

# THE NEW DIMENSION OF AMERICAN-TURKISH RELATIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

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At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Turkey still finds itself at the center of the attention of the West. Developments in Turkey, and in adjacent regions, compel attention.

This reality contrasts with the fear of post-Cold War ignorance widely expressed by Turkish observers after the fall of the Soviet Union .

The end of the Cold War and the result of superpower competition has had a strong repercussions on global and regional politics. In 1990s, all states, large and small, sought to adjust to the new international realities resulting from the tides of change that swept through Eurasia. Turkey is one of the countries that was most profoundly affected by the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the transformation of the political and strategic areas of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the eruption of violent ethno-national conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus. These developments radically altered Turkey's foreign policy environment, creating opportunities to expand its role facing new risks and challenges. Previously, Turkey was important because of two main reasons: containment of the Soviet Union and because of its geographical position rather than potential as regional actor and partner in its own right.

The Gulf War refocused USA and Western attention on Turkey, war experience and the country's subsequent role in the containment of Iraq have reinforced the perceptions that USA policy toward Turkey is actually a product of other more important policies – Russia policy, Caspian policy, Balkan policy, Middle East policy, and so on. Recent changes within Turkey increasingly compel analysts and policy-makers to see Turkey as a pivotal international actor.<sup>1</sup>

The post-Cold War tendency toward a multilateral approach in U.S. foreign policy reinforces this point of view.

## CHANGES ON THE TURKISH DOMESTIC SCENE AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS

Turkish society, politics, and economy have changed considerably over the past decades with important implications for relations with the United States. The pace of this changes became especially rapid in the Turgut Özal years. Turkey was going through economic reforms that brought it high growth rates, and new political cur-

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<sup>1</sup> Graham E. Fuller, Ian O. Lesser, et. al., *Turkey's New Geopolitics: from the Balkans to Western China*, Boulder, CO, Westview/RAND, 1993.

rents that gave it new chances and opportunities to become again an important "part of new world deal".

During this period, key elements of the Atatürkist tradition that guided Turkish perceptions and policies since the foundation of the Republic – secularism, Western orientation, and statism – have come under severe strain.

From the perspective of U.S.-Turkish relations, three aspects of domestic changes are particularly significant: the rise of Turkish nationalism; the polarization of "traditional" and "modern" outlook within the political elites and Turkish society; and the emergence of a dynamic private sector.

A strong sense of Turkish nationalism had its origins in the Atatürkist vision, and was closely tied to the modernization and Westernization of the country.<sup>2</sup> The basic assumptions of Atatürkism and the Turkish sense of nationalism was widely shared among Turkish elites in the period of the Republic.<sup>3</sup> This nationalism having a strong roots in the past, in 1990's has become one of the strongest political force in Turkey.

The impressive electoral performance of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) led by Devlet Bahçeli in Turkey's 1999 general elections has focused interest on Turkish nationalism both inside and outside Turkey. The postelection political scene in Turkey has produced several potentially important factors for Turkish foreign policy and relations with the United States. Firstly, the most positive one is, the formation of a stable three – party coalition that should allow Ankara to move on legislation and policy initiatives with relevance to Turkey's external relations. Social security reform, and privatization now have better prospect of moving forward. Both are linked to the longer-term outlook for the Turkish economy and opportunities for U.S. trade and investment.

However, the nationalist tendency can also complicate Turkish relations with the United States in some fields, even despite the growing importance of the bilateral relations as seen from Ankara. Turkish sensitivities with regard to sovereignty issues will likely to be the key concern. Turkish constitutional provisions do not allow for the permanent stationing of foreign military forces on Turkish territory. Yet, through various rational arrangements and deployment sanctioned by the Turkish parliament the United States has enjoyed "standing airpower" in Turkey (e.g., for Operations Provide Comfort and, more recently, Northern Watch). Since the Gulf War, access to Turkish facilities for non-NATO purposes has been measured against Turkish interests. Although, more active nationalist sentiment does not preclude close cooperation with the United States in regional matters, including the use of Turkish facilities for contingencies in the Gulf, the Balkans, or elsewhere but it make cooperation less automatic and less predictable. It can also complicate relations on key issues such as policy toward Greece and Russia, where the U.S. and Turkish approaches may diverge.

Beyond the rise of Turkish nationalism as a political force, the past decade has witnessed the growth of a sharper division within the Turkish political elites and society between "traditional" and "modern" worldview. This polarization can be

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<sup>2</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994, pp. 84–96.

<sup>3</sup> Ian S. Lustick, *Hegemony and the Riddle of Nationalism*, in: Leonard Binder (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics in the Middle East*, Gainesville, FL, University Press of Florida, 1999.

expressed in terms of friction between religious and secular outlooks. One of the socio-political reason of these frictions was 1996 election's outset. Welfare Party leading by Necmettin Erbakan won election and managed to form 54<sup>th</sup> government of the Turkish Republik at the end of June 1996. The new coalition: Welfare Party and True Path Party – leading by Tansu Ciller was the main representative of the religious outlook on Turkish domestic scene. This strong religious outlook had negative repercussions both in domestic and international policy area.

On international level, since Necmettin Erbakan became the prime minister of Turkey, Turkey's relations with other countries were evidently going through a period of changes without a clear pattern. In August 1996, Erbakan went in first and very controversial foreign trip to Iran to sign 23 billion dollars deal.<sup>4</sup> After this journey Erbakan insisted on visiting Libya, reportedly against the advice of Turkish Ambassador in Tripoli. Then, Turkey's first Islamist-led government in modern Turkey, refused to let the U.S. use Incirlik air base for strikes against Iraq. Even Erbakan's relations with military establishment was not correct. He had attacked Turkey's military accord with Israel and threatened to withdraw from NATO. No wonder that U.S. policymakers were worried about an ominous shift by a key ally.

The steps made by Erbakan encouraged the secular media to criticize and bring down the government, it had opposed from the outset.

On domestic level, very important meaning had psychological impact of the June 1996 creation of the coalition TPP-WP on the secular military establishment that had effectively governed Turkey since the foundation of Turkish Republik in 1923 by Atatürk. Thus, it seemed inevitable that the steadily increasing pressure emanating mainly from this military establishment, would lead to the collapse of the Erbakan's government. The armed forces still saw themselves as guardians of the Kemalist reforms and in particular secularism. Turkish military establishment was against the Erbakan's party open links with the Islamic sects, previously banned by Atatürk, permitting women to wear head scarves in state offices contrary to provisions of Atatürk dress code and calls for applications of Islamic law (Sharia). Admiral Güven Erkaya and General Cevik Bir warned that "Islamic fundamentalism was bigger threat than the PKK".<sup>5</sup> The decision of Turkish military establishment to once again assume a determinant role in Turkish politics was the result of conviction that the secular politicians were unable or unwilling to resist the WP's assault on the secular order.

The second reason of polarization between "religious" and "secular" outlook within Turkish society, were social and economic strains caused by Turkey's changing demographics, with the steady movement of population from the countryside to the cities (Turkey's population was 14 millions at the foundation of the Republik it is some 65 million today).<sup>6,7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bülent Aliriza, Zeyno Baran, *Turkey in Growing Distress*, CSIS Turkey Update, November, 1996, pp.1.

<sup>5</sup> Bülent Aliriza, *The Government Falls*, CSIS Turkey Update, April 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Mango, *Progress and Disorder: 75 years of the Turkish Republic*, Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 35, no. 3 (July 1999), pp.157-178.

<sup>7</sup> Cem Behar, Oguz Isik, Murat Guvenc, Umit Izmen, et al., *Turkey's Window of Opportunity: Demographic Transition Process and Its Consequences*, Istanbul, TUSIAD, 1999, p. 21.

Migration to the major urban areas has brought traditional Anatolian patterns of life and conservative social attitudes into an area where a secular, "European outlook" has dominated in recent decades. Refah and its successor, Virtue used this traditionalism in Turkish society to clash between two different attitudes, that who "haves" and "have-nots". The ranks of the traditional minded include many middle-class Turks, and even some conservative members of the economic elite. Although the outcome of the 1999 elections shifted the focus from religion to nationalism, traditionalism is far from spent a force.

The competing visions of the "traditional" and the "modern" affect the way foreigner see Turkey.<sup>8</sup> The debate over Refah and the Islamist question in Turkey was responsible for a significant increase in attention to Turkey in Washington. This growth in interest has endured even though the Refah issue has faded, sustained by the Öcalan affair, Kosovo, the disastrous earthquake of August 1999, and the more recent but positive developments in Turkish relations with Greece and the EU. The U.S. observers, on the whole, have been more tolerant of Islamist politics and less alarmist about religious expression in Turkey than European.

U.S. observers, in spite of – perhaps because of – the Iranian experience, have been less concerned about the internal implications of the Refah/Virtue phenomenon, preferring to focus on the foreign policy consequences of Islamic politics in Turkey.

The last but not less important factor is the rapid economic growth of the last decade that has been supported by the emergence of a dynamic and increasingly influential Turkish private sector. The effects of this change have been most obvious in the commercial arena, but changing balance between private organizations and the state are approved by bigger part of Turkish society. Many Turks are increasingly uncomfortable with the traditional, dominant role of state institutions. This discomfort is reflected in declining public confidence in the competence of the state and a growing tendency to organize lives and enterprises without any reference to the state. A prominent Turkish businessman, active in politics, has termed this tendency as:

"a darker version of the Italian model: a dynamic private sector tending to its own business and increasingly frustrated by the tendency of Turkish democracy and administration to lag behind."<sup>9</sup>

The effect of these changes has had some important implications for bilateral relations with the United States. Firstly, high growth rates, a large potential market, proliferation of private business partners, and the need for investment in key sectors (e.g. energy) should make Turkey a more attractive economic partner for the United States. The United States has for some time treated Turkey as a "big emerging market", and bilateral trade has grown steadily since the mid-1980.<sup>10</sup> But, with some exceptions such as power generations, U.S. and other foreign investment in Turkey has consistently fallen short of expectations.

<sup>8</sup> Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey*, Woodstock, NY, Overlook, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Kinzer, *Business Pressing a Reluctant Turkey on Democracy Issues*, New York Times, March 23, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Yılmaz Argünden, *Is Uncle Sam Making the Most of Turkey?*, Private View (Istanbul), Spring 1999, available on-line only, solvista@binternet.com.

Secondly, the rise of the Turkish private sector is influencing “the constellation of actors” within Turkey and on policy questions important to the United States. The space of concerns to the main Turkish power centers are regional trade and investment (where key issues are subsidies to Turkish Cyprus, trade ties to Caucasus and central Asia, and economic ties to Israel), defense procurement, and not least, the Kurdish issue.<sup>11</sup> The main power centers shaping trends in the political economy of Turkey are: the Turkish military, leading secular businesses (TUSIAD) and others, Islamic business interests (MUSIAD) and the Refah party, trade union, and illegal sector. Key power centers are very important stakeholders in the struggle between Turkey’s “statists” and those seeking economic reform. The military and the public-sector unions are evidently in the camp with a strong preference for existing patterns of state ownership and control. Islamists circles, Refah are against state enterprises and they want it to end traditional subsidies, but many of its private-sectors supporters display a more reformist view. Some large secular enterprises and organizations (e.g. TUSIAD) have been on the cutting edge of advocacy for structural change and a more international outlook, while others fear the loss of subsidies and preferential relationships. Many Turkish and foreign observers believe that viable centrist political alternative to Refah is most likely to emerge from the reform-minded private sector.

This dynamism in the private sector has also an important effect on mobility within the Turkish society. Whereas, Turks’ old-generation have traditionally seen the state service (above all, the military) as the path to social and professional advancement, younger generations look to private sector. It suggests that the role of the military in the Turkish society may be changing, and that new elites may have a very different worldview. In bilateral relationship that has stressed military-to-military ties, and has focused on security issues in preference to economic and other fields, changes along these lines, could have important implications for U.S. engagement in Turkey.

Thirdly, the rise of the private sector has also important implications for Turkey’s future regional role and the potential for bilateral cooperation in regional stability and development. Turkish companies have played a leading role in the improving economic relations between Turkey and Russia (now Ankara’s leading partner), the Arab Middle East (Turkey’s official relationship have often been difficult, the private sector has been an active player), Caucasus and Central Asia and so on.

The role of the private sector is likely to have a considerable influence on Turkish policy in regions where Washington and Ankara a shared stake.

## ANKARA AND WASHINGTON – COMMON OR DIFFERENT STAKES IN REGIONAL POLICY

However, U.S.-Turkish relationship has evolved substantially since the end of the Cold War, Washington remains an important cornerstone of Turkey’s foreign policy. During The Cold War, the basis of Turkish-American security was the need to deter a potential threat from the Soviet Union. Today, by contrast Turkish-American secu-

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<sup>11</sup>Ian Lesser and Michael Zanini summarized in Gregory F. Treverton, et al., *Commercial Power Centers in Emerging Markets*, Santa Monica, CA, RAND, MR-950, 1998, pp. 44–49.

rity cooperation is focused primarily on the Middle East, the Caspian region and the Balkans. This shift in focus has given Turkish-American relations an important new strategic dimension that did not exist during the Cold War.

While Turkey's strategic horizons in other areas have broadened, the deterioration of Turkey's ties with Europe has made that the importance of strong ties to the United States has increased. The United States is seen by Turks as being more supportive for Turkey's security concerns than Europe. Turkey's relations with Europe have become more difficult over the last decade. During the Cold War, Turkey was regarded as an important part of Western security system. As a member of NATO, it served as a critical bulwark against any possible Soviet invasion of Europe. Turkey's NATO membership reinforced Turkey's Western identification and accelerated the general process of Westernization of Turkish society began by Atatürk. Turkey saw its relations with European Community (EC) as a natural complement to its relations with NATO and the USA. The 1963 Ankara Agreement, when Turkey became an associate member of EC, gave it hope that someday it would eventually become a full member of the EC. However, the end of the Cold War significantly changed the context of Turkish membership. Prior to the collapse of the Wall, Turkey's problems with EC were primarily economic. Afterward, they broadened as EC (later EU) began to put greater emphasis on political, social, and cultural factors.<sup>12</sup> As Gülnur Aybet has noted:

"Not only the parameters of European security but also those of European culture were being redefined, as the division ceased to exist and Europe east and west – was finding new grounds for bonding in historical, cultural, and religious terms".<sup>13</sup>

During this long process the United States has strongly backed Turkey's candidacy for EU membership playing his ally's role as well in official as behind scene steps. Washington has lent strong political support to Ankara's effort to build the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline as well as has been more supportive of Turkey's struggle against the PKK than has Europe, which handling of the Kurdish issues.

This support has been greatly appreciated in Ankara and contributed to a deepening of Turkish-U.S. ties in recent years. Cooperation has been particularly intense in the Caspian Basin. Both countries share a common interest in promoting the independence and sovereignty of the states in the Caspian area, limiting Moscow's influence there, and developing the region's energy resources. As I noted, the United States has strongly backed Turkey's plans for the construction of the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline and worked closely behind the scenes to get the Azerbaijan government and Western oil companies to support the Baku–Ceyhan project.

Ankara and Washington have also closely cooperated in the Balkans. Turkey played a key role in training the Muslim army in Bosnia under the U.S.-led "train and equip" program. Turkey's more active policy in the Balkans initially caused

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<sup>12</sup> Barry Buzan and Thomas Diez, *The European Union and Turkey*, Survival, Vol. 4, No.1 (Spring 1999), pp. 41–57.

<sup>13</sup> Gülnur Aybet, *Turkey and European Institutions*, The International Spectator, Vol. XXXIV, No.1 (January/March 1999), p. 107.

some concerns in Athens, which feared that was trying to create a "Muslim arc" on Greece's northern border.<sup>14</sup>

However, Turkey's policy in the Balkans has actually been relatively cautious. Turkey has no tried to "play the Muslim card", as some feared it might be tempted to do. On the contrary, Turkey has gone out of its way to present itself as a loyal and honest NATO, USA, EU ally. Turkey participated in military operations in Bosnia and in both the Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR). It also contributed nearly one-tenth of troops of Operation Alba, as well as provided bases and aircrafts for Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. These moves have greatly contributed to strengthening the U.S.-Turkish security relationship and enhancing Turkey's strategic importance in the U. S. eyes.

Benefits of this deepening bilateral cooperation can be obtained, only under one condition, relations with Turkey have to be increasingly decoupled from Greek-Turkish relations. This has allowed the United States to pursue relations with Turkey on their own merits. At the same time, the United States has played an important behind-the-scenes role in encouraging the recent thaw in Greek-Turkish relations. The Greek-Turkish dispute has been a major source of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and a major concern for Greece and Turkey's NATO allies. In January 1996, the two countries nearly went to war over the islet of Imia/Kardak.<sup>15</sup> Only last-minute, high-level U.S. intervention prevented a possible military clash between the two countries.<sup>16</sup> Recently, however, Greek-Turkish relations have begun to warm. In July 1999, the two countries opened a dialogue on nonsensitive issues such as trade, the environment, and tourism. This dialog was given greater impetus by the earthquake in Turkey August 19 and the one in September in Athens, which provoked an outburst of popular sympathy in both countries. This was followed by Greece's support for Turkey's EU candidacy at the Helsinki summit in December 1999 and a visit to Ankara by Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou in January 2000 – the first visit by a Greek foreign minister to Turkey in nearly 40 years. The success of these talks could lead to broader dialog on more sensitive issues in the Aegean. In these relations Cyprus remains a major irritant matter and a breakthrough on this issue seems unlikely in the near future.

Turkish-U.S. relations have been far from trouble free. Human Rights and the Kurdish issue have become an increasing source of friction, especially with U.S. Congress.<sup>17</sup> In 1994, for instance, Turkey canceled the purchase of 10 Cobra helicopters – for which it had already paid – after Congress froze their delivery because of human rights concerns. More recently, the delivery of three frigates was postponed because of Congressional concern over Turkey's human rights record, though the Clinton Administration was eventually able to secure their release and delivery. The increasing intrusion of human rights issues into the defense relationship has

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<sup>14</sup> Yannis Valinakis, *Greece's Balkan Policy and the Macedonian Issue*, Ebenhausen: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWIP-2746, April 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Nazlan Ertan, *Crisis diffused, Ankara urges Athens to negotiate No flags no troops*, Turkish Daily News, (February 1), 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Uygur Akinci, *White house: Clinton Led Efforts to Quell Turkish-Greek Crisis*, Turkish Daily News (February 4), 1996.

<sup>17</sup> 1994 CQ Almanac, House Subcommittee Action, Washington, CQ Press, 1994, pp. 507.

been a source of growing irritation in Ankara and has led Turkey to seek to diversify its defense procurement. One of the motivations for Ankara's efforts to deepen defense ties with Israel has been its desire to avoid the human rights-related hassles on defense purchases that it had faced lately in Europe and the United States. At the same time, the decision to phase out military assistance to Turkey (and Greece) has reduced Washington's ability to influence Turkish policy.

Important differences also exist between Ankara and Washington on key regional issues in the Middle East. Since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has also become a more important regional actor in the Middle East. The Gulf War was the turning point in Turkey's involvement in Middle East. Against the advice of most his advisors, President Turgut Özal sided with the United States in the war, allowing the United States to fly sorties against Iraq from Turkish bases. Turkey also shut down the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline as part of the effort to impose sanctions against Iraq. Özal's action was an important departure from Turkey's traditional policy of avoiding deep involvement in Middle Eastern affairs and provoked strong opposition, especially from the Turkish military (The Turkish Chief of Staff, Necip Torumtay, resigned in protest over Özal policy. So did Foreign Minister Ali Bozer).<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, it initiated a new period of greater activism in Turkish policy toward the Middle East, which has intensified visibly since the mid-1990s. This more active policy contrasts with the more passive approach that characterized Turkish policy before the Gulf War. Iraq has always taken significant place in Turkish foreign policy, currently still poses a difficult dilemma for Turkish politicians. Turkish officials have no love for Saddam Hussein and they consider him to be a brutal dictator but Ankara is more inclined toward a policy of engagement with Iraq – especially economic engagement – than the United States, which has sought to isolate and contain Baghdad. Ankara also fears that U.S. efforts to overthrow Saddam could destabilize Iraq and lead to the creation of an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's border. They have looked askance, in particular, at U.S. efforts to promote a reconciliation between the warring Kurdish factions in northern Iraq. As I noted, economic interest heavily influence Turkey's policy toward Iraq. Before the imposition of UN sanctions, Iraq was Turkey's third largest trade partner and its largest oil supplier. Turkey would like to see this trade restored. Thus, Ankara favors a lifting of the UN sanctions against Iraq and an end to Iraq's economic isolation. Indeed, on many issues related to Iraq Turkish policy is much closer to European policy than it is to U.S. policy. Hence, Turkey has imposed tight restrictions on the U.S. use of Incirlik and other Turkish air bases to monitor the non-fly zone over Northern Iraq.

