16 February 2003.

<sup>59</sup> *Sunday Herald - Sun*, 16 February 2003.

<sup>60</sup> *Orlando Sentinel*, 16 February 2003.

<sup>61</sup> *Australian*, 17 February 2003; *Courier - Mail*, 17 February 2003.

can, will or should alter that fact. As such, in this new world, we are a terrorist target.<sup>62</sup>

Regardless of Opposition or public protests, Howard's policies protected the tendency and stability of the Australian arm.

The leader of the Australian Democrats, Andrew Bartlett, criticized Howard's speech and his zeal for following Bush: 'PM's war speech [was] about [the] defence of US militarism not Australian security ... [He has] simpering praise for American militarism'. He added that Howard continued 'to attempt to link unrelated issues such as Bali and September 11 to a war on Iraq, with no evidence any such link exists'. He concluded:

The PM said Australian foreign policy should reflect Australian values but Australia's defence and foreign policy is now effectively determined by the United States. US President George Bush will decide when Australia goes to war.<sup>63</sup>

Political and public unrest continued in Australia.<sup>64</sup> On 14 March, Crean also criticized Howard's 13 March speech: '[t]his isn't just a sad day for the country, it's a day of disgrace in which our Prime Minister has been involved'. The Greens' leader Bob Brown said that it showed how 'very out of touch' Howard was 'with community sentiment'.<sup>65</sup> Neither this nor public opinion provided 'significant enough opposition to prevent' Howard's coming decision for Australia's participation.<sup>66</sup>

On 18 March, Bush delivered an ultimatum to the Iraqi leadership: Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours or face military conflict.

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<sup>62</sup> John Howard, "Transcript of address to the National Press Club", The Great Hall, Parliament House, 13 March 2003, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au>, (Accessed 18.2.2019).

<sup>63</sup> Andrew Bartlett, leader of the Australian Democrats, and spokesperson for defence, "PM's war speech about defence of US militarism not Australian security", Media Alert 03/ 144, 13 March 2003, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au>, (Accessed 18.2.2019).

<sup>64</sup> *Age*, 14-18 March 2003; *Australian*, 14-18 March 2003; *Courier – Mail*, 14-16 March 2003; *Daily Telegraph*, 14-18 March 2003.

<sup>65</sup> *Australian*, 14 March 2003.

<sup>66</sup> Brendon O'Connor & Srdjan Vucetic, "Another Mars-Venus divide? Why Australia said 'yes' and Canada said 'non' to involvement in the 2003 Iraq War", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 64:5, 2010, 533. For details of opinion polling around the war see Murray Goot, "Introduction: World Opinion Surveys and the War in Iraq", *International Journal of Public Opinion*, 16, 2004, 239-68; Murray Goot, "Questions of Deception: Contested Understandings of the Polls on WMD, Political Leaders and Governments in Australia, Britain and the United States", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 61, 2007, 41-64.

That same day, Bush called Howard with a formal request regarding 'Australia's support and participation in a coalition of nations who are prepared to enforce the Security Council's resolutions by all necessary means. This request was subsequently considered and agreed to by [the] cabinet'. Howard informed parliament of his cabinet's decision. Although he said several times that the UN Security Council was 'the most important framework' to bring peace and security in Iraq,<sup>67</sup> cabinet had already decided to commit Australian forces to the US operation, despite the UN, and before any comprehensive parliamentary consensus. Howard stated:

There is no more serious decision for any government than to commit its forces to military conflict abroad. Under our system, this decision lies with the executive of government: the cabinet. Nevertheless, it is appropriate that the parliament, at the first opportunity, have the chance to debate this motion. It is essential that the reason for that decision be made plain to the representatives of the people and that they have a full opportunity to debate them and to have their views recorded.<sup>68</sup>

Although Opposition members called Howard's decision of committing Australia into the Iraq War 'reckless and unnecessary',<sup>69</sup> they could do nothing.

On 20 March Howard announced Australia's commitment to the Iraq War. He summarized what he had been saying since the Bali bombings, that the 'Government has decided to commit Australian forces to action to disarm Iraq because we believe it is right, it is lawful and it's in Australia's national interest.' He added:

International terrorism knows no borders. We have learnt that to our cost. Australia and Australians anywhere in the world are as much targets as any other Western country and its people. ... Another reason [for the decision] is our close security alliance with the United States. The Americans have helped us in the past and the US is very important to our long-term security.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 March 2003, 12506; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 2003.

<sup>68</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 March 2003, 12506.

<sup>69</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 March 2003, 12512; for the discussions in parliament on Howard's decision see Hansard, House of Representatives, 18 March 2003, 13085-13171.

<sup>70</sup> *Herald Sun*, 21 March 2003.

Crean pointed out that Australia had entered the war 'because the US asked us to',<sup>71</sup> and the Labor Party 'accused the Government of acting illegally by sending troops to war without any additional resolution by the UN authorising the use of force'.<sup>72</sup>

On 24 March parliament discussed the petition of 7000 Australians. The petitioners requested that 'the House shall refuse to commit Australia to join the [US] in this impending war, and further, that Australia uses what influence it has over the [US] to convince it to use non-violent strategies such as seeking a Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction over the entire Middle East'. The petitioners also claimed that the US operation in Iraq was a 'unilateral military action' and the Australian troops were deployed 'in support of this action'. They requested the House to: 'use its influence to dissuade the US Government from the threat of precipitate military action in Iraq; refrain from all support of such threats; continue with diplomatic efforts to reach a resolution of the problems of the region; and work through the United Nations, as the duly constituted international body, for building a secure basis for world peace'.<sup>73</sup> None of this changed the Howard government's decision. Four days later, Australian fighter jets attacked Iraqi military elements in Baghdad.<sup>74</sup>

For Howard's commitment there was no comprehensive parliamentary debate, 'no budget was revealed, no time-frame was set, and no clear objective was announced'. Forty-three of Australia's 'leading jurists' could not find 'authority for the unilateral invasion of Iraq in resolution 1441'. Although the resolution had 'strong language' about 'Iraq's obligations to cooperate and disarm, and about the serious consequences that would follow if it did not, the resolution provided only that, in the event of a material breach by Iraq, the Security Council should convene to consider the situation'.<sup>75</sup> Regarding Australia's commitment, the UN resolution was not the motivation or the justification, rather it was Howard's passion to follow Bush's priorities.

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<sup>71</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 21 March 2003.

<sup>72</sup> *Australian*, 21 March 2003.

<sup>73</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 24 March 2003, 13273, 13307.

<sup>74</sup> *Sunday Age*, 30 March 2003.

<sup>75</sup> Alison Broinowski, *Howard's War*, Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003, 23, 43; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 2003.

Howard tacitly confirmed this by emphasizing the priorities the two nations shared. On 14 May he said:

My talks last week with President Bush underlined the deepening and strengthening relationship between our two nations. The relationship between Australia and the United States has never been stronger. This relationship is not forced or contrived. We are allies because we are friends — very close friends. And that friendship is based above everything else on a commonality of views. We share a view of the world that values freedom and individual liberty.<sup>76</sup>

During Howard's visit in May, Bush also confirmed the closeness in bilateral relations. He stated that 'Australia and America began writing a new chapter in the history of our alliance. Our relationship has never been stronger'.<sup>77</sup> Even a year later, Bush was lauding the strength of the bond with similar words. He said that 'Australia and the United States have never been closer. Our closeness is based on a shared belief in the power of freedom and democracy to change lives'.<sup>78</sup>

Howard expected not only to reinforce the closeness in bilateral relations. Greg Sheridan listed Howard's expectations, some of which seemed unrealistic. 'Howard wanted: an enhanced intelligence relationship; enhanced defence cooperation; greater Australian influence in Washington's decision making; a free trade agreement; increased US involvement in the region, especially in Indonesia; the greater prestige in Asia that comes from being close to and able to influence Washington; and the enhanced prestige for his government with Australian voters that comes from the same source.'<sup>79</sup> As the leader of a middle power, Howard tried to punch above his weight.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 14 May 2003, 14424.

<sup>77</sup> "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia in Crawford, Texas", *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol.39, No.19, 12 May 2003, 533-537.

<sup>78</sup> "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia", *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 40, No. 23, 7 June 2004, 1004-1008.

<sup>79</sup> Greg Sheridan, *The Partnership: The Inside Story of the US-Australian Alliance under Bush and Howard*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2006, 13.

<sup>80</sup> For a detailed analysis of the flaws in Howard's expectations see Robert Garran, *True Believer, John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance*, Crows Nest: Allen&Unwin, 2004, 195-200; June R. Verrier, "Australia's self-image as a regional and international security actor: some implications of the Iraq war", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 57:3, 2003, 461, 465-466.

During the preparatory phase of the Iraq War, the Australian arm of the cross did not change its tendency and did not wobble. From the earliest planning stages of the US operation, Howard almost singlehandedly maintained this. Although there were other significant actors, such as Downer, Australia's Ambassador to the US Michael Thawley, and its Ambassador to the United Kingdom Michael L'Estrange, it was 'essentially' Howard's war.<sup>81</sup> As the leader of a smaller ally, Howard with his 'assiduous rhetorical support for the US following' September 11 'had limited the options under which' Australia 'could manoeuvre'.<sup>82</sup>

Howard sent Australian troops to fight alongside the US to converge Australian and American priorities. From the beginning this was his main motivation. A year after Howard's decision, Downer claimed that Australia supported the US in Iraq to prevent the alliance being weakened 'very substantially'.<sup>83</sup>

### *The wobbly cross:*

At the beginning of the 2000s Turkey was both economically and politically in a weaker position than Australia. The Ecevit government was politically unpopular and economically inefficient. Although Ecevit acknowledged the imbalance in Turkish-American relations due to his grave need for US aid, he never had the discretion to give any solid promise to support the US in Iraq. Erdoğan was much more popular both in Turkey and Washington and eager to support the US. He also acknowledged the imbalance in bilateral relations, considering his urgency for US support to consolidate his power and to further Turkey's EU membership. Yet he was not very experienced in foreign policy and had not yet obtained dominance over the anti-American opinion in parliament and among the public opinion. He tried to adapt Turkey's priorities to the US but the rejection of the proposal on 1 March induced one of the biggest wobbles on the arm, which was aggravated with the arrest of the Turkish special forces in Sulaymaniyah.

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<sup>81</sup> Robert Garran, *True Believer, John Howard, George Bush and the American Alliance*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004, 9; Alison Broinowski, *Howard's War*, Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2003, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Maryanne Kelton, *More than an Ally? Contemporary Australia-US Relations*, London: Routledge, 2008, 143.

<sup>83</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 March 2004.

Legally, institutionally, and politically, Howard was in a more comfortable position. Firstly, he did not need a parliamentary resolution to send troops. Secondly, he did not have to deal with an opposition as hostile as the Kemalists to Erdoğan. Thirdly, he did not need to consolidate his popularity in Washington or in Canberra. Fourthly, as in the Gulf War, the Iraq War posed a more imminent threat to Turkey than Australia, and the losses Turkey might have faced in the Gulf War were much more serious than Australia's. These two additional reasons made the Turkish parliament and public unwilling to support Erdoğan's enthusiasm. Fifthly, Australia's strategic habit supporting the US aided Howard. Howard successfully highlighted the severity of the threat posed by international terrorism and the requirements of the UN Security Council decisions. He constantly disguised his personal passion to follow Bush's policies. At the end Howard followed the Australian arm's trend. Erdoğan was more straightforward. He mainly focused on the importance of US alliance for Turkey and his party, rather than emphasizing international terrorism and the UN resolutions. He tried, unsuccessfully, to change the trend of the Turkish arm. The wobbly cross was validated again.

## PART 5

### Relations during the Syrian crisis (2011-2018)

#### a. Turkey: an inexorable trend

The Turkish-American interactions over the Syrian crisis demonstrate the inevitability of intractable wobbles, even with strong high-level political understanding and good-will. Throughout the crisis several other issues<sup>1</sup> induced wobbles on the Turkish arm which sustained its trend. This chapter focuses only on Turkish-American relations in Syria between 2011 and 2018. Both parties, especially in high-level exchanges, did their best to ease wobbles and change the Turkish arm's tendency. On many issues the Erdoğan government acknowledged the imbalance in bilateral relations but Turkey's priorities in practice were so disoriented that wobbles were not eased. To eliminate this, Turkey tried to change US priorities rather than adapting its priorities to the US. Yet, as a middle power, Turkey was not capable of doing this. The US did not change its priorities but tried to ease Turkey's frustrations. None of these efforts eased the wobbles.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of these issues are: In 2012, the US Administration rejected Turkey's attempts to buy *US Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)*, see Jim Zanotti, "Turkey: Background and United States Relations", *Current Politics and Economics of the Middle East*, 3:3, 2012, 420,434; *BBC Monitoring European*, 9 August 2012. In 2012, President Barack Obama's pro-Israel attitude towards Israel's attack on Gaza on 14 November, see "No: 261, 14 Kasım 2012, İsrail'in Bugün Başlatmış Olduğu Gazze Operasyonu Hakkında", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, (Accessed 20.2.2019); *Asia News Monitor*, 21 November 2012. In 2013, a crisis in relations due to Turkey's attempt to buy Chinese FD-2000 air defense missile systems, see Michael Rubin, "Turkey Endangers NATO," *Commentary*, 3 October 2013, 83; *Reuters*, 7 October 2013; *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 December 2013. In 2014, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) threat in Iraq after the occupation of Mosul, see *BBC Monitoring European*, 13-14 June, 1 July, 29 September 2014; Petre Vlad Irimie & Gabriela Amalia Grigore, "Reconfiguration of Power Relations – the ISIL Issue", *International Scientific Conference "Strategies XXI"*, Vol. 1, 2014, 156-165. In 2015, US officials' statements of the Armenian issue of 1915, see *Wall Street Journal*, 16 April 2015. In 2016, the coup plot by Fethullah Gülen and the allegations made against a "possible" US contribution, see *International New York Times*, 2-4 August 2016; *Asia News Monitor*, 15 Sep 2016. In 2017, US officials' refusal of Fethullah Gülen's extradition, see *Asia News Monitor*, 24 October 2017; *Sputnik*, 23 November 2017. In 2017 the US administration's decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, see "the Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem", The White House, 6 December 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>, (Accessed 20.2.2019); *Asia News Monitor*, 8, 14, 19 December 2017. In 2018, the Pastor Andrew Brunson crisis followed by a US economic embargo to Turkey, see "United States: USCIRF Strongly Condemns New Indictment Against Pastor Andrew Brunson, Including Possible Life Sentence", MENA Report, 15 March 2018; "Treasury Sanctions Turkish Officials with Leading Roles in Unjust Detention of U.S. Pastor Andrew Brunson", US Department of the Treasury, Press Releases, 1 August 2018. In 2018, the crisis in relations due to Turkey's attempts to buy an S-400 anti-aircraft system from Russia, see *Asia News Monitor*, 23 April, 4 June, 3 August 2018; *Washington Post*, 27 November 2018.



At the end of 2018, the Turkish arm of the wobbly cross had seemingly inevitable downward trend, pushing Turkey away from the US.

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The Syrian crisis<sup>2</sup> between Bashar al-Assad's government forces and various opposition groups began in 2011. Although the crisis started as a domestic affair, very quickly became part of the post-Cold War great and middle power struggle in the Middle East.

As in previous cases, Turkish and American priorities regarding Syria were different: the US' were more regional, Turkey's were more national. The US prioritized containing Iran's influence in the region; reducing the dominance of political Islam; eradicating the extremists with a particular focus on the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - ISIL); and preventing the use and proliferation of chemical weapons. Turkey's priorities were to restrain Kurdish military and political influence in the region; maintain security alongside its Syrian border; control the inflow of refugees; and remove the Assad regime.<sup>3</sup> The difference in priorities and the tactics to achieve them created incurable wobbles on the arm, and sustained its tendency.

At the beginning of the crisis, Turkey tried to mediate between Assad and the Syrian opposition. On 6 April, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, met Assad to convince him to carry out reforms the opposition was demanding.<sup>4</sup> A few days later the Assad regime killed some 80 people, which brought Turkey and the US together for the first serious consultations on Syria. Both Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Barack Obama stated that they were keen on the Assad regime's survival. Obama urged Erdoğan 'to do

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<sup>2</sup> An explanation of the Syrian crisis is beyond the scope of this chapter. For details see Linda Matar & Ali Kadri (eds.), *Syria: From National Independence to Proxy War*, Cham: Springer, 2018; Nikolaos Van Dam, *Destroying a Nation, the Civil War in Syria*, London: I.B.Tauris, 2017; Reese Erlich, *Inside Syria, the Backstory of their Civil War and What the World Can Expect*, New York: Prometheus, 2014; Tim Anderson, *The Dirty War on Syria: Washington, Regime Change and Resistance*, Global Research e-book, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Morton I. Abramowitz & Eric S. Edelman, "U.S.-Turkish Cooperation toward a Post-Assad Syria, A Paper of BPC's Turkey Task Force", *Bipartisan Policy Center*, April 2013, 9.

<sup>4</sup> "Dış Politika Kronolojisi", April 2011, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/nisan\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/nisan_.tr.mfa), (Accessed 20.02.2019); "DIARY - Political and General News Events from April 6", 6 April 2011, <https://uk.reuters.com/>, (Accessed 20.02.2019).

his best in order to convince his neighbour' Assad 'to reform his regime instead of toppling it'.<sup>5</sup> Turkey and the US agreed on Assad's survival but their priorities were quite different.

The Obama administration viewed the Assad regime as a 'bastion of stability in the Middle East, and thus a key factor in continued US security'.<sup>6</sup> For Turkey, the Syrian crisis began to generate two serious problems: the resurgence of the PKK and the refugee influx.<sup>7</sup> The crisis was creating a power vacuum in which the PKK could increase its influence on Syria's Kurdish-majority areas of Kobane, Jazira, and Afrin.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, from its very beginning, the crisis ignited the refugee problem both for Turkey and other neighbouring countries.<sup>9</sup> The survival of Assad was crucial to subdue these issues.

Erdoğan tried to convince his neighbour. On 27 April, the Director of Turkish National Intelligence Organisation, Hakan Fidan, conveyed Erdoğan's message for reforms to the Syrian Prime Minister, Adel Safar.<sup>10</sup> On 15 June, Erdoğan reiterated his message to Assad's special envoy Hasan Turkmani. By that time, 'about 8,500 Syrian nationals crossed into Turkey to shelter in tent-camps in southern Turkey'.<sup>11</sup> On 9 July, Davutoğlu re-visited Damascus to convey President Abdullah Gül's letter to Assad, calling for reforms.<sup>12</sup>

The US was appreciative. In the Senate, Senator Joe Lieberman stated that 'no one has worked harder than Prime Minister Erdogan to encourage Bashar al-Asad to reform'.<sup>13</sup> On 16 July during her meeting with Davutoğlu, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation on the Syria crisis.<sup>14</sup> This was repeated in almost every Turkish-American high-level talk throughout the crisis.

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<sup>5</sup> *Turkish Newswire*, 27 April 2011; *Hürriyet*, 27 April 2011; *Middle East Reporter*, 28 April 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Robert G Patman, "The Obama Doctrine and the Syrian Crisis, 2011-2015", *Politika Annual Journal*, 2015, 45.

<sup>7</sup> *Turkish Newswire*, 4 May 2011.

<sup>8</sup> *BBC Türkçe*, 20 June 2011.

<sup>9</sup> *Voice of America News*, 3 May 2011.

<sup>10</sup> *Hürriyet*, 28 April 2011.

<sup>11</sup> *China Daily*, 15 June 2011.

<sup>12</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 10 August 2011; *Middle East Reporter*, 10 August 2011.

<sup>13</sup> "Syria", US Congressional Record, Vol.157, Part 5, 2011, 6762.

<sup>14</sup> *Habertürk*, 16 July 2011.

Erdoğan's diplomacy did not work. Assad ignored his calls. Turkey understood this especially after Assad's attack on Hama on 31 July. On 15 August, Davutoğlu stated that '[t]his is our final word to the Syrian authorities: Our first expectation is that these operations stop immediately and unconditionally. If the operations do not end, there would be nothing more to discuss about steps that would be taken'.<sup>15</sup> On 14 September Erdoğan re-affirmed that '[n]ow the Syrian people do not believe Al Assad. I don't either. A leader that murders his people loses his legitimacy'.<sup>16</sup>

The US agreed. On 18 August, Obama stated that '[t]he future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Assad is standing in their way'.<sup>17</sup> Obama's next move was to issue the Executive Order 13582, which blocked 'the property of the Syrian government' in the US from being 'transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in'; banned 'US persons from new investments in or exporting services to Syria'; and banned 'US imports of, and other transactions or dealings in, Syrian-origin petroleum or petroleum products'.<sup>18</sup>

On 20 September Erdoğan met Obama in New York. Their remarks once more highlighted the importance Turkish-American cooperation.<sup>19</sup> After the meeting, Turkey began to follow US measures. On 30 November, the Erdoğan government started sanctions against Syria via suspending the Turkish-Syrian High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, introducing travel bans on several officials from the Assad government, and freezing these officials' assets in Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of 2011, although their priorities in Syria did not overlap at all, both the US and Turkey were sharing the idea of removing Assad. Both leaders

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<sup>15</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, 17 August 2011.

<sup>16</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 14 September 2011.

<sup>17</sup> "A Statement by President Obama", 18 August 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>, (Accessed 20.2.2019).

<sup>18</sup> "Executive Order 13582-Blocking Property of the Government of Syria and Prohibiting Certain Transactions with Respect to Syria", Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, 18 August 2011.

<sup>19</sup> "Remarks Prior to a Meeting with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange with Reporters in New York City", *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2011, Book II*, 20 September 2011, 1091-1092.

<sup>20</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 2 December 2011.

repeatedly underlined the strategic importance of Turkish-American cooperation but they had not yet started to talk about policy or tactics.

In 2012, with differences in tactics, wobbles became visible again. The differences were on two issues: the Syrian opposition, and military intervention. In 2012, Turkey was supporting the Syrian National Council (SNC) and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) as the main opposition front, and wanted the US to intervene militarily to replace Assad with the SNC. Erdoğan acknowledged the imbalance in bilateral relations by believing that only an American intervention in Syria could resolve the crisis and end Assad's regime. But Obama was against a unilateral military intervention, which he believed would make things even worse. He wanted UN-sponsored solution, but was deadlocked by Russian and Chinese vetoes on 4 February 2012.<sup>21</sup>

Divergent priorities became even clearer during a Davutoğlu-Clinton meeting in Washington on 4-14 February. At the meeting, Davutoğlu constantly referred to 'the deadlock' in the UN and the increased need for intervention. Clinton simply talked of 'diplomatic pressure' via 'sanctions', and of bringing the 'international community together in condemnation of the actions of the Assad regime'. She said little about the Syrian opposition or military intervention.<sup>22</sup>

Wobbles became more visible when Turkey began to push the US to recognize the SNC as the main representative body of the Syrian opposition.<sup>23</sup> The US rejected this, for two reasons. Firstly, the SNC was not comprehensive enough to embrace all segments of an anti-Assad coalition, so a larger opposition front was needed. Secondly, the Obama administration believed that the SNC had al-Nusra and Al-Qaeda members, which both the US and Turkey accepted as terrorists.<sup>24</sup>

To convince the US on the representative status of the SNC, Turkey established a platform called the Group of Friends of the Syrian People, which had its first

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<sup>21</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 4 February 2012.

<sup>22</sup> "Secretary Clinton comments on Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu after their meeting", *US Fed News Service*, Washington DC, 14 February 2014.

<sup>23</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 1 April 2012.

<sup>24</sup> "Senators Unveil Congressional Resolution on Syria", *Targeted News Service*, Washington DC, 28 March 2012; *International Herald Tribune*, 7 May 2012; *USA Today*, 12 June 2012; *Wall Street Journal*, 28 June 2012.

meeting in Tunisia on 24 March. On 31 March and 1 April, a larger meeting of the platform was held in Istanbul, attended by 83 Countries.<sup>25</sup> The meetings did not convince the US to replace of the Assad regime with the SNC.<sup>26</sup>

On 16 May 2013, Erdoğan visited Obama, this time to convince him of the necessity for humanitarian intervention. Erdoğan cited Assad's use of chemical weapons on civilians. Obama asked for 'more specific information' and refused a unilateral American intervention. He promised only to 'strengthen the opposition politically' and increase its ground fighting ability 'to protect [it] from the Assad regime'.<sup>27</sup> The differences in priorities grew.

On 30 June 2012 the Geneva Agreement was signed. The parties to the agreement, including the permanent members of the Security Council, proposed 'a plan for establishing a transitional unity government' to lead 'the country into writing of [sic.] a new constitution and elections'. At the meeting, Davutoğlu once again emphasized the necessity of more 'decisive steps', not simply a plan to avert the Assad's regime's threat to the region.<sup>28</sup> Clinton repeated the US concern that 'further militarizing the conflict' would 'simply add fuel to the fire'.<sup>29</sup>

Turkey's attempts to use multilateral platforms to change the US view did not work. Therefore Erdoğan tried the bilateral route again. He called Obama on 30 July to highlight the worsening of situation in Syria. Obama's rhetoric and priorities did not change. He was concerned 'about the Syrian regime's ruthless attacks against its own people' and 'acknowledged' Turkey's generosity 'in hosting' a great number of Syrian refugees. Yet he said nothing about US military intervention in Syria.<sup>30</sup> Erdoğan acknowledged that Turkey did not have

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<sup>25</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 1-2 April 2012; *BBC Monitoring European*, 3 April 2012.

<sup>26</sup> "Intervention to the Friends of the Syrian People", State Department Documents/FIND, 2 April 2012; *Anadolu Agency*, 1 April 2012; "Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's Intervention to the Friends of the Syrian People as Prepared for Delivery", *Political Transcript Wire*, 2 April 2012.

<sup>27</sup> "Joint Press Conference by President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey", Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, 16 May 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/>, (Accessed 22.02.2019).

<sup>28</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 1 July 2012.

<sup>29</sup> "State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland holds State Department regular news briefing", *Political Transcript Wire*, 2 July 2012.

<sup>30</sup> "Readout of the President's Call with Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 30 July 2012.

the ability to remove Assad<sup>31</sup>, but his acknowledgment did not change US priorities.

The US Presidential candidate Mitt Romney exposed the divergent priorities of the Erdoğan and Obama administrations. On 10 October 2012 Romney said, 'Obama has failed to lead in Syria ... [the] rebels needed more powerful weapons to battle' Assad's troops. The US 'should try harder to ... encourage Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar to give [Syrian rebels] more arms'.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of the year, the priorities further diverged with Obama's efforts to build up a more comprehensive opposition in Syria. On 15 November the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NCSROF) was established in Doha, Qatar. The NCSROF sidelined the Turkey-supported SNC by giving the Kurds and Nusayris a larger representation.<sup>33</sup>

Since it could not organize a rival opposition platform, Turkey was more acknowledged the imbalance at a meeting with the head of NCSROF. At the meeting Davutoğlu 'wholeheartedly' welcomed the NCSROF structure while repeating the importance of the SNC for Turkey.<sup>34</sup>

Another imbalance in bilateral relations was economic. By 2012, the number of refugees in Turkey reached 100,000.<sup>35</sup> Turkey needed American economic and humanitarian support to cover its hosting costs. The Erdoğan government asked for help. On 11 August, during Clinton's visit to Turkey, Davutoğlu stated that 'refugees fleeing to Turkey had surged to 3,000-a-day' and that Turkey needed help. Clinton promised only '\$5.5 million of new aid, for the refugees', which was not enough. <sup>36</sup> Once more, accepting the imbalance did not change US priorities but prevented a new wobble.

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<sup>31</sup> "Next Steps in Syria", *Congressional Documents and Publications*, Washington, 1 August 2012.

<sup>32</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 10 October 2012; *Washington Post*, 11 October 2012.

<sup>33</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 20 November 2012.

<sup>34</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 23 November 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, "Plan ve Bütçe Komisyonu 2013 Yılı Merkezi Yönetim Bütçe Kanunu Tasarısı Raporu", Yasama Dönemi:24, Yasama Yılı:3, Cilt: 1, 3 December 2012.

<sup>36</sup> "Public Schedule for August 11, 2012", State Department Documents/FIND, 11 August 2012; *Voice of America News*, 11 August 2012.

In 2013, the imbalance in Turkish-American relations continued. This time, Turkey needed the Obama administration's help to carry out two new policies: a humanitarian corridor and a no-fly-zone in Syria, and arming the Syrian opposition. Although Defence Secretary Leon Panetta and Clinton agreed to support Turkey, Obama vetoed it.<sup>37</sup> The US Congress also supported Turkey's proposal to strengthen 'the Opposition and to change the balance on the ground to help give the Opposition the leverage they need to negotiate and to change' Assad's 'calculations'. Any 'humanitarian aid through the U.N. that ends up going through the regime at all, because it indirectly helps Assad, and therefore, presumably prolongs the conflict, and prolongs the human suffering'. According the Congress, if Assad was 'gone', 'Iran would lose a key ally, one critical to its terrorist operations, including against Israel. and that's why Iran and Hezbollah are massively stepping up their support of the Assad regime, providing a lifeline of weapons, providing fighters on the ground'. This is strengthening the Jihadist groups in Syria'. Obama vetoed again, since he believed that '[i]f Assad loses, it will be the Middle East version of Black Friday with door-busting sales on all the latest weapons, batteries included. If he wins, the door remains closed'.<sup>38</sup> Obama's rejection of a unilateral American action directly conflicted with Turkey's requests.

In the first quarter of 2013, the Obama administration also tried to change Turkey's priorities. For this, Secretary of State John Kerry visited Turkey twice. On 1 March, Kerry highlighted the differences in tactics between Turkey and the US. He stated:

the first priority is to try to have a political solution. We would like to save lives, not see them caught up in a continued war. But we are clear about who we support in the effort to restore freedom and unity to the people of Syria. And in that effort, we have worked together, not just Turkey and the United States, but a whole group of countries, all of

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<sup>37</sup> "U.S. Patriots Set to Begin NATO Missile Defense in Turkey", U.S. Department of Defense Information/FIND, 25 January 2013; *BBC Monitoring European*, 1 January, 16 February 2013; *Dow Jones Institutional News*, 5 February 2013.

<sup>38</sup> "House Hearing, 113th Congress - CRISIS IN SYRIA: THE U.S. RESPONSE", Congressional Hearings, House of Representatives, Y 4.F 76/1:113-10, 20 March 2013; "Rep. Ed Royce holds a hearing on crisis in Syria", *Political Transcript Wire*, 20 March 2013; *Daily Herald*, 20 March 2013.

whom have been doing different things according to their laws and according to their abilities.<sup>39</sup>

On 6-7 April, in his second visit for the Friends of Syrian People meeting, Kerry underlined his administration's priority for a diplomatic solution in Syria.<sup>40</sup>

Kerry did not change Turkey's priorities, even though ironically, Erdoğan was still in need of US help to carry them out. On 16-21 May he visited Obama, and urged that Turkey and the US should put more effort into 'prevent[ing] Syria from becoming an area for terrorist organizations', that the use of 'chemical weapons' should be stopped, and that the rights of all minorities 'should be secured'. He invited the US and the UN to take necessary measures for this. Obama's did not budge. He said that the Syrian opposition should be strengthened 'politically so that it is inclusive and representative of all the people inside ... Syria'. He added:

We continue to try to mobilize the entire international community to put more and more pressure on Assad so that he recognizes that he is no longer legitimate and that he needs to go. ... the crisis was an international problem [and bringing peace to Syria] was not something that the United States does by itself. And I don't think anybody in the region, including the Prime Minister, would think that U.S. unilateral actions in and of themselves would bring about a better outcome inside ... Syria.<sup>41</sup>

Assad's chemical attack on 21 August partially changed Obama's mind regarding a military intervention. He announced:

the United States should take military action against Syrian regime targets. This would not be an open-ended intervention. We would not put boots on the ground. Instead, our action would be designed to be limited in duration and scope.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "Remarks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu After Their Meeting", State Department Documents/FIND, 1 March 2013.

<sup>40</sup> "Secretary of State John Kerry Delivers Remarks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu", *Political Transcript Wire*, 8 Apr 2013; "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu meets with U.S. Secretary of State in İstanbul", *Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bulletin*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, (Accessed 24.2.2019).

<sup>41</sup> "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey", *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2013, Book I*, 16 May 2013, 448-456.

<sup>42</sup> "Remarks on the Situation in Syria", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 31 August 2013.



Obama's announcement of limited military involvement did not satisfy Turkey. Erdoğan 'openly declared' that Turkey wanted 'the Assad regime toppled as soon as possible' and a limited intervention would not bring a regime change but only deter Assad 'from using his chemical weapons again'. He added, '[i]t is doubtful even whether Obama still wants Assad to go'.<sup>43</sup>

Chinese and Russian vetoes at the Security Council limited Obama's intervention even more. Putin said that US military intervention 'could ignite Islamic unrest around the region', which was also among Obama's concerns. China backed Putin.<sup>44</sup> Obama had to postpone the attack.<sup>45</sup>

Turkey was once again disappointed and tried to use the UN to reverse Obama's decision. In the UN on 23 September-4 October, Gül openly expressed Turkey's displeasure. He claimed:

a lack of action from the UN Security Council (UNSC) only emboldens aggressive regimes. We need a UN capable of forcing the perpetrators of brutal actions to submit to justice and the rule of law. Decisive action is the only way that the UN system will remain relevant and credible.<sup>46</sup>

Obama 'did not believe that military action — by those within Syria, or by external Powers — could achieve a lasting peace'.<sup>47</sup> At the end of 2013, the divergence in Turkish and American priorities and tactics was turning into a deadlock.

Davutoğlu tried to break the deadlock. In the US on 16-19 November, he told Kerry of the inadequacy of international community, particularly US, efforts in Syria. Kerry responded that the US was after a 'political solution to the conflict'.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 2 September 2013.

<sup>44</sup> *New York Times*, 12 September 2013; *Washington Post*, 12 September 2013.

<sup>45</sup> *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 13 September 2013.

<sup>46</sup> "General Debate of the 68th Session 24 September 2013 to 04 October 2013", Turkey, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gül, President, 24 September 2013, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/68/turkey>, (Accessed 24.2.2019).

<sup>47</sup> "General Debate of the 68th Session 24 September 2013 to 04 October 2013", United States of America, Barack Obama, President, 24 September 2013, <https://gadebate.un.org/en/68/united-states-america>, (Accessed 24.2.2019).

<sup>48</sup> "Secretary of State John Kerry Remarks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu", *Political Transcript Wire*, 18 November 2013; *BBC Monitoring European*, 19 November 2013.

At the end of 2013, another and much more significant divergence in priorities emerged regarding the Kurdish establishments in northern Syria. Until then divergence was managed via high level visits, and did not particularly affect policies, so they did not induce wobbles on the arm. The Kurdish issue was different. For Turkey, the expansion of the Democratic Union Party's (PYD/YPG) influence along the Turkish-Syrian border was a national security threat. Turkey saw the PYD/YPG as an extension of the PKK.<sup>49</sup> In November, the PYD/YPG's announcement of its autonomy in northern Syria outraged Turkey.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, for the US the PYD/YPG was becoming 'a reliable ally' due to its 'willingness to take on ISIS', which was the US' foremost priority.<sup>51</sup>

The Kurdish wobble was exacerbated by the increased financial burden of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, for which the US was refusing Turkey's requests for financial support. At the end of 2013, according to the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), there were 210,358 Syrian refugees living in camps and another 450,000 outside them.<sup>52</sup>

In 2014, the differences in Turkish and American priorities and tactics regarding Syria induced more wobbles. High level visits at the beginning of the year warmed relations but did not prevent wobbles since these visits did not focus on the differences in priorities. The Turkish arm sustained its tendency.

In the first quarter of 2014 there were an unusual number of high-level visits between Turkey and the US. During these, representatives talked about common concerns rather than differences. Therefore they could not reconcile their differences. On 4 January, Davutoğlu called Kerry. Both agreed on the worsening of the 'human crisis in Syria' and that 'all efforts are needed to make sure that

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<sup>49</sup> "PKK", Main Foreign Policy Issues, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/pkk.tr.mfa>, (Accessed 24.2.2019).

<sup>50</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 November; "House Hearing, 113th Congress - TERRORIST GROUPS IN SYRIA", "US Policy in Syria", US Congressional Hearings, House of Representatives, Y 4.F 76/1:113-95, 20 November 2013, 31; Rodi Hevian, "The Resurrection of Syrian Kurdish Politics", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 17:3, 2013, 49-52.

<sup>51</sup> Barak Barfi, "The Fractious Politics of Syria's Kurds", *The Washington Institute Policy Analysis*, Washington: Washington Institute, 18 December 2013.

<sup>52</sup> "AFAD Basın Duyurusu", 30 December 2013, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/>, (Accessed 24.2.2019).

Geneva II talks will take place in most suitable conditions'.<sup>53</sup> On 12 January Kerry and Davutoğlu met in Paris for the Friends of Syria group meeting, but neither party formulated a policy for a more proactive and interventionist US action.<sup>54</sup> On 22 January, Kerry and Davutoğlu met again for Geneva II talks. Both admitted that Assad and 'his close associates ... have lost their legitimacy and capability to exercise authority in the country'. They also agreed on 'negotiating a transition government born by mutual consent' which 'Assad will not be part of'.<sup>55</sup> On 18 February Obama called Erdoğan, and both spoke of the deterioration of the situation in Syria. Although the conversation did not focus on differences of priorities, it was the first call from the US Presidency in six months.<sup>56</sup> Another high level communication was from the US Deputy Secretary of State, William Burns, during his İstanbul visit on 24 February. Once again, nothing substantial was discussed about a US intervention. Press reports claimed that Obama's call and Burns' visit were the signs of 'warming relations' between Turkey and the US.<sup>57</sup> To maintain it, on 6-7 March Obama's assistant for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Lisa Monaco, visited Turkey. Monaco and Turkish officials discussed particularly 'the growing terrorist presence in Syria'.<sup>58</sup>

This closeness in relations was temporary. On 20 March, following a series of tweets questioning the Turkish government, Erdoğan banned Turkish access to social media. A week later, the US Senate condemned this.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 5 January 2014; Under the 1949 Geneva Convention, prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. In addition, they must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity. Further, persons holding prisoners of war must in all circumstances treat them with respect and honour. No form of coercion may be inflicted on prisoners of war to obtain from them information of any kind whatever. More recently, article 45 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, applicable to international armed conflicts, granted the protections of prisoner of war status to persons taking part in hostilities who fall into the power of an adverse party. According to the Additional Protocol II, similar protections are due to persons detained during non-international armed conflicts. Dan Saxon, 29 January 2013, <https://cpj.org/blog/>, (Accessed 25.2.2013).

<sup>54</sup> "Remarks with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu After Their Meeting", State Department Documents/FIND, 12 January 2014.

<sup>55</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 24 January 2014.

<sup>56</sup> "Readout of President Obama's Call with Prime Minister Erdogan", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 19 February 2014; *BBC Monitoring European*, 20 February 2014.

<sup>57</sup> "Deputy Secretary of State William Burns Travels to Turkey and Ukraine", State Department Documents/FIND, 24 February 2014; *BBC Monitoring European*, 25 February 2014.

<sup>58</sup> "Statement by NSC Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden on Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa Monaco's Travel to Turkey, Yemen and Saudi Arabia", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 9 March 2014.

<sup>59</sup> "Condemning the actions of the Government of Turkey in restricting free expression and Internet freedom on social media", US Congressional Bills, Senate, Y 1.6: Y 1.4/2, 27 March 2014.

More wobbles emerged due to worsening security situation on the Turkish-Syrian border. On 23 March the Turkish military shot down a Syrian fighter jet after an alleged violation of Turkish airspace.<sup>60</sup> On 24-25 March, Gül talked to Obama at the Third Nuclear Security Summit in the Hague. Gül argued that 'Turkey acted within its right to self-defence' and underlined the threat 'the Syrian regime' was posing to Turkey. Again, Obama did not comment on a US military intervention in Syria.<sup>61</sup>

In May, the infiltration of foreign fighters into Syria induced another wobble. The US asked Turkey to restrain this inflow by increasing security of its Syrian border,<sup>62</sup> but the nature of the border, 822 kms long, and the lack of intelligence support restrained Turkey's efforts. With a continuing inflow, ISIS was becoming the most serious threat to the region.<sup>63</sup>

Turkish and American priorities also diverged on the rise of foreign fighters in ISIS. For Turkey, Assad's increased pressure was the main reason for the rise of radicalism in Syria and the moderate opposition, the Turkey-supported SNC, should be strengthened to reduce this radical influence. Otherwise the radicals would bring more recruits from overseas.<sup>64</sup> Turkey's emphasis was to establish a national unity government with the help of the SNC.<sup>65</sup> The US also accepted that the radicals and foreign fighters were the main threat in Syria, but the main aim should be dealing with them directly, not organizing a new Syrian establishment.<sup>66</sup>

With the increased number of recruits, ISIS attacked Kobani in September.<sup>67</sup> After ISIS' attack, 180,000 Kobani settlers fled to Turkey. The burden on Turkey

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<sup>60</sup> *Milliyet*, 23 March 2014.

<sup>61</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 26 March 2014.

<sup>62</sup> "Proceedings of Congress and General Congressional Publications", US Congressional Record, Vol.160, No.65, 2 May 2014, E667-668.

<sup>63</sup> "TERRORIST THREATS", US Congressional Record, Senate, Vol.160, No.101, 24 June 2014, S4119-4124.

<sup>64</sup> *Guardian*, 26 June 2014; Michael Becker, "When Terrorists and Target Governments Cooperate the Case of Syria", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 9:1, 2015, 96.

<sup>65</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 25 June 2014.

<sup>66</sup> "Terrorist Threats", US Congressional Record, Senate, Vol.160, No.101, 24 June 2014, S4119-4124.

<sup>67</sup> *Independent*, 19 September 2014.

grew.<sup>68</sup> The Kobani attack induced a very significant wobble because the Obama administration considered that Turkey did not put enough effort in fighting against ISIS or stopping the recruitment of foreign fighters. Senator Lindsey Graham stated:

Well, I'm very disappointed in Turkey. But here's the problem. Syria is a disaster. Complete disaster. Here is what Turkey understands. If Assad stays in power, then Syria will continue to be a failed state. There is no way the Syrian people will accept a Syria where Assad controls part of it. Turkey is reluctant to get involved with the ISIL problem until they see a clear commitment from us to give the Syrians a fresh start by removing Assad.<sup>69</sup>

The US administration also thought, correctly, that Turkey saw the PYD/YPG as an extension of the PKK, which was also ISIS' enemy, and that, Turkey was letting the ISIS grow stronger to fight more effectively against the PYD/YPG.<sup>70</sup>

On 2 October 2014, US Vice-President Joe Biden claimed that Erdogan 'had told him that Turkey was wrong to let foreign fighters [get through] the Turkish border into Syria', in a way blaming Turkey for the rise of the ISIS. Erdoğan responded 'with a furious outburst, calling his relationship with Biden "history", demanding an apology and denying that he had either made the comment to Biden or that Turkey had allowed foreign fighters to cross its borders'. On 4 October Biden called Erdoğan and apologized, but now Ankara was no longer sure about the effectiveness of cooperation with the US.<sup>71</sup> Officially, the Obama administration did not push Turkey any further regarding ISIS, but the American media did.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> David L. Phillips, *An Uncertain Ally*, London: Routledge, 2017, 126-128; *Times*, 23-24 September 2014; *Guardian*, 23 September; *Cumhuriyet*, 24 September 2014; *Habertürk*, 28 September 2014.

<sup>69</sup> "ISIS Could Take City of Kobani, Invade Turkey; Are Air Strikes Enough Against ISIS; FBI: Masked ISIS Terrorist Probably a Midwestern", International Wire, 8 October 2014.

<sup>70</sup> "President Obama Addresses U.N. on ISIS", International Wire, 25 Sep 2014; *Guardian*, 9 October 2014; *Hürriyet*, 21 October 2014.

<sup>71</sup> *Washington Post*, 6 October 2014; *Anadolu Agency*, 4 October 2014; *Milliyet*, 4 October 2014; *Habertürk*, 5 October 2014; *Hürriyet*, 6 October 2014.

<sup>72</sup> *Daily Beast*, 5 October 2014; *Washington Post*, 5 October 2014; *New York Times*, 7 October 2014; *Examiner*, 11 October 2014; *Buffalo News*, 11 October 2014; *South Florida Sun*, 16 October 2014; *Washington Post*, 30 October 2014.

Turkey accepted ISIS as a national security threat, but preferred to target the PYD/YPG first.<sup>73</sup> Erdoğan acknowledged the imbalance in bilateral relations since he was in need of US help to deal with these two threats on the Syrian border. Yet Kobani clearly showed that acknowledging this imbalance did not bring priorities closer, since the US wanted to eradicate ISIS first. The wobbles sustained the arms' tendency.

The wobbles were detrimental to both parties. Turkey needed US military and intelligence support to consolidate the SNC's position in Syria and to bolster its border security. On the other hand, the US did not want to sacrifice Turkey's military support in fighting ISIS. To ease wobbles and clarify Turkey's position on ISIS, Erdoğan called Obama on 18 October. They 'pledged to work closely together to strengthen cooperation against' ISIS. Erdoğan made clear that Turkey would not work with the PYD/YPG, but with the Free Syrian Army (the armed component of SNC).<sup>74</sup> On 15 November, Prime Minister Davutoğlu<sup>75</sup>, outlined divergence in priorities and Turkey's enthusiasm to ease them by changing some of its priorities. At the end of his talk with Obama, Davutoğlu claimed that 'we have no difference of opinion'. We both insist that both Assad and ISIS 'should go'. There were differences only 'in synchronization or timing'. He added that 'after all, different countries have different concerns and face different risks. Because Turkey is affected by this crisis most closely, it wants the problem to be solved as soon as possible'.<sup>76</sup>

Davutoğlu tried to recalibrate Turkish and American focus on fighting ISIS. The US Congress supported Davutoğlu.<sup>77</sup> Biden's Turkey visit on 21 November re-affirmed Davutoğlu's claims and stated that Turkish-American cooperation on fighting ISIS strengthen in 2015.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 24, 27 September 2014.

<sup>74</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 19 October 2014; *Jerusalem Post*, 20 October 2014; *Milliyet*, 26 October 2014; *Hürriyet*, 5 November 2014.

<sup>75</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu became Prime Minister in August 2014.

<sup>76</sup> *Milliyet*, 16 November 2014.

<sup>77</sup> "Next Steps for US Foreign Policy on Syria and Iraq", US Congressional Hearings, House of Representatives, Y 4.F 76/1:113-223, 19 November 2011.

<sup>78</sup> *Washington Post*, 23 November 2014; "Background Briefing on the Trip of Vice President Joe Biden to Morocco, Ukraine and Turkey", *Political Transcript Wire*, 24 November 2014.

The new focus on ISIS eased wobbles at the beginning of 2015. Yet, later in the year many more wobbles emerged, which maintained the Turkish arm's tendency.

In the first three months of 2015, the Turkish and American administrations cooperatively concentrated on fighting the ISIS. In January they successfully ended ISIS' siege of Kobani.<sup>79</sup> This helped Turkey 'to shake off its image of being [ISIS]'s bashful ally' and it received official US appreciation.<sup>80</sup> Cooperation on ISIS seemingly worked well.

Yet with the enlargement of cooperation, wobbles re-emerged. On 19 February Turkey and the US concluded an agreement on a train-and-equip program for local recruits sent to Syria. The Pentagon stated that the US had identified 1,200 moderate opposition members to be vetted for the training program.<sup>81</sup> The program was initially going to begin in March. The Turkish Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Feridun Sinirlioğlu, and the US Ambassador to Turkey, John Bass, both declared that the agreement was expected to strengthen the partnership.<sup>82</sup> Seemingly, both sides thought that the agreement would reduce tactical differences.

The expectation was not realistic. Firstly, the program did not start in March since Turkey aimed to use the recruits to overthrow the Assad regime but the US was 'placing its priority on fighting' ISIS.<sup>83</sup> In May, Turkish and American authorities re-started the program. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, announced that the 'programme started in Turkey [with] 300 Syrian rebels' on 9 May.<sup>84</sup> Ambassador Bass claimed that, the program was delayed because of logistics not tactical differences.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *New York Times*, 27 January 2015; *Times*, 27 January 2015.

<sup>80</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 29 January 2015.

<sup>81</sup> "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Rear Adm. Kirby in the Pentagon Briefing Room", U.S. Department of Defense Information/FIND, 18 February 2015; *Voice of America News/FIND*, 2 March 2015; *Anadolu Agency*, 19 February 2015.

<sup>82</sup> "Syria Arab Republic, Turkey: TURKISH FM confirms train-&-equip agreement inked", MENA Report, 21 February 2015; *Voice of America News/FIND*, 19 February 2015.

<sup>83</sup> *BBC Monitoring*, 19 March 2015; "Regional Impact of US Policy Towards Iraq and Syria", US Congressional Hearings, House of Representatives, Y 4.F 76/1, 30 April 2015.

<sup>84</sup> *Hürriyet*, 16 May 2015.

<sup>85</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 11 May 2015; *Daily Sabah*, 12 May 2015.

These high-level statements did not reflect reality. The divergence in priorities prevented tactical convergence, and this was the main reason for the delay. Turkish and American officials could not agree on the militia to be trained. The US 'reportedly turned down about 20[%] of the people that the Turkish National Intelligence Organization ... assembled to train as fighters due to suspicions that they belong[ed] to [the] al-Nusra front', which the US saw as a part of Al-Qaeda.<sup>86</sup> The Turkish and American disagreement on Syrian opposition was long standing. Since 2012, the US administration believed Turkey-supported coalition members have links with Al-Qaeda.

The efficiency of the program was hampered when 60 militia trained and sent to Syria were caught by radical groups. Turkish and American authorities quickly understood the operational ineffectiveness of the program and shut it down.<sup>87</sup> Different priorities wrecked one of the most important Turkish-American cooperative tools in Syria.

Another significant wobble emerged with the US administration's change of mind regarding the Assad regime. In March, Kerry said that 'he still believed it was important to achieve a diplomatic solution for the conflict in Syria and that the negotiations should involve President Bashar al-Assad'.<sup>88</sup> Turkey hastily reacted. Çavuşoğlu said, '[w]hat you are [i.e. are your] going to negotiate with Assad? What will you negotiate with a regime that killed more than 200,000 people and has used chemical weapons? What has come out of the negotiations that have been held up until now?'<sup>89</sup> Although the US administration backtracked in May, Turkey's concerns continued.<sup>90</sup>

Another wobble emerged during the train-and-equip program when Turkey pushed for establishing a safe zone in Syria. In April, Çavuşoğlu stated that for

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<sup>86</sup> *BBC Monitoring*, 19 May 2015; "United States Strategy and Military Operations to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and United States Policy toward Iraq And Syria" US Congressional Hearings, Senate, Y 4.AR 5/3, 21 May 2015.

<sup>87</sup> *Hürriyet*, 3 August 2015; *Posta*, 6 August 2015; "The President's News Conference", *Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, 2 October 2015; *Sabah*, 9 October 2015.

<sup>88</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 15 March 2015; *New York Times*, 16 March 2015.

<sup>89</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 16 March 2015; *Hürriyet*, 17 March 2015.

<sup>90</sup> *Washington Times*, 17 May 2015.



the program's success on the ground a 'safe-zone in Syria is a must'.<sup>91</sup> At first, the US Congress was inclined to support Turkey's claim,<sup>92</sup> but that in June, US officials stated that Turkey's plans were 'hypothetical' and there was not 'any ground truth [in] any of these plans'. The State Department also observed that 'no-fly zones, safe havens, just are not happening'.<sup>93</sup>

More wobbles emerged with increasing US support to the PYD/YPG. For the US, the PYD/YPG was a significant ally against ISIS.<sup>94</sup> For Turkey it was not only an extension of the PKK, but also was fighting the Turkish-backed opposition, the Free Syrian Army and the Turkmen.<sup>95</sup> Çavuşoğlu declared that Turkey's "red line" would be violated if the PYD/YPG crossed to west of the Euphrates.<sup>96</sup> The US agreed to keep Syrian Kurds out of this red line. Yet the PYD/YPG did not release any statement to relieve Turkey's concerns.<sup>97</sup>

In July Turkey's concerns about the PYD/YPG heightened with PKK attacks in Turkey. Turkish officials claimed that the PKK improved its capability in parallel with the PYD/YPG.<sup>98</sup> The US tried to ease Turkey's concerns by admitting the PKK as a terrorist organization,<sup>99</sup> but this did not stop the US sending military consultants to Syria and keeping in touch with the PYD/YPG. The US Department of State Spokesperson, John Kirby stated:

We don't consider the YPG a terrorist organization, and they have proven successful against ISIL inside Syria. And as I said, we're going to continue to work with counter-ISIL fighters who are and can be successful against this group, and they're not all Kurds. They are not all Kurds. We understand that the Turkish Government has concerns about the YPG. We continue to talk to them and engage them. We continue to

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<sup>91</sup> *BBC Monitoring*, 22 April 2015.

<sup>92</sup> "Durbin, Graham, Kaine, McCain Urge President to Establish Humanitarian Safe Zones in Syria", *Congressional Documents and Publications*, Washington, 21 April 2015.

<sup>93</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 13 May 2015; "State Department Conducts Daily Press Briefing, June 29", *Targeted News Service*, Washington DC, 29 June 2015.

<sup>94</sup> "Senior Administration Officials on Counter-ISIL Coalition Efforts", State Department Documents/FIND, 28 July 2015.

<sup>95</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 22 June 2015; *Asia News Monitor*, 24 June 2015.

<sup>96</sup> "Senior Administration Officials on Counter-ISIL Coalition Efforts", US Fed News Service, Washington DC, 29 July 2015.

<sup>97</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 3 August 2015.

<sup>98</sup> "Senior Administration Officials on Counter-ISIL Coalition Efforts", US Fed News Service, Washington DC, 29 July 2015.

<sup>99</sup> "Recognizing the Republic of Turkey in Their Fight Against ISIS", US Congressional Record, Vol.161, No.139, 25 September 2015.

be appreciative of the support that Turkey is making to the coalition and to direct kinetic activity against ISIL.<sup>100</sup>

Turkey was disappointed again.<sup>101</sup>

Turkey's concerns continued to grow in 2016. The most significant reason was the deepening of US-PYD cooperation. Turkey's concerns about PYD/YPG's influence in Syria climaxed when with US support the PYD/YPG began to merge Kurdish cantons in western and eastern Syria.<sup>102</sup> Tel Abyad was the crucial town for merging these cantons. Therefore, particularly in Tel Abyad, the PYD/YPG, forced the locals to move, which was severely criticized by Amnesty International.<sup>103</sup> The Tel Abyad operation not only threatened the ethno-religious fabric of northern Syria but also fuelled instability due to the increased migration of Arab, Turkomans.<sup>104</sup>

Turkey's concerns climaxed with the PKK's intensified attacks in Ankara and Istanbul.<sup>105</sup> As at July 2015, Turkish officials and public opinion/media stressed the link between the PYD/YPG and the PKK in bolstering a surge in the PKK's attack capabilities.<sup>106</sup> Erdoğan once again stressed that the PKK, and the PYD/YPG 'have no difference from each other'.<sup>107</sup>

Erdoğan acknowledged the imbalance in relations whereby without cutting US support, Turkey could not eliminate the PYD/YPG. He tried to change US priorities again. In April 2016, he visited Obama. Although, as in previous communications, both stressed the importance of Turkish-American cooperation in fighting ISIS, no resolution was achieved regarding the PYD/YPG<sup>108</sup> since the

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<sup>100</sup> "State Department Conducts Daily Press Briefing, Sept. 21", *Targeted News Service*, Washington DC, 21 September 2015.

<sup>101</sup> *Washington Post*, 14 October 2015.

<sup>102</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 7 February 2016; *Daily Star*, 8 February 2016.

<sup>103</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 17 February 2016;

<sup>104</sup> *Daily Sabah*, 18 April 2016.

<sup>105</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 12 January 2016; *Independent*, 17 February 2016; *Guardian*, 14-17 March 2016; *Time*, 16 March 2016; *Milliyet*, 19 March 2016.

<sup>106</sup> "Ankara Kızılay'da Meydana Gelen Terör Saldırısına İlişkin Açıklama", *Presidency of the Turkish Republic*, Press Releases, 13 March 2016; *Sabah*, 23 February 2016; *Haber 7*, 10 March 2016; *Yeni Şafak*, 14, 19 March 2016; *Takvim*, 14 March 2016.

<sup>107</sup> *Hürriyet*, 12 January 2016.

<sup>108</sup> "The President's News Conference", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 1 April 2016; "ABD Başkanı Obama ile Görüşme", *Presidency of the Turkish Republic*, Press Releases, 3 April 2016.

US was still supporting the PYD/YPG. On 23 March, US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Mark Toner stated:

we still adhere to what our policy's been for the past many months, which is that we view the PKK as a foreign terrorist organization. We condemn its - the violence that it carries out against Turkish civilians and citizens. And separately, we have been working with the YPD - or YPG, rather, in parts of Syria as part of a number of groups we're working with who are actively fighting and dislodging Daesh or ISIL from territory it controls.<sup>109</sup>

Before Toner's words, the US Special Envoy on Fighting ISIS Brett McGurk posted twitter feeds from his Kobani visit which infuriated Turkey. McGurk shared a photo of 'a cemetery where he said he "paid respects to over 1,000 Kurdish martyrs" from the battle of Kobani waged by' the PYD/YPG. Once again US 'support for the PYD' had 'proven to be one of the most contentious issues dividing the U.S. and Turkey'.<sup>110</sup> Turkey's anger increased 'after images emerged of U.S. ground forces wearing the insignia of [PYD/YPG] during operations against' ISIS. Cavaşoğlu said 'it was unacceptable that U.S. special forces would be wearing [PYD/YPG] shoulder patches'.<sup>111</sup> This again showed that acknowledging the imbalance did not reconcile priorities.

The PYD/YPG wobble was expanded when its militia tried to cross Turkey's "red line" of the Euphrates. In May/June, 'despite all Turkey's objections US-sponsored PKK/PYD elements have crossed over to the west of the Euphrates' and continued 'to advance'.<sup>112</sup> Deputy Prime Minister, Numan Kurtulmuş stated that 'we have told' the Americans 'that if the PYD or ISIL crosses' to the west of Euphrates 'it would threaten Turkey's security. Unfortunately, this sensitivity of ours has not been seriously addressed'.<sup>113</sup> Çavaşoğlu was clearer. He said that 'it is a different matter if the YPG wants to provide logistics support [against ISIS] in the east of the Euphrates, but once the operations are over, we do not want a single one of them in the west'. He added 'it is unacceptable for a country that

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<sup>109</sup> "Mark Toner, State Department Deputy Spokesperson, Holds State Department Regular News Briefing, As Released by The State Department", *Political Transcript Wire*, 23 March 2016.

<sup>110</sup> *Reuters*, 1 February 2016; *Asia News Monitor*, 24 February 2016.

<sup>111</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 28 May 2016.

<sup>112</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 2 June 2016; *Milliyet*, 7 June 2016.

<sup>113</sup> *Hürriyet*, 1 June 2016.

claims to always be at the forefront of the fight against terrorism to cooperate with [the] YPG/PYD which keeps sending terrorists to Turkey and is behind the attacks in Ankara'. Turkey-PYD/YPG hostility almost turned into an armed conflict in Manbij.<sup>114</sup>

The US tried to ease the situation by organizing a new opposition front called the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) which was promised to have more members from local Arab groups.<sup>115</sup> Yet McGurk's social media and the discussions in the US Senate<sup>116</sup> showed that the SDF was heavily composed of PYD/YPG militia.

In August, the situation in Manbij escalated in August further. After the occupation of the town, the SDF refused to leave. PYD elements in the SDF announced that they intended to set up a corridor between Manbij and Afrin, which would considerably expand their influence in the region. That was also 'the dream of the Kurds ... to unite their lands across northern Syria, from Hassakeh in the northeast to Afrin in the northwest, erasing the shame of the Ba'ath Party's Arabization policies which disenfranchised Kurds and diluted their language and culture'.<sup>117</sup> This was an ultimate crossing of Turkey's "red line".

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<sup>114</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 7 June 2016. 'Manbij is a town that today finds itself straddling areas of control of the United States, Turkey, and the Syrian regime. A majority of the inhabitants welcome the stability provided by PYD rule after the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a Kurdish-Arab coalition dominated by the YPG, pushed the Islamic State out of Manbij in August 2016. However, locals have been divided because of competition between the regime, the Americans, and the Turks over the town. Syrian opposition forces from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and backed by Turkey had controlled Manbij until January 2014, when the Islamic State's takeover of the town forced the FSA to redeploy to Azaz and Jarablus'. For details see "The Meaning of Manbij", Carnegie Middle East Center, <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/77417>, (Accessed 23.4.2019).

<sup>115</sup> "OIR Spokesman: Local Forces in Iraq, Syria Increase Pressure on ISIL", U.S. Department of Defense Information/FIND, 29 Jun 2016.

<sup>116</sup> *Milliyet*, 21 June 2016; "Global Efforts to Defeat ISIS", US Congressional Hearings, Senate, Y 4.F 76/2: S. Hrg. 114-754, 28 June 2016, 1-2.

<sup>117</sup> *Daily Star*, 7 September 2016.

The Erdoğan government's next move was harsher. ISIS cross-border attacks and the 15 July coup attempt<sup>118</sup> aggravated the pressure on him.<sup>119</sup> To push the PYD/YPG and ISIS away from the Turkish border, on 24 August he decided to carry out a cross-border operation into northern Syria, called *Euphrates Shield*. The Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army operated with Turkish armed forces. The operation started a few hours before US Vice-President Joe Biden's arrival in Turkey,<sup>120</sup> to send a strong signal to the US about Turkey's "red line".

Biden did not react against *Euphrates Shield* since he came to ease the PYD/YPG-Turkey conflict. He said continuing US support for Turkey and said that 'we have made it absolutely clear ... that [pro-Kurdish forces] must go back across the river. They cannot, will not and under no circumstances get American support if they do not keep that commitment'.<sup>121</sup> In the press conference, he thanked Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım 'for how quickly Turkey resumed its counter-ISIL operations after the attempted coup' and said that Turkey and the US would 'continue working toward a permanent political solution to the conflict in Syria'. Yıldırım re-iterated Turkey's priority that a more comprehensive/international collaboration was necessary for a solution in Syria. Yıldırım stated that Turkey was sensitive about Syria's territorial integrity and would not give 'any advantages to any ethnic groups' and not allow 'the circumstances that would lead to that to ... happen'. He added, 'Turkey will never accept a new Kurdish formation along its borders'.<sup>122</sup>

Biden's assuring words did not change the situation in the field. The PYD/YPG had not left Manbij. Under *Euphrates Shield* the Turkish military was coming

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<sup>118</sup> Turkey witnessed a coup attempt on 15 July 2016. A section of the Turkish military launched a coordinated operation in several major cities to topple the Erdoğan government. The Turkish government blamed the failed coup attempt on Fethullah Gülen, a Turkish preacher who has lived in the US since 1999. After the coup attempt Turkey asked for the extradition of Gülen which Washington refused by insisting that Turkish authorities did not have enough evidence to arrest Gülen or to start the formal process for his extradition. For details see "15 July Coup Attempt and the Parallel State Structure", *Presidency of the Turkish Republic*, Reports, October 2016; *Al Jazeera*, 15 Jul 2017.

<sup>119</sup> *Sabah*, 9 August 2016; *Hürriyet*, 18 August 2016; *Milliyet*, 23 August 2016; *Yeni Şafak*, 26 August 2016; *BBC Monitoring European*, 5 September 2016.

<sup>120</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 24 August 2016, *Milliyet*, 25 August 2016.

<sup>121</sup> "Biden Pledges 'Unwavering Support' For Turkey's Democracy", *Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications*, 24 August 2016.

<sup>122</sup> "Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım at a Press Availability", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 25 August 2016.

closer to the town. Cavuşoglu 'reminded the U.S. [of] its pledge to push the YPG to the east of [the] Euphrates, noting that more than 200 members of the armed wing of the terrorist PYD/PKK group remain in Manbij'.<sup>123</sup> Erdoğan was more straightforward. He stated that 'we have ... encircled and besieged al-Bab from the west. This is not enough. From there we will also head to Manbij'.<sup>124</sup>

With the election of Donald Trump in November 2016, Turkey began to hope that the wobbles of the Obama administration could be eased.<sup>125</sup> Yet, in a short while, Turkey understood that wobbles were inevitable.

Turkey's initial expectations of easing wobbles were not completely baseless. Immediately after the elections, Vice President Mike Pence stated the importance of Turkish-American relations and added that the US administration should have listened to Turkey about Syria.<sup>126</sup> Turkey's expectations were bolstered by an Erdoğan-Trump telephone conversation, during which Erdoğan 'expressed [his] hope for a new start in relations that were strained considerably under' Obama's presidency. Both leaders 'expressed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and continue cooperation on ... the fight against terrorism'.<sup>127</sup>

In the first quarter of 2017, there were a number of high-level bilateral exchanges, and Erdoğan-Trump telephone diplomacy continued. As in previous years, the exchanges had the potential to ease wobbles. On 7 February Erdoğan called Trump. Each repeated the same assurances on fighting terrorism.<sup>128</sup> On 8 February CIA Director Mike Pompeo met Yıldırım in Ankara. Turkey was Pompeo's first visit after his appointment. Pompeo's aim was to find a compromise over the PYD/YPG for a possible operation to retake Raqqa. Yıldırım's emphasis was Fethullah Gülen's extradition.<sup>129</sup> On 9 February, Yıldırım and Pence had a

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<sup>123</sup> *Anadolu Agency*, 27 September 2016.

<sup>124</sup> *Hürriyet*, 22 November 2016.

<sup>125</sup> *CNN Türk*, 8 November 2016; *Hürriyet*, 9 November 2016; *Sabah*, 12 November 2016; *Yeni Şafak*, 29 November 2016

<sup>126</sup> *Sputniknews*, 10 November 2016; *Haber7*, 14 November 2016.

<sup>127</sup> "Turkey's Erdogan congratulates Trump after US strains", *AFP International Text Wire*, Washington, 9 November 2016.

<sup>128</sup> "ABD Başkanı Trump ile Telefon Görüşmesi", *Presidency of the Turkish Republic*, Press Releases, 8 February 2017.

<sup>129</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 9 February 2017; "CIA Chief, Turkish Prime Minister Discuss Closer Antiterror Cooperation", *Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications*, 10 February 2017.

telephone conversation again on increasing bilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism. On 18 February, they met at the Munich Security Conference, where their divergent priorities appeared again. Yıldırım constantly emphasized Gülen's extradition but Pence focused on accelerating joint efforts to defeat ISIS.<sup>130</sup>

The 15 July coup distracted Turkey. The Erdoğan government's priority shifted from the PKK and ISIS to Gülen's extradition, while the US priority of eliminating ISIS did not change with Trump. Moreover, many US officials, who had strained bilateral relations during Obama's term were still in their positions, including Brett McGurk, and the CENTCOM Commander, and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>131</sup> Good-willed high-level communications did not converge priorities.

In May, PYD/YPG operations at Raqqa wobbled the arm again.<sup>132</sup> This time, Turkey attacked PYD/YPG targets in northern Syria without asking the US.<sup>133</sup> Conflicting priorities were clearer in the field.

After Raqqa, conflicting priorities began to affect high-level talks as well. On 16 May, Erdoğan met Trump in Washington. Erdoğan asked for Gülen's extradition, while Trump emphasized a deeper cooperation with Turkey to eliminate ISIS.<sup>134</sup> On 30 June, Erdoğan called Trump, asking for his help to stop the PYD/YPG's continuing influence in Afrin, and to stop its funding by the US. Trump did not promise anything.<sup>135</sup>

Divergent priorities on the PYD/YPG continued throughout the year regardless of US officials' appeasing statements. The US Deputy Department of State, Jonathan Cohen stressed that US support for the PYD/YPG was 'temporary,

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<sup>130</sup> "Pence tells Turkey PM wants 'new start' in ties: report", *AFP International Text Wire*, Washington, 19 February 2017.

<sup>131</sup> "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Mattis, General Dunford and Special Envoy McGurk on the Campaign to Defeat ISIS in the Pentagon Press Briefing Room", Transcript of the Meeting, 19 May 2017, <https://dod.defense.gov/>, (Accessed 2.3.2019).

<sup>132</sup> "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Col. Dorrian via teleconference from Baghdad, Iraq", U.S. Department of Defense Information/FIND, 3 May 2017; *NBCNews*, 9 May 2017.

<sup>133</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 4 May 2017; *Anadolu Agency*, 18 May 2017.

<sup>134</sup> "Remarks Following a Meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange with Reporters", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 16 May 2017.

<sup>135</sup> "ABD Başkanı Trump ile Telefon Görüşmesi", *Presidency of the Turkish Republic*, Press Releases, 8 February 2017; *Hürriyet*, 30 June 2017.

transitional and tactical'.<sup>136</sup> The US Defense Secretary, Jim Mattis, reassured Turkey that 'the US military would recover some logistical gear [and weapons from the PYD/YPG] after the anti-[ISIS] fight'.<sup>137</sup> Again US promises were not confirmed in the field. The US continued to work with the PYD/YPG in securing Arab population dominated areas of northern Syria, such as Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa.<sup>138</sup> In Raqqa, particularly PYD/YPG members' PKK propaganda infuriated Turkey again.<sup>139</sup>

Turkey's anger now emerged in high-level conversations. Erdoğan called Trump on 24 November. Trump 'informed' 'of pending adjustments to the military support provided to [US] partners on the ground in Syria'.<sup>140</sup> Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ stated, '[t]he conversation of the two presidents is a turning point in our relations. If the [US] does not keep its promise to cease military assistance to the YPG, then the [US] would deceive the whole world. Turkey will be observing that as well as the return of previously given weapons by the YPG'.<sup>141</sup> While Turkey was expecting Trump to keep his promise,<sup>142</sup> the Pentagon expressed its 'astonishment' by Trump's decision and made a statement on 'the possible continuation of cooperation between Washington' and the PYD/YPG.<sup>143</sup>

2018 was an even more turbulent year in bilateral relations. In addition to the Syrian crisis, several political and economic issues aggravated relations and the arm continued its tendency of moving Turkey away from the US.

US-YPG cooperation continued to induce wobbles throughout 2018. At the beginning of the year, Pentagon officials stated that the US administration was

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<sup>136</sup> *Sputnik*, 17 May 2017.

<sup>137</sup> "US wants to steer clear of Syrian civil war: Mattis", *AFP International Text Wire*, Washington, 27 June 2017.

<sup>138</sup> "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Colonel Dillon via Teleconference From Baghdad, Iraq", U.S. Department of Defense Information/FIND, 29 June 2017.

<sup>139</sup> *Dow Jones Institutional News*, 19 October 2017; *Milliyet*, 20 October 2017.

<sup>140</sup> "Readout of President Donald J. Trump's Call with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 24 November 2017.

<sup>141</sup> *Hürriyet*, 24 November 2017; *Sputnik*, 27 November 2017.

<sup>142</sup> "Turkey expects Trump to 'keep promise' not to arm Syria Kurds", *AFP International Text Wire*, Washington, 25 November 2017.

<sup>143</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 27 November 2017; *Daily Beast*, 28 November 2017; *Sputnik*, 28 November 2017; *Anadolu Agency*, 1 December 2017.



planning to establish a border security force in northern Syria with PYD/YPG elements.<sup>144</sup> Turkey not only opposed the proposal but began another cross-border operation on 20 January, *Olive Branch* against PYD/YPG elements/camps in Afrin. The aim was to push the PYD/YPG out of Afrin.<sup>145</sup> US CENTCOM did not support Turkey's operation on the grounds that the US-led coalition against ISIS did not recognize Afrin as an operation area, so was not paying particular attention to that area with its military resources.<sup>146</sup>

*Olive Branch* got the Trump administration's attention, since the White House did not want Turks to operate unilaterally in Syria.<sup>147</sup> To discuss areas of cooperation in Syria, on 23 January a US delegation headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary, Jonathan Cohen visited Ankara. The delegation met a Turkish delegation headed by the Deputy Undersecretary of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Muhtar Gün. The US delegation did not give a time frame but again promised to take back heavy weapons supplied to the PYD/YPG.<sup>148</sup>

Yet, this did not mean that US-PYD/YPG cooperation would stop in Syria. A senior administration official of the White House said, the White House made a 'distinction between allies — a term he said had legal connotations — and partners in a combat mission, like the Kurds. America's actions on the ground in Syria, he said, would be driven by a calculation of its interests'. The Trump administration 'appeared to be a significant attempt to reassure Turkey's president', Erdoğan, who considered 'the Kurds a threat to his country's internal stability'. Yet 'the Pentagon issued its own statement ... standing by its decision to create the Kurdish-led force. And a senior American commander praised the partnership with the Kurds, whose help was critical in a major American airstrike on' ISIS. The commander of Special Operations forces in Iraq and Syria, General James Jarrard, said, '[o]ur S.D.F. partners are still making daily progress and sacrifices, and together we are still finding, targeting and killing ISIS terrorists

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<sup>144</sup> *BBC*, 14 January 2018; *Hürriyet*, 15 January 2018.

<sup>145</sup> "Turkey army confirms start of new 'Olive Branch' operation inside Syria", *AFP International Text Wire*, Washington, 20 January 2018; *Sputnik*, 23 January 2018; *Al Monitor*, 26 January 2018.

<sup>146</sup> *Dow Jones Institutional News*, 20 January 2018; *Wall Street Journal*, 21 January 2018; *Anadolu Agency*, 21 January 2018; *New York Times*, 1 February 2018.

<sup>147</sup> "Syria: Which Way Forward?", US Congressional Hearings, House of Representatives, Y 4.F 76/1, 6 February 2018, 1-4.

<sup>148</sup> *BBC Monitoring European*, 25 January 2018.

intent on keeping their extremist hold on the region'. Senior Pentagon officials said that 'the Syrian Kurds will most likely serve as the backbone of the allied forces on the ground in Syria for months to come'.<sup>149</sup>

After the meeting with Cohen, the Turkish delegation thought that the US 'would stop supplying [PYD/YPG] with weapons [because ISIS] would soon be defeated'.<sup>150</sup>

The US tried to bolster the Turkish delegation's optimism. On 15 February Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and National Security Advisor Herbert McMaster came to Turkey. The announced aim of the meeting was to develop 'mechanisms that will achieve results [and] will meet the expectations of both sides'. Tillerson said that the US and Turkey 'are not going to work alone any longer. ... We're going to lock arms, we're going to work through the issues that are causing difficulties for us'. At the end of the visit several working groups were established composed of both countries' top diplomats and national security personnel.<sup>151</sup> The working groups were important in the sense that, for the first time in a long while, a comprehensive number of bureaucrats came together with an aim to put high-level goodwill into practice.

On 8 March, the joint working groups met first in Washington,<sup>152</sup> then on 25 May in Ankara. They worked specifically on Manbij. At the end of the Ankara meeting, Çavuşoğlu stated that '[t]he road map for Manbij' was 'tied to the calendar'. It was decided that the 'YPG will leave. Turkey, along with the US, will decide who will take part in the leadership instead of [the] YPG, and who will participate in the security forces, perhaps on a parity basis'.<sup>153</sup> Yet, the US thought differently. State Department spokeswoman, Heather Nauert stated:

We don't have any agreements yet with the Government of Turkey. We announced previously that the United States and the Turkish working group met ... in Ankara on Friday of last week. We're continuing to have

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<sup>149</sup> *New York Times*, 23 January 2018.

<sup>150</sup> *Sputnik*, 25 January 2018.

<sup>151</sup> "U.S. Embassy in Turkey Issues Remarks on U.S.-Turkey Alliance", *Targeted News Service*, Washington DC, 16 February 2018; *Wall Street Journal*, 16 February 2018; *Dow Jones Institutional News*, 20 February 2018.

<sup>152</sup> *Washington Post*, 10 March 2018.

<sup>153</sup> *Sputnik*, 30 May 2018.

ongoing conversations regarding Syria and other issues of mutual concern. The two sides then had outlined the contours of a roadmap for further cooperation, and that includes on Manbij. I know that the Secretary looks forward to hosting Foreign Minister Cavusoglu on June 4<sup>th</sup> here in Washington for those conversations to continue.<sup>154</sup>

In June, working groups managed to hammer out a more specific solution on the PYD/YPG's influence in Manbij. The plan was to form a new administration in the town, whose security would be maintained by Turkish and American patrols.<sup>155</sup>

On 4 June, Çavuşoğlu and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met in Washington to discuss the working groups' road map. Although after the meeting the State Department did not give any details about this map, Çavuşoğlu announced that there was 'a clear schedule for the plan [and] we are talking about a couple of months, not six months'. Turkish government spokesman Bekir Bozdağ confirmed this.<sup>156</sup> On 12-13 June, Turkish and US military representatives met at the headquarters of the US European Command in Stuttgart, where they stated that both sides agreed on a plan. The US European Command 'announced the agreement on its Twitter account' that the 'US and Turkish military officials who participated in the discussions agreed on a proposed Manbij implementation plan that will be recommended to senior US and Turkish leadership for further discussions'.<sup>157</sup>

While the Turkish and American bureaucracies were getting ready to put a compromise agreement into practice, at the high-level of politics co-operation hit the wall. The Pastor Brunson issue created one of the most serious crises in relations. On 18 July, from Twitter addressing Erdoğan, Trump said that it was '[a] total disgrace that Turkey will not release a respected U.S. Pastor, Andrew Brunson, from prison. He has been held hostage far too long'.<sup>158</sup> On 26 July, Mike Pence demanded that Turkey release Brunson. Trump and Pence also threatened Turkey with sanctions if it failed to release Brunson. Trump said that the US 'will

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<sup>154</sup> "State Department Spokeswoman Heather Nauert Briefing, as Released by The State Department", *Political Transcript Wire*, 29 May 2018.

<sup>155</sup> "ABD-Türkiye Ortak Açıklama", US Embassy Ankara Press Release, 4 June 2018, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/tr/abd-turkiye-ortak-aciklama/>, (Accessed 3.3.2019); *NTV*, 4 June 2018.

<sup>156</sup> *New York Times*, 4 June 2018; *Milliyet*, 4 June 2018.

<sup>157</sup> *Associated Press Worldstream*, 14 June 2018; *BBC Monitoring European*, 14 June 2018.

<sup>158</sup> <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1019757603570806785>, (Accessed 3.3.2019).

impose large sanctions on Turkey for their long time detainment of Pastor Andrew Brunson'. Pence said that the US 'will impose significant sanctions on Turkey if Brunson is not freed'. The Turkish Foreign Ministry called US demands 'unacceptable' and added that 'no-one can give orders to Turkey and threaten our country'.<sup>159</sup>

The crisis escalated in August. On 1 August, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) 'took action', 'targeting' Turkey's Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gül and Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu, by accusing both of them for playing 'leading roles in the organizations responsible for the arrest and detention of Pastor Andrew Brunson'.<sup>160</sup> On 10 August, from Twitter, Trump announced that he 'authorized a doubling of tariffs on Steel and Aluminium with respect to Turkey as their currency, the Turkish Lira, slides rapidly downward against our very strong Dollar! Aluminium will now be [%]20 and Steel [%]50. Our relations with Turkey are not good at this time!'.<sup>161</sup> With US sanctions the Turkish Lira 'hit a low of 5.11 to the dollar, and inflation reached [%]24.5'.<sup>162</sup> Brunson was released on 12 October. Erdoğan replied to Trump from Twitter (in Turkish). He tweeted, 'I always pointed out, the Turkish judiciary reached its decision independently. I hope that the United States and Turkey will continue their cooperation as the allies that they are, and fight together against terrorist groups'.<sup>163</sup> In 2019, Turkey has still not recovered from its deepening economic crisis.

The Brunson affair put a lot pressure on bilateral relations, especially regarding Syria. Although both sides' working groups were enthusiastic to forge a resolution for cooperation in northern Syria, Pastor Brunson's court case deadlocked it.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *BBC*, 26 July 2018; *Hürriyet Daily News*, 26 July 2018.

<sup>160</sup> "Treasury Sanctions Turkish Officials with Leading Roles in Unjust Detention of U.S. Pastor Andrew Brunson", US Department of the Treasury, Press Releases, 1 August 2018.

<sup>161</sup> <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1027899286586109955>, (Accessed 3.3.2019).

<sup>162</sup> Julie Honoré, "Erdoğan May Have Freed Pastor Brunson, But Turkey's Economy Is Still Trapped", *Foreign Policy*, 16 October 2018.

<sup>163</sup> [https://twitter.com/RT\\_Erdogan/status/1051130307905241088](https://twitter.com/RT_Erdogan/status/1051130307905241088), (Accessed 3.3.2019)

<sup>164</sup> *Washington Post*, 10-11 March 2018.

On 19 December 2018, via Twitter, Trump announced that the US would withdraw its troops from Syria,<sup>165</sup> but the US military circles and Trump still had no strategy or roadmap on how and when to carry this out. At the beginning of 2019 Turkish and American officials were trying to resume talks to coordinate the US withdrawal. <sup>166</sup>

Turkish-American relations regarding the Syrian crisis proved that the Turkish arm of the wobbly cross has an inexorable trend, which pushes Turkey away from the US. From the beginning of the crisis, high-level representatives of both sides tried to develop cooperation, but their different priorities prevented it. The two nations differed on several issues: removing Assad, supporting different elements of the Syrian opposition, and the Kurdish militias' role in defeating ISIS. Erdoğan acknowledged the imbalance in bilateral relations: that Turkey could not remove Assad or bolster the anti-Assad coalition or defeat ISIS and the PYD/YPG without US support. For the US, Turkey's support was important but not vital, while the Turkish administration's complaints about the PYD/YPG were not acceptable because of their militias' usefulness in the field. The high-level visits repeated themselves regarding the importance of Turkish-American cooperation but did not affect policy or practice, or facilitated Turkish and American bureaucratic collaboration. In other words, high-level goodwill did not translate into practice. Several times the US administration tried to ease Turkey's concerns via plans, working groups and promises but their diverging priorities blocked these being realized, which constantly created wobbles. The trend of the wobbly cross was validated once again.

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<sup>165</sup> *New York Times*, 19 December 2018; <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1075528854402256896>, (Accessed 3.3.2019).

<sup>166</sup> *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 January 2019.

## **b. Australia: paying a premium**

Australia's relations with the US regarding the Syrian crisis clearly demonstrate the reasons for the stability of the Australian arm. During the crisis, Australia did not try to change US priorities. As a middle power in need of US strategic support for the stability of its region, Australia adapted its priorities and policies to the US. Both in the UN and in bilateral exchanges, Australia followed American policies in Syria. Paying a premium on US security insurance for the Indo-Pacific was habitual by now. For the US insurance, Australia also made it clear that increasing cooperation with China did not mean that the US was becoming secondary. The US appreciated Australia's staunch posture and small wobbles in this era did not change the Australian arm's trend towards the US.

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When the Syrian crisis erupted, on 15 March 2011 Australia-US relations were very close. Prime Minister Julia Gillard visited the US on 5-13 March for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ANZUS. On 7 March Gillard met Obama. After the meeting, Obama's words precisely summarized this closeness: '[w]e have no stronger ally than Australia', adding 'I understand that you'll be speaking to a joint session of Congress, which is a high honor that is reserved for only our closest friends. And I think it's a measure of the degree to which Australians are held in such high esteem by Americans, partly because we share so much'.<sup>1</sup> Gillard expressed the closeness in the Congress. She said, 'you have a true friend down under' both 'in war and peace'.<sup>2</sup> According to available records, the leaders did not specifically talk about the escalation in Syria, but both shared 'a very firm conviction that the violence that's been taking place and perpetrated' by autocratic Middle Eastern governments were 'unacceptable'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Remarks Following a Meeting with Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 7 March 2011.

<sup>2</sup> "Joint Meeting to Hear an Address by The Honorable Julia Gillard, Prime Minister of Australia", US Congressional Record, Vol.157, No. 35, 9 March 2011, H1624.

<sup>3</sup> "Remarks Following a Meeting with Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 7 March 2011.

Australia's first significant reaction to the Syrian crisis was in May 2011. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd, announced that Australia 'strongly condemns the recent actions of the Syrian regime against its people' and 'is ramping up targeted financial sanctions against key regime figures responsible for human rights abuses and lethal suppression of peaceful protests in Syria, and is also imposing an embargo on arms and other equipment used for internal repression'.<sup>4</sup> Australia's sanctions were 'the first by an Asia-Pacific country on Syria'. The Reserve Bank of Australia 'placed 25 Syrian entities on its list ranging from individuals including intelligence and security heads to property companies'.<sup>5</sup> As in previous crises (for example Korea, Gulf, Iraq) Australia was quick to join the US.

From the beginning of the crisis, Australia's priorities, policies and tactics in Syria almost overlapped with the those of the US: a political solution via extended diplomatic consultation. In September, the joint communiqué of the annual Australia-US ministerial meeting (AUSMIN), the main device for managing the ANZUS alliance, stated that the US and Australian governments had decided to 'reiterate' their 'call for Syrian president Assad to step aside and allow for a democratic transition to take place in Syria'.<sup>6</sup> At a meeting to facilitate cooperation between defence elements, both sides discussed the possibility of 'establishing a bilateral working group to develop options that would align [their] respective force postures'.<sup>7</sup>

In mid-November, Obama visited Australia, and both parties' repeated their closeness not only in policy but also in synchronising a defence outlook. Obama said firstly that the US 'has no stronger ally than Australia', then declared his real aim of deepening cooperation between defence forces.<sup>8</sup> Australia was ready. The

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<sup>4</sup> "Australia Ramps Up Sanctions on Syrian Regime", Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd, Press Release, 13 May 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, Senate, 1 June 2011, 157; *Dow Jones International News*, 21-22 June 2011.

<sup>6</sup> "Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2011 Joint Communique", State Department Documents/FIND, 15 September 2011.

<sup>7</sup> "Mark Toner, Director, Office of Press Relations, State Department, Holds State Department Regular News Briefing, As Released by The State Department", Political Transcript Wire, 10 November 2011.

<sup>8</sup> "The President's News Conference with Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia in Canberra, Australia", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 16 November 2011.

parties agreed on 'joint initiatives to enhance' the ANZUS alliance by expanding the 'collaboration' between the ADF, the US Marine Corps and the US Air Force. Accordingly, Australia would 'welcome deployments of a company-sized rotation of 200 to 250 marines in the Northern Territory for around 6 months at a time'. The aim of joint and combined training<sup>9</sup> was to develop a posture 'to better respond together'. Increased synchronisation of defence forces would make Australia more valuable for joint operations. During his speech in parliament, Obama stressed the significance of Australian troops in Afghanistan: 'I salute Australia: outside of NATO, the largest contributor of troops' to Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

In the first quarter of 2012, Australia's focus on Syria grew. In parliament on 7 February, Rudd condemned the massive killings of civilians in Homs, and stressed the government's profound disappointment at the UN Security Council's vetoes (by China and Russia), of an international call for military action or a regime change or an arms embargo or sanctions. He said that President Assad 'has lost all legitimacy and has shown a complete disregard for the rights and welfare of the Syrian people. Assad should step down and he should step down now'. He added, 'I therefore welcome calls by both our United States and EU partners to work with Arab partners to establish an international support group of like-minded countries to work in concert to support [a] peaceful transition in Syria and the earliest end to the bloodshed'.<sup>11</sup> Rudd was repeating the statements of the US Congress and Obama on Assad: that Assad should 'step down from power'.<sup>12</sup>

As did Obama, Australia followed a diplomatic course against Syria. On 9 February Rudd talked to the Syrian charge d'affaires, Jawdat Ali, since Syria had no ambassador in Canberra. Rudd said that Assad 'must find an exit strategy and had lost legitimacy by deploying arms against his own people', and that the violence, 'including in Homs' was 'indisputable'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Apart from joint NATO practices and the management of US bases, Turkey had had no such specific synchronisation with the US military.

<sup>10</sup> "Remarks to the Parliament in Canberra, Australia", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 17 November 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 7 February 2012, 53-54.

<sup>12</sup> "Calling for democratic change in Syria", US Congressional Bills, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, Y 1.6: Y 1.4/2, 9 February 2012.

<sup>13</sup> *Age*, 9 February 2012.



In February and March, the Syrian crisis began to pre-occupy parliament. In February, Senator Bob Brown announced the Australian Senate's condemnation of 'the appalling human rights abuses and escalating violence in Syria' and called on 'President Assad to step down'.<sup>14</sup> In March, the Liberal Party's Joe Hockey said that Australia 'should stand up and say that' it 'will not put up with the actions of Assad'.<sup>15</sup>

In May, Australia began to take more serious steps. Foreign Minister Bob Carr expelled the Syrian charge d'affaires after more than 100 people were massacred in the village of Houla. Carr said, 'this is the most effective way we've got of sending a message of revulsion to the Syrian government'.<sup>16</sup> That month Obama told Erdoğan that military action, which the US could not carry out by itself, would complicate things in Syria. The US would continue to put pressure on Assad via sanctions.<sup>17</sup> Carr and Gillard echoed Obama's stance. Carr claimed that Australia would consider military intervention in Syria but 'Syria's military might make such action extremely difficult'. Gillard said that 'Australia and other nations would continue with sanctions against Syria'.<sup>18</sup> This closeness, even in political rhetoric, shows that, Australian priorities and policies aligned with the US. There were no visible wobbles on the Australian arm regarding Syria.

In June, following the US, Australia ramped up sanctions on Syria. Australia already had an arms embargo and travel and financial restrictions on Syrian nationals. Now Australia blocked 'trade and investment in oil, petroleum, financial services, telecommunications and precious metals',<sup>19</sup> ramped up its diplomatic and humanitarian efforts. In July, at a Friends of Syria meeting in Paris, Carr stated that 'Australia has taken a lead in calling for a unified international response to end the bloodshed', and announced that Australia would give \$5 million in humanitarian aid to Syria to refugees and their host communities, which brought Australia's total contribution to \$16 million.<sup>20</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Hansard, Senate, 8 February 2012, 391.

<sup>15</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 14 March 2012, 2945.

<sup>16</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 29 May 2012.

<sup>17</sup> "Joint Press Conference by President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey", Office of the Press Secretary, the White House, 16 May 2013.

<sup>18</sup> *Herald Sun*, 31 May 2012.

<sup>19</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 25 June 2012.

<sup>20</sup> *AAP General News Wire*, 8 July 2012.

September, Australia took another significant step in humanitarian aid and announced that it would accept extra 1,000 refugees from Syria.<sup>21</sup>

In the Senate in October, it was stated that Australia did not have 'extensive interests or assets' in Syria and there was 'very little, if any, Australian economic or commercial involvement on the ground in Syria'. Australia considered Syria a humanitarian crisis, 'impacting not only Syria but also its neighbouring states'.<sup>22</sup>

At the end of the year, Australian authorities began to discuss the long-term consequences of the Syrian conflict, particularly regarding the return home of 'Australian home-grown jihadists'. 'The Australian Federal Police's deputy commissioner in charge of national security, Peter Drennan, confirmed [that] the Syrian conflict had resulted in a spike in the number of Australians travelling overseas to fight'. He added that 'these individuals then return with training in the use of weapons and explosives and experience fighting in armed conflict' and 'could well use these skills and knowledge for terrorism in Australia'.<sup>23</sup> The Syrian crisis was becoming more important for Australia than was previously considered.

In January 2013, as a non-permanent member the UN Security Council, Australia repeated the need for humanitarian action in Syria. On 18 January, Australia outlined a plan to protect medical workers and maintain access to hospitals for families caught in Syria. The US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, supported this.<sup>24</sup>

On 18 March, Foreign Minister Carr met Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington. Their statements proved the continuing stability of the Australian arm. Kerry declared, 'I don't think there's a relationship that we have that is more united, collaborative, and strong than our friendship with Australia', and 'our relationship, I think, is stronger than ever'. Carr was more direct regarding Australia's position. He stated that Australia would 'welcome American leadership

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<sup>21</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 13 September 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Hansard, Senate, 18 October 2012, 73-74.

<sup>23</sup> *Weekend Australian*, 22 December 2012.

<sup>24</sup> "Australia: Australia to raise Syria medical plan at UN Security Council", MENA Report, 18 January 2013.

the leadership of the President and the leadership of the Secretary of State, on the Middle East'.<sup>25</sup> It was clear that Australia would align its priorities with the US.

Australia's backing of Obama's 21 August decision to take limited military action against Syria after Assad's chemical attack<sup>26</sup> proved this. Carr stated that 'I think America is entitled ... to receive [support] from a country like Australia that has elevated a concern with chemical weapons'. Carr justified this by claiming that 'we could suffer retaliation because we're an ally, because we've got a security treaty with the United States, because of what we've said at any time during this wretched, appalling civil war in Syria'.<sup>27</sup> On 6 September Australia and the US together with Canada, France, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, and the UK condemned Assad's use of chemical weapons. They noted that the UN Security Council was paralysed and could not stop the increased suffering in Syria, or the regional instability.<sup>28</sup> Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop<sup>29</sup> stated that, as president of the UN Security Council, Australia was 'taking the lead in finding a resolution ... for the conflict in Syria'. She also implied that Australia had been collaborating with the US throughout this effort against chemical weapons.<sup>30</sup>

In November, Australia-American collaboration on Syria was a priority during AUSMIN consultations. The US delegation appreciated Australia's lead during its Security Council presidency against Syria's chemical weapons. Both parties underlined their efforts towards a 'political transition in Syria and urged opposition groups to work together to build a post-Assad Syria'. Kerry also stated

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<sup>25</sup> "Remarks with Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr After Their Meeting", State Department Documents/FIND, 18 March 2013.

<sup>26</sup> "Remarks on the Situation in Syria", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 31 August 2013.

<sup>27</sup> *AM – Australia Broadcasting Corporation*, 31 August 2013.

<sup>28</sup> "Joint Statement by the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, the French Republic, the Italian Republic, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Spain, the Republic of Turkey, and the United Kingdom", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 6 September 2013.

<sup>29</sup> In Australia, the Tony Abbot Government had come to power on 18 September 2013.

<sup>30</sup> *AM – Australia Broadcasting Corporation*, 24 September 2013; *Canberra Times*, 29 October 2013.

that both parties' 'shared efforts' were for 'reaching a political solution' in Syria.<sup>31</sup> The arm was still stable and sustaining its trend since Australia did not have Turkey's problem of supporting Syrian coalition elements disliked by the US or pushing for a quick military solution that the US found problematic or unlikely.

Developments in 2014 continued to maintain the Australian arm's tendency. The year started with Bishop's Washington visit on 22 January 2014. Bishop met Vice President Joe Biden. Again each underscored the strength of US-Australia alliance.<sup>32</sup> Bishop said, '63 years on [from ANZUS], the US alliance remains the cornerstone of our national security'.<sup>33</sup> On US priorities in Syria she said 'obviously, the US leads the global effort' and 'Australia is a vigorous supporter of international counter-terrorism co-operation, as well as playing our part in specific regional action'.<sup>34</sup>

In February 2014, Australia's focus on the ISIS threat in Syria and its long-term repercussions was intensified, especially on Australians fighting in ISIS and their potential to pose a national security threat when/if they return home. Australia's counter-terrorism ambassador, Bill Fisher, stated that 'al-Qaeda has made a comeback that few foresaw. On at least one important metric, it has never been stronger'. He added, '[t]wo groups linked to al-Qaeda, [ISIS] and Jabhat al-Nusra now lead the military resistance against Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad'. On Australia's national security he said, 'several dozen' Australians were believed to be fighting in Syria. Attorney General George Brandis clarified the threat perception by warning that 'those who actively participate in combat or assist in the planning and facilitation of such activity can become radicalised and obtain new skills - including the ability to conduct an attack on Australian soil [and] radicalise others'.<sup>35</sup> Australian media reports repeated that 'Australians fighting in Syria now occupy senior leadership positions with al-Qa'ida-linked groups, with

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<sup>31</sup> "Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN)", State Department Documents/FIND, 20 November 2013; "Secretary of State Kerry Comments at Joint Press Availability with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, and Australian Defence Minister David Johnston", US Fed News Service, Washington DC, 21 November 2013.

<sup>32</sup> "Readout of Vice President Biden's Meeting with Foreign Minister Julie Bishop of Australia", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 22 January 2014.

<sup>33</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 25 January 2014.

<sup>34</sup> *Australian*, 23 January 2014.

<sup>35</sup> *Canberra Times*, 1 February 2014.

new figures showing the number of passports cancelled on security grounds has soared to record levels'.<sup>36</sup> Both Australia and the US saw ISIS as the primary threat and Assad as secondary.

On 22 February, Australia approved the UN Security Council resolution 2139 aiming to extend humanitarian aid to Syria. Australia co-authored the resolution. Australia's UN Ambassador Gary Quinlan stated that '[t]he other resolutions were aimed at achieving a political solution [to the war] or imposing sanctions; this one is about humanitarian assistance'. Australia was continuing 'its humanitarian diplomacy efforts'.<sup>37</sup>

In March 2014, there was a significant example of Australia's acknowledgement of the imbalance in its relations with the US. To alleviate US discomfort over Australia's developing economic relations with China, the Australian government clarified its choice between these two great powers. On 6 March at the Sydney Institute, Bishop stated that 'while Australia continues to cement and modernise our close ties with the nations of our region, it's not been at the expense of our alliance partner, the United States'. She added that 'we agreed to work together to support the US policy of rebalance to the region and to work together on the full implementation of the force posture initiatives in Australia'.<sup>38</sup> The Australian government needed a deeper defence cooperation with the US for Australia's security in the Indo-Pacific. Acknowledging this imbalance made it very clear that Australia was trying to adapt its priorities to the US not only in Syria.

US-Australia defence cooperation deepened. On 23 April, a joint media release of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence announced that the government 'approved the acquisition of an additional 58 F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft', which would 'reinforce the ADF's ability to operate seamlessly with US forces and Australia's capacity to continue supporting ... shared strategic

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<sup>36</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 2014; *Canberra Times*, 1 February 2014; *Australian*, 18 February 2014.

<sup>37</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 2014; *Washington Post*, 23 February 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Kumuda Simpson, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy, January to July 2015", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 61:2, 2015, 612; Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Speeches, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2014/>, (Accessed 5.3.2019).

interests under the US alliance'.<sup>39</sup> While Turkish-American tactical collaboration was shrinking, Australian-American collaboration was expanding.

The US appreciated Australia's efforts in adapting its priorities. In June Prime Minister Tony Abbott visited Obama, who once again underlined the closeness in bilateral relations: 'we don't have a better friend in the world, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, than Australia'. Obama also expressed his pleasure at the Australian stance on China: '[o]bviously, both the United States and Australia have enormous trade relationships with China, and we both agree that it's important to continue to see China prosper and rise. But what's also important is that as China emerges as this great world power that it also is helping to reinforce and abide by basic international law and norms'. Obama also noted the similarity of threat perceptions regarding Syria: 'both our countries are potentially threatened by jihadists and freedom fighters, as they call them, that are going into Syria, getting trained in terrorist tactics, and then potentially coming back to our countries and could end up being a significant threat to our homeland as well'. Abbott indicated that Australia would follow the US in the Middle East: He said 'there are a whole range of security issues which the United States is leading on and where Australia is doing our part to secure the freedom and the safety of the world and its citizens'. At a press conference Obama repeated, 'there are a handful of countries in the world that we always know we can count on, not just because they share our values, but we know we can count on them because they've got real capacity. Australia is one of those countries'.<sup>40</sup> After the meeting Obama and Abbott 'announced the conclusion of the US-Australian Force Posture Agreement', which would give US forces 'more opportunities to work with Australian forces both bilaterally and in trilateral and regional activities'. The Agreement facilitated continuing bilateral cooperation on Syria.<sup>41</sup> Australia's defence priorities were becoming institutionalized.

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<sup>39</sup> "Prime Minister and Minister for Defence - Joint Media Release - F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to transform Australia's air combat capability", <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/david-johnston/media-releases/prime-minister-and-minister-defence-joint-media-release-f-35>, (Accessed 5.3.2019)

<sup>40</sup> "Remarks Following a Meeting with Prime Minister Anthony J. Abbott of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 12 June 2014.

<sup>41</sup> "FACT SHEET: The United States and Australia: An Alliance for the Future", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 12 June 2014.

In June, ISIS' capture of Mosul raised concern in both Australia and the US. Bishop was 'deeply concerned by media reports that the al-Qaeda-linked militant group', ISIS, 'has seized control ... of Mosul'.<sup>42</sup> ISIS' further penetration in Syria and Iraq accelerated Australia's humanitarian diplomacy efforts. In July, with Luxembourg and Jordan, Australia co-sponsored another significant Security Council resolution, 2165, which aimed to mandate humanitarian aid access to Syria.<sup>43</sup>

In August, ISIS expansion in Syria was discussed at the 29<sup>th</sup> AUSMIN consultations, which reinforced the parallel priorities of Australia and the US. Kerry stated, '[a] considerable focus of our discussion was on counterterrorism and, more specifically, on the issue of foreign fighters'. They are 'leaving their countries, going to Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere and becoming radicalized and taking part in extremist terrorist activities [. This] is, in fact, an international problem', and 'a concern for Australia' and the US. He added, 'we're cooperating to get the chemical weapons out of Syria'. The two nations signed the Force Posture Initiatives, which was 'the formal, legally binding document about a presence of U.S. Marines in the north of [Australia]'.<sup>44</sup> A joint communiqué of AUSMIN noted, 'both countries are continuing to work closely to tackle serious challenges ... including the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria, protection of civilians in conflict zones, effective implementation of sanctions, countering the international terrorist threat and regional weapons proliferation'. The communiqué also stated that both countries condemned Syria's use of chemical weapons and were seeking a political solution, not a military one.<sup>45</sup>

Australia echoed Obama's decision in August to use limited air strikes and special forces against ISIS. This 'provided the Abbott government with an ideal opportunity to show its support for the ANZUS alliance'.<sup>46</sup> After withdrawing troops from Iraq in 2008, Australia maintained an operational hub at Al Minhad

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<sup>42</sup> *PM – Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 11 June 2014.

<sup>43</sup> *Voice of America News/FIND*, 14 July 2014.

<sup>44</sup> "Secretary of State Kerry Comments About Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop, and Australian Minister of Defense David Johnston", US Fed News Service, Washington D.C., 13 Aug 2014.

<sup>45</sup> "Joint Communique AUSMIN 2014", State Department Documents/FIND, 12 August 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Andrew Phillips, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy, July to December 2014", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 61:2, 2015, 274.

air base in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>47</sup> This asset helped Australia provide humanitarian aid and military supplies to US-backed Kurdish military elements in Erbil.<sup>48</sup> Abbott stated that this would be an open-ended deployment, which could last 'many, many months'.<sup>49</sup>

Australia's concerns about ISIS were realized towards the end of 2014. Abbott rightly stated that the ISIS 'is a terrorist group that is reaching out to Australia. This is not just an international security situation, but it's a domestic security situation'.<sup>50</sup> ISIS became a domestic threat with "lone wolf" attacks in Melbourne<sup>51</sup> and Sydney.<sup>52</sup>

The attacks increased the Syrian conflict's prominence in the Australian national security agenda. During parliamentary discussions on the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014, several MPs stated that ISIS had become 'one of the government's highest national security priorities'.<sup>53</sup> The attacks raised Australia's threat level from medium to high.<sup>54</sup> In January 2015, Abbott and the Premier of New South Wales Mike Baird gave an account of the Sydney attack, which underlined that 'the decision to raise the threat level [was] related to ... the increasing numbers of Australians connected with, or inspired by ... ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, and al-Qa'ida, which have desire to attack Western countries, including Australia'. The account repeatedly declared Australia's vulnerability to "home grown" terrorist attacks.<sup>55</sup> On 23 February Abbott noted the rising terrorist threat 'at home and abroad', and stated his government's underlying concern: '[w]e have seen our fellow Australians – people born and bred to live and let live – succumb to the lure of this death cult'. He added, '[b]y any measure, the threat to Australia is worsening', and pointed to coming counter-terror measures: 'The government will develop amendments to the Australian Citizenship Act so that we can revoke or suspend Australian citizenship

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<sup>47</sup> *ABC News*, 15 September 2014; Hansard, House of Representatives, 25 September 2014, 10687.

<sup>48</sup> *Australian*, 14 September 2014;

<sup>49</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 15 September 2014.

<sup>50</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 15 September 2014.

<sup>51</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 24 September 2014.

<sup>52</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 15 December 2014.

<sup>53</sup> Hansard, House of Representatives, 1 December 2014, 13635-13696.

<sup>54</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 20 January 2015.

<sup>55</sup> *ABC*, 22 February 2015.



in the case of dual nationals. It has long been the case that people who fight against Australia forfeit their citizenship'.<sup>56</sup> Abbott thought make this counter-terror measure a law, enabling the Immigration Department to strip dual citizens of Australian citizenship,<sup>57</sup> but was opposed within Cabinet.<sup>58</sup>

Introducing domestic counter-terrorism measures did not lessen Australia's enthusiasm for US policies and tactics in Syria. In January 2015 after ISIS siege of Kobani, the US intensified its efforts to fight ISIS via supporting the PYD/YPG. In March, Abbott announced that Australia would send 300 troops to Iraq, in addition to the forces already deployed: '[t]his follows requests from the Iraqi and from the United States governments'.<sup>59</sup> Although Australian military elements were sent to Iraq, they were meant to train Iraqi *peshmerga* forces fighting ISIS in Syria.<sup>60</sup> Australia's increased support was an indirect, but an important, help to American efforts in Syria.

The US praised Australia's contribution. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf said that 'Australia has contributed significantly to the coalition efforts by providing personnel and aircraft to air combat and support missions, and advising and assisting Iraqi security forces. Australia has been a strong partner in the counter [ISIS] coalition.'<sup>61</sup>

In May, Defence Minister Kevin Andrews stated that if there was tension between the US and China, both of which were 'particularly important' in 'shaping the' Indo-Pacific region, Australia's alliance with the US would 'continue to be a central feature of Australia's defence and security arrangements'. Australia 'continue[s] to strongly support the United States' presence in the Indo-Pacific, and to 'welcome its renewed focus on the region'.<sup>62</sup> There was an important link

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<sup>56</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 February 2015.

<sup>57</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>58</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 2015; *ABC Premium News*, 31 May 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Tony Abbott, "Building Partner Capacity in Iraq", Joint Press Conference, Parliament House, 3 March 2015, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-24248>, (Accessed 6.3.2019).

<sup>60</sup> *AAP General News*, 3 March 2015; *Washington Post*, 3 March 2015.

<sup>61</sup> *AAP Bulletin Wire*, 4 March 2015.

<sup>62</sup> "Minister for Defence - Australian Member Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (Aus-CSCAP), 22 May 2015", <https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/minister/kevin-andrews/speeches/minister-defence-australian-member-committee-council-security>, (Accessed 6.3.2019).

between Australia's efficient following of US priorities in Syria and its need for US strategic support in Indo-Pacific. Helping the US in Syria was like paying a premium on US insurance for Australian security in this region.

In June Abbott highlighted similarities between Australian and American outlook towards ISIS in Syria. Firstly, he noted ISIS' global reach. He said that ISIS 'is not terrorism for a local grievance; this is terrorism with global ambitions'. He added that ISIS' 'senior members are routinely calling on sympathisers to kill unbelievers wherever they find them, sometimes specifying Australians'. He specified the significance of the US effort in fighting ISIS, and said that 'American leadership is indispensable here as in all the world's trouble spots'.<sup>63</sup> In another speech two weeks later Abbott observed that Australia and the US 'are natural partners because America's values ... are Australia's values, too', and that '[o]ur destinies are intertwined today, particularly as we meet the scourge of ISIL. ... Australia, like America, seeks to defend our interests, our citizens, our values and our friends'. He concluded that 'America will never have a more dependable friend than Australia'.<sup>64</sup> Abbott very clearly summarized a major reason for the continuing trend of the Australian arm.

In the first two weeks of August, Australian and US defence officials were 'in informal discussions ... about Australia joining the air campaign in northern Syria'.<sup>65</sup> Parliament did not yet support Abbott's "informal" decision to extend airstrikes from Iraq into Syria. The ALP in particular questioned the legality of airstrikes.<sup>66</sup> On 27 August, Abbott tried to justify his "informal" decision by announcing the US request: 'the President ... raised with me the Syrian situation and said that he would be very glad if Australia would do more, including airstrikes', adding that after bilateral official talks, 'a formal request has now come from the Pentagon'. The US Ambassador, John Berry, re-iterated Obama's request in an appreciative tone: Australia '[is] essential to many of the successes [the US] have had' and 'we would like to see it go into the eastern portions of

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<sup>63</sup> Tony Abbott, "Address to Australia's Regional Summit to Counter Violent Extremism", Sydney, 11 June 2015, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-24524>, (Accessed 6.3.2019).

<sup>64</sup> Tony Abbott, "Address to the USA Independence Day Reception", US Embassy, Canberra, 30 June 2015, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-24586>, (Accessed 6.3.2019).

<sup>65</sup> *Courier – Mail*, 13 August 2015.

<sup>66</sup> *ABC*, 13 August 2015.

Syria so that ISIL does not have any safe haven or any place to hide'.<sup>67</sup> The request came from the US but Australian media speculated that the government had prompted for it.<sup>68</sup> Abbott also stated that '[w]hile the legality is different whether these airstrikes are taking place in Syria or Iraq, the morality is the same'.<sup>69</sup>

The Greens were not satisfied. They thought Abbott's decision illegal and continued their call for a political solution.<sup>70</sup> Kevin Andrews defended the government by noting the lack of a physical border between Iraq and Syria. He said that Australia '[is] in Iraq at the invitation of the government of Iraq – we're defending Iraq', and that '[i]t makes sense to be able to go over the border [into Syria] because it's a bit like the border between New South Wales and the ACT'.<sup>71</sup> The Abbott government was adapting Australia's priorities to the US following the latter's additional requests.

The escalation of the humanitarian crisis in Syria helped the government's justifications. In September tragic footages of the refugee crisis 'provoked global outrage at the failure of the international community to act, and became symbolic of the challenge facing European countries in what had become the region's worst refugee crisis since the Second World War'.<sup>72</sup> The Australian public showed great sympathy for Syrian asylum-seekers.<sup>73</sup> Accordingly, the Abbott government prepared to offer 12,000 Syrian asylum-seekers permanent places in Australia's humanitarian program.<sup>74</sup> The ALP accepted this, which led the government get public support for aerial bombings in Syria. In mid-September, Australian airstrikes on ISIS targets began.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Australian*, 27 August 2015.

<sup>68</sup> *ABC*, 21 August 2015; *Age*, 26 August 2015.

<sup>69</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 13 August 2015.

<sup>70</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 9 September 2015.

<sup>71</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 10 September 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Katie Linnane, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy, July to December 2015", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 62:2, 2016, 273.

<sup>73</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 7-8 September 2015; *Wall Street Journal*, 9 September 2015.

<sup>74</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 December 2015.

<sup>75</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 7-8 September 2015; *Australian*, 9 September; *Age*, 10 September 2015; Hansard, House of Representatives, 10 September 2015, 9894, *ABC*, 16 September 2015.

On 15 September 2015 Malcolm Turnbull replaced Tony Abbott as prime minister. On 13 October the Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop, the Minister for Defence Marise Payne, the Secretary of State John Kerry and the Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter met for AUSMIN in Boston. On Syria, the meeting agreed on 'their strong commitment' to degrade and defeat ISIS in Syria via military intervention, but that the 'the conflict will ultimately require a political solution'.<sup>76</sup> Turnbull maintained Abbott's policy.

The significance of Australia's increasing commitment to Syria was implied in the 2016 Defence White Paper. This paper reflected a clear change in Australia's defence mindset.<sup>77</sup> Previously Australia had focused on a continental defence as set out in Paul Dibb's review. Dibb did not ignore helping the US but underlined that this help 'should be seen essentially as a gesture of support, not as a contribution that could materially affect the outcome'.<sup>78</sup> The 2016 Paper argued that Australia's defence force structure should address tasks in the Indo-Pacific and in other parts of the globe. It specified that the '[g]overnment is committed to making practical and effective military contributions to global security operations'.<sup>79</sup> Australia's alliance with the US should be strengthened 'to meet shared security challenges such as the pervasive threat of terrorism'.<sup>80</sup> Regarding Syria, the 'government will also continue to work closely with' the US 'to address common global security challenges such as in' Syria.<sup>81</sup> The paper showed how fully the Australian government had managed to adapt its priorities to the US.

On 19 January 2016, Turnbull made his first visit to the White House since becoming prime minister, and met Obama. Obama noted the closeness in

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<sup>76</sup> "2015 Australia-United States Ministerial (AUSMIN) Joint Statement", US Department of State, Press Release, 13 October 2015; "Remarks with Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, and Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne", US Department of State, Remarks by Secretary Kerry, 13 October 2015.

<sup>77</sup> Although in the Defence White Papers, following Dibb's review, a gradual change towards a more outward focus in Australian defence could be observed. The 2016 White Paper crystallised this focus.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 3. See also The Defence of Australia (1987 Defence White Paper), [https://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/1987](https://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/1987), (Accessed 6.3.2019). See also NAA, A14039, 4589, Cabinet Submission 4589 - Defence White Paper 1987 - The Defence of Australia - Decision 8975.

<sup>79</sup> Department of Defence, "2016 Defence White Paper", 15.

<sup>80</sup> Department of Defence, "2016 Defence White Paper", 9.

<sup>81</sup> Department of Defence, "2016 Defence White Paper", 44.

relations by appreciating Australia's efforts in Syria: 'in our fight against ISIL, Australia is the second largest contributor of troops on the ground after' the US. Turnbull stressed that Australia's contribution to the US efforts in fighting ISIS was not because of 'national self-interest, not just [of] economics or kinship, but [of] shared values', and that Australia's aims in fighting ISIS matched those of the US. He said that '[w]e have to constantly lift our game in the way we engage with and tackle these extremists, particularly' ISIS.<sup>82</sup> Turnbull clearly demonstrated a convergence of priorities.

Bishop also visited Washington at the end of January. She met Biden and relevant high-level security officials such as the head of the CIA, John Brennan, the Director of National Intelligence, General Jim Clapper, and the National Security Adviser, Susan Rice. The 'civil war in Syria and the fight against' ISIS 'dominated' their 'discussions'. Bishop promised continuing close coordination with the US: 'it has been acknowledged by the United States from the outset that Australia is a major contributor to the [Syrian] effort ... I know the United States is urging other countries to do as Australia has done and put forward a greater contribution to ensure that we can bring peace to Syria'.<sup>83</sup> Australia was a distinctive example of a US ally which so closely aligned its priorities with the US.

On 2 February Bishop met Kerry in Rome. Kerry stated that the US and its allies 'have to [go] ahead with their strategy and do so relentlessly' to counter ISIS expansion. Bishop implied that Australia's contribution to the coalition's efforts in Syria was its individual decision: 'there was absolutely no pressure from the US or other countries for Australia to do more in Iraq and Syria'.<sup>84</sup>

Bishop's visit and her statements had results. The Commander of US Pacific Air Force, General Lori Robinson, stated, 'high-level discussions are underway to have American B-1 bombers and aerial tankers temporarily stationed in the Northern Territory ... it gives us the opportunity to strengthen the ties we already

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<sup>82</sup> "Remarks Prior to a Meeting with Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 19 January 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Julie Bishop, "Sky News AM Agenda - interview with Kieran Gilbert", 28 January 2016, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>84</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 2 February 2016.

have with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and it gives the opportunity to train our pilots to understand the theatre and how important it is to strengthen our ties with our great allies, the RAAF'.<sup>85</sup>

The arm continued its trend. Australia was not only following US policies very closely, but also allowing the enlargement of a US presence on its soil. 'The expansion of [the] US presence in Australia is seen as a way both of boosting the US position in the region — enabling US aircraft and Marines to operate regionally — as well as deepening US commitments to Australian security'.<sup>86</sup> Australia's efforts in supporting the US in Syria were being recognised.

Yet in 2016 a wobble re-emerged following growing China-Australia cooperation. The wobble appeared after the US State Department 'secretly polled nationwide opinion of the Northern Territory's deal to lease [the] Darwin port to Chinese firm Landbridge, predicting it would likely force Australians to rethink their choices of when to put national security ahead of economic gain'. That 'the US carried out such polling reflected some American doubt about Australia's strategic intentions'.<sup>87</sup> The US was not happy with deepening China-Australia relations.<sup>88</sup>

Biden's visit to Sydney at the end of July showed that the US wanted to eliminate the wobble by recalibrating US' significance to Australia in the Indo-Pacific. Biden declared, 'I'm here because that partnership is a living connection between our two countries, as vital in our current era of change and uncertainty ... we've shown our commitment to lead in the region over and over again. Anyone who questions America's dedication and staying power in the Asia Pacific simply is not paying attention'.<sup>89</sup> The US was not comfortable with 'Beijing's behaviour across the Indo-Pacific' especially regarding increasing tensions in the East and South China seas, 'fuelled by Chinese land reclamation and militarisation'. Biden's visit demonstrated that 'even the closest relationships require tending. ANZUS should

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<sup>85</sup> *ABC Premium News*, 8 March 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Andrew Carr, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy, January to June 2016", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 62:4, 2016, 598.

<sup>87</sup> *Australian*, 9 March 2016.

<sup>88</sup> "The Center for Strategic and International Studies Holds a Discussion on Australia-Japan-U.S. Maritime Cooperation", *Political Transcript Wire*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>89</sup> *PM - Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 20 July 2016.

not be taken for granted, and it is not a wholly trouble-free zone'. In Southeast Asia, Australia's interests might cross 'American ambitions'.<sup>90</sup>

The disagreement reflected a significant parallel between Turkish-American and Australian-American relations. For trouble spots in the Middle East where Australia had little national interest, it was easy for Australian governments to follow American priorities. Yet, as with Turkey, neighbourhoods where Canberra always had key national priorities, such as developing relations with China, it was possible to conflict with US priorities.

On 18 September 2016 Australian airstrikes targeting what was believed to be ISIS elements near Dayr az Zawr turned out to be attacking Syrian government affiliated troops.<sup>91</sup> Turnbull said that 'Australian forces, Coalition forces in that particular operation, believed they were targeting Daesh units, Daesh fighters, units of ISIL'.<sup>92</sup> The Minister for Defence, Marise Payne, stated that the government 'regret[s] the loss of life and have extended our deep sympathies to the families of those, of members of the Syrian defence force involved'. Payne added that 'Australia will never intentionally, knowingly target a known Syrian military unit or in any way, shape or form actively support Daesh. Our mission is in fact to remove the threat of Daesh, not support it in any way'.<sup>93</sup> In the Australian Senate, in October, Acting Chief of the Defence Force Vice Admiral Ray Griggs gave an opening statement. He repeated that the Australian Defence Forces 'have been patently clear that Australia would never intentionally target a known Syrian government military unit or actively support Daesh'.<sup>94</sup> The statements showed how much Australian and American priorities coincided on Syria. Unlike Turkey, both wanted to defeat ISIS not primarily remove Assad.

While the convergence of priorities keeping the Australian arm stable, the American discomfort regarding Australia-China relations still induced wobbles. After Donald Trump's presidential victory, AUSMIN was cancelled for 2016. The

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<sup>90</sup> *Australian*, 20 July 2016.

<sup>91</sup> *Asia News Monitor*, 21 September 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Doorstop National Mall, Washington D.C.", 22 September 2016, <http://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-40465>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>93</sup> *AM – Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, 19 September 2016.

<sup>94</sup> Hansard, Senate, 19 October 2016, 10.

Australian media commented, '[i]t's not a promising sign about the alliance's vitality', and that Washington was shocked 'late in 2015, at not being told that the Port of Darwin - including facilities used by the US Marines - was about to be leased for 99 years to a Chinese company with Communist Party links'.<sup>95</sup>

In addition to this wobble, 2017 started with the "Trump effect".<sup>96</sup> The Trump administration's repeated statements of its preference to break the traditions of US foreign policy raised questions in Australia 'about the durability of the alliance'.<sup>97</sup>

Before the "Trump effect" started to influence bilateral relations, in Washington on 26 January, Bishop stated that 'Australia entered into free trade negotiations with the United States and ten other partners because we believed the Trans Pacific Partnership [TPP] had the potential to deliver mutual benefits to every nation involved', and that even if 'the Trump administration has withdrawn its support for the TPP', 'Australia remains supportive of the principles that underpinned the TPP'.<sup>98</sup> This was an early signal that in the Indo-Pacific, the Turnbull and Trump administrations' relations began to wobble.

Turnbull's first telephone conversation with Trump on 28 January demonstrated this. 'Trump badgered, bragged and abruptly ended [the] phone call with' Turnbull over a refugee agreement.<sup>99</sup> Trump's tone showed that the relations would not be as comfortable as before, at least at leaders' level.

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<sup>95</sup> *Weekend Australian*, 12 November 2016. See also *Courier – Mail*, 10 November 2016.

<sup>96</sup> Ramesh Thakur, "The Trump Effect and Australia", *Australian Outlook*, 7 December 2016; Timothy B. Gravelle "Trumping foreign policy: public diplomacy, framing, and public opinion among middle power publics", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 72:5, 2018; 473-490.

<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Zala, "Issues in Australian Foreign Policy, January to June 2017", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 63:4, 2017, 612.

<sup>98</sup> Julie Bishop, "US-Australia Dialogue on Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific", 26 January 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2017/>, (Accessed 7.3.2019). The Trans-Pacific Partnership 'was the centerpiece of President Barack Obama's strategic pivot to Asia. Before President Donald J. Trump withdrew the United States in 2017, the TPP was set to become the world's largest free trade deal, covering 40 percent of the global economy. For its supporters, such a deal would have expanded U.S. trade and investment abroad, spurred economic growth, lowered consumer prices, and created new jobs, while also advancing U.S. strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region. But its detractors, including Trump, saw the deal as likely to accelerate U.S. decline in manufacturing, lower wages, and increase inequality'. For details see "What Is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)?", <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-trans-pacific-partnership-tpp>, (Accessed 7.3.2019); Akira Amari, "The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement", *Asia-Pacific Review*, 23:1, 2016, 11-20.

<sup>99</sup> *Washington Post*, 2 February 2017.



Both parties still agreed on Syria. Turnbull stated that '[w]e will be engaged and we are already engaged, obviously, with the new administration in Washington', and that 'we have a very intimate, engaged collaboration, alliance, with the United States, so we're working very closely together'.<sup>100</sup> After 'having had very detailed meetings' with Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, National Security Advisor General Herbert Raymond McMaster, Bishop stated that 'it is clear that a military solution will not resolve the instability, the civil war in Syria; there must be a political solution'.<sup>101</sup> At a press conference for the arrival of an F-35A, Turnbull announced the legal arrangement for increasing the efficiency of Australian defence force engagements against ISIS:

Australian law, as it stood, had the consequence that our defence forces in that particularly Syria-Iraq theatre could only target terrorists when they were actively engaged in combat. We weren't able to target them when they were in support roles, in logistics, in planning, in financing, for example. I changed the law ... so that our Australian Defence Force, our Air Force, is able to kill terrorists in the Middle East whether they have a gun in their hand, a bomb in their hand or whether they are in the back office planning an attack or raising money or engaged in logistics. [Trump] was very, very impressed to hear about the [defence] investment [Australia has] made.<sup>102</sup>

Yet close cooperation on Syria still did not ease the wobble regarding China-Australia relations. 'Australia's diplomatic juggling act in wooing Chinese investment while strengthening its military alliance with the US' was not appreciated in Washington. The Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Peter Varghese, stated that 'Australia ultimately wouldn't be able to avoid facing up to China's ambition to displace the U.S. as the predominant power in Asia [and] judging [this] to be an ambition at the heart of Australia's alliance with the U.S.'.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Address to the National Press Club", 1 February 2017, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-40718>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>101</sup> Julie Bishop, "Doorstep Interview", 23 February 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>102</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Press Conference at the arrival of the Joint Strike Fighter F-35A", Transcript, 3 March 2017, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-40798>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>103</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, 21 March 2017.

On Syria, on 22 March Bishop attended the Global Coalition Summit to emphasize Australia's efforts in fighting ISIS.<sup>104</sup> After the summit Bishop said that Australia would 'continue to pressure ISIS militarily in Iraq and Syria', and that Australia was 'already one of the largest contributors to the effort to defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq and we will continue to work within the Coalition'. She said that Australian and American priorities overlapped on 'on defeating ISIS in Syria' and retaking 'the territory that has been claimed by ISIS'.<sup>105</sup> Next day, in another interview in Washington, Bishop left the door open for providing more troops in Syria if the US asked for it. She said '[o]f course we will continue to play our part and it may well be that we are asked to provide more and we would of course consider any specific request at that time'.<sup>106</sup>

In April, regardless of the "Trump effect" in Asia, Australian and American priorities on Syria were still aligned. The US position was to take unilateral action to stop Assad using chemical weapons if the UN failed to provide collective action. Bishop stated that '[i]f indeed it is the Assad regime as many have claimed, that is responsible for [the chemical] attacks, then the first step would be ... to prevent the Assad regime from continuing', and that both the US and Australia believed that 'Assad has to be part of the transition to a political solution'.<sup>107</sup> Turnbull stated, '[y]ou know where we stand, we have condemned [Assad's chemical attacks] utterly, it cries out for a strong response and we are in close, very close touch as we always are, constant, close and constant communication with our allies and in particular the United States'.<sup>108</sup>

In May, Turnbull visited Trump. Although both leaders showed warmth,<sup>109</sup> Australian concerns about the closeness of relations concerning the Indo-Pacific

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<sup>104</sup> Julie Bishop, "Statement to the Global Coalition Summit", 22 March 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>105</sup> Julie Bishop, "Doorstop interview" 22 March 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>106</sup> Julie Bishop, "Sunrise, Interview with David Koch and Samantha Armytage" 23 March 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>107</sup> Julie Bishop, "ABC RN Breakfast, Interview with Fran Kelly" 6 April 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>108</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Radio interview with Neil Mitchell, 3AW", Transcript, 7 April 2017, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-40875>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>109</sup> "Remarks During a Meeting with Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia and an Exchange with Reporters in New York City", *Compilation of Presidential Documents, Office of the Federal Register*, National Archives and Records Administration, 7 March 2017.

were growing<sup>110</sup> even while cooperation on Syria was deepening. At the 16<sup>th</sup> IISS Asia Security Summit in June, Turnbull noted the efficiency of the international coalition against ISIS. Regarding Australia's concerns about the US-China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific he stated:

Now some commentators argue that Australia has to choose between Beijing and Washington. It is an utterly false choice - we have a good friend and partner in Beijing and a steadfast friend and ally in Washington. Nothing constrains us in our dealings with the other, neither constrains us in our dealings with the other - our foreign policy is determined in Australia's national interest and Australia's alone. We know that our security and our prosperity depends on the continued stability and peace of this region, a condition which can only be achieved if all nations can pursue their own destinies free of coercion or interference. Our Alliance with the United States reflects a deep alignment of interests and values but it has never been a straightjacket for Australian policy-making.<sup>111</sup>

On 5 June, both sides met for 2017 AUSMIN consultations. The resultant joint statement stressed the 'strength and vitality' of the alliance, and claimed efficiency in US-Australia cooperation on fighting ISIS. Australia's main concern was Indo-Pacific security. 'Australia and the United States underlined their shared, deepening commitment to the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, and to strong regional organisations, especially the East Asia Summit, APEC, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus'.<sup>112</sup> Tillerson particularly emphasized US appreciation for Australia's contribution in Syria. 'We are certainly grateful for Australia's commitment to defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria, [or] wherever else they may show their face - and certainly their face is appearing in the region. Countering violent extremism, stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, and shutting down propaganda arms online remains a shared goal for both the United States and Australia'.<sup>113</sup> The wobble on the arm did not change its now traditional trend.

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<sup>110</sup> James Bowen, "Trump-Turnbull Meet Comes Amid Increasing Debate over Australia's US Ties", *The Diplomat*, 5 May 2017.

<sup>111</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Keynote address 16th IISS Asia Security Summit, Shangri-La Dialogue", Transcript, 2 June 2017, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41001>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>112</sup> "Joint Statement AUSMIN 2017", State Department Documents/FIND, 5 June 2017.

<sup>113</sup> Julie Bishop, "Joint Press Conference with United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defence General Jim Mattis", Transcript, 5 June 2017, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

At the launch of a Foreign Policy White Paper in November, Turnbull stated, '[o]ur alliance with the United States reflects a deep alignment of interests and values, while never being a straitjacket for Australian policymaking'. He added:

Now there is no more important bilateral relationship in the world than that of China and the United States. I have seen firsthand that Presidents Trump and Xi respect and understand each other, both on the issues on which they agree and those on which they differ.<sup>114</sup>

At the end of the year Bishop repeated the significance of the Australia-US alliance at the "G'Day USA 2018" launch. She said Australia and the US 'are natural partners' and that the US 'is also [Australia's] most important strategic partner in defence, intelligence and security terms'. She added that 'today US and Australian servicemen and women are working together to counter terrorism in Syria'.<sup>115</sup>

In 2018, the arm was still stable and trending upwards regarding Syria, even if ISIS began to lose some weight in the security agendas of both countries. The ISIS problem in Syria was now becoming a concern about foreign terrorist fighters returning to Australia. For this continuing threat Australia was still working very closely with the US.<sup>116</sup> In February Bishop met Tillerson in Kuwait for Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS meeting. There both parties declared the significance of their collaborative efforts in defeating ISIS elements in Syria and Iraq. Yet Bishop added Australia's concern that ISIS 'may no longer hold Iraqi territory, but most certainly, some of its members are seeking to hide among the general population and return to the tactics of insurgency'.<sup>117</sup> Although this would not affect Australia's relations with the US: '[w]e have a very close relationship with the United States and we will continue to work with them on common challenges in our region and globally and specifically on issues we already have

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<sup>114</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Launch of the Government's Foreign Policy White Paper", Transcript, 23 November 2017,

<https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41344>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>115</sup> Julie Bishop, "G'Day USA 2018 Launch", Speech, 1 December 2017,

<https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 7.3.2019).

<sup>116</sup> Julie Bishop, "Newstalk ZB - Interview with Larry Williams", Transcript, 8 February 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>117</sup> *Herald Sun*, 13 February 2018.

underway, for example, our work in the coalition to defeat terrorism, in Iraq, Syria'.<sup>118</sup>

In Washington at the end of February, Turnbull reiterated Bishop's concerns. He said, '[now that] the so-called caliphate has been rolled up in Syria, you're seeing foreign fighters coming back to the region. It's very, very important that we work seamlessly, as closely as possible with our partners in the region to ensure that we do not get a sort of revival of ISIL in this region'.<sup>119</sup> Trump shared Australia's concerns and 'thanked ... Australia's leadership on counterterrorism issues in Southeast Asia and its substantial contributions to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. They discussed further cooperation as terrorist fighters depart Iraq and Syria'.<sup>120</sup> Both leaders emphasized their coordinated efforts for a political settlement in Syria and to fight ISIS.<sup>121</sup> Turnbull underlined the main reason for the success of Australia-US cooperation. 'Australia and the United States, we define our national identities, not by race or religion or ethnicity but rather by commitment to shared political values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, mutual respect'.<sup>122</sup>

Cooperation continued without wobbles when Assad used chemical weapons in Douma. Australia waited for the US before reacting. Bishop then said that 'President Trump has indicated that the United States will decide [on] a response shortly. Australia will obviously take into account any request from the United States and our allies in relation to this matter'.<sup>123</sup> In practice, '[i]n relation to the recent chemical weapons attack in Syria, overnight Australia has co-sponsored a

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<sup>118</sup> Julie Bishop, "ABC Drive - Interview with Linda Mottram", Transcript, 14 March 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>119</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Interview with Kieran Gilbert, Sky News", Transcript, 22 February 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41462>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>120</sup> "President Donald J. Trump's Meeting with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull Strengthens the United States-Australia Alliance and Close Economic Partnership", White House Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Briefings/FIND, 23 February 2018.

<sup>121</sup> "Press Conference with President Trump", 24 February 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41468>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>122</sup> "Keynote address to the National Governor's Association Annual Winter Meeting", 25 February 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41472>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>123</sup> Julie Bishop, "Interview with Fran Kelly - ABC RN Breakfast", Transcript, 10 April 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

United States UN Security resolution calling for the establishment of a new UN investigative mechanism to assess this chemical weapons attack'.<sup>124</sup>

Turnbull repeated Australia's support for US airstrikes. 'Today, the United States, United Kingdom and France responded forcefully to the Syrian regime's illegal use of chemical weapons on 7 April in Douma. Australia supports these strikes, which demonstrate a calibrated, proportionate and targeted response'.<sup>125</sup>

At AUSMIN consultations in July, the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo gave 'a firm commitment that the US will not pull back on its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region'.<sup>126</sup> Pompeo confirmed, 'our cooperation and our efforts and our alliance is rock solid'. Not only in Syria but also for Indo-Pacific security and a de-nuclearised North Korea '[t]he United States and Australia speak with one voice'.<sup>127</sup> 'The Secretaries and Ministers underscored their shared commitment to ISIS's lasting defeat in Iraq and Syria'.<sup>128</sup>

In October Foreign Minister Marise Payne visited Washington, but discussed ISIS in Syria very little. Both parties' focus shifted to the return of foreign fighters to Southeast Asia, and Indo-Pacific security.<sup>129</sup> In November, Australia foreign and defence policy increased its attention on balancing China and the US in Indo-Pacific. Payne stated:

the stability of our region depends on relations between two of our most important partners. They are the United States and China. They are economically interdependent and their own relationships are sophisticated. They're multifaceted. So we want to continue to ensure the strength and vitality of our own relationship with the United States. It's fundamental to our security. But we can also be strengthening our

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<sup>124</sup> Julie Bishop, "Doorstop interview", Transcript, 11 April 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>125</sup> Malcolm Turnbull, "Response to targeted strikes in Syria", 14 April 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41568>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>126</sup> *Australian*, 25 July 2018.

<sup>127</sup> "Press Conference at the Australia-US Ministerial Consultations", 24 July 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>128</sup> "Joint Statement Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations 2018", US Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, 24 July 2018.

<sup>129</sup> "Secretary Pompeo's Meeting with Australia Foreign Minister Marise Payne", State Department Documents/FIND, 1 October 2018, Marise Payne, "Transcript of doorstep, Washington DC", Transcript, 3 October 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

relations with China ... particularly through advancing our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.<sup>130</sup>

At the end of the year, Syria became a hot topic in Australia once more with Trump's decision to pull US troops out of Syria. On 19 December Trump 'ordered the withdrawal of 2,000 American troops from Syria, bringing a sudden end to a military campaign that largely vanquished the Islamic State'.<sup>131</sup> After the decision US Defence Secretary James Mattis resigned, which kept Australian Defence personnel wondering about what would be Trump's next move in the Middle East.<sup>132</sup>

### *The Wobbly Cross:*

Turkish and Australian relations with the US regarding the Syrian crisis highlight the reasons for the wobbly cross. Both middle powers were in need of US support but for different levels of urgency. Turkey acknowledged the imbalance in its relations with the US since it needed US help in removing President Assad, alleviating the financial pressure of Syrian refugees, eliminating the PYD/YPG threat, and resolving additional national security issues such as the extradition of Fethullah Gülen. On almost none of these Turkish priorities, Turkey and the US agreed. Turkey tried to punch above its weight by urging the US to adapt its priorities to Turkey. Throughout the crisis it became clear that Turkey never had that capability. The US priority was shifted from removing Assad to eliminating Islamic extremists, particularly ISIS, with the PYD/YPG's militia support. Almost every high-level correspondence between Turkish and American officials stated the importance of Turkish-American cooperation but only for the US priority of fighting ISIS. In other words, the US tailored Turkey's priority. Divergence of priorities, policies and tactics induced incurable wobbles and sustained the downward sloping tendency of the Turkish arm.

Australia did not have close national security priorities in Syria, since the crisis did not pose a direct threat until the "lone wolf" attacks in Melbourne and

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<sup>130</sup> Marise Payne, "Interview with Sabra Lane, ABC AM", Transcript, 6 November 2018, <https://foreignminister.gov.au/transcripts>, (Accessed 8.3.2019).

<sup>131</sup> *New York Times*, 19 December 2018.

<sup>132</sup> *Australian Financial Review*, 22 December 2018.

Sydney. Therefore it was easier for Australia to adapt its priorities to the US in Syria. Australia followed the changes in US priorities from removing Assad to humanitarian intervention, from extended airstrikes to eliminating ISIS. As in the Gulf and Iraq wars, Australia very closely followed US policies and tactics. The ANZUS tradition and a common language aided Australia in following the US lead.

The Syrian crisis highlighted another aspect of the wobbly cross. The severity of national priorities makes it difficult for the middle power to adapt to the great power. When these priorities conflicted, sometimes acknowledging the imbalance in bilateral relations did not help. The great power expected the middle power to adapt to it. The US wanted Australia to diminish its cooperation with China and focus on ANZUS collaboration. Similarly the US ignored Turkey's concerns regarding the PYD/PYD and asked for support in fighting ISIS. Both middle powers had to comply because of their continuing need or desire for US support, which sustained the imbalance in relations and the trend of the arms.



## **Conclusion: Testing the “Wobbly Cross”**

This thesis compares Turkish-American and Australian-American relations from c.1975 and to the end of 2018. It aims to test and extend the argument put forward in my doctoral thesis that the diagonally opposite courses of these relations between the early 1940s and the mid 1970s continued until today. The case studies selected demonstrate that the arms of the cross not only sustained their opposite courses, but still wobble as US relations oscillate. The “wobbles” are the result of middle power leaders’ national security concerns set against their seeking self-reliance and national autonomy. The diagonal shape of the wobbly cross is caused by divergence in middle power with local and national priorities from a great power with global priorities.

Although Turkey and Australia are so dissimilar in their political culture, customs and institutions, the “wobbly cross” highlights the consequences of inherent factors in the situation of middle powers. These factors mainly relate to two conceptual aspects: an imbalance in relations and a divergence in priorities. These aspects constantly interact in structuring the “wobbly cross”.

A middle power’s relations with a great power are imbalanced. Even if they operate within an alliance framework, for example NATO or ANZUS, a middle power’s need for the great power is much greater and more diverse than the reverse. Both Turkey and Australia illustrate this. Because of its permanently fragile economy, Turkey has always needed foreign financial aid. Either via bilateral agreements or via the IMF, the US has provided most of this, which has generated an accumulating dependence, or an imbalance. In the 1990s and 2000s, Turkey tried to turn this imbalance into an interdependency by seeking to increase bilateral trade. The US constantly rejected this. Turkey’s continuing financial dependence on the US thus pushed Turkish leaders to acknowledge the imbalance and to try to act as a loyal US ally.

US military aid to support Turkey’s defence budget and its armed forces intensified this imbalance, because at the same time Turkey needed US diplomatic and political support for their attempts to join the EU. A similar need for US politico-diplomatic and military support to strengthen Turkey’s position in

the Middle East occurred with the Gulf War and intensified with the Arab Spring. The US then needed Turkey, but only in the military and security realms. Turkey has always been both a useful barrier to block Russian influence in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, and a significant logistic line for US operations in the region. Turkey has strategic NATO bases, for example Incirlik, critical to US deployments and airstrikes. The US administration's ultimate aim has been to use these bases without much Turkish interference.

Australia too has an imbalanced relationship with the US, but some differences put Canberra in a stronger position vis-à-vis Ankara. First, Australia's economy is not fragile nor reliant on US aid. The American and Australian economies in the finance, education, and service sectors interact near-seamlessly. This lets both countries deepen cooperation in trade and investment. Second, geographically Australia is far from the trouble spots of the Middle East, where the US has given most of its strategic attention in recent decades. Third, Australia has not needed US diplomatic or political support to strengthen its position in an international organization. The major imbalance in Australia-US relations is strategic. Australia seeks US support for high-tech military and intelligence equipment and data. More importantly, Australia needs a US strategic/military presence in the Indo-Pacific to feel secure. In other words, Australia's need for US support was for perceived threats, Turkey's was for acute and actual threats. Had the crises been in the Indo-Pacific, and not in the Middle East, the trend of the "wobbly cross" might have reversed.

The case studies show that the imbalance in Australia-US relations was not as vulnerable as in Turkish-US relations. For decades, even after the end of the Cold War, the US alliance was accepted as indispensable to Australian defence and foreign affairs. Almost always, Australia worked for "alliance solidarity", expecting that via this solidarity, the US would be anchored in Asia. The US alliance was seen as an insurance policy, and fighting for the US was its premium payment.

While imbalance directly affected Turkish-US and Australian-US relations, conflict in priorities were more significant for the trend of the arms.

This thesis uses national “priorities” rather than national “interests” in order to distinguish general from context-oriented national aims. National priorities were used to elaborate the latter. Since the 1970s, Turkey and the US have had similar national interests: stability in the eastern Mediterranean, strengthening NATO’s south-eastern wing, developing Turkey’s defence posture. Yet the case studies show that their national priorities were different. Turkey wanted to reduce its financial dependence on the US, and to be a rule maker in the Middle East by extending its influence in Iraq and Syria strategically and economically. Turkey also wanted to eliminate the PKK threat. In high level talks, US officials noted the importance of Turkey’s priorities but in practice did not wholeheartedly support any of them. Instead they expected Turkey to adapt its priorities to the US. Özal and Erdoğan tried this, but could not suppress anti-American feeling in the Opposition or in public opinion. Whenever priorities converged, for example fighting ISIS or opening the İncirlik base, wobbles eased and relations strengthened. But such convergence happened only a few times. Divergent priorities sustained the Turkish arm’s tendency.

The US also expected Australia to adjust its priorities to the US. Australia was more successful in this, for several reasons. First, since 1952 Australia and the US had a common threat perception, maintained and developed within the ANZUS alliance. Second, this perception produced a common understanding or culture, facilitating each other’s expectations. Third, following US policies became a habit particularly for Australian conservatives. Fourth, the crises of the period did not directly affect Australian priorities, which were mainly focused on the Indo-Pacific. As a result Australia’s success in adapting its priorities to the US sustained the Australian arms trend and kept Australia close to the US.

The Australian and the Turkish leadership and opposition were important factors in adjusting priorities. For Turkey, Özal and Erdoğan were both eager to develop relations with the US. Both tried to use the crises in the Middle East to increase Turkey’s role in US strategic calculations. Yet by doing so they alienated the Opposition in parliament, the bureaucracy, and the public. Erdoğan was more successful in suppressing such opposition but he developed his own anti-Americanism, particularly during the Syrian crisis.

Under the influence of the Guam Doctrine, Whitlam attempted an active and self-reliant foreign policy, creating tensions with Nixon. This was easily resolved by Fraser. Hawke also took small steps towards self-reliance but his government's pro-American statements and actions prevented any significant wobble. Howard had close personal relations with Bush, which sustained his pro-American outlook and policies. Gillard, Rudd, Abbott, and Turnbull all followed US policies within the ANZUS spirit. None of these leaders seriously struggled against an anti-American opposition in parliament, as in Turkey.

Another important difference between Turkey and Australia is their relative cultural affinity with the US. Although Turkey has been a NATO member since 1952, with several strategic NATO bases on its soil, and has developed a wide-variety of interactions with the US, the two countries find it hard to cultivate a common language of understanding. On several regional and global issues since 1975 they have had common interests but could not transform these into joint priorities. On many issues communications were like the "dialogue of the deaf".

Since ANZUS Australia and the US have developed a culture of understanding and mutual support. They support each other on regional and global platforms. Although ANZUS is not a security organization as developed and effective as NATO, it helps the two countries keep up efficient communication. After the US minimized relations with New Zealand within ANZUS, Australia became the sole pivot of the organization, which increased its value as an ally for US strategic plans.

The developments in Turkish-American and Australian-American relations during the Syrian crisis highlighted three significant aspects related to the "wobbly cross". These aspects were also valid in previous cases but more clearly observed during the Syrian crisis. First, middle powers cannot change a great power's key priorities. Erdoğan tried to align US priorities with Turkey on removing Assad, on the perceived threat posed by the PYD/YPG's increasing influence in northern Iraq and Syria, and on Fethullah Gülen's extradition. None of his attempts worked. Australian governments did the opposite. They adapted Australian priorities to the US on humanitarian aid to Syria, keeping Assad in power, and fighting ISIS. Second, a middle power and a great power could

effectively cooperate and strengthen their alliance only on the great power's priorities. Both Australia and Turkey cooperated most effectively with the US on fighting ISIS, which was the US' central priority. Third, a middle power can most successfully align its priorities to a great power in realms where the middle power's priorities are not acute or significant. In Syria, where the Assad regime, the increasing number of refugees, and the PYD/YPG posed threats to Turkey, Erdoğan could not tailor Turkey's priorities to the US.

Ironically, in the Indo-Pacific Australia's priorities might assume an importance similar to Turkey's priorities in Syria and Iraq. The Indo-Pacific is not only significant for Australia, but is also a theatre of China-US rivalry. Australia's efforts to balance its relations with these two great powers at the same time does not make the US particularly happy. During the Syrian crisis, Australia and the US did manage to ease Indo-Pacific wobbles via the ANZUS psyche, but Australia-China cooperation could induce future wobbles on the Australian arm, as Canberra may not so easily align its priorities with the US. It is not impossible to imagine that the Australian arm of the "wobbly cross" might one day reverse.

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