# AMERICAN-TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE 1990S: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

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**Abstract**

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Throughout the Cold War, the bilateral ties between the US and Turkey, epitomized by their cooperation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), provided both states with the necessary means to secure their sovereignty, freedom, and development to the greatest degree possible. However, the end of the bipolar confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union provided for the potential split or dramatic change in bilateral ties. This thesis focuses on both the continuities and changes that shaped US-Turkey relations in the first decade of the post-Cold War era. First, despite the fall of the Soviet Union—the initial cause of their connection via existential fear—the US and Turkey sought to maintain tactical ties. Furthermore, American goals and desires still often heavily affected Turkey's external and internal policies. Second, the sometimes turbulent and distrustful history between these two states often colored Turkish responses to American policies both towards Turkey and to the region, frequently in an apprehensive manner. A liberal realist theoretical framework was used in the inquiry.

To investigate these hypotheses, I utilized a review of the relevant, existing literature, which were supplemented by primary research including personal interviews with former Turkish and American government officials. The results substantiated the first hypothesis, but did not provide enough evidence to either convincingly confirm or refute the second hypothesis. The results of this investigation not only adds depth to the existing understanding of the US-Turkish bilateral relationship, but also provide a theoretical framework to examine other alliances in the post-Cold War era.

## Özet

1990'larda AMERİKAN-TÜRK İLİŞKİLERİ: SOĞUK SAVAŞ-SONRASI DÖNEMDE SÜREKLİLİKLER VE DEĞİŞİMLER

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Birleşik Devletler, İlişkiler, İttifak

Soğuk Savaş sürecince, Birleşik Devletler ve Türkiye arasındaki ikili ilişkiler, Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü (NATO)'ndeki işbirliklerinden de örneklendirilebileceği üzere, her iki devlete de egemenliklerini, özgürlüklerini, ve kalkınmalarını olabilecek en iyi derecede koruma yolları sağlamıştır. Fakat, Birleşik Devletler ile Sovyetler Birliği arasındaki çift kutuplu çatışmanın son bulması iki ülke arasındaki ikili ilişkilerde olası kopmalara veya belirgin değişimlere zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu tez Soğuk Savaş'tan sonraki ilk on yılda Birleşik Devletler-Türkiye ilişkilerini şekillendiren devamlılıklara ve değişimlere odaklanmaktadır. İlk olarak, Sovyetler Birliği'nin —iki ülke arasında varoluşsal kaygılarla oluşan bağın birincil sebebinin— çöküşüne rağmen Birleşik Devletler ve Türkiye taktiksel ilişkilerini korumanın yollarını aramışlardır. Buna ek olarak, Birleşik Devletler'in hedefleri ve istekleri halen Türkiye'nin dış ve iç politikalarını yoğun olarak etkilemeye devam etmiştir. İkinci olarak, iki ülke arasında geçmişte yaşanmış bazı çalkantılı ve güvensizlik teşkil eden olaylar, Türkiye'nin Birleşik Devletler'in Türkiye'ye ve bölgeye dönük politikalarına verdiği tepkileri çoğunlukla etkilemiş, ve bu tepkiler genellikle endişeli bir tutum sergilemiştir. Araştırma sırasında liberal gerçekçi bir teoretik çerçeve kullanılmıştır.

Bu hipotezleri araştırmak için, konu ile ilgili var olan literatür incelemesinin yanı sıra, önceden görev yapmış Türk ve Amerikan yetkililerle yapılan yüz yüze görüşmeleri de içeren birincil araştırmalardan da faydalanılmıştır. Sonuçlar ilk hipotezi doğrulamış, fakat ikinci hipotezi doğrulayacak ya da yanlışlayacak yeterli kanıtı sağlamamıştır. Bu araştırmanın sonuçları Birleşik Devletler-Türkiye arasındaki ikili ilişkilere yeni boyutlar

katmakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda Soğuk Savaş sonrası diğer ittifakları incelemek için de teoretik bir çerçeve.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Starting with the Second World War, the relationship between the United States and Turkey has been rooted firmly within the wider geopolitical and historical context. The bipolar confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War defined this environment and formed the basis of and impetus for their strategic alliance. The bilateral ties between the US and Turkey, epitomized by their cooperation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), provided both states with the necessary means to secure their sovereignty, freedom, and development to the greatest degree possible. However, this relationship was not predetermined; its fruition, maturation, and maintenance required the perennial efforts of diplomats, governments, and military leaders on both sides. These efforts proved particularly important in the subsequent historical period during and following the crumbling of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc between 1989-1991. Whereas the previous bipolar confrontation provided Turkey an explicit security-based reason to maintain close ties with the US, sometimes at great cost to the Turks, this new era presented Turkey with an opportunity to chart a fundamentally new path, if it so desired.

To sustain their relationship, both the US and Turkey thus had to find new justifications for their continued close, strategic connection beyond simply institutional inertia and nostalgia. This thesis focuses on both changes and continuities in shaping US-Turkey relations in the first decade of the post-Cold War era. First, despite the fall of the Soviet Union—the initial cause of their connection via existential fear—the US and Turkey sought to maintain tactical ties. Furthermore, American goals and desires still often heavily affected Turkey's external and internal policies. Second, the sometimes turbulent and distrustful history between these two states often heavily influenced Turkish responses to American policies both towards Turkey and to the region, frequently in an apprehensive manner.

This argument is substantiated by employing a methodology involving both a review of the present literature and personal interviews conducted in person or by phone

with former American and Turkish governmental officials. The literature review focused on books and journal articles written on US-Turkish relations or Turkish regional policies, as well as contemporaneous newspaper articles of specific events. A total of ten interviewees were consulted, seven American and three Turkish. The American officials and their positions during the period under study were National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Chief of Mission Jim Holmes, Ambassador Marc Grossman, Ambassador Mark R. Parris, State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Marshall P. Adair, Ambassador Morton I. Abramowitz, and Ambassador for aid to the post-Soviet States Richard Armitage. The Turkish officials were Foreign Minister and form Chief Adviser to the Presidency and Prime Ministry Emre Gönensay, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Commissioner-General and former Foreign Minister İlter Türkmen, and permanent Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then Ambassador to the UK Özdem Sanberk. These officials were chosen because of their active involvement in official policy and bilateral negotiations in the 1990s. Furthermore, many of the interviewees, as high level, influential and redoubtable officials within their respective governments, also had historical experience in US-Turkish relations. While conducting the interviews, I utilized a standard set of questions reflecting the sectoral framework of this thesis. However, interviewees had the freedom to take their responses in tangential directions as they saw fit. The interviews with these former officials not only reinforced the existing literature available on this time period, but also provided new insight and perspectives into the rationales behind American and Turkish policies and responses.

This thesis is further divided into eight chapters. Chapter Two introduces the theoretical framework that will support the ensuing discussion. The liberal realist approach that is utilized provides the structure necessary to better understand the reasoning behind the decisions of both parties in the relationship, both in the bipolar and unipolar periods. Chapter Three provides a brief history of the relationship during the Cold War to establish the context in which the alliance found itself in the 1990s. The five chapters that follow the historical discussion provide the crux of this investigation.

Chapter Four investigates Turkey's relationship with Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the Iraqi Kurds in the North throughout the 1990s. It is further divided between the

initial multilateral war in 1990-91 against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing no-fly zone that was established over Iraqi territory. The shifts in relations between the US and Turkey elaborated within this section prove to be some of the most heated and important in the relationship's history. Chapter Five examines Turkey's expanded foreign policy towards the post-Soviet States in the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as the Balkans. The fall of the Eastern Bloc and the dissolution of the Soviet Union provided Turkey with a newfound opportunity to interact with many states in these regions and promote both its own interests and those of its allies. There is a particular focus on the oil pipeline connecting Turkey to Azerbaijan via Georgia and the NATO intervention in Bosnia. Chapter Six analyzes Turkey's changing policies toward Israel, Iran, and Syria. Although these three states were certainly not always the focus of Turkish foreign policy, their confluence with American interests proved particularly important in how Turkey's policies evolved over the decade.

Chapter Seven explores the relationship between the European Union and Turkey, and the role that the United States played in forging closer ties between the two actors. Special attention is paid to the EU accession process and its effect on Turkish domestic policies. Chapter Eight delves further into Turkey's national politics. It examines the internal adjustments that Turkey made throughout the decade in its attempts to stabilize and liberalize both politically and economically. The role that the US had in supporting, encouraging or discouraging these processes is of particular importance. Finally, Chapter Nine provides a summary of the thesis' results and their relation to the initial hypothesis. Furthermore, it furnishes a brief analysis on how these results affect US-Turkish relations to the present day and the role that they may have played in the events and crises that occurred after the period under investigation.

## 2. A LIBERAL REALIST APPROACH TO THE ALLIANCE

The 1990s provide a unique opportunity to investigate the interactions between different states. Unlike the previous half century, with the end of the Cold War this decade was defined by the ascendance of the United States as the preeminent global power with no near-term competitors. Thus, the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study of international relations had to change and adapt in accordance with the new reality defined by the end of the bipolar confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union.[1] To better understand the motivations and limitations of the US and the players with which it interacted in the beginning of the post-Cold War era in the 90s, it is best initially to review some competing theoretical frameworks and then propose aspects of a liberal realist interpretation to most clearly explain recent US-Turkish relations. However, prior to embarking upon the details of the theories, it is critical to define the terminology and vocabulary employed.

Perhaps the two most important and loaded words used here are 'bipolar' and 'unipolar.' An international system that is bipolar contains two states that maintain the majority of military, economic, and cultural influences within their relative spheres of influence. The alliances that typified this period—NATO and the Warsaw Pact—were based on the ideological hegemon providing for the security of the member states and their existing regimes. Throughout the Cold War (roughly from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991), the world was divided more or less between the Western and capitalist states that were under the general influence of the US and the Communist states that were under the influence of

[1] Historically, US-Turkish relations have been analyzed using traditional realist or neorealist models like those espoused by Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, or John Mearsheimer. These theoretical frameworks had at their core the focus on the competitive self-interest of unitary states in an anarchic world. The neorealists further contributed a greater understanding of the balance of power and the formation of alliances in multipolar and bipolar international systems that largely precluded liberal or constructivist ideas that focused on the roles of international institutions, agency and actors within states, and the socially constructed nature of the nation-state.

the Soviet Union. This system mirrored that of a hub and its spokes; the hub facilitates coordination among the states that are arrayed around it.[2] However, the goods and services provided by the hub exceeded simply security. They also included financial and economic aid, as well as the underpinnings of a regional or global economic system. For instance, the US—as the hub for NATO—also formed the basis for the economic, financial, and aid systems of the Western world, epitomized by the IMF, Bretton Woods monetary system, and the World Bank.

Additionally, while there were self-professed non-aligned states such as India and Yugoslavia, their foreign and even national policies were often heavily influenced and impacted by the competing poles, despite their self-described independence. Conversely, the end of the Cold War between 1989-91 ushered in the emergence of a unipolar moment wherein the international system "contain[ed] one state whose overall share of capabilities place[ed] it unambiguously in a class by itself compared to all other states."[3] Although the economic and military capabilities of the US most likely outshone those of the USSR throughout most of the Cold War, it was not the absolute predominance of power that determined the nature of the international system. Instead, it was the relative power relationship that deemed the previous era bipolar; the US and USSR far outweighed any possible challengers in their range of capacities. In turn, the 1990s saw the US far exceed any potential competitor on both an absolute and relative scale—an unparalleled feat in modern history—signifying its unipolar moment. However, while the US had no near peer competitor for global predominance, the loss of an aggressor in the USSR potentially freed its allies from their reliance upon and therefore obligations to the US. Thus, the liberal realist framework expects the unipole to act cooperatively with others to forestall any defections from its alliance.[4]

Although the US found itself to be a leader in a unipolar moment, it had not reached the paramount status as a global hegemon. A true hegemon would be able to police all regions of the world and institutionalize the system as it saw fit, with little regard to the concerns of other states. In the 1990s, the US fell "well short of global hegemony, which [meant] that major powers must continue to worry about security

[2] Ikenberry 2011, 224.
[3] Ikenberry et al 2011, 6.
[4] Ikenberry and Kupchan 2004, 40.

issues and take steps to guarantee it, either alone or in concert with others."[5] Nevertheless, the US, still the unipole at the time, had a greater capacity to interact with other states and shape responses to regional and global issues than it had during the previous period. Thus, it is important to analyze in what ways the US chose to act within the world system; a spectrum from revisionist to conservative provides an effective way to judge such actions.

In this context, a revisionist power would seek to promote its own interests—however conceived—at the expense of not only other states, but the existing international system as well. In the American unipolar example, this would be a particularly important instance of rule-breaking by a near-hegemon, considering that the international system was "already strongly shaped by its power and preferences."[6] Conversely, a conservative unipolar power would seek to not only abide by, but in fact buttress and expand the existing international system. Robert Jervis and G. John Ikenberry best demonstrated the contra-distinct views. Jervis argued that the unipolar moment provided "powerful structural incentives for the leading state to be revisionist." These included the lack of a countervailing power, the tendency for the interests and fears of the state to increase as its relative capabilities increase, and the increasing likelihood of worrying about the future because of the desirability of the present situation. Additionally, Jervis argues that the unipole's greater relative capabilities made it more likely to take on global policing responsibilities (public good) as well as the desire to influence the end-game result in the best possible way, according to its own interpretations. A unipole in this instance may best be described as a "system maker and privilege taker,"[7] as it constructs the system and utilizes its status to take advantage of it. Furthermore, Jervis suggests that "because the unipole has wide discretion in the nature and extent of the goods provided, its efforts are likely to be perceived by less powerful states as hypocritical attempts to mask the actual pursuit of private goods."[8]

In contrast, Ikenberry, in describing a distinctly American unipole, argues that in the "liberal order built around US power...the unipole faces strong general incentives to

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5 Walt 2011, 100.
6 Ikenberry et al 2011, 14.
7 Ibid., 16.
8 Ibid., 16.

maintain this order. Even if it acts as a privilege taker on specific issues, its overall support for the institutional-normative order has many attributes of public goods provision."[9] Although both explanations have merit, the Ikenberry approach better describes the American-built liberal order in the 1990s, while Jervis's analytical approach proves somewhat more useful in understanding the changing uses of American power during and after the Iraq War of 2003. Ikenberry elaborated further on this conservative perspective with Charles A. Kupchan in their explanation of liberal realism. Accordingly, the US, as the momentary unipole, benefited from the strengthening and spread of international bodies that constrained the exercise of military power for all actors except through the institutions that were largely modeled on American ideals of a rules-based international system. Furthermore, these institutions would provide the US with potential to use military force abroad legitimately in the eyes of both allies and adversaries.

Beyond the perspective of the unipole, it is important to understand the motivations and reasoning behind the other potential actors in this international system. From the position of American Cold War allies, the loss of a unifying central threat (the USSR), "[signified] that the US [had] less control over adjustment struggles with its principal economic partners, because it [could] no longer leverage their security dependence to dictate international economic outcomes."[10] The rapid growth of globalization in the 1990s reinforced this tendency. Additionally, America's institutionalization of the necessity to acquire legitimacy to wage war also constrained US actions to a certain degree (although the 2003 Iraq War certainly proved that a committed unipolar power could still overcome such institutionalization if sufficiently committed). Furthermore, the end of a bipolar world allowed for smaller states to shift from hard balancing (formal military alliances such as NATO or the Warsaw Pact) to soft balancing (hiding, binding, delegitimization, or norm entrapment).

These subtler balancing strategies could be used against the unipole as well as regional hegemons that instigated conflicts—both in concert with and independent of the unipole.[11] However, soft-balancing can be difficult to identify fully, since actions

[9] Ibid., 16-17.
[10] Ibid., 17-18.
[11] Ibid., 21.

taken may or may not be motivated by balancing away from the unipole. For example, a military build up could develop in support of an existing unipolar alliance or an attempt to break away. Conversely, states could simply be seeking additional assets—whether individually or collectively—to "gain a measure of autonomy and hedge against future uncertainties"[12] in the long-term. Alternatively, the unipole might experience bandwagoning, wherein more and more states join the unipole for their own security concerns to balance against another entity, not the unipole.[13] For example, "medium and lesser powers [might] align with the United States not because they fear US power but because they are primarily concerned with regional threats and want to use US power to deal with them."[14] It will be argued later that the case of the First Gulf War reflects this latter perspective.