Turkish and U.S. perspectives on Iran also differ considerably. Whereas the United States has generally sought to isolate Iran, Turkey prefers a policy of engagement. Turkish relations with Iran have witnessed ups and downs over the last decade. Turkish policymakers, especially the Turkish military, remain wary of Iran because of the fundamentalist character of the current Iranian regime and its support for international terrorism. The Turkish military's crackdown against Islamic fundamentalism, moreover, has increased its sensitivity about Iran's influence and involvement in Turkish domestic politics. However, Turkey needs Iran's cooperation to restrict

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Makovsky, *The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, SAIS Review, Winter-Spring 1999.



the activities of the Kurdish guerrillas in Southeast Turkey, who often use Iranian territory as a sanctuary. Thus, Turkey has been careful not to let differences over the other issues inflame its relations with Iran too badly. Iran is also a major source of energy supplies. Turkey's growing energy needs also give Ankara an important argument to maintain good economic ties to Iran, which is second only to Russia in the world's largest gas reserves. Turkey's annual gas needs of 8 million cubic meters are expected to increase to 30 billion cubic meters by 2010.<sup>19</sup> Hence, for Turkey, increasing ties to Iran in the energy field makes good economic sense.

In 1996 Turkey and Iran signed the agreement of delivering Iranian natural gas to Turkey. Teheran has completed its part of pipeline, but Turkey's portion, which was due to be completed last year, remains unfinished. Turkish officials have said it will not be completed until 2001. The reason for the delay is partly related to Turkey's economic problems caused by the August 1999 earthquake. But Ankara also appears to be going slow in deference to U.S. opposition to the pipeline, which Washington fears will strengthen Iran economically.

In addition, Turkey and Iran remain competitors for influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. So far Turkey has had the upper hand because Iran has been isolated and preoccupied with its own internal problems. But further thaw in U.S.-Iranian relations could open up prospects for Caspian oil to be transported via Iran and make Teheran a much more serious competitor for influence in Central Asia and the Caspian region but for today it is unreal.

In reference to Syria, U.S.-Turkish perspectives have been closer. Turkey viewed U.S. efforts to court Syria during the first Clinton Administration with the suspicion because of Syria's support for the PKK. However, Turkish concerns have decreased since the Ankara Agreement signed on October 20, 1998 under which the Syrian government agreed to cease all support for the PKK; expel PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan from Syria; and expand cooperation with Turkey against the PKK.<sup>20</sup> Since then, Turkish-Syrian relations have undergone a visible thaw. PKK attacks from Syria virtually ceased and a monitoring system has been set up. Syria appears to be trying to turn its momentary defeat into victory by insisting on a reciprocal gesture from Turkey on the water issue to normalize relations between the two countries. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether Syria will fully comply with the provisions of the Adana agreement, especially those regarding inspections. Ankara remains also wary of any U.S. backed peace initiative that might lead to redeployment of Syrian troops along the Turkish-Syrian border.

Summing up, Turkey's foreign and security policy is currently undergoing revision and redefinition in response to changes in Turkey's security environment as well as domestic pressures. Where this process will lead and exactly how it will affect Turkey's security orientations will depend on a number of factors, particularly U.S. and European policy.

Both sides have too much at stake to damage the friendship that was building throughout centuries and suffer defeat. For the United States, Turkey is at the crossroads of three areas of increasing strategic importance for U.S. policy: the Caspian,

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<sup>19</sup> Cenk Bila, *Trade over Politics*, Turkish Probe, November 8, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Mahnut Bali Aykan, *The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View*, Middle East Policy, Vol. VI, No. 4 (June 1999), pp. 174-191.

the Middle East, and the Balkans. Thus Washington has a strong strategic interest in maintaining close ties to Turkey. For Ankara, Washington remains indispensable security partner, especially since its chances of becoming a member the EU in the next decade are slim.

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