

TURKEY'S FUTURE DIRECTION AND U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:35 p.m. in Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Douglas Bereuter (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. BEREUTER. The Subcommittee will come to order. The Europe Subcommittee today will hold a hearing, an open hearing, called "Turkey's Future Direction and United States-Turkey relations."

I will have an opening statement. I will proceed with that and then will turn to the Ranking Member.

I welcome our witnesses here today, we appreciate the fact you have devoted some time to this and we look forward to your testimony, written and oral, and also, of course, to some opportunity to raise some questions for you.

Today the Subcommittee meets to assess recent developments in Turkey. We will also seek views on the direction that Turkey will likely take in the future, that is optimistic or ambitious. Finally, we will reevaluate United States relations with Turkey, one of our long-term friends and strategic partners.

This is the first time in recent memory that the International Relations Committee at any level has held a hearing specifically focused on Turkey. That is unfortunate, but we will try to begin making up for that neglect.

Turkey, of course, is certainly a study in contrasts. When this Member visited Istanbul last year, it was clear that in this overwhelmingly Muslim nation where loudspeakers still call the faithful to prayer each day modern capitalism in the form of—well, many forms, but upscale restaurants, bars, shopping malls, dance clubs, featuring a wide array of music from American jazz to European techno-rock, which I do not understand, has become a major component of Turkish society and I have been pleased to visit most corners of your country, but not the interior, except for Ankara. I am looking forward to future opportunities.

Today, in the aftermath of a stunning election outcome last fall, Turkey is governed by a single political party rooted in Islamic traditions, yet it appears the AKP leadership remains loyal to the vision of Ataturk that Turkey must retain a secular, moderate, democratic and tolerant, political orientation.

Turkey's governing system is seen by many as a political model for the region fraught with authoritarian rule, intolerance and anti-western views in so many other locations. Yet many in Turkey yearn to be recognized, it is quite evident, as European and fully express their desire to be invited into the European Union and the European community generally.

Turkey maintains a popular and influential military establishment and maintains a significant armed force. Turkey has also been a long and valued member of NATO, of course. But Turkey's leaders remain ever cautious, finding real and potential threats from Kurds, Iran, