

**TURKISH FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY  
IN THE CURRENT ERA**

**Şebnem Udum**

**Bilkent University**

**Department of International Relations**

**Turkey**

25 pages  
ISSN:1503-4356  
© Agder University College, 2007  
Servicebox 422, 4604 Kristiansand

Design: Agder University College  
Cover and binding: Agder University College  
Typesetting and printing: Agder University College

## **The outlook of Turkish foreign and security policy (TFSP)**

Straddling Europe and Asia, Turkey sits on a strategic piece of land at the intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa, in the vicinity of significant trade routes, energy corridors and conflict-ridden regions, namely the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East. The Turkish Straits pass through the larger Asian peninsula (Anatolia) and the smaller European peninsula (Thrace), connecting the Black Sea in the North to the Mediterranean Sea in the South, via the Marmara Sea and the Aegean Sea. Turkey shares borders with Bulgaria and Greece in the West; Georgia, Armenia and Iran in the East; and Syria and Iraq in the Southeast.

Turkey's foreign and security policy (TFSP) is shaped by its geography, history, the structure of Turkish domestic politics, and international context. It has evolved since the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 by international and/or domestic factors.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey's history dates back to the Ottoman Empire, which had an influence over the evolution and formation of the current Turkish foreign and security policy. The Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 forms one of the founding documents, and is signed by the founders of modern Turkey, annulling the Sèvres Treaty of 1920, which was signed by the Ottoman State, partitioning the Ottoman land between the victors of World War I.

The founder of Turkey is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who embedded the principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" to Turkey's foreign policy. It means that stability and security in Turkey and those in the region are connected and mutually dependent.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of Turkish foreign policy since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, See Cengiz Okman, "Turkish Foreign Policy: Principles-Rules-Trends, 1814-2003", in Idris Bal ed., *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post-Cold War Era*, Boca Raton: BrownWalker Press, 2004, pp. 5-26.

Therefore when Turkey, which embodies several ethnically and religiously diverse peoples, enjoys domestic stability and security, i.e. territorial and social integrity, it would generate the same for the region. Likewise, the security and stability in the region would reflect itself on the domestic situation in Turkey. Atatürk completed this framework by establishing the new regime on the basis of Turkish nationalism- defined not by ethnicity but by citizenship- and secularism, to maintain territorial and social integrity for a country, which did not have any previous experience of the rule by and of people. Thus, the main referents of domestic security are these two pillars: nationalism and secularism. The nature of civil-military relations in Turkey is an extension of the role of the military to defend these values under Constitutional provisions.

Whereas in Western practice, the military is an instrument of politics<sup>2</sup>, in Turkey it is regarded as part of it. It has been expected to intervene or influence politics should the civilian government fall short of maintaining the Republican regime, or worse, pose a threat to it by challenging either the nationalist or the secular basis of the state.<sup>3</sup> Although this makes Turkey less than a democracy, it guarantees the level of democracy that Turkey has achieved so far; because in other cases, territorial and social integrity would be at stake, and it would not be possible to talk about democracy where there is no security. Specifically, in the current era, Turkey's domestic threat perceptions emanate from terrorism by separatist Kurdish groups (namely the PKK, and later PKK-

---

<sup>2</sup> See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> See Ümit Cizre Sakalioğlu, "The Anatomy of Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (January 1997), pp. 151-166.

KONGRAGEL), and Islamic movements which reject a secular regime and which are critical of Turkey's strong ties with the West.

At the international level, TFSP was influenced by the developments in and characteristics of the interwar period, Cold War, post-Cold War and post-September 11<sup>4</sup> periods. Since its establishment, Turkey sought security through alliances, and devoted its efforts particularly to embrace the West. During the interwar era, it established alliances and signed friendship agreements in the Middle East. After World War II, Turkey aspired to join NATO against the looming Soviet threat, and became a member of the North Atlantic Alliance in 1952. As a result, NATO membership established a long-lasting institutional and functional link with the West.<sup>5</sup>

Turkey became member to the United Nations in 1945, the Council of Europe in 1949, and associate member of the European Economic Community in 1963. Turkey is also a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC).