Stephen M. Walt outlined four key factors that would help explain the power struggles within security alliances such as NATO in both bipolar and unipolar international systems. First, the strongest player in the alliance tends "to bear a disproportionate share of the costs while smaller members tend to free ride."[15] Second, "the more asymmetric the distribution of capabilities within an alliance, the more durable it is likely to be and the greater the ability of the alliance leader to dictate alliance policy."[16] Third, the small and medium-sized states within an alliance fear abandonment, being left in the lurch in a crisis, or entrapment, being dragged into misguided wars by one's alliance commitments, at the hands of the alliance's hegemon.[17] Within a unipolar international system, the unipole becomes less worried about smaller allies leaving the alliance, since there is no other pole to which to defect.[18] Additionally, the lack of a possible defection point means that the unipole can apply great pressure on smaller states to join any coalitions of the willing it sees fit to promote.[19] A later chapter will discuss how Turkey experienced both of these sentiments throughout this time

12 Walt 2011, 123.
13 Ibid., 128.
14 Ibid., 101.
15 Ibid., 103.
16 Ibid., 103.
17 Ibid., 104.
18 Ibid., 113.
19 Ibid., 114.

period. Lastly, an alliance is strengthened and attains improved longevity if it is highly institutionalized, if it is based on liberal regimes of governance, and if explicit norms regulating the alliance decision making process exist.[20] This is particularly important in the unipolar system, whereby the largely structurally-determined alliance ties of the bipolar system have disappeared due to the loss of the central military confrontation that inspired the alliances in the first place.[21] With the absent or greatly diminished structural imperatives, a unipole has "greater leeway to opt for its preferences," whether they are fellow liberal regimes or other states that will follow its wars of choice. Furthermore, the liberal realist framework anticipates the potential for defections, since the loss of the bipolar confrontation lessens the existential fear that a smaller state may experience.[22]

Although this analysis has outlined only some of the many interpretations and frameworks that attempt to explain the international system in both bipolar and unipolar periods, the highlighted factors will help to explain the interactions and evolving relationship between the United States and Turkey from the Cold War through the 1990s. To summarize in the words of Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, a liberal realist interpretation of the international system thus focuses on three points. First, the pole—in this case the US—must "wield its superior strength in concert with others to ensure that it forestalls rather than invites balancing behavior."[23] Second, the pole cooperates with and encourages the "secular diffusion of global power,"[24] that is to say, the accommodation of other powers into a rule-based order that contributes to international stability. Third, the pole's strength relies upon more than its military strength; it must have a "moral authority abroad"[25] that encourages allies and adversaries to feel like "stakeholders in the international system."[26] This synthesis of realist rational self-interest and liberal institutionalism best reflects and explains mechanism by which that the bilateral relationship evolved between the US and Turkey, within the broader NATO alliance and the international system. The following chapter will apply this theoretical

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20 Ibid., 104.
21 Ibid., 109.
22 Ikenberry and Kupchan 2004, 40.
23 Ibid., 40.
24 Ibid., 40.
25 Ibid., 41.
26 Ibid., 41.

framework to the historical dynamic between the US and Turkey during the Cold War era.

## 3. HISTORY – A STRONG ALLIANCE WITH DEEP SHADOWS

Historically, the relationship between the United States and Turkey—and the Ottoman Empire before it—lacked depth and breadth. It took the Ottoman Empire and the US until 1867 and 1901, respectively, to establish diplomatic legations because their relationship lacked "geographic, cultural, or economic foundations."[27] Although Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the Turkish Republic in 1923 with a desire to modernize and develop both the state and society along European and Western paradigms, contact between the US and Turkey remained minimal for roughly two decades.[28] It was only in the waning months of the Second World War that this formerly negligible connection began to grow in importance. At this time, the budding global rivalry between the USSR and the US had just commenced in earnest and most independent states, including Turkey, began seeking out positions within the alliances formed by the growing superpowers. To begin with, Turkey feared Soviet desires to amend the Montreux Convention for its own benefit and to gain control over parts of eastern Anatolia lost by Tsarist Russia as it exited the First World War.[29] The Turks, due to the growing bipolarity in the international system and its existing Western orientation, thus sought out as close an alliance as possible within the US sphere of influence. Contrary to these Turkish concerns, the Americans, as early as September 1945, saw the Soviet's potential use of the Bosporus Straits to turn Turkey into a "vassal"[30] state. This fear was best described by US Ambassador to Turkey Edwin C. Wilson in a March 23, 1946 cable wherein he argued that the USSR was using the "Straits question in order to destroy Turkish independence, establish a 'friendly' regime in Turkey thereby closing one remaining gap in [a] chain [of] Soviet satellite states from [the] Baltic to [the] Black Sea."[31] He argued that "Turkish independence [had] become a vital interest for the US."[32]

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27 Aliriza and Aras 2012, 1.
28 Brzezinski 2012, 128.
29 Ibid., 1.
30 Diplomatic Cable, 1946.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.

These fears thus initiated a seven-year process in which the growing concerns over Soviet expansion or attack overshadowed continued unease regarding including Turkey within an alliance for collective security. The next big milestone in the relationship was the receipt of two British aide-memoires describing Britain's inability to continue to support Turkey and Greece militarily and economically. This led to a frank discussion between the Executive and Legislative branches of the United States on the importance of aid to these two states, which was eventually codified in the Truman Doctrine on March 12, 1947.[33] A dramatic increase in financial and military aid followed; however, the Turks still expressed significant fear of Soviet attack and the lack of Turkish inclusion in NATO, the Western collective security alliance. Turkish Interim Foreign Minister Tahsin Bekir Balta thus submitted in December 15, 1948 Turkey's first of three applications for admission to NATO.[34] Although the US stressed throughout the rest of the 1940s Turkey's strategic importance, the Turks were unable to achieve what they coveted most at that time—a treaty-backed guarantee by the US to protect Turkey.

Yet the aforementioned intimate connection was only achieved after Turkey's contribution to the allied effort in the Korean War. Although numerically small, Turkey's role in the war revealed the "tremendous fighting qualities of the Turkish troops" and "demonstrated its willingness to participate in collective security."[35] It was primarily due to this military involvement and the successful Turkish democratic elections of 1950 that the US was able to encourage Turkey's inclusion in NATO, despite the concern by some NATO allies that Turkey—alongside Greece—might diminish the democratic and western character of the alliance.[36] Ambassador Abramowitz possibly summarized the Turkish efforts best, describing them as

> "[this] was why Turkey entered the Korean War, and that was why [they] recognized Israel. They were not worried about aggression in Korea or had great affection for Israel, it was their way of making sure that the Americans would push [for] them, get them into NATO."[37]

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33 Diplomatic Cable, 1947.
34 Memorandum, 1948.
35 Memorandum, 1951.
36 Diplomatic Cable, 1951.
37 Abramowitz 2013.

However, while the US valued the democratic and western character of the alliance for strategic and public relations reasons, American policymakers were actually more concerned with ensuring Turkey's entrance into the Western coalition in the face of a potentially aggressive Soviet Union. An April 9, 1951 memorandum by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff best illustrated this turning point in the American perspective on Turkish entrance to NATO:

> "United States security interests demand that Turkey and Greece be admitted as full members of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Joint Chiefs of Staff attach such great importance to insuring that Turkey and Greece are on the side of the Western Powers at the outset of a general war that they are willing to agree to an alternative mutual security arrangement for Turkey and Greece if their inclusion in NATO would be delayed to such an extent that orientation with the West in the event of a general war would be jeopardized. The Joint chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, would not regard either bilateral security arrangements between the United States and Turkey or Greece as an adequate solution."[38]

Following this convincing memorandum from the pinnacle of the military, the rest of the US government toed a similar line and pressed for Turkey's quick admission to NATO in February 1952.

The Turkish admission to NATO touched off roughly a decade of strong bilateral ties between Turkey and the United States, including the deployment of US Jupiter II nuclear missiles in Turkey in 1959.[39] The military deployment was seen as a further guarantor of American support for Turkish security in case of Soviet attack in response to the inclusion of additional American soldiers on Turkish soil. But, this rosy relationship would begin to face a series of tribulations beginning with the 1960 Turkish military coup. Despite the importance of a democracy to the NATO charter, the US continued to support Turkey throughout its coup government because of the persistent fear of Turkey turning to the Soviets for economic assistance. Thus, American Ambassador Warren, in a report on the coup to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, remarked that the US should continue to support the military government of Cemal Gürsel, as it did the civilian government of Adnan Menderes

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38 Statement of Policy, undated.

39 Türkmen 2013.

before it, and any future government—"if it is not commie"[40]—to ensure Turkey's commitment to the West. This continued support, despite the breakdown of democracy, was the first of four instances wherein America's ideals ran aground against its security concerns to the assurance of Turkish democracy. According to US National Security Adviser Scowcroft, the continued American support for Turkey in spite of this and the following three military coups "probably, overall, made a closer relationship with Turkey more difficult,"[41] because of the conflict between our ideals and our national security interests. For instance, Gönensay remarked that even though the American government, military and intelligence circles did not know about the 1980 coup even during the preceding evening, conspiracy theories about America's involvement amongst the Turkish public remained widespread.[42]

The next major issues to test the bilateral alliance in the 1960s were the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Johnson Letter. In part, the Missile Crisis stemmed from the American-made, but increasingly Turkish-operated, Jupiter II missiles stationed in Turkey. Although the missiles were largely obsolete by the time of their complete deployment in 1960, the Turkish government saw them as a political and military statement of independent strength as well as security within the NATO alliance.[43] However, the US sought their removal and replacement with the more advanced Polaris submarine-based nuclear missile deterrent system. President John F. Kennedy made repeated overtures to the Turks for their replacement, in addition to requesting American studies to analyze the Jupiters' removal. The last such study commissioned before the crisis was in the NSC Action Memorandum of August 23, 1962.[44] While the Americans believed that they would be supplying the Turks with a more effective deterrent in the Polaris system, the Turks felt that the removal of the Jupiters would signify a loss of America's full security guarantee. This dynamic set the foundation for the Cuban Missile Crisis wherein President Kennedy agreed to secretly remove the Jupiters from Turkey if the Soviet Union publicly removed their nuclear missiles from Cuba. The idea

40 Letter from Ambassador Warren, 1960.
41 Scowcroft 2013.
42 Gönensay 2014.
43 Memorandum, 1962.
44 Uslu 2003, 138.

to keep this *quid pro quo* hidden possibly originated on the American side from Ambassador Raymond Hare who suggested a covert US-Soviet arrangement without Turkish knowledge to minimize damage to the US-Turkish relationship.[45] Without knowing of their relationship to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Turks eventually were forced to accept the replacement of the Jupiters with the Polaris system on February 2, 1963.

Although the deal was not public knowledge, the American-mandated removal of the Jupiters still resulted in ill-feelings within the Turkish leadership. President Lyndon B. Johnson would soon further exacerbate this negative sentiment with his June 5, 1964 letter to President İsmet İnönü. The Johnson Letter implied that the US and its NATO allies might not be under legal obligation to protect Turkey if it were to suffer a Soviet intervention after Turkey became militarily involved in the Cyprus conflict. The threat of the practical rescission of the NATO collective security alliance for Turkey marked the "starting point of the losing of faith"[46] in US-Turkish relations, according to Ambassador Özdem Sanberk. This incident painted a different conception in the minds of the Turkish public and officials than had existed beforehand. According the Sanberk,

> "Strategic relations...means [the] two parties must adjust their policies to each other, even if their basic interests do not correspond to what they are doing between them. This has never been the case between Turkey and the United States. The best and most concrete example is the Johnson Letter. Turkey, of course, with its NATO membership and relations with the US had always enjoyed the security of these relations. But when the insecurity or threat came from the south—[Cyprus]—this security arrangement was not valid."[47]

Whereas the Turks felt that they were on a more even playing field prior to the Johnson Letter—even in spite of the forced removal of the Jupiter II Missiles—the aftermath of the letter proved to members of both the Turkish civilian and military elite and to the public at large that its security was at the whim of American politics and not as guaranteed as it had believed.

Foreign Minister Türkmen expanded upon the aftermath of the Johnson letter, maintaining that despite a particularly warm reception at the White House when Turkish

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45 Ibid., 144.
46 Sanberk 2013.
47 Ibid.

President İnönü visited later that year in 1964, the damage had been done at the societal level. "Anti-Americanism...expanded from the '64 episode, and since then has been present in the collective memory"[48] of the Turkish people. These anti-American sentiments and issues of distrust were exacerbated later that decade when the secret agreement removing the Jupiters was publicized. Türkmen described the Turkish societal response as, "America betrayed us, they made a deal behind us without informing us. Anyway it is not forgotten. It is not forgotten."[49] Although these episodes strained their ties, the US and Turkey maintained a security-based relationship in which the Turks were very helpful to American interests, according to Scowcroft. Although it certainly "jarred the Turks...it did not prevent the continuation of a close intelligence relationship with Turkey."[50]

Türkmen shed additional light on the differing views that may have arisen between the political elite and the population at large. According to Türkmen, in a meeting with İnönü in 1973—nine years after the Johnson letter— İnönü said that he was "proud of one thing, that [he] did not send the Turkish army to Cyprus."[51] Türkmen expanded that the public usually could not see the entirety of the relationship and thus did not know "What went behind the Johnson letter...that İnönü in a sense invited this letter because he never wanted to intervene in Cyprus."[52] Whether this was hindsight or the true conviction of the former president is uncertain; however, this incident clearly demonstrated the capacity of Turkish anti-Americanism and the potential for the Turkish state to use America as an external actor and scapegoat to enact unpopular policies. Overall, these two episodes served to establish a base level of distrust in the relationship that would persist throughout the time period under investigation.

The mistrust was further reinforced in the mid-1970s beginning with the 1974 Congressional Arms Embargo of Turkey in reaction to the Turkish military invasion of Northern Cyprus, an effort to protect the ethnic Turkish minority located there. Following this military action, the US Congress faced significant pressure, particularly

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48 Türkmen 2013.
49 Türkmen 2013.
50 Scowcroft 2013.
51 Türkmen 2013.
52 Ibid.

from the Greek lobby (one of numerous influential ethnic lobbies), to sanction Turkey by embargoing further financial and military aid. According to Jim Holmes, who was Deputy Chief of Mission between 1992-1995, "it was politically motivated, [stemming from a] shallow understanding of what was going on in Cyprus that led to the Arms Embargo, and not a sufficient recognition of what the Turkish population of Cyprus had been going through for years before the invasion of Cyprus."[53] Furthermore, US officials, such as former National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger argued that the strategic importance of Turkey superseded any other concerns at the moment. He described to President Gerald Ford how essential "the relationship with Turkey was to Western security, and that this relationship existed not as a favor to Turkey,"[54] but as a consequence of the importance of Turkey to the security of not only the "Mediterranean, but of all of Europe and the Atlantic area."[55] President Ford signed the embargo bill despite concerns for national security and the effect such an embargo would have on America's image in Turkey.

From the Turkish perspective, though, two parallel yet contrasting responses to the embargo emerged. In the first, the general public reacted very negatively to the American action, dredging up stories and suspicions from the previous decade to explain how deceitful and untrustworthy the Americans were. Conversely, there were members of the elite who felt that the embargo was a welcome shock to Turkish complacency with the bilateral alliance and their reliance upon the Americans. According to Türkmen, President Kenan Evren during the 1980s, while looking back on the episode, reflected how,

> "you know, we were furious with the Americans, because they embargoed the aid to us. But, it was in fact a service to Turkey, because we had become so dependent on the US, not only for the weapons and ammunition and modern equipment, but everything, even the shoes of the soldiers."[56]

This duality of response mirrored the contradictory reactions highlighted during the Johnson Letter crisis. Although the Turkish elite would certainly be offended in public —and maybe even in private—by American actions, they also used such actions and

[53] Holmes 2013.
[54] Aliriza and Aras 2012, page 4.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Türkmen 2013.

their 'dues ex machina' nature to enact policies that might have proven difficult or unpopular, such as not invading Cyprus in the 1960s after the Johnson Letter.

The continued tension within the bilateral alliance also had numerous underlying contributory factors, in addition to the aforementioned crises. Two of the major issues highlighted by Türkmen were the large number of foreign, NATO bases on Turkish territory—a seeming insult to Turkish sovereignty—and that the Americans "exhibited a lifestyle much superior to that of the normal Turk."[57] In fact, the US government went so far as to distribute notices and directives to American officers instructing them how to interact with Turkish officials to avoid an antagonistic relationship. Nevertheless, these feelings, coupled with the media "constantly rehearsing"[58] instances of perceived American disloyalty or duplicity, buttressed anti-American sentiment well into the 1990s and 2000s. Numerous officials, such as Holmes and Ambassador Grossman, observed that Turkish officials would often bring up the Johnson Letter, Arms Embargo, or Cuban Missile Crisis.[59] The continued American support for Turkey during the 1980 military coup, wherein there were many human rights violations, would add among the Turkish public another layer of distrust and anxiety regarding America. It was a persistent refrain in the alliance when relations were at difficult points or when regional conflict loomed.

In terms of the theoretical framework established above, the bipolar international system of the Cold War provided the US with a distinct advantage vis-a-vis Turkey in their bilateral relationship. The United States, being the security and economic hub of the Western alliance, had the asymmetric capacity to set security policy to a great degree for the NATO alliance at large and Turkey specifically. Due to Turkey's fears of abandonment—left in the lurch in case of Soviet outright or clandestine attack—Turkish officials had to temper their own policy objectives and those of the Turkish public at large to accommodate those of the US.[60] Beyond its security guarantee, Turkey thus attained significant other goods at a disproportionate cost to the American public—best epitomized at its start in the Truman Doctrine.

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57 Ibid.
58 Holmes 2013.
59 Grossman 2013.
60 Walt 2011, 104.

As the Cold War came to a close in the late 1980s and first two years of the 1990s, the sometimes rocky, but always crucial, relationship between the US and Turkey began to shift to a new trajectory. Despite how much the global and regional situation had changed—alongside the international system's shift to a unipolar moment—it would be narrow-minded and unwise to analyze this time period as a distinct era. The anxieties, distrust and crises of the Cold War, in conjunction with its moments of true cooperation and feelings of brotherhood, played an important role in determining how actors on both sides of the Atlantic responded to new crises and events. In fact, America, with its increased scope to act in a newly unipolar world, spent a considerable amount of time tamping down the suspicions and concerns of Turkish officials while trying to confront many of the challenges that lay ahead in the new decade.

# 4. IRAQ AND THE TESTING OF US-TURKISH TIES

## 4.1. The Iraq War

Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 set off a tense period not only in regional politics, but also between the United States and Turkey. The war would officially last until February 28, 1991. The invasion and the US-led efforts to push Saddam out of Kuwait that followed were a major shock and testing point for the US-Turkish relationship. The ways that the various actors within these two states interacted reflected not only the critical situation at hand, but also the rich, and at times tense, history that they shared. To help understand how and why these interactions played out the way that they did, it is useful to take stock of the global situation at the time. The year 1990 was the midpoint in the roughly three year process of the end to the Cold War that arguably began with the Polish roundtable and finished with the Soviet Union's vote to disintegrate. As it was such a moment of flux, the concerns and priorities of the actors within the US and Turkey were understandably shifting and unstable.

According to Sanberk, the rapid swing from concerns regarding containing the Soviet Union—"the core concept that animated Turkish-American relations"[61]—to containing Saddam's Iraq maintained the relationship's importance. Türkmen agreed, stating that although there was some fear of America losing interest in Turkey as the Soviet Union and Communism crumbled, the rapid commencement of the Iraq War mitigated such Turkish concerns. On the American side, some officials proposed similar points of view. According to Abramowitz, the Turks shifted from being "a very strong ally and...bulwark of NATO's southern flank"[62] against the Soviets, to helping the US confront a Middle East that had erupted in chaos. Ambassador Grossman went even further, explaining how in 1989 and 1990 he and Ambassador Abramowitz worked to reassure the Turks that America would not lose interest. Grossman detailed how a

[61] Sanberk 2013.
[62] Abramowitz 2013.

number of Turkish officials came to them concerned that they "would not be important" anymore, that "no one would pay any attention to them," and that "NATO would go away."[63]

Whereas Sanberk argued that containment—and the shift from the USSR to Iraq—helped to maintain the relationship and its importance in the eyes of both parties, Grossman disagreed. He felt that instead, other matters helped to "galvanize US-Turkish relations after the fall of the wall, [including] the work that [they] were doing together in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and, also,"[64] what was happening in Turkey internally at that time economically and politically. Furthermore, according to State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Adair, while "the importance of Turkey to the United States was still very high" it was secondary, "in terms of actual behavior, for many elements of the US government."[65] Ambassador Parris agreed. While the Turks may have been preoccupied with where the end of the Cold War left the US-Turkish relationship, to the US, "Turkey was kind of an afterthought."[66]

While American and Turkish officials differed on the importance of their relationship at this turning point, no one disagreed that the Iraq War proved pivotal in setting the stage for the next era of bilateral relations. Initially, the Turkish National Security Council (NSC – which included both civilian and military leaders, but had been traditionally dominated by the military) believed that the Gulf War would quickly resolve itself, assuming that "it could preserve its traditional neutral attitude in what was seen as a purely inter-Arab dispute, without damaging its links with the Western powers."[67] However, this was not to be. The conflict quickly escalated and President Turgut Özal sought to firmly reinforce Turkey's alliance with the Western powers, particularly the US. Özal quickly—and unilaterally within the Turkish government—cut off the crucial Kirkuk-Yumurtalık oil pipeline (even before the United Nations Security Council resolution)[68] and closed off all other commercial links, at tremendous economic

63 Grossman 2013.
64 Ibid.
65 Adair 2013.W
66 Parris 2013.
67 Hale 1992, 683.
68 Eralp 2003, 114.

cost to Turkey (estimated at $2-2.5 billion a year).[69] In doing so, Özal sought to prove that Turkey "could be trusted,"[70] to gain leverage with the US on trade and defense issues, to develop its prospects for membership in the EU, and to increase its business opportunities in the Arab Gulf.[71] This embargo was also a "radical departure from Turkey's established policy regarding non-involvement in regional conflicts and wars."[72] Additionally, according to Sanberk,

> "Özal took this initiative, he was sure that he was going to be—that some pressure was going to be put on [by the Americans] and he was going to be obliged to do that. So he preempted this and not because he was afraid of these pressures, but he also thought that it was in his interests, Turkey's interests, and also the region's interests."[73]

According to Holmes, "Özal was the most dominant player since İnönü and Atatürk"[74] in Turkish politics and was accordingly able to determine domestic and international policies to a large degree while he was both in the Prime Ministry and the Presidency. Despite the fact that "the vast majority of Turks were absolutely opposed to supporting the US in this effort,"[75] Özal cultivated a close and deep relationship with Former President George H.W. Bush and Former US Secretary of State James Baker that helped to transcend the public's opposition. National Security Adviser Scowcroft related that:

> "Bush and Özal's dialogue...produced an 'intimate, personal' bond 'where the relationship really became...very close and in a sense less military and more political than it had ever been before,' while 'demonstrating the indisputable strategic importance of Turkey to the United States.'"[76]

This close cooperation between Özal and Bush was also in spite of the opposition from the Turkish military, which had traditionally been the focal point of US-Turkish relations (as seen in continued US support for Turkey during military coups). In fact, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Necip Torumtay, resigned over potential

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69 Hale 1992, 684.
70 Ibid., 687.
71 Sayari 1997, 46.
72 Ibid., 45.
73 Sanberk 2013.
74 Holmes 2013.
75 Grossman 2013.
76 Aliriza and Aras 2012, 5.

Turkish involvement in the American-led effort on December 3, 1990. He "found Özal's 'unconventional' way of dealing with the Gulf crisis unacceptable."[77] Although he was certainly concerned with Turkey's potential military involvement in a regional conflict, Torumtay also was concerned with opposition from lower ranks. This resistance amongst the ranks is particularly distressing to military and civilian leaders considering lower and mid-ranked officers' involvement in instigating previous coups. According to Sanberk,

> "The relationship between the Turkish Army and the American army at that time—the American armed forces—at the higher level was quite good. The difficulty was coming from the lower grades in Turkey; from majors, colonels, and perhaps brigadiers, etc. But when it comes to 4 star, 3 stars, their difficulty was how to control their low-grade staff. And there, of course, there was lots of striking under the belly from the lower grades. Fighting with commanders."[78]

Nevertheless, "Özal believed that he should support the US."[79] This assistance later gained greater public support following UN resolutions buttressing the US coalition. According to Grossman, the UN action reduced the Turks' wariness somewhat. Nonetheless, it "was a courageous decision for [Özal]"[80] to overcome public opinion and assist the US wholeheartedly. This is certainly true in light of the continued resistance to the war effort from both opposition parties and Özal's own Motherland Party (ANAP). Possibly the greatest point of contention for the opposing politicians—as well as many members of the military—was the "fear [which] is always there, that the Americans are supporting the Kurds. [That] they want to create a big Kurdistan and weaken Turkey."[81] Bülent Ecevit—leader of the Democratic Left Party (DSP)—called the operation "suicidal,"[82] and feared that it would create a de facto, independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq that would prove disastrous to Turkey's territorial integrity. Erdal İnönü—leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party—disagreed with allowing Turkish troops to be under a foreign commander and declared that "Turkey

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77 Karaosmanoglu 2000, 211.
78 Sanberk 2013.
79 Grossman 2013.
80 Ibid.
81 Türkmen 2013.
82 Candar 2000, 139.

should liberate itself"[83] from the deployment. Gönensay reflected that the military had a consistent and significant fear that Turkey was losing sovereignty and authority over its own territory in allowing an increased American presence.[84] Furthermore, Süleyman Demirel, the leader of the opposition True Path Party, disagreed with "turning Turkey into 'an American aircraft carrier,'"[85] referring to the American use of Turkish airbases to launch attacks. The opposition was so strong that the initial parliamentary vote to approve of the use of Turkey as a base of deployment for, and to add troops to, the allied effort failed. It was only after significant effort by Özal that he was able to win approval of Turkey's employment as a base of operations (albeit not a contributor of soldiers to Desert Storm). Adair particularly emphasized the importance of the Incirlik airbase in Southern Turkey to the allied war effort.

However, before pushing internally for Turkish support of the American-led war, Özal had to be convinced of America's true intentions to see the crisis through, in order to gain his support beyond an economic embargo (which he introduced unilaterally). Grossman stated that, at this time, many Turkish officials would bring up the past crises —particularly the Johnson letter—to question America's trustworthiness. Grossman stated that, to Özal, the question for the US was, "are you going to do this like Grenada or are you going to go to war? Because if you are going to go to war, I am with you. But if you are going to fool around, we live here."[86] Özal apparently received a satisfactory answer when the bombings began during Desert Storm; he believed that the US was fully committed. In fact, he sought an even more comprehensive end to the Iraq War than the simple removal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Özal, whose hatred of Saddam and concern with bordering an Iraq led by him was immense, actually wanted the US to go to Baghdad and overthrow his regime.

This tactical approach—a clear instance of bandwagoning—helps to further explain Özal's decisions. According to Sanberk, "Özal made a very realistic analysis of the situation and [saw] Turkey's interest in [the] elimination of Saddam Hussein."[87]

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83 Ibid., 140.
84 Gönensay 2014.
85 Eralp 2003, 114.
86 Grossman 2013.
87 Sanberk 2013.

Although "one of the basic principles of Turkish diplomacy was that unless there is aggression to Turkish territories, there is not any reason for Turkey to make war,"[88] Özal saw the opportunity to potentially rid the region of the unpredictable Saddam variable, or at least constrain his capacity to cause further trouble. In spite of the difficulties in convincing the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) of the importance of supporting the American action, he believed that this was an opportunity to potentially utilize America's far greater military capabilities to attack one of Turkey's primary regional enemies at the time. Sanberk summarized Özal's plan of action succinctly, stating:

> "Özal's policy was very clear and very coldblooded, if I may say so. He understood that there was a convergence of interests between Turkey and the US, and he acted accordingly. And first and foremost, success was to convince the US, together with the French and the British and the UN Security Council Permanent Members, to create the no-fly zone"[89]

The no-fly zone to which Sanberk referred will be covered more fully in the next sub-chapter; nevertheless, the necessity of its existence reflected the facts on the ground at the end of the war. The Kurdish uprisings that began on February 2, 1991—with the vocal support of the US—had ended terribly for the Kurdish population of Northern Iraq. Without actual American military support, the Kurds were crushed by Saddam. In the waning days of the war, millions of Kurds fled their homes, primarily seeking refuge in Southeastern Turkey and Northwestern Iran. This major refugee crisis terrified Turkish politicians and military officials of all stripes, who not only feared the economic and humanitarian toll, but also the potential it had for exacerbating Turkey's own internal Kurdish problem. According to Türkmen, the Iraq War strengthened the already-mentioned concerns among Turkish officials that the US sought to create an independent Kurdistan.[90] These fears, which were forcefully and energetically voiced to US officials, would lead to over a decade of a US-led no-fly zone over northern Iraq to help ameliorate Turkish concerns.

Beyond the humanitarian and security concerns of the Turkish government and military, there also existed significant economic fears stemming from the Iraq War. As

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88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Türkmen 2013.

detailed earlier, the closing of the pipeline and border trade was a considerable economic burden. Özal believed that by helping the US, Turkey would receive economic and financial benefits. “Despite marginal US and Arab financial assistance and a rise in textile quotas,”[91] Turkey received no other support and experienced significant economic hardship during the Gulf War. These financial concerns would expand and intensify throughout the next decade due to the embargo on Iraq as well as the no-fly zone, both of which will be covered further in the next section.

Beyond how the various stages of the war affected US-Turkish relations, it is important to further explore how these interactions fit into the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two. To begin, the shift from a bipolar to unipolar international system provided the US with the capacity to act in either a revisionist or conservative manner. As seen throughout the Iraq War, the US chose to maintain a conservative approach. It supported existing states—instead of trying to carve up new nation-states as it saw fit. The US also utilized and strengthened the UN as a deliberative body that could legitimize wars to maintain or impose peace. Arguably the reason for the United States' decision to strengthen existing institutions instead of overruling them is that these institutions reflected American-influenced liberal ideals to a large degree. Thus by taking a conservative approach, the US not only strengthened its values in the view of the world, but it also effectively utilized the existing world system to beat back an aggressive tyrant. As the US was not a global hegemon capable of policing the world independently, it sought to confront this challenge in concert with others.

Next, the interactions between the US and Turkey fit well into the framework detailed earlier. During the war, the Soviet Union still existed. Despite the declining fears of Soviet aggression, Turkey still focused on the importance of maintaining a strong relationship with its security 'hub,' America. Beyond the long-standing concerns of the USSR, the Turks also had regional fears, for Özal this pertained particularly to Iraq, but also Syria, Iran, Greece and Cyprus. As Turkey was not a great power or regional hegemon with massive military capabilities, it sought to maintain assurances from the US, its NATO ally; it could not seek major soft-balancing away from the US and NATO alliance. Instead, its major concern was abandonment—as detailed by

[91] Eralp 2003, 115.

Grossman above—as well as entrapment to a certain extent. Thus the Iraq war was arguably a synthesis of entrapment and bandwagoning. The Turks, including Özal, feared the potentially disastrous consequences of an American war with Iraq. However, they—principally Özal—also feared an aggressive and expansionist Iraq.

### 4.2. The No-Fly Zone and New Ties with the Iraqi Kurds

As the Iraq War ended in February 1991, the refugee crisis in Northern Iraq and Southeastern Turkey intensified dramatically. With roughly 500,000 Iraqi Kurds on the Turkish border seeking refuge from Saddam Hussein's ruthlessness, Turkey was on the edge of an economic and humanitarian crisis.[92] To help alleviate the humanitarian disaster and Turkish concerns, the British began an air campaign in March 1991 that the Americans later joined to dissuade Iraqi forces from further attacks. By April 5, 1991, the UN had passed Resolution 688 calling on Iraq to end the repression of its people and authorizing the maintenance of a no-fly zone over the north of Iraq to protect the civilian population there. This operation was called Provide Comfort and it lasted until July 24, 1991, when Operation Provide Comfort II began. The second operation would last until December 31, 1996. Both operations comprised American, British and French aircraft and were based out of Turkey. Turkey, and particularly its Incirlik airbase, was central to the allied effort to protect the Kurdish region of Iraq, according to Deputy Secretary of State Armitage. As noted by Sanberk, the creation of Operation Provide Comfort was a major policy success of Özal. Sanberk stated that,

> "[Özal] understood that there was a convergence of interests between Turkey and the US, and he acted accordingly. And first and foremost, success was to convince the US, together with the French and the British and the UN Security Council Permanent Members, to create the no-fly zone. And this was possible to evacuate, if I may say so, the 500,000 refugees back to their country and to keep them there. This is his policy. And I think it was quite a successful policy. And it was obtained [through] trustworthy, personal relations."[93]

[92] Hale 1992, 687.
[93] Sanberk 2013.

By October of 1991, the Kurdish regions of Iraq that were protected by the no-fly zone were free from Iraqi military harassment and attained a level of de facto independence. Directly following Operation Provide Comfort II, the Americans, British and Turks began Operation Northern Watch to maintain the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel that would protect this proto-Kurdish Regional Government from Baghdad. This final operation would last until the Second Iraq War of 2003.

Besides the initial, predominantly self-interested concerns of the Turks, Turkey had other reasons for supporting the no-fly zone. To begin with, Turkish officials believed that, if the Iraqi Kurds eventually became reliant upon their goodwill, Turkey would be able to encourage them not to formally establish a new state.[94] Next, Turkey feared the potential support that the de facto state could provide for the PKK—particularly as a protected enclave. Additionally, if "Saddam were to crush the Kurds again, Turkey might have [had] to face hordes of destabilizing Kurdish refugees once more."[95] Furthermore, Turks believed that they would win respect and support from the West for doing so, possibly encouraging the EU to expedite membership discussions—to be discussed at length in a later section. Özal's support for the no-fly zone was in spite of repeated statements by Ecevit, ANAP backbencher Ülkü Gökalp Gunay, and Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan (among many others) that the creation of an eventual Kurdish state was part of a US plan that also included the dismemberment and incorporation of Turkish territories.[96] Even if these particular concerns were fanciful, they reflected the deep-seated fears of many Turkish officials. Foreign Minister Emre Gönensay described a more realistic Turkish fear; that the US did not explicitly want the disintegration of Turkey, but rather its weakening by providing the PKK with protection and arms.[97] He elaborated, saying that this conspiracy theory reflected the perceived belief that the Americans always wanted to have the "PKK card as leverage against Turkey because Turkey behaves sometimes as a loose mind. You never know what

94 Gunter 1993, 304.
95 Ibid., 305.
96 Ibid., 305.
97 Gönensay 2014.

Turkey will do...So perhaps to have this leverage was a way to control Turkey so that it would not go into adventurism."[98]

To combat these beliefs, America "spent an awful lot of time and effort trying to reassure [the Turks] with respect to American policy on behalf of Iraqi integrity, [both] territorial and political."[99] American officials were always rhetorically against an independent Kurdistan, arguing instead that Provide Comfort was only there for aid.[100] Grossman detailed how in all of America's "contacts with the Kurds—and [the US] had a lot—[it] always made clear that this was about [the Kurds'] success and their refugee return, and helping them keep Saddam off of their backs, but it was not about a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq."[101] Nevertheless, Adair proposed reasons or potential justifications for the Turks' worries—"there was not perfect unanimity within the US government."[102] There were some individuals in the executive and legislative branches that felt that a "Kurdish state would be a good idea. And Turkish officials were aware of that."[103] Although officials—like Ambassadors Grossman, Abramowitz, and Holmes—always made it clear what official US government policies were, the Turks maintained a healthy dose of skepticism and fear of American disingenuity.

The lack of trust and perceived sense of duplicity on the part of the US, alongside the continued close cooperation, reflected both the fundamental importance of the US alliance, but also Turkey's anxiety over its own internal and regional security and stability. After becoming President in 1993, Demirel reflected that the US had allowed the "snakes"[104] to come out from under the umbrella, revealing his belief that the US action assisted the PKK during the Gulf War. Yet, as President, he did continue Özal's military support, reasoning, "what was I to do; damage relations with the United States?"[105] Afterward, rumors of American involvement or even orchestration of the

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98 Ibid.
99 Holmes 2013.
100 Grossman 2013.
101 Ibid.
102 Adair 2013.
103 Ibid.
104 Candar 2000, 140.
105 Ibid., 140.

1980 military coup[106] or in providing helicopter support to the PKK proliferated.[107] Parris expanded upon Turkish politicians' habit of absolute opposition when not in government transforming to reticent acceptance upon attaining office:

> "It was certainly the case that Prime Minister Ecevit, who had written extensively on [his disapproval of the no-fly zone] when he was in the opposition, did not fundamentally change his viewpoints, in my opinion, after he became Prime Minister. But neither did he act in ways that were consistent with them. In other words, he did not change the policy, he continued basically what his predecessors had done. Which is to essentially accede to ongoing American urging to cooperate with us on maintaining a no-fly zone and on maintaining, grosso modo, the integrity of the sanctions regime."[108]

Parris went on to describe how, although most people were against America's policies and Turkey's involvement, the "statesmen" in the military and state understood that they must go along with America's policies "at a time when there was only one superpower left, where American prestige was at a level that it may never again reach, and where intelligent Turks understood that, by and large, they had to align themselves with reality."[109] According to Parris, Demirel—"as pro-American a politician as Turkey"[110] had in the latter half of the 20th century—had a distinct understanding of this necessity.

According to Sanberk, Turkish-American relations had all been negative once Özal left the scene, as demonstrated by innumerable statements by his successors to the Presidency and Prime Ministry.[111] The relationship was troubled by "a deep, deep mistrust by the military that the Americans were trying to create a Kurdish state."[112] These sentiments were not only shared by members of the military and civilian leadership, but also general Turkish public opinion, and were no longer confronted by major politicians like Özal. Sanberk flatly stated that the Iraqi Kurdish issues were at the heart of the "deterioration of the Turkish-American relations"[113] and America's image in Turkey during the 1990s. Holmes agreed, arguing that while Provide Comfort and

106 Onis 2000, 112.
107 Ibid., 116.
108 Parris 2013.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Sanberk 2013.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.

Northern Watch offered the Turks and Americans a chance at near-term cooperation, "longer-term, it created the stuff of mythology, which to this day affects the attitude of Turks towards the United States."[114] He went on to explain how the Turks frequently reiterated the point that the NATO forces were using a Turkish base and that Turkey "had the ultimate say with respect to the types of activities that were undertaken there." He expanded that "they never, in that period of time, never came to a period of trust with respect to what the US was doing in so far as its relationship with the Kurds of Northern Iraq."[115] Nevertheless, Holmes did state that it was the continued strength and history of the relationship, despite this growing distrust, between the American and Turkish militaries that led to America's continued maintenance of the no-fly zone even after the British and French departed in the late 90s.

Turkey faced considerable economic obstacles throughout the 1990s beyond the many security concerns related to the Iraq War and its aftermath. The continuation of the oil embargo and the closure of the border to trade—since "there was a lot of trade that did not involve exports of Iraqi oil"[116]—cost the country significantly.[117] In particular, the Southeastern region of Turkey that bordered Iraq experienced a serious economic crisis that coincided with—and reinforced—the civil conflict that Turkey had been experiencing between Kurdish terrorists (the PKK or Kurdistan Workers Party) and the military. As it was an American-led policy to maintain Iraq's isolation, Turkey sought economic assistance from America, other NATO allies, and the Arab states that had supported the coalition forces. However, significant financial support was not forthcoming, contributing to an already lackluster and crisis-prone Turkish economy in the 1990s. Holmes discussed at length the issue of Turkish expectations of support, American promises of aid, and their general lack of fulfillment:

> "There are people on the American side, who I have talked to, who say that they were in the room when promises were made to the Turks that were never fulfilled. Those were of an economic variety, of military assistance variety, they were of a political-national security variety. Made by a very senior level people—Secretary of State Jim Baker, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but they were not followed up. I shouldn't say were

[114] Holmes 2013.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Parris 2013.
[117] Akinci 1996a.

> not followed up; were not fulfilled. When the Turks say that they paid a price, they believed that they convinced the US that they were undertaking a substantial risk for which they needed to be given assurances on compensation. And many of those assurances of compensation for taking those risks were not delivered. It dealt in part with the PKK, but in larger part it dealt with the delivery of military goods; it dealt with the delivery of financial assistance in the order of, I would say, several billion dollars worth of military assistance and financial assistance. Now in fairness, the US has always had an explanation for this. It is one thing to say, we will deliver, and it is something else to actually deliver, but you have to understand that this requires the budgetary support from the US Congress as well. Sometimes that caveat is not understood or as entrenched as the promise and assurance in the first place."[118]

Prime Minister and True Path Party Leader Tansu Çiller visited the White House in 1993 to seek the lifting of the Iraqi embargo to help Turkey economically and to prove that its model of secular democracy surpassed that of the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the time, Vice President Al Gore simply reassured her that the US would help financially, without ensuring any steps were taken.[119] Parris and Scowcroft reiterated these points, reinforcing how the Turks felt that the US "had simply walked away from [its] commitments,"[120] and were generally unable to accomplish a great deal proactively to ameliorate the situation within Turkey economically. Even though the US did not actively provide additional financial and military aid to Turkey, as the Turks expected, it did help in other, indirect, ways.

According to Ambassador Grossman, a significant effort was made by American and NATO forces to utilize Turkish trucks and truck drivers as much as possible to move gasoline, food and other supplies to and from military bases. America thus "tried to recreate as much of that transport corridor as possible."[121] Furthermore, Grossman, President Bill Clinton, and numerous other officials worked hard to support the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Besides providing Turkey a new energy resource and jump-starting its endeavors to be an energy hub, the pipeline's trajectory would also place it in the economically affected areas in a further attempt to ameliorate local conditions. As described in greater detail in the next section, it is important to note that the US was a

[118] Holmes 2013.
[119] Eralp 2003, 116.
[120] Parris 2013.
[121] Grossman 2013.

major supporter of the pipeline, partially because the US “felt that [it] owed...Turkey some recompense for the losses that they had suffered by following the UN resolution.”[122]

Ambassador Parris also detailed at length efforts made by the US to overlook “fairly flagrant Turkish willingness to enable at least the violation of UN sanctions on bringing petroleum products out of Northern Iraq for sale in Turkey.”[123] Despite US efforts internationally to isolate Iraq diplomatically and economically, American officials realized that tacitly facilitating the illicit trade of Iraqi oil from Northern Iraq was one of the few significant ways that the US could support Turkey's economy. Parris described it “as a quid pro quo essentially for the cooperation [the US was] getting in the military sphere.”[124] While Turkish authorities never mentioned this seeming trade, Parris felt confident that they were well aware of the situation. This effort to mitigate Turkey's economic costs stemming from the embargo also factored into another issue at the time: Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish relations. Although most of the oil “product was coming from areas that were beyond Kurdish control...[it was] going out through Northern Iraq, which was essentially KDP controlled.”[125] The KDP, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Massoud Barzani and the PUK, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Jalal Talabani, were the two primary competing Kurdish militia-cum-parties in Northern Iraq. Their personal and familial rivalries were—and remain—immense. According to Parris, the trade was having “a positive impact...in the North, where it was an American objective to protect and to guarantee as prosperous a life as one could have under the circumstances.”[126] Furthermore, it “was having a salutary effect on Southeast Turkey and on the terrorism problem as well.”[127] Thus the tacitly-approved smuggling of Iraqi oil through Northern Iraq to Turkey effectively entwined Turkey further in Kurdish politics and helped to strengthen the hand of Barzani and his KDP.

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122 Ibid.
123 Parris 2013.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.

As Saddam's forces faded from being the primary concern in the north, the Turks and Americans began to focus in earnest on internal Iraqi Kurdish politics and their relations with Turkey and America. Throughout the post-Iraq War 1990s, the US played a significant role in attempting to mediate relations between the two competing Kurdish factions. Part of this mediation effort stemmed from the American desire that the Kurds maintain a united front against any military endeavors from Saddam. The US sought the peaceful and democratic development of the northern region as an example of what a Saddam-free Iraq could potentially attain. Additionally, the US believed that a Kurdish region at peace could help mitigate Turkish concerns over both a free Iraqi Kurdistan and also elements of the PKK utilizing a poorly governed region to attack Turkish territory. However, this dream of peaceful and amenable development was not to be. The KDP and PUK fought a civil war in the mid-90s. According to Holmes, "the PKK, the KDP, and the PUK, and the Turks...had a constantly shifting set of alliances and arrangements and [played] one side off against the other,"[128] throughout this time period. The KDP even allied with Saddam for a time period to oust the PUK from Erbil.

For much of the 1990s, Turkey sought out accommodations with Barzani and Talabani in an effort to combat the threat of PKK terrorism in Turkey. According to Sanberk, Barzani and Talabani, while trying to prove their aversion to separatist terrorism in Turkey, fought against the PKK in the early and mid-1990s to try to ameliorate tensions with Turkey.[129] He commented on how the Kurds "were always eager to have good relations"[130] with the Turks and that they knew that their interests could best be supported by a strong relationship with Turkey. However, Sanberk reflected that there was "huge mismanagement"[131] in conducting Turkish outreach to the Kurds due to the heavy involvement of a distrustful Turkish military, particularly amongst the middle and lower ranked officials actually making frequent contact. Thus, Turkish efforts to mediate the conflicts between the two parties—as seen in the Ankara process of negotiations in 1997—failed and the Turkish influence was reduced to a certain extent. Yet, Turkey did attain one significant and tangible result from its

[128] Holmes 2013.
[129] Sanberk 2013.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.

diplomatic endeavors, the agreement by the KDP and PUK to allow Turkey to maintain a base in Northern Iraq filled with Special Forces troops. This base provided Turkey with an enhanced capacity to gather intelligence and plan military strikes against PKK forces more accurately.[132] Although the base was of "doubtful legality"[133] under international law, the US provided tacit approval for its continued existence as a way to support Turkey against the PKK.

Nonetheless, by the end of that year, attempts to pacify the internal Kurdish conflict fell to the Americans and British primarily.[134] Although American leadership may have helped the Kurds to settle their differences—demonstrated by the Washington Agreement in September 1998 stipulating the sharing of power and revenue—it bred distrust among Turkish officials of American priorities and goals since the Turks would "have to follow from behind."[135] However, Barzani and Talabani had agreed to the allowance of a small number of Turkish troops to be stationed in Northern Iraq.[136] According to Holmes, these forces were Turkish Special Forces and were there to conduct or coordinate strikes against PKK threats in Iraqi territory.[137] Additionally, they successfully penetrated the Kurds in Northern Iraq with their intelligence people.[138] Holmes stated that the reason that the Kurdish leaders approved of their presence was to ensure the withdrawal of many more Turkish troops after one of Turkey's larger operations towards the end of the Kurdish civil war.[139] Despite the fact that America had attempted to assist the Turks in their efforts to chart a path to peace in the Ankara process, the Turks never fully trusted the Americans in their endeavors at negotiations.[140]

Despite considerable American and Turkish-led efforts at negotiations in the early and mid-90s, there were also numerous instances of Turkish military actions to target PKK members and bases in Northern Iraq, as mentioned above. This stemmed from three major factors. First, the no-fly zone meant that the Iraqi central government

[132] Gönensay 2014.
[133] O'Leary 2012, 500.
[134] Sanberk 2013.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Türkmen 2013.
[137] Holmes 2013.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Sanberk 2013.

could not maintain and control its own borders. Second, the confrontations within the Kurdish parties meant that their attention—and that of their military forces—primarily lay with each other and not with potential terrorists and terrorist bases within their territory. Lastly, the shifting alliances during the time period meant that at some points, one or the other of the Iraqi Kurdish parties might be supporting the PKK. This was particularly true of the PUK, for a substantial amount of the period. Thus, the proto-Kurdish Regional Government, under the leadership of Barzani, had at numerous points expressed its intentions to combat the PKK together with the Turks.[141] Consequently, there were several major operations conducted by the Turks to confront the PKK threat involving the cooperation of Barzani.[142] Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the alliances shifted dramatically from instance to instance. According to Armitage, "Barzani has been on and off sides with the Turkish government from time to time. He has been on all sides of the issue."[143]

During this time period, the US approach to Turkish-Kurdish relations was constantly under stress. At various moments the Americans sought to actively facilitate improved relations, and at others they intentionally reduced contact so as not to antagonize the Turks. For example, at one point early on, Ambassador Abramowitz conveyed a message to Washington stating that he wanted to talk to Talabani. In response, the State Department said "absolutely not, the Turks will get excited."[144] This sentiment was in spite of the fact that Özal was actively consulting both Barzani and Talabani at the time in private. Nevertheless, the Turkish fears of America potentially negotiating with the Kurds against its wishes—either intentionally or unintentionally—led to US-Kurdish relations being a function of the US-Turkish relationship. To ameliorate the tension and distrust between Turkey and the US, the US actively shared information and intelligence. However the "Turks never believed that they got all of the information that the US had. They never believed they [the US was not] up to something that they didn't know about."[145] To improve relations, the US designated the

[141] Armitage 2013.
[142] Türkmen 2013.
[143] Armitage 2013.
[144] Abramowitz 2013.
[145] Holmes 2013.

PKK as a terrorist organization, which helped to restrict its capacities internationally.[146] Nevertheless, according to Holmes—and partially vindicating the Turks' distrust—the US "consistently during that decade denied [Turkey] actionable intelligence, as a matter of policy,"[147] primarily due to the harsher and more military-oriented approach that the Turks pursued in comparison to the American penchant for treating it as a policing issue at that time. The Turks resented America's withholding this type of information and felt that it was inconsistent with America's declaration of the PKK as a terrorist organization.

Besides tacitly approving the multiple Turkish invasions of Northern Iraq, the US also "closed its eyes"[148] "to some perfectly awful Turkish military activities in the Southeast" of Turkey.[149] The Executive Branch of the US government even stymied Congressional efforts to cut off military assistance to Turkey because of military human rights abuses. Holmes reflected that the US facilitated Turkey's military endeavors in Northern Iraq not so much in actual additional, direct military assistance, but in the maintenance of the existing military aid.[150] Grossman summarized the American perspective at the time well:

> "The US preferred that Turkey not send its troops into Northern Iraq, but given the terrorist threat from the PKK and the fact that the central government in Iraq was not able to impose its own control over the area, I think a lot of people, certainly in the first Bush administration, understood that, you know, if we were fighting terrorists and sometimes acted militarily, than the Turks sometimes had that requirement as well"[151]

Once the Turks proved unsuccessful at compelling Barzani and Talabani to make peace, the US lost its reticence for active engagement in the political process. The US facilitated contact "in Northern Iraq, but also in Ankara with each of the gentlemen separately, and on at least a couple of occasions, together."[152] The US constantly tried to encourage dialogue between the two Kurdish leaders themselves and between them and

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146 Grossman 2013.
147 Holmes 2013.
148 Türkmen 2013.
149 Holmes 2013.
150 Ibid.
151 Grossman 2013.
152 Holmes 2013.

the Turks throughout the period and into the 2000s. The peak of this facilitation was arguably when former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright brought Barzani, Talabani and the Turks to Washington DC to negotiate the Washington Agreement in 1998.[153] According to Holmes, both leaders met with US Vice President Al Gore during this trip, reflecting the importance that the US placed on resolving their issues. Significantly, the simple act of getting the Kurds to Washington was a feat of international cooperation, since they had to travel through Turkey. According to Holmes, the US intervened to urge Turkey to allow them to travel. "They facilitated it...at one point they even issued Turkish passports for their travel."[154]

The relationship between Turkey and the US during the post-Iraq War period was emblematic of the many of the fears of abandonment and entrapment. Due to the rapid switch from Soviet or Iraqi aggression to an unstable and terrorist-laden Northern Iraq, Turkey maintained a need for a strong security tie to the unipolar power—the US. The significant "asymmetric...distribution of capabilities within [the] alliance"[155] allowed the alliance leader—the US—to dictate policy to a great degree. This command of policy fed on existing Turkish distrust of the US and even provided new opportunities for conspiracy theories and fears of betrayal to spread. Having already been 'entrapped,' to a certain degree, in the Iraqi War and its aftermath, Turkey had few opportunities to defect to another pole or attempt to band together with other smaller states to counteract US policy, given its reliance on American cooperation to maintain its territorial security. Despite Turkey's reliance upon American intelligence to assist in fighting the PKK, "officials complained that this [was] not real time"[156] and actionable intelligence, a concern that would not be addressed until the end of 2007. It would only be in the first decade of the 21st Century that Turkey felt confident enough in its relations with the Kurds of Northern Iraq to countenance a shift in American relations. Beyond Turkey's entrapment and abandonment concerns, American policy towards post-War Iraq maintained the conservative approach to the international institutional system. The US still sought and relied upon UN approval for the no-fly zone of

[153] Grossman 2013.
[154] Holmes 2013.
[155] Walt 2011, 103.
[156] Gönensay 2014.

Northern Iraq and definitely declared that it was against such revisionist policies like the fracturing of Iraq into ethnic or sectarian statelets.

# 5. A NEW ACTIVISM, FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO THE BALKANS

## 5.1. Central Asia and Azerbaijan

While the Iraq War and its aftermath certainly were the priorities in US-Turkish relations during the 1990s, they were not the only factors. One key realm of cooperation and encouragement between the two sides was Turkey's expanding foreign policy to the newly independent, former Soviet Republics. Turkey's outreach extended to nearly all of these states, excluding Armenia for the most part. However, Turkey's policies and motivations regarding Azerbaijan and the Turkic republics in Central Asia were most significant in establishing the potential for US-Turkish cooperation. Turkey's assistance to these states began quickly as the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991; although it was an independent policy, the US certainly encouraged it. Turkey's new foreign policy to these states had numerous origins that conveniently supported and reinforced aspects of American policies at that time. To begin with, from the Turkish perspective, these states, as ethnically Turkic, were considered a natural regional ally, so that the Turks "naturally wanted to extend [a] hand to"[157] them. According to Sanberk, Özal had a concrete policy framework in mind from the onset. He "thought that Turkey must immediately start to create new channels"[158] of contact and communication. Although Turkey maintained its policy not to engage in the civil conflicts or wars between these states, it "became politically and diplomatically very active."[159]

This course of action included the opening of airspace and traffic routes, the extension of various forms of communication and cultural exchange such as telex, telephone and television, and establishing lines of "export to allow the exchange of people, traders,...trade, credit lines, and energy."[160] From the beginning, Turkey—first under Özal, but continuing under his successors—sought bilateral agreements with these newly independent states, tying them to the outside world and market via Turkey.

[157] Türkmen 2013.
[158] Sanberk 2013.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.

Indeed, this general outreach was not just Turkish policy, it was also encouraged by the US. The US saw in Turkey an opportunity to assist these newly independent states to make the transition to market-based democracies and integrate into the global economy and Western World.[161] Additionally, according to Abramowitz, the American encouragement to support Central Asia reflected rhetoric to try to reassure the Turks that the US would not lose interest with Turkey now that the Cold War had ended.[162]

The US and Turkey did differ, however, in their expectations and understanding of the situation. While the Turks "had this notion that Turkey would lead...the resurrection of a Turkish speaking, Turkish culturally identifiable entity,"[163] the US understood that this ideal was a utopian dream. According to Holmes, the Turks were disappointed that the US would not be an active partner in the promotion of this policy, but he felt that "they fairly quickly began to see that it was extremely costly and not likely to go any place, and that these countries were going to choose their own allies and directions...quite apart from what Ankara urged upon them."[164] According to Grossman, American officials including Armitage—who was handling US policies to these states—encouraged the Turks to go there in earnest and work to modernize these states.[165] He felt that the Turks did a "very smart thing,"[166] by sending bankers, business people, and others to these countries.

The Americans warned the Turks not to expect open arms and ready acceptance of Turkey as the "big brother"[167] to these states, since they had just "got rid of big brother and they probably [did] not want another one."[168] So, while their motivations were well-intentioned, the Turks were underwhelmed by the welcome they received from the post-Soviet states. To a great degree, these states also remained culturally and economically integrated to Russia, who worked to counteract the Turkish outreach which it saw as antagonistic.[169] Additionally, Grossman reflected that the Turks who had

[161] Ibid.
[162] Abramowitz 2013.
[163] Holmes 2013.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Grossman 2013.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid
[168] Ibid.
[169] Gönensay 2014.

visited these states were shocked at the conditions of their economies and countries. Unlike many American officials and business people who may have had exposure to the Eastern Bloc at various times, the Turks had little such first-hand experience with Communist countries. Thus, Turks returned in the first few years saying "oh my goodness, we had no idea how backward this was."[170] Grossman expanded, saying:

> "[They were] shocked by how backward it was and what a disaster, human disaster, communism was. Well they adjusted themselves and figured what kind of work could be done. So they realized that they would have to raise a pretty profound foundation out there."[171]

Despite the horrid conditions of these states at the time, some Turkish businesses proved successful, including construction, transportation, trucking, and food service. This business achievement reflected joint US and Turkish goals of attempting to redirect these states diplomatically and strategically from Russia to the West, which varied in degree from state to state. According to Adair, the achievements stemmed from a budding symbiotic relationship:

> "Turkey, theoretically at least, could help to introduce trade and free market concepts to that region. And the region in turn could offer opportunities for increased trade and increased economic growth. And that would promote prosperity and hopefully democracy in Central Asia. And from our perspective, would also serve to strengthen ties with the West. So in all of those—all of that was a good thing."[172]

Without a doubt, the outreach and economic ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey flourished relative to the other states, in large part due to its contiguity with Turkey.[173]

While Turkey's economic ties to these states expanded to one degree or another, ties with Armenia became progressively worse. Turkish-Armenian, Azerbaijani-Armenian, or American-Armenian relations each proved likewise complicated and crisis-prone. Although a detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth briefly summarizing the various crises and how they impacted and were affected by the US-Turkish relationship. Armenia and diaspora Armenians supported efforts to declare the mass deaths and killings of Armenians during the First World War a Genocide

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170 Grossman 2013.
171 Ibid.
172 Adair 2013.
173 Parris 2013.

committed by the Ottoman Empire—to which Turkey was the successor state legally and historically. Because of the large diaspora population in America, Armenian-Americans had proved somewhat successful at influencing US policies to the region.[174] Although neither President Clinton nor Congress at the time had ever declared it a Genocide, the issue's frequent appearance in the legislative agenda made for tense relations between the US and Turkey. Nevertheless, when Armenia and Azerbaijan fought a war in the early 1990s over Nagorno-Karabakh, the US imposed "sanctions on Azerbaijan, even though Armenia was responsible for the conflict...[due to] the Armenian lobby" in America, which was very powerful.[175] Early on in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict Turkey closed its border to Armenia in support of Azerbaijan. This closure provided one of the first, but certainly not the last, points of conflict between the US and Turkey over Armenia.[176] A USAID train en route to Yerevan, Armenia got as far as Kars, near the Turkish border with Armenia, before being unable to move any further because of the closed border.

Upon arriving in Turkey in 1992, Holmes leveraged Turkey's ties with the US to open the border for that one train. Although it was allowed to pass, "it was an illustration"[177] of the problems that would repeatedly crop up between the US and Turkey and made it "quite apparent that the US was going to pay a price and be blamed for an awful lot of Eurasian problems that Turkey had because of the Azerbaijan-Armenia problem."[178] Despite the Turks' perception that the US played a disruptive role when it came to Armenia, Sanberk felt that the US also provided a positive function. According to him, the US-Turkish relationship was what sparked and maintained most of the attempts at reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia throughout the 90s and into the new century. Although they did not provide a long-term resolution to the problem, the relationship did help to deescalate conflicts and reduce tension, to a certain extent.[179]

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174 Sanberk 2013.
175 Scowcroft 2013.
176 Holmes 2013.
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Sanberk 2013.

The US supported Armenia in its conflict with Azerbaijan to the chagrin of both the Azerbaijanis and the Turks. At the same time, America played a major role in developing the natural resource infrastructure that would prove pivotal to Azerbaijan and Turkey—the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline. According to Sanberk, when Ambassador Grossman arrived at his post in Ankara, he sought to change how the US viewed its relations with Turkey. Unlike in the previous era when Turkey's importance to the US was "always a function of other regions,"[180] Grossman created, fought for State Department approval, and brought to fruition a series of actionable policies that had Turkey at their heart.[181] The primary point was the development of the pipeline—with efforts at assisting Turkey's admittance to the EU a close second. The pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey through Georgia had three primary justifications for its massive US support.

The first motivation for the US to assist in the pipeline's construction was as a form of payback to the Turks for the costs of the Iraq War and the no-fly zone. According to Grossman, the pipeline was an effort to "show Turks that [the US] understood that they had taken an economic hit and [that] this was one way to try to balance that checkbook."[182] Although the US government did not provide any funds directly or indirectly (via OPIC)[183] to the construction of the pipeline, the government expended "a huge amount of effort over many years...from President Bush, President Clinton, Secretaries of State, everybody,"[184] to ensure that the project went to completion. These many years of multifaceted effort became "one of the prime...loadstones of US-Turkish strategic cooperation ultimately."[185] Türkmen went further, arguing that the "pipeline was really achieved thanks to President Clinton... [because] he worked very hard also to convince the [oil] companies"[186] to invest in the project. Beyond the initial investment, the transit of oil through its territory would

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180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
182 Grossman 2013.
183 Armitage 2013.
184 Grossman 2013.
185 Parris 2013.
186 Türkmen 2013.

provide Turkey with an additional revenue stream.[187] According to Armitage, who had retired from public service and was actively working on the pipeline project in the private sector in the latter half of the 90s, the US applied pressure on the consortium, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and the EU to ensure that the project went to fruition.[188]

According to Gönensay, who spearheaded much of Turkish policy regarding the pipeline in the early and mid-1990s, the American government's assistance was key in ensuring that the oil went through Turkey as opposed to through Russia. American and other Western oil companies had originally and consistently sought to export Azerbaijani energy through the existing infrastructure through Russia to Europe so as not to rile their relationships and forthcoming business opportunities with Russia.[189] Gönensay reflected that at the final meeting in London to set the pipeline's route, the American companies were not going with the existing plan and intended to use Russia instead.[190] It was only through Gönensay's working with Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger's office in the US National Security Council that they were able to pressure the companies to stick to the Turkish route.[191]

The second motivation was to assist Turkey in forging stronger relations with the former Soviet states and in creating "the economic means of ensuring that the former republics did not again become dependencies of Russia as they had been of the Soviet Union."[192] The pipeline would reinforce the economic outreach, efforts towards economic modernization, and attempts at opening up to the global market amongst the newly independent states that Turkey was pursuing. According to Parris, "Turkey and America were in strategic terms working very closely and shared a common strategic vision in many respects, which was anti-Russian in its focus."[193] Thus, the final motivation for the American leadership and support for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline reflected this anti-Russian and pro-western integration directive.[194]

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187 Gönensay 2014.
188 Armitage 2013.
189 Akinci 1996b.
190 Gönensay 2014.
191 Ibid.
192 Parris 2013.
193 Ibid.
194 Gönensay 2014.

The third factor was to “strengthen ties between Central Asia [and Azerbaijan] and the West.”[195] The pipeline was the first to tie the EU and the Caspian Sea region together via Turkey, instead of Russia. It consequently jump-started Turkey's role as an energy hub; “Turkey probably would not be nearly as relevant with respect to global energy as it is today without [this] connection.”[196]It was the start of a new east-west energy corridor that continues to develop to this day. A part of the impetus to this development was the aforementioned anti-Russian sentiment. “Multiple pipelines had been a policy decision,”[197] for the US which tried to expand the opportunities for both the providers (former Soviet states) and consumers (EU) to bypass Russia with the intention that Russia would lose some of its capacity to use its energy resources and pipelines as a diplomatic weapon.[198] Furthermore, American officials, such as Adair, believed that economic and energy ties such as these would help in Turkey's efforts to gain admission to the EU—another US priority during the 90s.[199]

Overall, despite continuous tensions regarding Turkey and America's respective relations with Armenia, the Turkish opening to the former Soviet states proved to be a successful area of cooperation between the US and Turkey. Although certainly a Turkey-led initiative, the opening to former Soviet states held strategic rationale for both the US and Turkey and provided an opportunity for them to ameliorate some of the tension built up over Iraq. As detailed above, the foreign policy opening reflected American desires to further enmesh Turkey within its sphere of influence (liberal market states), to compensate it for the costs that it suffered related to Iraq, and to preemptively combat the resurgence of a Russian threat.

To the Turks, the outreach supported primarily two arguably opposing policies anticipated by the theoretical framework. First, the foreign policy initiative offered Turkey the opportunity to attempt to 'soft-balance' away from the US by building ties with former Soviet states. While the outreach was successful overall, it did not reach the heights of cooperation and fraternal ties that many Turkish politicians—particularly the

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195 Adair 2013.
196 Holmes 2013.
197 Armitage 2013.
198 Akinci 1996b.
199 Adair 2013.

ultra-ethnonationalists—thought possible. Nevertheless, it did provide Turkey the opportunity to strengthen ties with Europe, which, while in the US 'camp,' was independent and could act as a counterweight to unpopular American policies. However, this desire for a broader range of potential allies amongst the post-Soviets and the Europeans was also an American priority for Turkey. As such, Turkey's rationally self-interested policies simultaneously reinforced its ties with its 'alliance security hub,' potentially reducing Turkish fears of abandonment. Even with these symbiotically-reinforcing policies, US-Turkish relations could not overcome long-standing and newly arising aspects of distrust. Although suspicion did not figure prominently in most of the largely positive or at least neutral relations, the Armenian circumstances unquestionably added to that the rationale of the Turkish public and officials to distrust the US or see ulterior motives and conspiracy theories behind US actions and policies.

### 5.2. The Balkans and NATO Intervention

As with the post-Soviet states, Turkey's outreach to the Balkans provided the opportunity for positive and active cooperation with the US dealing with a strategic imperative. However, unlike Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Balkans—being in Southeastern Europe—were clearly within the sphere of influence of both the EU and NATO, dramatically shifting how US-Turkish interactions and policies were instituted. Instead of primarily being a bilaterally-focused relationship with ad hoc outreach to other states, relations were firmly entrenched within the NATO, EU, and even UN architectures For Turkey, the US, and the EU, the Balkans provided an early example, right in the middle of the 'West,' that the post-Cold War period would not see the 'end of history.' This phrase, coined by Francis Fukuyama, illustrated the concept that the world had entered a new era in which liberal, democratic, and market-based countries that respected individualism and pluralism would reign supreme. Instead, the upheaval in the Balkans, and more specifically, the disintegration of Yugoslavia, demonstrated that instead of a global clash of the free-market versus communism, the international system would be riven by ethnic, religious, or otherwise identity-based conflicts. To a certain

extent, this was supported by Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' theories arguing that world civilizations (like the Judeo-Christian West) would be the primary competitors in the post-Cold War period.

Turkey's approach to the conflict in Yugoslavia progressed through three stages. First, Turkey, like the US and the EU, was firmly against the break up of Yugoslavia into its constitutive parts.[200] Nevertheless, as Slovenia and Croatia fought for and won their independence from the Serbian dominated Yugoslav federal army, the EU and US chose to recognize their freedom.[201] Turkey quickly followed suit, recognizing all four breakaway republics, including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. The initial reticence to support Slovenian and Croatian independence stemmed primarily from Turkey's fear of a similar separatist movement within Turkey gaining international support and diplomatic recognition as the idea of ethnic or religious nationalism regained prominence.[202] Turkey was also concerned with a potential flood of refugees, the loss of trade to the EU that went through these territories, and also uncertainty with respect to turning its back on a former ally (Yugoslavia had been supportive of ethnic Turks when Bulgaria instituted ethno-nationalist policies in the 1980s).

The second stage of Turkey's response to the Balkan crises occurred as the ethnic and religious fighting worsened in Bosnia. Both the Turkish government and public were highly concerned with the violence in Bosnia and the effect that it was having on Bosnia's Muslim population. This was particularly true given that "a large number of Turks of Bosnian origin were living in Turkey."[203] Turkey thus actively advocated through "multilateral—rather than bilateral—actions (NATO, UN, or Islamic Conference Organization)"[204] in defense of Bosnia. Among Turkey's complaints were that the multilateral organizations of the West were acting like Christian clubs and that the UN arms embargo was "punishing the Bosnian government by denying Bosnia-Herzegovina the ability to defend its own territory."[205] It thus submitted an action plan to

200 Calis 2001, 137.
201 Anastasakis 2004, 52.
202 Calis 2001, 137.
203 Anastasakis 2004, 52.
204 Ibid., 52.
205 Ibid., 52.

the UN on August 7, 1992 to adopt a more "active and serious stance"[206] against Serbia. Turkey, although distressed with the sluggish response from the US, EU, and UN, nevertheless continued to support and press for a multilateral response. Furthermore, acting as a broker between the Bosnians and Croats in November 1993, Turkey began to help enforce the no-fly zone that same year, contributed to the American-led Washington agreement of March 1994, took part in the bombing of the Serbian forces surrounding Sarajevo, and sent 100 troops to Zenica to participate with the subsequent UN protection forces.[207] Following the US-led Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, of which it was a major supporter, Turkey would also play a large role in training the Bosnian-Croation Federation army.[208]

The final stage of Turkey's foreign policy towards the Balkans occurred during the Serbian war with its breakaway province of Kosovo (which declared formal independence in 2008, although it is still not formally recognized by Serbia). Unlike in Bosnia, Turkey "viewed the Kosovo crisis primarily in terms of its impact on regional stability and order."[209] It was a notably more restrained response than that to Bosnia, stemming in part "from the fact that the ethnic Turkish minority in Kosovo...did not ally themselves with the Albanians and had genuine concerns about being dominated by the Albanian majority."[210] Although Turkey was not active in diplomacy, it did comply with NATO's sanctions against Serbia, deployed F-16 jets in the air campaign, and contributed 1,000 troops to the UN peacekeeping forces in Kosovo.

Despite the early concerns by the Turks that the US, NATO, and EU were not responding fast or adequately enough to the crisis in Bosnia, they did appreciate American policy and its results in the end.[211] Parris, reflecting on the American perspective, felt that "Turkey and America were, in strategic terms, working very closely and shared a common strategic vision"[212] that helped to encourage cooperation and dialogue with the US in regional issues outside of Iraq. Grossman concurred,

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206 Calis 2001, 139.
207 Anastasakis 2004, 52. and Calis 2001, 140.
208 Sayari 2000, 177-78.
209 Ibid., 178.
210 Ibid., 178.
211 Sanberk 2013.
212 Parris 2013.

arguing that Turkey played a key role in the negotiations in preparation for Dayton. He commented on how "the early negotiations to get ready for Dayton with Alija Izetbegović took place in my living room in Ankara."[213] Furthermore, he stated that:

> "President Demirel in particular was a great supporter of [Holbrooke's] efforts to bring an end to the Balkan—to the War in Bosnia. I would say that a lot of that took place in Turkey. There was a very dramatic moment in [Holbrooke's] book where, while they are in Dayton, we needed Prime Minister Demirel to call Izetbegović and he does. So they played an important role in all of that."[214]

As with its outreach to the post-Soviet states, Turkey's diplomacy and active engagement in the conflicts within the Balkans provided it with a chance to bolster its relationship with the US, improve its standing within the NATO security alliance, and offer an opportunity to engage with EU member states on a key European issue that did not revolve around Cyprus, Greece, or Turkey itself. These mutually nonexclusive relationships allowed Turkey to reassert its importance within the Atlanticist security architecture and develop its credentials as an active defender and supporter of democratic and pluralistic societies. This further enmeshment within Western multilateral organizations was actively encouraged by the US, which sought to ensure that Turkey remained within its geostrategic sphere of influence. Thus, similarly to the Central Asian and Caucasian example, Turkey sought to both maintain and even improve its military and diplomacy-based cooperation with the US-led NATO alliance while simultaneously attempting to soft-balance away to enhance its ties with some Balkan states and the EU. For the US, it continued to encourage Turkey's outreach to the EU as well as the Balkans as an attempt to further enmesh it within Western liberal democratic and market-based institutions and norms. However, unlike the Iraqi example, the American approach to the international system reflected both conservative and revisionist desires. The US continued to utilize the UN institutional architecture to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis and, barring that, military and sanctions-based support for its end. However, it pursued aspects of a revisionist policy in its support for the fragmentation and independence of the Yugoslav Republics. Although the US had traditionally been against such secessionist endeavors, the rapid pace of events and the

[213] Grossman 2013.
[214] Ibid.

relative lack of concerted opposition from American allies in the region to independence movements helped to justify and support America's role.

## 6. RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, IRAN, AND SYRIA

In the 1990s, Turkey's foreign policy towards other states in the Middle East besides Iraq provided similar opportunities for cooperation and trust-building between the US and Turkey that its outreach to the post-Soviet states had provided. This proved particularly true and beneficial when it came to its policies towards Israel, Iran, and Syria—three of the more contentious states in the region, albeit for differing reasons. Undoubtedly, the rapid improvement in Turkish-Israeli ties during this time period was the most consequential of the three relationships. This transformation reflected the numerous means by which Turkey and Israel could profit from each other's security in the region, as well as the advantages that Turkey could receive via Israel in its relationship with the US. As with the historical US-Turkish relationship, ties between Turkey and Israel were based on military-military cooperation and high level civilian consultation over broad-based societal and economic bonds.[215] To the Turks, Israel provided military arms assistance and intelligence to help confront Kurdish separatism both in Turkey and Iraq, counter regional support for extreme Islamic groups, and bolster Turkey's modern and secular credentials in the eyes of the West. This was particularly crucial for the military, which was leading this effort and considered itself "the custodians of the true Turkish state"[216] and its secular character. The military and its allies in the state bureaucracy and media feared the rise of "religious reactionism"[217]—religious conservative political and societal actors whom they feared would change the nature of the Turkish Republic. The military's concerns grew with the rise of the Refah (Welfare) Party, which was Islamist in character; there was consequently a military coup in 1997, addressed in greater detail in a later section. Nevertheless, to Turkey's armed forces, Israel proved a key ally and source of support for its domestic considerations.

Internationally, Israel was Turkey's regional ally in a neighborhood full of potential threats, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Greece and even the ongoing Cyprus

[215] Balci and Kardas 2012, 108.
[216] Scowcroft 2013.
[217] Balci and Kardas 2012, 104.

conflict. Israel provided the Turks with arms and weapon systems that were beneficial to the security of both states. Because there were certain weapons systems that Turkey desired of which Congress forbade American export, Turkey saw "Israel as an alternative source."[218] According to Holmes, although "American industry lost in some sales contracts that went to Israel instead, [the US] didn't fuss about it. [It] didn't fight for the American industry as long as it went to Israeli industry instead."[219] For Israel, Turkey provided a democratic and majority Muslim ally in a region full of hostile states and could assist Israel in confronting both state and non-state actors that threatened its security. Scowcroft bluntly stated that "it was helpful policy to have a Muslim state with friendly relations with Israel; it was useful so [the US] encouraged it."[220] Furthermore, "The military of course liked Israel for its military arms, etc. but also because they stuck it to the Islamics."[221] Additionally, according to Sanberk, there was some latent appreciation on the part of the Turks regarding the experiences of Jews under the Ottoman Empire, where there were no "pogroms, never,"[222] up through World War II. "Although Turkey [in that war] was impartial...its people played a role"[223] in assisting in the clandestine removal of European Jews from danger. As relations improved following the start of official diplomatic ties in March 1992, Israeli tourism to Turkey increased dramatically. This marginally helped Turkey economically, but more importantly, it provided the opportunity for bonds to begin to develop at a societal level.

Numerous military to military accords and deals that were signed at the time represented the official extent of the relationship. The first such accord took place in February 1996 without the consent or knowledge of its details by the Minister of Defense.[224] This reflected how important the Turkish Armed Forces placed its ties to Israel such that it bypassed the civilian government to ensure its passage. There followed a defense industry accord in August, this time signed by the Refah government

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218 Parris 2013.
219 Holmes 2013.
220 Scowcroft 2013.
221 Abramowitz 2013.
222 Sanberk 2013.
223 Ibid.
224 Balci and Kardas 2012, 108.

despite its personal desires to end such cooperation.[225] Beyond domestic and regional security, Israel also aided Turkey in its relations with the US both indirectly and directly. Indirectly, since Israel was a major ally of the US and many European states in a troubling neighborhood, Turkey saw potential to improve relations with these states by assisting Israel.

Directly, the relationship had three factors. First, Turkey "saw Israel as a means of exerting countervailing pressure in Congress on groups that they viewed as hostile towards Turkey—primarily responses to Armenian and Greek lobbies in"[226] the US. According to Holmes, "the Israeli lobby, AIPAC...was thoroughly on board with that and a lot of help was given to Turkey with respect to issues like the Armenian Genocide Resolutions because of the strength of the Turkey-Israeli relations."[227] This would prove pivotal in Turkish diplomatic efforts to stop Congress from formally recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Abramowitz concurred, arguing crudely that the Turkish government believed that "the Jews dominated America politically and Israel was their principle concern, so improving the whole Israeli relationship and the whole Turkish-Israeli relationship meant a good relationship with American Jews."[228] A cultural centerpiece of this effort was the commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the expulsion of Jews from Spain, which brought together American, Turkish and Israeli Jewry. Second, Turkey and America's relationship with Israel encouraged Israeli leaders to pressure European officials to support Turkey in its accession process. According to Gönensay, former Prime Minister Shimon Peres "instructed all of his diplomatic services within the EU to help [Turkey] get into the union and do whatever they [could] to support [them]."[229] Third, Israel's provision of arms and weapon systems to Turkey was also used as a bargaining chip of sorts in Turkey's ties with the US.

In contrast to its vastly improved relationship with Israel, Turkey's ties to Iran remained largely cool. This partially reflected Turkey's strong ties to the US and Israel. Adair reflected that "the United States' principal concern there was maintaining

[225] Ibid., 108.
[226] Parris 2013.
[227] Holmes 2013.
[228] Abramowitz 2013.
[229] Gönensay 2014.

sanctions on Iran. And that was sometimes difficult...for lots of [America's] allies"[230] in the region. Israel shared America's concerns about maintaining the economic and diplomatic isolation of Iran; consequently, Turkey was motivated to not expand "Turco-Iranian economic cooperation."[231] One such motivation was the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline mentioned in the previous section. This was one of America's methods to support alternate routes for economic and specifically energy-related development.[232] This was particularly important given the Turkish need to find alternative sources of energy due to the Iraqi embargo. Beyond its allies' justifications for not improving ties with Iran, Turkey also had its own. According to Türkmen, Iran and its revolutionary religious movement were participating in propaganda and covert actions in Turkey at the time.[233] The secular—and military dominated—governments in the first half of the decade were antithetical to such religious politics and consequently did not feel a large pressure to improve ties. Furthermore, after the military coup in 1997, "the Turkish military did not need lectures as to why it was bad politics and policy to get close to an Islamic Republic. They got it. And as a practical matter, [America] did not have to spend much time making the case."[234]

In direct opposition to the improving ties with Israel and in comparison to the cold, but largely civil ties with Iran, Turkey's relationship with Syria deteriorated to the brink of war in the 90s. Historically, Turkey "always had problematic histories because of water, because of many other things. And it continued like that, it was a chronic, bad relations,"[235] according to Sanberk. By the 1990s, Syria had also become a major supporter of the PKK, going so far as to host its leader Abdullah Öcalan.[236] According to Grossman, "the Turks would tell the Syrians, why is this guy living in Damascus? Get him out of there."[237] The blatant support for the PKK leader and the allowance of the use of Syrian territory as a base of operations for PKK violence reached a tipping point

[230] Adair 2013.
[231] Calabrese 1998, 79.
[232] Ibid., 79.
[233] Türkmen 2013.
[234] Parris 2013.
[235] Sanberk 2013.
[236] Eralp 2003, 129.
[237] Grossman 2013.

towards the end of the decade. The Turks assembled their armed forces at the border in preparation for an invasion in 1998. An invasion was only prevented by the expulsion of Öcalan from Syria, after which, Syria pledged to stop harboring PKK militants and eventually signed the Adana security cooperation agreement in 1999.[238] Despite the danger that Syria's support for Öcalan had for Turkey, it also provided an opportunity for improved trust and ties between Turkey and the US. Initially the US put significant pressure on Syria not to protect Abdullah Öcalan; it then pressured Russia, Italy, and Greece not to provide Öcalan asylum.[239] Besides this semi-public pressure, the US also captured Öcalan for the Turks in Kenya, which led to significant goodwill on the part of Turkey.[240]

Although this support was certainly appreciated by the Turkish state and public at large, it nevertheless had little effect in tamping down the distrust and suspicions of the US that had become quite common during the 90s. Turkey's ties to these three states were largely security-based—a common theme in Turkish relations in any era—and as such, were affected one way or another by Turkey's presence in the US-led NATO security alliance. As such, Turkey readily and enthusiastically improved relations with Israel as both an attempt to secure itself better regionally, and to improve ties with US within the international system. This approach proved effective, as demonstrated by the significant US effort to satisfy Turkish security concerns regarding Syria and Öcalan, as well as its efforts to support other means for Turkey to expand its economic and energy based outreach within the region. Furthermore, both the US and Turkey sought to maintain and broaden their security-based alliance within the region by cooperating on mutually beneficial policies to these three states.

238 Parris 2013.
239 Eralp 2003, 118.
240 Sanberk 2013.

## 7. TURKEY AND THE EU, A SUDDEN IMPROVEMENT

Although Turkey had been on the path towards accession to the European Union (or its predecessor, the European Economic Community) since the Ankara Agreement in 1963, its progress had stalled considerably by the 1990s. While it had been Turkish policy for a generation to seek admittance to all European-wide institutional bodies, the governments—both military and civilian—lacked any strong desire to join the EU until the 90s. According to Sanberk, this sentiment stemmed from Turkish officials having never "understood what the EU [meant] and what Turkish membership [meant], and what the project of Unification of Europe [meant]...So they had always thought that it was joining the European Council—or Council of Europe—or OECD,"[241] no one understood the "essence of the EU idea."[242] Nevertheless, the 1990s saw the most rapid advancement of EU-Turkey ties since the infancy of the European Coal and Steel Community, fundamentally reshaping the extent of the relationship. Partially, this reflected Özal's understanding of the importance of tying Turkey to the rest of Europe institutionally.[243] However, the US arguably proved the main instigator and catalyst for Turkey's improvement through the accession process. As already delineated, the impetus for this assistance was the end of the Cold War and concerns within the US government that Turkish fears of being abandoned as the rational for NATO diminished. Besides rhetorically playing up the importance of NATO to stem this tide of concern, the US issued its first statement in vocal support of Turkey's entrance into the EU. This revolutionary statement stemmed from Abramowitz and Bob Zoellick "trying to find ways to show [America's] support for Turkey's war effort. [They] were always looking for ways to help Özal deal with...a public opposed to what he was doing."[244] This transformation also reflected Clinton's desire to shift the bilateral alliance to "shared values and greater political cooperation."[245] All the same, in acknowledgment of Turkish

[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Abramowitz 2013.
[245] Aliriza and Aras 2012, 6.

security concerns with the ongoing embargo of Iraq and PKK violence, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke in 1995 reasserted the American position that Turkey remained "the front line state for U.S. security interests in Europe."[246]

For American policymakers in the Clinton Administration, Turkey's potential entry into the EU was a net positive for all involved—the Turks, the EU, and the US.[247] So despite the fact that the Europeans were generally not actively supportive of Turkish admittance, the US believed that "supporting Turkish entry into the EU would encourage changes in Turkey that seemed, to [the US], long-term positives for Turks,"[248] by incentivizing "more democracy, more pluralism, [and] more tolerance."[249] In the 1990s, discussions of Turkey not being European, by either ethno-national or liberal democratic value parameters, gained prominence in Brussels and amongst many EU member states.[250] Thus the further development of the Turkey-EU trade relationship was used as a tool to paper over these concerns. Additionally, Turkey's development in the 1990s when civilian leaders gained more control from the military reflected a desire to reward and encourage "Turkish democratization and political change."[251] As Turkey's domestic politics were often in disarray with myriad different governments throughout the 90s—a reflection of this young, democratizing process—persistent US restatement of the importance that the US "attached to Turkish membership in the EU, was...a valuable touchstone for Turkish policy,"[252] according to Holmes.

Grossman, with the "fantastic"[253] support of President Clinton, consequently reached out to the Turkish government as Ambassador to express the full-fledged American commitment to aiding Turkey in its admittance, the first step being the Customs Union, as long as Turkey reformed itself internally. The Customs Union, which no state had joined without eventually becoming a full EU member, proved to be a sufficient incentive.[254] The primary concern for the EU at the time were the release of

246 Ibid., 6.
247 Grossman 2013.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid.
250 Muftuler-Bac 2000, 164.
251 Ibid., 164.
252 Holmes 2013.
253 Grossman 2013.
254 Sanberk 2013.

journalists and other political prisoners from jail and the reform of aspects of the Penal Code. These reforms were part of the Matutes package of technical, political and financial assistance that had started with low expectations in 1990 under the direction of the European Commission.[255] Consequently, Ambassador Grossman, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs Stewart E. Eizenstat, and other American officials relentlessly and effectively lobbied EU member state governments and the European Commission to allow Turkey to join the Customs Union. The successful deal to do so was signed at the end of 1995 and came into effect in 1996. The United States' support for Turkey within the EU in 1996 went beyond the Customs Union and the discussions upon Turkish membership. It helped, through NATO, to defuse substantial tensions between Turkey and Greece over the Kardak/Imia Island dispute that year. That diplomatic crisis could have easily ended in a military engagement—a ruinous possibility, not considered since the 60s or early 70s with the Cyprus conflict. Such a conflict would have weakened the military alliance just as it was being used to usher in democratic change and security in Central and Eastern Europe alongside the EU outreach.[256]

Beyond the goals of closer EU-Turkey ties and its eventual admittance, Adair provided another rational for the American efforts to improve relations. According to him, the shift from general support for a closer EU-Turkey bond to active engagement in encouraging and promoting the process came under the direction of Richard Holbrooke, who was Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs at the time.[257] In the early 90s, Holbrooke was not only focused on Turkey, but also Cyprus, which had been a divided island since the Turkish invasion in 1974. He "made the decision that the US should try to become more directly involved in both accession efforts, both [for] Turkey and Cyprus."[258] He instructed the requisite ambassadors to go to the various European governments and encourage them to consider Cyprus' accession to the EU immediately, instead of waiting for the division of the island to be resolved. Holbrooke's "rationale was, number one...if Cyprus could be become a member of the EU, being a

[255] Arikan 2006, 72.
[256] Eralp 2003, 117.
[257] Adair 2013.
[258] Ibid.

part of the EU would influence its perspective, its sense of international security, its confidence, and make it easier...to resolve the division."[259] The ambassadors would also argue for improvements in Turkey's accession simultaneously. The American argument was:

> "If in the long-term we could get both Turkey and Cyprus into the EU, then that would help to resolve a lot of tensions and disagreements and problems that otherwise seemed to be evading resolutions. Because by both being members of the EU, they would have more things in common and the situation would basically be more conducive to a resolution."[260]

Beyond encouraging this EU policy, the US also was a major supporter of UN developments "to bring Cyprus back together."[261] Unlike many other indifferent politicians, this push for a simultaneous resolution of the Cyprus issue and the admission to the EU of both Cyprus and Turkey was supported by Özal and his successor as Prime Minister, Mesut Yılmaz. However, efforts to resolve the Cyprus problem fizzled out in the ensuing years as the domestic dysfunction, inter-party squabbles, and economic crisis of 1994 took priority. Gönensay remarked that despite efforts to resolve the division of the island, the Greek Cypriot portion was allowed to progress in its accession process—explicitly breaking a promise that Holbrooke had made to him.[262]

Despite the lack of progress in resolving the division of Cyprus, the Customs Union came into effect in January 1996, boosting Turkey-EU trade significantly and improving Turkey's legal regime via the requisite changes in laws and regulations.[263] The Customs Union deal also included $2.5 billion in aid from the EC to Turkey to help its economy "deal with the implications of the Customs Union, assisting some 7,000 Turkish businesses which faced competition from cheaper European products due to the removal of customs barriers."[264] However, the improvement of relations would be short-lived, since the Custom Union's financial aid package was suspended within the year it

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259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Scowcroft 2013.
262 Gönensay 2014.
263 Hughes 2011, 27-28.
264 Ibid., 28.

was established due to "protracted human rights violations."[265] The human rights violations reflected the relatively free rein that the NSC had within Turkey (particularly in the Southeastern region) to conduct counter-terrorism and insurgency activity against the PKK. The independent and unchecked capacity of the military to conduct brutal operations within Turkey without sufficient parliamentary oversight or press inquiry reflected poorly on its movement towards the liberal democratic and civilian supremacy norms represented by the EU.[266] Relations would deteriorate further during the December 1997 Luxembourg Summit when "Turkey was clearly shunted aside"[267] and Cyprus was embraced into the 2004 enlargement group. Grossman reflected that statements at the time by the Prime Minister of Luxembourg calling "Turkey a nation of torturers"[268] certainly made EU-Turkey ties significantly more heated than was necessary at the time to encourage further political and economic reforms within Turkey. Consequently, Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz froze political dialogue with the EU in 1997.

The American response to the 1997 decision—an outcome that it had been "pushing and shoving to try to avoid,"[269] was a major increase in diplomatic engagement with the EU. In the ensuing two years, American diplomats intensified their outreach to EU officials and member state governments to encourage a reassessment of their damaged relationship with Turkey.[270] Washington worked relentlessly to salvage the EU-Turkey relationship and put it back on a proper and positive trajectory. Thus, American officials, in meetings with their European counterparts, "lectured [them] at length…on the injudiciousness of denying Turkey a chance to join the EU."[271] Furthermore, "Washington argued that excluding Turkey was a strategic mistake that risked not just the future direction of Turkey's foreign policy but also its economic well-being."[272]

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265 Icoz 2012, 516.
266 Holmes 2013.
267 Barkey 2003, 215.
268 Grossman 2013.
269 Parris 2013.
270 Kazaz 1999.
271 Barkey 2003, 215.
272 Ibid., 215.

A potential response to this effort was the European Commission's March 4, 1998 'European Strategy for Turkey,' which enhanced and expanded the Customs Union reforms to other areas.[273] Turkey would join these discussions by September of that year. In December 1999 at the Helsinki Summit, EU-Turkey relations would change dramatically for the better, and all the while American diplomats were trying to avoid a repeat of what had happened at Luxembourg. According to Grossman, US Ambassador to Finland Eric Edelman was "hugely helpful"[274] at the Summit, taking an active role in negotiations. The Helsinki Summit confirmed that Turkey was "a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States."[275] Grossman commented:

> "[It was a] diplomatic triumph for the Turks, but we were very proud to have supported that effort. And on the day that they met in Helsinki, President Clinton, himself, was hugely involved. He made a telephone call to the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Prime Minister Ecevit, urging him to accept the arrangement."[276]

Türkmen concurred, stating that "Helsinki was made possible by some American direction and American protests."[277] As a consequence of the Summit's decision, Turkey benefited from "a pre-accession strategy which would stimulate and support its reforms,"[278] including advanced technical and financial assistance, both of which were undoubtedly helpful and appreciated.

Within the theoretical framework established above, Turkey's maneuvers regarding US-Turkish and EU-Turkish ties at this time stemmed from both a desire to soft-balance away from and simultaneously to create stronger ties to the US. While this action may seem counter-intuitive, it reflects the American goal to improve the stability and dynamism of a strategic ally by further enmeshing Turkey within the newly predominant alliance system in the post-Cold War. For the Turks, this move—although not a priority for many politicians—allowed Turkey to become closer to a supranational body that at times sparred with the US politically. This arrangement could provide

[273] Hughes 2011, 29.
[274] Grossman 2013.
[275] Hughes 2011, 30.
[276] Grossman 2013.
[277] Türkmen 2013.
[278] Hughes 2011, 30.

Turkey with a potential 'backstop' of support if it disagreed with US decisions in the future but feared opposing them. It also enhanced Turkey's security within the US-led NATO architecture and outside of it in the international system.

Overall, Turkey's relations with the EU proved to be one of the major, if not the most important, sources of improvements in US-Turkey ties throughout the 90s. The repeated and public efforts by American officials to jump-start the accession process on Turkey's behalf had an energizing effect on their relationship with their Turkish counterparts. However, it is not apparent if this salving effect extended to Turkish public opinion at large. This is most likely due to the existence of other realms of distrust that had a far more noticeable impact on the average Turk's life than EU ties, which remained arguably more of an elite objective until the turn of the century. Examples of such areas of distrust included the Iraq War, its aftermath, and the 97 Post-Modern Coup. Nevertheless, the improvements in government-government ties provided a bright moment of cooperation to build on in the future.

## 8. INTERNAL ADJUSTMENTS

Within purely Turkish domestic politics, there was an undeniable, albeit subtle, shift from a focus upon American strategic and military engagement, to a broader emphasis on liberal values.[279] Turkey's democratization and its slow swing to civilian instead of military predominance became an increasing concentration for the US, reflecting Clinton's belief that democracy—alongside economic development, both within the EU—would be the only thing to ensure Turkey's internal improvement and maintenance of the strategic alliance. Beyond the gains that Turkey would receive personally from its own liberalization, the US saw Turkey's developments as a strong example for former Communist countries making the difficult transition to democratic, market-based systems.[280] Yet, while the US undoubtedly supported democratic and economic liberalization throughout the decade, its actual policies and decisions were often less noble and more pragmatic. Holmes described this practicality well, stating:

> "So there wasn't much of a sense of a political adventure as far as Turkey was concerned with the United States. And over all of this was the continued realization, as far as the US was concerned, that the civilian government didn't much matter. It was the military that pulled the strings."[281]

Armitage agreed, noting that it was not necessary for the US to have as strong ties to Turkish political leaders, who changed frequently with a whirlwind of different governments, because the military-military relationship was still strong.[282] Holmes elaborated, stating that the US "tended probably to spend more time with [the military] on issues that would not normally have been considered military issues strictly speaking, but rather in the strategic sphere, than would normally have been the case."[283]

The importance of the military relationship proved particularly true following Özal's death in 1993. President and former Prime Minister Özal had been the

[279] Aliriza and Aras 2012, 6.
[280] Armitage 2013.
[281] Holmes 2013.
[282] Armitage 2013.
[283] Holmes 2013.

predominant political force in Turkish politics for a decade, overseeing both the return to civilian-rule and the liberalization and opening up of Turkey's economy. His preeminent position domestically via a strong situation in parliament and his personal relationship with American leaders provided him with the capacity to make bold decisions throughout his tenure. However, following Özal's death, internal Turkish politics fell into intermittent disarray, which was matched by its economic instabilities. For most of the 1990s up through the Post-Modern Coup of February 28, 1997, the US "cut [Turkey] a lot of slack"[284] when it came to its internal democratic and humanitarian flaws related to America "always [having] one eye on the importance of the international security relationship."[285] The US would always say the right thing, rhetorically arguing for the importance of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, but it did not utilize any coercive means during this period to induce such reforms. This lack of aggressive support for political liberalization may have partially reflected the lack of a strong personal relationship between any of Özal's successors and American leadership at the time. Apart from a "sort of infatuation by the United States with a Muslim country led by a woman"[286] when Tansu Çiller became Prime Minister, this period lacked the type of Bush-Özal bond of the early 90s.