After the end of the Cold War, Turkey engaged in a renewed effort for membership to the European Union, and also took regional initiatives to establish the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and the Naval Task Force for the Black Sea (BLACKSEAFOR) among the littoral states aimed at responding 'soft

---

<sup>4</sup> The attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, will be referred to as 9/11.

<sup>5</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoglu, "The Evolution of Turkey's Security Culture and the Military in Turkey," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1, (Fall 2000), pp. 109, 209

security' issues. Turkey founded the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) with Iran and Pakistan, which was expanded with the membership of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Central Asian Republics. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which transports Caspian oil via Georgia and Turkey to western markets (officially inaugurated in May 2005), is a politically, strategically and economically significant project that is based on regional cooperation.

### **TFSP in the post-Cold War**

During the Cold War, crisis management and prevention was basically handled by superpowers or great powers in order to prevent an escalation that would lead to a nuclear standoff. Thus, regional powers did not always need to take initiatives or even to express a clear stance since the superpowers of each camp determined the course of policies. The end of the Cold War increased the significance of regional security issues as the influence of superpowers either decreased or disappeared in addressing security issues or conflicts. Situated in the middle of the Balkans, the Middle East, Caucasus, the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, Turkey is affected by or is part of regional security issues. Thus, it sought to enhance its influence to pursue its interests, and in this process, it prioritized multilateralism and acting within alliances in its foreign policy and military strategy.<sup>6</sup>

The outstanding issues in Turkey's foreign policy in this period were the new security risks in the Middle East, Balkans and Southern Caucasus, such as ethnic/intrastate conflicts, migration, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and

---

<sup>6</sup> "Turkey's Defense Policy and Military Strategy", *White Paper*, Part Four, Section One, Ministry of National Defense, 2000.

their delivery systems, illicit trade of arms and drugs; and relations with the European Union, former Soviet republics, and energy issues.

During the Cold War and extending to the post-Cold War period, two main security issues were standing out in TFSP: Relations with Greece regarding Cyprus and the Aegean, and its uneasy relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors regarding terrorism, water, border issues and mutual perceptions of ideological threat. Turkey maintained strategic balance with Greece by keeping its troops in Northern Cyprus to prevent a change of the status quo in the Aegean and Cyprus. In the Middle East, military power was favorable vis-à-vis Syria and Iraq and roughly the same with Iran. More importantly, its NATO guarantee constituted the main deterrent against any unconventional attack with ballistic missiles from these states.

NATO remained the cornerstone of Turkey's defense policy after the Cold War, because of its role not only in European security but also in out-of-area conflicts. The fall of the Soviet Union removed the nuclear threat, but at the same time created many other issues that led to instability. Furthermore, these issues required more than maintaining ultimate material capabilities. Thus, while Turkey continued to enjoy the NATO collective defense guarantee with the nuclear option, it aimed at pursuing an active policy in its region, to prevent or alleviate the adverse affects of instability in the Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus and the Middle East.

NATO strategy evolved throughout the Cold War from "massive retaliation" to "forward defense", making its European allies uneasy about the US commitment to the continental security. "Out-of-area" operations was another matter that concerned Turkey's Middle Eastern borders, because the commitment had been vague regarding the

defense of Turkey if the country incurred an attack from the Eastern borders. The end of the Cold War neither led to the end of the Alliance nor its nuclear policy. By the CFE (Conventional Forces Europe) Treaty, Turkey shifted its troops from the West to its Eastern and Southeastern regions, thereby providing a more credible deterrent.<sup>7</sup>

The out-of-area issue in NATO, and Turkey's policy towards the Middle East were highlighted during the Gulf War of 1991 (and later in 2003 Iraq Operation): The 1991 Gulf War was the first significant challenge to Turkey's security policy when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait and an international coalition intervened to restore the situation. NATO's collective defense commitment was questioned, and Turkey had to revise its "cautious indifference" for Middle Eastern issues. Turkey had pursued a policy of nonintervention toward the Middle East, but as a result of the war, it took sides with the international coalition led by the United States.<sup>8</sup> After the inspections in Iraq, which revealed the weapons of mass destruction capability and particularly nuclear program, Turkey started to pursue an active policy in the Middle East: It engaged in strategic relations with the United States and Israel and signed military cooperation agreements including participation in missile defense projects.<sup>9</sup> Turkey was able to continue with its

---

<sup>7</sup> See Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Defense Reform in Turkey," in Istvan Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (eds.), *Post-Cold War Defense Reform: Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2002, pp. 135-164.

<sup>8</sup> Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Redefinition of Turkish Security Policies in the Middle East After the Cold War," in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan (eds.), *The Europeanization of Turkey's Security Policy: Prospects and Pitfalls*, Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 2004, pp. 213-232.

<sup>9</sup> See Şebnem Udum, "Missile Proliferation in the Middle East: Turkey and Missile Defense," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 4, No.3, (Autumn 2003), pp. 71-102.

security and defense policy-deterrence, alliances, forward defense- despite the various security risks and threats to its national interests.

Following the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, several ethnic strives or intrastate conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus posed a new challenge to international peace and security. These conflicts resulted in migration and refugees, environmental issues, human trafficking and illicit trade of arms and drugs. Therefore, new policies and strategies were adopted; in this sense, peace operations mandated by the United Nations and undertaken by either the UN or regional organizations assumed importance to address these challenges. Turkey participated in various UN, NATO and EU-led missions. Turkey contributed to UN peacekeeping missions with over 300 civilian police, and to humanitarian assistance in international and bilateral aid efforts.<sup>10</sup> Turkey's contribution to the peacekeeping missions in the Balkans was very important for the success of the mission, since the local people welcomed the Turkish troops because of the positive memories back in Ottoman times.

Relations with the European Union, those with former Soviet republics, and energy issues were items on top of the foreign policy agenda. Turkey's relations with the EU in this period was marked by renewed vigor for membership, intensified social and trade relations with the former Soviet republics, and Turkey's role in the transportation of Caspian hydrocarbon resources from the landlocked region to European markets via its Mediterranean port, Ceyhan. Therefore, Turkey's foreign policy evolved from being

---

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Synopsis/SYNOPSIS.htm>>

shaped by military and political interests, to one that also included economic and social levels.

### **The challenge of 9/11**

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 in the United States led to a new definition of threat and response in international security and affected international politics dramatically, whose effects are still seen today mainly as a result of the policies that the United States pursued from then on. After 9/11, a new type of war was defined between the “West” under the leadership of the United States and the value systems it represents (democracy, liberal economy, human rights, freedom) vs. those non-state groups that aspire to demolish this political, economic and value system which is claimed to bring all the inequality, suppression and “evil”. The statements and background of the terrorist networks suggested that they also sought nuclear capability to strike these nations and homelands.<sup>11</sup> The international community and certainly the United States responded to the events of 9/11 by redefining urgent threats and devised policy options to address them. In the rush of waging the “war against terror”, multilateralism in decision-making and implementation was ranked second to unilateral responses against urgent threats; military measures were prioritized over diplomacy, and the use of nuclear weapons was included in security policy.

Right after the events of 9/11, international community united in extending support to the United States for the operation in Afghanistan: As a member of NATO,

---

<sup>11</sup> See Adam Dolnik, “America’s Worst Nightmare? Osama bin Laden and Weapons of Mass Destruction,” PIR Center, September 12, 2001.

Turkey took the command of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, first between June 2002 and February 2003 (ISAF II) and later between February and August 2005 (ISAF VII) for a total of 14 months in 3 years. Similar to its role in the Balkans, Turkish troops are welcome in Afghanistan, mainly because they are Muslim.

On the other hand, the decision to attack Iraq on the rationale that the Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein had clandestine weapons of mass destruction to be used against the United States and its allies, caused rifts as to whether the threat was imminent, i.e. justifying a war; and whether it was legitimate, i.e. without authorization by the United Nations. For the United States, swift action was necessary, therefore, there was no time to be spent to reach consensus. As a result of this position, which did not observe the interests and concerns of the allies it sought support for the operation, and the extension of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with thousands of civil and military casualties, criticisms intensified and eventually opened up a wave of anti-Americanism (even in allied countries), which was exactly what the United States was trying to prevent in order to address the terrorist challenge.