As with the political situation, the US-Turkish relationship provided little more than vocal support for economic support and reform within Turkey. The US provided minimal tangible aid, during and in the aftermath of the Iraq War as addressed earlier. The Clinton Administration's effort to "get the American financial situation back in balance after the years of military expansion in the 80s,"[287] was the impetus behind the US providing minimal tangible aid to Turkey during and immediately after the Iraq War. Nonetheless, although direct American aid was not forthcoming, the US did assist Turkey economically in this period in two ways. First, America provided support for Turkey via the IMF, to which the US was a major financial contributor. This IMF support proved very important in the 1994 economic crisis, and even more so in the 2000-2001 public and private banking crises. The US was even able to pressure the IMF

[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Adair 2013.

to commit to a stand-by agreement with Turkey in 1999 as a precaution, although it proved ineffective in stemming the tide of financial panic in the following two years. Second, the US introduced the Economic Partnership Commission, as a counterpart to the High Level Defense Group—a key bilateral strategic body. The Commission's objective was:

> "to increase cooperation between the two countries in addressing some of these economic difficulties. The commission had the effect of establishing direct ties between a wide range of Turkish and American economic officials that either had not existed at all before, or had been sporadic."[288]

Even though it did not provide direct financial assistance and proved ineffective at promoting a new wave of reform within Turkey, the Commission did help "to give Turkish officials across the range of governments, a better understanding of the—not just US policy, but the rationale behind US policies."[289]

In comparison with the somewhat ineffective American efforts to encourage widespread democratic and economic reform, the US demonstrated a marked interest in and newfound enthusiasm for conducting outreach to civil society and the public at large. This effort was shown to be particularly true for Ambassadors Abramowitz and Grossman—the first ambassadors in the post-Cold War period—who actively engaged with students, businesses, and civil society groups to encourage a fresh self-evaluation of what democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, and human rights meant to the average Turkish citizen.[290] Grossman reflected that, while the Turks "had to make their own decisions, [he thought] that it [was] proper for American representatives to talk about those kinds of things"[291] and actively support the growth of civil society from its relative dearth in the 80s and 90s. He also felt that a potential catalyst for this reevaluation of societal and governmental norms stemmed from the poor treatment of the ethnically Turkish Bulgarians in Bulgaria and the rapid influx of 300,000 such refugees.[292] To Grossman, this treatment "kind of [started] the conversation in Turkey about, huh, if

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288 Ibid.
289 Ibid.
290 Grossman 2013.
291 Ibid.
292 Grossman 2013. and Abramowitz 2013.

they are doing that to Turks, maybe we should think in a new way about our relationship to the Kurds."[293]

Despite civil society's growth and development, the general public's faith in the state came to a perilously low point during the 1990s. The loss of trust had been an ongoing, slow-moving process throughout the political and economic dysfunction of the 1990s. The public's trust suffered a precipitous drop in the second half of the decade when there were three political 'earthquakes.' These events were the 1996 Susurluk car crash and ensuing scandal, the 1997 Post-Modern Coup, and the devastating 1999 Izmit earthquake and consequent disgraceful government response. The Susurluk car crash took place November 3, 1996 in a town of the same name within the Balıkesir region of Turkey.[294] To this day, the actual events of the crash remain highly contested, reflecting the scandalous nature of the episode; however, it is certain that the four occupants were: Abdullah Çatlı, a former ultra-nationalist militant wanted by police for multiple murders and drug trafficking; Huseyin Kocadağ, deputy chief of the Istanbul Police Department; beauty queen Gonca Us (Çatlı's girlfriend), who were killed; and Sedat Bucak, an MP from the True Path Party, who survived with injuries.[295] Those in the car had been meeting with Interior Minister Mehmet Ağar, further tying the event to the highest reaches of the government. Additionally, Çatlı was carrying a green passport issued by the Interior Ministry and a gun license signed by the Minister.[296] The crash and the nature of the casualties created an uproar in Turkish politics shining a light on the dark recesses of governmental corruption and illicit acts while also exposing the existence of the 'deep state,' which much of the public believed controlled many facets of the government. The crash led to a series of widespread investigations of those involved and their associates, but the scandal proved to many Turks that the state could not be trusted—a sobering conclusion given the highly centralized nature of the Turkish Republic.

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[293] Grossman 2013.
[294] Demiroz and Kapucu 2012, 280.
[295] Ibid., 280.
[296] Ibid., 280.

Contemporaneously with the Susurluk Scandal, the Refah Party was gaining more and more popularity domestically.[297] While Refah's success partially reflected the conservative nature of much of the populace, it also demonstrated the growing distrust of the existent parties, the ways in which they were used as the personal fiefs of their party leaders, and the growing concerns regarding widespread corruption (as seen in Susurluk).[298] Many saw the Islamist Refah Party as purer and with less potential for corruption than other political parties. By June 1996, Refah and its coalition partner, the True Path Party, formed a government with Refah's Necmettin Erbakan as Prime Minister. The religious nature and anti-Western sentiments of the party and Erbakan concerned a significant portion of the population (despite Refah's electoral plurality) as well as the military.[299] The US also expressed significant fears over Erbakan's agenda and the direction in which he was turning Turkey geostrategically. So, in contrast to the treatment experienced by the previous Prime Ministers and Presidents, US officials did not "cut [him] a lot of slack.."[300] Holmes expanded on this sentiment, stating that "Erbakan had a reputation in Washington as being the Turkish Khomeini, and you know, if something had been done to see that he was not successful, it was all for the good."[301] That 'something to be done,' was the February 28, 1997 Post-Modern Coup by the military. Unlike earlier coups that might entail the dissolution of parliament, the creation of a new or altered constitution, and the institution of short-term military-rule, this coup involved the Turkish National Security Council issuing the government a memorandum forcing Erbakan to admit to an Islamist and unconstitutional agenda and to resign.[302] Following his resignation, instead of choosing Erbakan's coalition partner, Tansu Çiller, to lead the next coalition government, President Demirel chose Motherland Party leader Mesut Yılmaz to form a new government. Soon after the coup the Refah Party was banned as unconstitutional and Erbakan barred from politics. This dramatic reversal in the fortunes of religious and conservative parties within Turkey and the reemergence of

297 Balci and Kardas 2012, 104.
298 Marc Grossman 2013.
299 Balci and Kardas 2012, 104.
300 Holmes 2013.
301 Ibid.
302 Balci and Kardas 2012, 104.

the military's role as a final arbiter bode poorly for Turkey's attempts at domestic reform and admission to the EU.

Despite Holmes' statement above characterizing America's general distaste of Erbakan, the US policy was not to "short-circuit the political process" and not "get discouraged,"[303] before the coup took place. This paralleled Gönensay's remarks that the NSC had "no direct contact with the Americans and no direct encouragement...it was [the NSC's] initiative."[304] Even so, Alan Makovsky, Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy at the time, remarked that the US stood on the sideline during the coup except for "Delphic remarks for a secular, democratic Turkey."[305] Despite this political encouragement, "many people put their blame on the Americans...They thought that the Americans were behind all of these things, which was not the case,"[306] according to Sanberk. It certainly added to the widespread distrust, rampant conspiracy theories, and anti-Americanism within Turkey at the time. Nevertheless, the 1997 'Post-Modern Coup' proved to be something of a stumbling block in America's desire to institutionalize civilian dominance over the military and democracy. Holmes, commenting on the "awful lot of understanding for the military" that had been given by the US" during the coup, stated that General Çevik Bir was "a favorite son of the US."[307]

Nevertheless, in an attempt to reassert the importance of the rule of law and democratic reform within Turkey, the State Department and White House did negotiate a list of seven criteria with Prime Minister Yılmaz, which the US would use to judge Turkey on human rights issues.[308] This list was shared with the NGO community and manufacturers to have groups besides the diplomatic community apply pressure on Turkey to democratize. Furthermore, in 1998 when current Prime Minister and former Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was in prison, the US Istanbul Consul General visited him. This event caused an uproar politically, since it was seen as "interfering in

303 Adair 2013.
304 Gönensay 2014.
305 Barkey 2003, 221.
306 Sanberk 2013.
307 Holmes 2013.
308 Barkey 2003, 222.

the domestic affairs of the country."[309] Nevertheless, it "conveyed an important message to those who labored for reform in Turkey…[who] looked to Washington for moral support and even protection."[310]

Finally, the third major event that shattered the public trust in the state, the Izmit Earthquake, took place on August 17, 1999. This earthquake cost the lives of an estimated 20,000-40,000 people, depending upon the source cited. Beyond the loss of life and severe injuries were the extreme economic and physical damage causing hundreds of thousands to lose their homes. The state's response to this disaster was feeble, destroying any semblance of faith in the government that many people had at the time. The earthquake did, however, have positive international effects. The most important result was a dramatic improvement in Turkish-Greek relations due to aid that was given by Greece at the time. This transformation would radically change Turkish and American security concerns for the better; the threat of Turkey and Greece going to war receded, dramatically reducing the possibility of a repeat of the 1964 Johnson Letter Crisis. Furthermore, President Clinton's visit to Turkey and the impacted regions in 1999 proved extremely successful as improving relations on a societal level. According to Türkmen, Clinton's actions and the "sympathetic image"[311] he projected elicited "the greatest welcome, probably, among all American presidents after Eisenhower"[312] from the Turkish public and state. Türkmen recounted a further example of how Clinton ameliorated the tense relationship:

> "There was a wonderful, a wonderful cartoon which symbolized this visit. Clinton is almost a Turk who sits on the Bosphorus with a friend, and he says to him—what we say among ourselves—what will happen to this country, what will be the fate of this country?"[313]

This improvement in ties, although unable to completely reset US-Turkish ties, was able to better relations considerably. The bond was further heightened by the end of the year with the massively US-supported EU Summit at Helsinki in which Turkey gained official candidate status.

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309 Ibid., 222.
310 Ibid., 222.
311 Türkmen 2013.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid.

# 9. CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to investigate the changes and continuities in the US-Turkey relationship between 1990-1999. In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War at the beginning of this period, the shift from a bipolar to a unipolar international system provided an opportunity to investigate how a strategically-originated alliance such as the one that tied Turkey to the US would change and adapt to a novel geostrategic environment. To examine this relationship, I posed two arguments. First, regardless of the Soviet Union's dissolution, the US and Turkey sought to maintain their strategic ties, despite the often one-way nature of their relationship at the occasional expense of Turkey. Second, the periodically tumultuous and conspiracy theory-ridden history between these two states frequently and negatively influenced Turkish responses to American policies both towards Turkey and to the region at large. To confirm these hypotheses, I utilized a methodology involving both a review of the present literature and personal interviews conducted with former American and Turkish governmental officials. Furthermore, my investigation employed a liberal realist theoretical framework which combines rationalist thinking with institutional designs to better understand the motivations of the various actors studied.

The evidence gathered utilizing the above-defined methodology convincingly demonstrated that both the US and Turkey valued and sought to maintain their strategic bilateral relationship throughout this decade, despite specific policy differences on occasion. Even with the end of both the Cold War and the bipolar international system, the US had not attained true global hegemony during its unipolar moment. Although the US achieved an unparalleled level of economic and military superiority, its need to ally with and utilize regional actors to realize its policy goals consequently were unchanged. Thus, the US saw Turkey as a linchpin in its foreign policy outreach in numerous regions, particularly the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This proved particularly true with the advent of the First Gulf War and its aftermath, where US-Turkish cooperation proved key to sustaining the isolation of Saddam's Iraq. America also valued Turkey's active diplomatic, economic, and military role with other

states as crises or constructive events developed, such as the disintegration of Yugoslavia or the potential to diversify European energy supply via the post-Soviet States, respectively. All the while, the US recognized that the loss of the bipolar confrontation provided Turkey—as well as most other states—with the capacity to potentially change its strategic orientation. Thus, the US worked hard to support Turkey where it could as a way to reassure the Turks of their place within the NATO alliance and the US strategic bilateral relationship. This reassurance proved particularly true with the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, the capture of Öcalan, and Turkey's EU accession process.

Yet, the US approach to Turkish domestic economic and political liberalization proved to be somewhat ambivalent. Although the US remained rhetorically committed to wholehearted liberalization, its policies towards Turkey often reflected its paramount placement of strategic concerns over ethics or values. This was portrayed most clearly with the rise of the Refah government and the Post-Modern coup of 1997. Beyond specific US foreign policies, such as the Iraq War, the maintenance of the sanctions regime on Iran, and the desire to improve US-Turkish ties, America's strategic orientation demonstrated its aspiration to strengthen and develop a rules-based, institutionalized international system. Despite the ample potential for the US to pursue a revisionist and unilateral policy during its unipolar moment in the 1990s, it sought to bolster and institutionalize the liberal, market based system that it had cultivated within its sphere of influence throughout the Cold War.

For Turkey, a strong bilateral relationship with the US undoubtedly remained the cornerstone of its strategic considerations. Although no longer facing existential fears of attack by the USSR, its neighborhood contained numerous hot and cold conflicts both independent from and directly related to Turkey. Thus, the Turks sought a guarantee that the US remained committed to its territorial integrity. The two most important actions that Turkey took to assure itself of America's security commitment were its support for the First Gulf War and its increasingly close ties to Israel. Özal's decision to wholeheartedly support Bush Sr. in the war, as well as his initial galvanizing of support for the no-fly zone over Northern Iraq established a source of institutional momentum that would prove unshakable until the beginnings of the Second Gulf War in 2003,

despite repeated opposition internally. This backing of the American-led actions in Iraq were supported by Özal regardless of the economic and security problems that it instigated because he wanted to demonstrate clearly to the US that Turkey would continue to be a strong and committed ally in the region. The dramatic increase in PKK violence in Turkey stemming from the Iraq War was the most significant and costly repercussion for Özal and his successors' support for American policies. On the other hand, the relationship with Israel, in terms of Turkey's strategic ties to the US, stemmed from a belief that Jewish Americans held the key levers of power in America. Consequently, Turkey sought to develop mutually beneficial strategic agreements with Israel to garner Congressional support for Turkey, particularly in opposition to the Greek and other ethnic lobbies supporting policies that the Turks considered damaging to their interests in Congress.

In contrast to the costly support for the Iraq War, Turkey's close cooperation with the US proved beneficial with its relationships in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, and even Syria. During the war in Bosnia, Turkey bolstered its credibility as a diplomatic and military actor beyond its direct neighbors, all the while strengthening the NATO alliance's credibility following the loss of its *raison d'être*. Similarly, Turkey's early and active advocation for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline convinced American officials to commit to the diversification of energy supplies to Europe beyond Russia. This helped to somewhat reduce the initial potential by Russia to bully European states through its control over oil and gas logistics. Furthermore, it was only due to American involvement and pressure that Öcalan was expelled from Syria and brought to justice within Turkey, a major point of pride in the relationship. Finally, the US proved to be the main initiator and supporter of Turkey's rapid improvement with regards to its accession to the EU. By constantly advocating on Turkey's behalf to the Europeans, the US helped Turkey to achieve two milestones in the EU accession process, the Customs Union and candidate country status, despite numerous, significant hurdles and crises that threatened to derail EU-Turkish ties.

Although the first hypothesis in this thesis was substantiated by the evidence provided, the second was found to be less clear. While determining potential foreign and domestic policies, many actors in Turkey, as well as significant portions of the Turkish

public at large, frequently cited the tumultuous and conspiracy-laden history of the US-Turkish relationship. However, the evidence does not substantiate whether this regular reference to the shared troubled past was a key, or even significant, motivator of many policy decisions. Nevertheless, statements by former Turkish officials do indicate certain areas where the turbulent history with the US was introduced as a cause for concern in relation to America's trustworthiness or commitment to Turkey. The first and most pertinent instance was the Iraq War and its aftermath. Conspiracy theories and rampant anti-Americanism by opposition politicians, members of the military, and the Turkish public reflected the widespread belief that the US may have had ulterior motives with regard to the war and the subsequent no-fly zone. Beyond the more extreme view that the US actively sought the dismemberment of Turkey and the creation of a greater Kurdistan, there remained significant concern that the US sought to use the PKK and its support for the Iraqi Kurds as a tool to ensure the cooperation of the Turks in American policies. Although these considerable fears did not produce policies antithetical to US goals, this success at cooperation stemmed more from the wholehearted support of Özal and his paramount position in Turkish politics at the time than from any broad-based decision to assist the US.

The second major instance related to Cyprus. Historically, the conflict in Cyprus had resulted in an important point of contention between the US and Turkey. This stemmed from the 1964 Johnson letter threatening not to protect Turkey from Soviet attack if Turkey were to invade Cyprus and the 1974 Arms Embargo following the Turkish military's invasion of Cyprus to protect the ethnic Turkish population there. Beyond losing faith in the trustworthiness of the US significantly when it came to Cyprus, these events also brought to Turkish politicians' attention the importance of the ethnic—and particularly Greek—lobbies in Congress. Consequently, as a result of this troubled history, Turkey sought out strong ties with Israel as well as the American Jewish community to act as a counterbalance within Congress against the ethnic lobbies. Although there were certainly other reasons for the strengthening of ties with Israel—many of which were mentioned above—this example does provide at least one instance where the tumultuous US-Turkish history had a nontrivial effect on Turkish policy.

Beyond substantiating the first hypothesis and providing somewhat equivocal support for the second, this thesis establishes an effective analysis of how both a pole and a medium-sized ally in a troubled region could respond to the shift from a bipolar to unipolar international system. This framework may prove beneficial for future researchers of US-Turkish relations beyond the 1990s. A further analysis of how the US-Turkish relationship evolved during the Second Gulf War and the rise in Turkey of the Justice and Development Party's one-party government in the next decade could test the strength and resilience of this analysis. Furthermore, this framework may prove useful in anticipating how the bilateral alliance will evolve in the coming years as US-Turkish ties are strained to an ever greater degree with the ongoing political corruption scandals and upcoming elections within Turkey, as well as the continuing Syrian Civil War across the border. In addition to investigating this specific bond, the framework could also prove useful in analyzing how relations developed or dissipated between the US and other small and medium-sized allies following the end of the Cold War. Such a study may surmise that the US-Turkish relationship was a special example with no direct parallel, or it could be just one instance of a larger archetype. Regardless, the immediate post-Cold War period and America's ties to Turkey provide ample opportunities to examine how strategic alliances may shift, adapt or disperse as a geostrategic context changes.

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