The developments and the new international security environment after 9/11 as well as the foreign and security policy of the United States had severe impacts on Turkey: Taking the side of the United States made Turkey the target of two terrorist attacks in November 2003 in Istanbul. The policies of the Bush administration, which designated a world of “good vs. evil”<sup>12</sup>, narrowed the room of maneuver of the allies, who might have

---

<sup>12</sup> President Bush’s Remarks, Address to a Joint Session to the Congress and American People, United States Capitol, Washington, D.C. , September 20, 2001.

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>>

been willing to take sides with the United States, but whose national interests would not let them do so.<sup>13</sup> It was one of these instances when Turkey had given a historic decision by not letting the US troops use Turkish territory to attack Iraq from the North in March 2003. In an allied country which has been a staunch member of NATO, anti-Americanism reached its peak, especially after the 4 July 2003 Suleymaniyah incident, when the US troops detained Turkish special forces in Iraq's north on incomplete intelligence. This caused outrage in the public, and became a social phenomenon<sup>14</sup>. The post-war conflict in Iraq affected Turkish economic and domestic security situation due to terrorist infiltrations from Iraq's north, and decreasing levels of economic activity.

The main area of discontent between Turkey and the United States has been that, while the United States is reluctant to fight against the Kurdish terrorist group, the PKK, which finds shelter in Iraq's north, it prevents Turkey to carry out a unilateral cross-border military operation to address its security concerns. There are mainly two reasons: First, on March 1, 2003 the Turkish Parliament rejected the motion to allow the US troops to use Turkish territory for a northern front in Iraq, which not only caused disappointment on the part of the United States, but also dependency on the Kurdish groups in the north. Second, the United States would avoid disturbing the relative stability in the north by Turkey's military operation, because it would lead to the total failure of the US operation in Iraq.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Idris Bal, "Turkey-USA Relations and Impacts of 2003 Iraq War," in Idris Bal ed., *Turkish Foreign Policy...*, pp. 119-152.

<sup>14</sup> The movie titled "Valley of the Wolves: Iraq" which took this incident as its starting point was watched by more than 4 million people, the highest number of spectators in the Turkish movie industry.

The other pressing issue on Turkey's agenda is Iran's nuclear program, over which concerns mounted after 2003. The impacts of the policies of the Bush administration were also felt in the international nuclear nonproliferation regime: After 9/11, President G.W. Bush talked of Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the "axis of evil". The discourse justifies any action by the United States to fight against these states which pose a serious threat. The reflection of this policy on these states has been a knee-jerk reaction of guarding against a possible US operation. As a result, North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and carried out a nuclear test, and there are suspicions that Iran aspires to become a nuclear power.

Turkey is concerned about a change in the military balance in the region by the acquisition of nuclear arms by a regional power, like Iran. Turkey and Iran have maintained good relations despite several issues, but the absence of conflict owes to the strategic balance between the two neighbors regarding the constituents of their power base. If Iran goes nuclear, it will not only change regional balances, but also undermine the international nuclear nonproliferation regime, thereby stimulating drives for armament. Therefore, the handling of the situation with Iran is vitally important for Turkey as well as regional and international security.

Overall, in the current security situation, Turkey is in a very special position by being a country with a population 99% of which is Muslim, and at the same time a secular country with Western orientation. It not only is a geographical but a cultural bridge between continents and civilizations, so it has much to offer to refute the thesis of "clash of civilizations". Accordingly, Turkey seeks to foster a culture of understanding and cooperation between civilizations. In February 2002, Turkey hosted a joint forum

with the EU and OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference) In addition, Turkey and Spain co-sponsor a new initiative, called “Alliance of Civilizations” launched by the United Nations Secretary General in July 2005.<sup>15</sup>

### **Relations with allies, regional policies and issue areas in Turkish foreign policy**

Turkish foreign policy is formulated and shaped by several variables ranging from military, political and economic interests, to regional and social concerns. Turkey’s geography not only sits between two continents, but also two different security and political structures in these regions: Turkey is both part of Europe and European security system, which has been shaped on liberal principles (avoiding war and promoting cooperation) since the end of World War II, and the Middle East (or its Eastern and Southeastern borders), where security and perceptions are still defined in Realist terms (Reelpolitik). Therefore, memberships to international organizations and cooperation are as important as alliances in Turkey’s foreign policy. In this sense, Turkey attaches utmost importance to its relations with the United States and the European Union. As Atatürk’s famous dictum “Peace at Home, Peace in the World” establishes the domestic and regional links in security, Turkish foreign policy agenda includes the following regions and issue areas: The Middle East and Iraq, terrorism, Cyprus and Greece, Southern Caucasus, Russia, Central Asia, energy resources and the Balkans.<sup>16</sup> Regarding security, Turkey has contributed to peacekeeping, and arms control and disarmament efforts.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Synopsis/SYNOPSIS.htm>>

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

*Relations with the United States:*

Turkish-US relations were dealt to a great extent in the previous section, but it should be underlined here that these relations are based on strong ties of alliance, and that both countries are indispensable for each other. These relations are not limited to military and political, but include economic and social realms. The United States has supported Turkey's membership to the EU, has worked towards a comprehensive settlement on the island of Cyprus, and has provided support in economic terms, particularly through the IMF. After 9/11, the number of exchange students from both countries was increased so as to promote dialogue and understanding at the social, cultural and intellectual level.

*Relations with the European Union:*

Turkey's association with the EU was established by the Ankara Agreement of 1963. Turkey applied for full membership in 1987 and completed a Customs Union in 1995. It was officially recognized as a candidate at the Helsinki European Council in 1999. The European Commission Progress report of October 2004, acknowledged that Turkey satisfied the Copenhagen political criteria and recommended the opening of accession negotiations. The Brussels European Council of December 2004 concluded that the European Union would open accession negotiations with Turkey, and on 3 October 2005, accession process was launched in Luxembourg Intergovernmental Conference.

Turkey's EU membership bid has been a contentious issue, which cannot be studied in a short piece as this one.<sup>17</sup> An outstanding argument in the debate is that

---

<sup>17</sup> See Meltem Müftüleri-Bac, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe*, New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Turkey is not and should not be a part of Europe, because it neither geographically nor culturally belongs to Europe. In fact, several of the issues that mark Turkish-EU relations is related to this very point. In addition, Turkey is a hard case that extends the “absorption capacity” of the Union: Geographically, Europe has perceived Turkey as a buffer against the security risks emanating from the East, and if Turkey becomes a member, the EU will have borders in a volatile region like the Middle East. Moreover, Turkey has a population around 70 million, which would affect decision-making in EU bodies. Around 60% of this population is composed of young people, and this worries Europeans about an immigrant influx demanding jobs. Socially and intellectually, Turkish immigrants in Europe preserved their distinct identity and culture<sup>18</sup>, which also concerns European policymakers about an overriding social change should Turkey become a member. These points are met with arguments on the advantages that Turkey’s membership would provide in terms of security, particularly in the post-9/11 world (that is, Turkey’s membership to the EU as a Muslim country), the dynamic young population for the economies of the aging Europe, the bridge-role in terms of relations with lucrative markets in the former Soviet Union, and in terms of energy projects.

The membership of the Greek Cypriot Administration (recognized as the government of Cyprus) stands as one of the major stumbling blocks in front of the accession process, because Turkey does not legally recognize it as the “Republic of Cyprus,” and does not ratify the Protocol which extends the Customs Union to all

---

<sup>18</sup> Fulya Kip Barnard, “The Role of Turkish Migration and Migrants in Turkey’s Relations With the EC/EU,” in Idris Bal ed. *Turkish Foreign Policy...*, pp.181-195.

members. The recognition issue is related to the much broader conflict between Greece, Cyprus and Turkey<sup>19</sup>, which will be presented in more detail below.

*Greece and Cyprus:*

Despite many commonalities in history and culture, the rivalry over the strategic balance in the Aegean and the Mediterranean put Turkey and Greece in conflict regarding political and military issues. The main issue areas between Turkey and Greece are the continental shelf and FIR (Flight Information Region) zone in the Aegean, the militarization of the Aegean islands, and Cyprus. To preserve its strategic situation in the Seas, Turkey refuses to extend the continental shelf from six to twelve miles, and the FIR zone to ten miles, as opposed to Greece, which extended them on the basis of international conventions. Turkey also opposes the militarization of the Aegean islands under Greek sovereignty, because it is against the Lausanne Convention. However, Greece argues that it acquired the islands from Italy, and not Turkey.<sup>20</sup>

The dispute over Cyprus also concerns strategic balance in Eastern Mediterranean. After decolonization, Greece, Turkey and the UK became guarantor states and a state was established on the island, composed of Turkish and Greek Cypriots. As a result of intercommunal atrocities, Turkey intervened in 1974 on the basis of the

---

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the issue, See Tarık Oğuzlu, “The EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle: The Prospects of Reconciliation?” in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan (eds.), *The Europeanization of Turkey’s Security Policy*...pp. 257-282.

<sup>20</sup> For more details on the legal aspect of the issue, See Yüksel İnan and Yücel Acer, “The Aegean Disputes,” in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan (eds.), *The Europeanization of Turkey’s Security Policy*..., pp. 125-157

guarantorship agreements, and the island was divided between Turks in the north and Greeks in the south, with UNFICYP (UN Force in Cyprus) to separate the conflicting parties. With no comprehensive settlement since that time, the issue acquired social and economic dimensions in addition to military and political.

Turkey's policy to maintain the strategic balance with Greece was the existence of Turkish troops in the north: Should Greece attempt to change the status quo in the Aegean, Turkish troops would threaten southern Cyprus. However, the prospect of Cyprus' membership to the EU presented a serious issue, because via the EU, The Greek Cypriot administration would be able to exert more pressure on Turkey to recognize it as the sole government of the island, and to be forced to withdraw troops from the island. This indeed, is the current situation. To find a solution, the then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, came up with a plan bearing his name, which was submitted to referenda in the North and South Cyprus in April 2004. The plan foresaw a settlement that would provide for the accession of a united Cyprus to the EU. While the Turkish Cypriots voted in favor, the Greek Cypriots voted against.

On May 1, when Cyprus became an EU member, the entire balance on the island was upset: The Greek Cypriot administration acquired veto power regarding decisions on Turkey, an accession country, in order to induce the latter to accept a resolution in favor of its interests. However, the issue is too complicated to be resolved within the EU, and Turkey preserves its position that the issue be resolved under the auspices of the UN. The accession talks were made conditional upon the resolution of the issue, and it is a bone of contention between the EU and Turkey.

Although they were NATO allies, Turkish-Greek relations were marked by tension. There was a rapprochement in Turkish-Greek relations starting from 1998 and increasing in 1999 as a result of the earthquakes in both countries and mutual aid efforts. Thanks to the efforts of respective foreign ministers of both countries, around 30 agreements were concluded in areas like trade, tourism, environment, culture, energy, transportation and security related issues; and confidence-building measures were adopted. This period also witnessed several high level contacts and reciprocal visits.

*The Middle East:*

Turkey has historical and cultural ties with the countries and peoples of the region, and the instability in the region has adverse affects, which leads Turkey to have an interest in the resolution of issues. The Middle East is marked by protracted conflicts, like the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, which involves all states in the Middle East, and several issues whose solutions are linked to each other: Water, weapons of mass destruction, territorial disputes, terrorism, etc... to name a few. Turkey has expressed its readiness to provide facilitation or mediation. In 2005, it launched the Ankara Forum, between Israel, Palestinian Authority and Turkey to promote economic and commercial relations.

Turkey's relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors, namely Iran, Iraq and Syria, were shaped by disputes over water resources, terrorism, border issues, and mutual threat perceptions due to state regimes. Turkey could address these issues by either promoting cooperation, such as in water dispute, or coercion, particularly to deal with terrorist

infiltrations from these countries.<sup>21</sup> Currently, the main issues are the situation in Iraq and Iran's nuclear program.<sup>22</sup>

Four years after the military operation in Iraq in March 2003 by the US-led coalition, post-conflict restructuring and peacemaking processes are halted by sectarian violence. Security is still the primary issue, which impedes political processes that would engender stability in the country. The riches of the country and the vulnerabilities to outside influence cause regional and international concerns. Turkey is opposed to the disintegration of the country on the basis of ethnic or sectarian terms, because the territorial and social unity are not only vital for the country itself, but also for stability and peace in the region and beyond.

Turkey's primary concern about Iraq emanates from its northern region: Turkey suffered from PKK terrorism since early 1980s. The terrorist organization carried guerrilla warfare in Turkey's southeast claiming 30,000 lives. Its ultimate aim is to establish an independent Kurdish state in this region. Turkey has incurred terrorist infiltrations from Iraq's north before the War, but it had an agreement with the Iraqi government for hot pursuit down to 5 kilometers past the border. After the Gulf War of 1991, Turkey retained the right for this option to fight against the PKK. However, now that it is only Iraq's north which enjoys a relative stability and security, Iraq and the

---

<sup>21</sup> For an overview on Turkey's relations with Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey's security policy, See Şebnem Udum, "Missile Proliferation in the Middle East:..."

<sup>22</sup> For an analysis on Iran's nuclear program on Turkey's non-nuclear weapon policy, See Şebnem Udum *Turkey's Non-Nuclear Weapon Status: A Theoretical Assessment*, Paper presented at the 2006 ISYP Conference, 9-10 November 2006 Cairo, Egypt. < <http://www.pugwash.org/reports/pac/56/papers1-8.htm>>

United States vehemently oppose Turkey's possible cross-border military operation to chase the terrorists, or to prevent their infiltration. The tripartite dialogue mechanism established between Iraq, Turkey and the United States is far from satisfying Turkey's concerns and allowing the actions that it sees fit to deal with the terrorist threat. The statements of the Kurdish leaders in Iraq regarding the establishment of an independent state in Iraq's north is alarming for Turkey, because it is perceived as a threat to the country's territorial integrity by paving the way to similar claims for Turkey's southeast region. Thus, the issue concerns Turkey's vital national interests, and is a top priority item in foreign policy.

The other important issue regarding Iraq is the future of Kirkuk. The region is not only significant because of oil, but also the existence of Turcoman population. The control of Kirkuk is critical, and the monopoly of political or administrative rule would start a new wave of conflict over the control of oil. Turkey is in favor of a joint administrative structure in order to achieve stability.

#### *Terrorism:*

Before 9/11, terrorism was defined in a narrower scope and with specific targets. In this sense, Turkey incurred terrorist attacks from the PKK, a separatist/terrorist organization and the DHKP-C, an extreme leftist organization against military or civilian targets. 9/11 opened up a new era of an apocalyptic war between "the West" and "terrorists". While there is no single definition of terrorism, it is hard to fight against this new type, and as mentioned above, the allies of the United States, including Turkey, suffered from terrorist attacks because they were on the side of the former. Having suffered from a two-decade

long terrorism problem, Turkey does not differentiate in urgency of action regarding the types of terrorism.

*The Russian Federation, Southern Caucasus, Central Asia and Energy:*

Throughout history, relations with Russia have traditionally been very important, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, these relations were expanded to include new foreign policy items on the conflicts in Southern Caucasus, relations with the Central Asian Turkic republics and transportation routes of energy resources.<sup>23</sup>

Turkey and Russia cooperate in the fields of economy and energy. Turkey gets a considerable portion of its natural gas from Russia. In Southern Caucasus, Turkey has close relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan, mainly in economic and energy realms. Turkey's relations with Armenia are still short of formal diplomatic relations, and the allegations of the Armenian diaspora constitute one of the main roadblocks. Turkey's invitation to establish a joint commission composed of historians of the respective nations for research was not enthusiastically received.

The close cultural and historical ties with the Central Asian republics paved the way for trade relations, and Turkey's extension of support in their democratic and economic development in financial terms, technical assistance, civil and military assistance and training, scholarships, etc..<sup>24</sup> There are several investments by Turkish firms mainly in the construction sector.

---

<sup>23</sup> See Victor Panin and Henry Paniev, "Turkey and Russia," in Idris Bal, *Turkish Foreign Policy...*, pp. 253-267; See Zeyno Baran, "Turkey and the Caucasus," *ibid.*, pp. 269-289; See Gül Turan, İlter Turan and Idris Bal, "Turkey's Relations with the Turkic Republics," *ibid.*, pp. 292-326

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Turkey does not have sufficient oil or gas reserves for domestic consumption, but its geography is advantageous for transportation routes for the Middle Eastern and Caspian oil. It has received oil through the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline from Iraq to its Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, and natural gas from Iran. Regarding the transportation of oil and gas reserves in the Caspian basin, there were several proposed routes,<sup>25</sup> and Turkey was in favor of a Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline that would bypass the Turkish Straits to prevent environmental hazards and to threaten the safety of the inhabitants of Istanbul, considering the already heavy tanker traffic in the Straits.

*The Balkans:*

Turkey has historical and cultural ties with the Balkans. The ethnic and religious borders do not coincide with state borders in the region, which provides a fertile ground for conflicts, particularly after the Cold War. Peace and stability in the region is very important in the Balkans, because the final destination of a movement of people as a result of ethnic conflicts is in Turkey. Thus, Turkey has not only aimed at the cessation of hostilities, but enduring stability.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, Turkey participated in NATO operations, peacekeeping missions and reconstruction efforts. Turkey contributes to

---

<sup>25</sup> For a detailed analysis of the transportation of Caspian oil and its link with Turkish foreign policy, See Şebnem Udum, "The Politics of Caspian Region Energy Resources: A Challenge for Turkish Foreign Policy," *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. VI, (December 2001-February 2002), available at <<http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume6/December2001-February2002/sebnemudum.PDF>>

<sup>26</sup> See Mustafa Türkeş, "Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Balkans: Quest for Enduring Stability and Security," in Idris Bal ed. *Turkish Foreign Policy...*, pp. 197-209.

KFOR and UNMIK (the UN Police Mission in Kosovo), the EU police mission (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the EU-led Proxima in Macedonia, and the EUFOR-ALTHEA, which replaced SFOR in 2004. Turkey launched the Southeastern European Cooperation Process (SEECF), and the Multinational Peace Force Southeast Europe (MPFSEE)/Southeastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG). Turkey acts in regional economic initiatives and the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI).<sup>27</sup>

**International security: Peace operations, Arms control and Disarmament,  
Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Peace operations, which were formulated during the Cold War to prevent a superpower nuclear standoff, evolved in the post-Cold War period, particularly to address the regional conflicts with the involvement of regional organizations mandated by the UN. New issues require multilateral efforts and more than military measures, increasing the relevance of peace operations. These are long-lasting missions and for the success of the operation, the multilateral force should be welcome in the country. Turkey's involvement in the peacekeeping missions or post-conflict missions, particularly in the Balkans, Africa and Afghanistan were significant in that respect due to cultural or religious ties.

Turkey upholds multilateral efforts in arms control and disarmament as well as the efforts on nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems. The conflicts in Turkey's neighborhood fuel the drives for armament, especially of WMD and missiles. Turkey is party to the treaties, conventions, international

---

<sup>27</sup>Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

organizations and agreements that aim at preventing the spread of these weapons and their delivery systems.

### **Conclusion**

The above analysis can only be a summary of a complete analysis of Turkey's foreign and security, which can be studied with variables in international, state and domestic levels. It has not touched to contentious issues in detail, because they need a broader analysis with the help from different disciplines, particularly history. It is important for the uninformed reader that Turkey's geopolitical situation does not allow the country to have a detached stance in its policy, and to pursue a unidimensional or unidirectional policy.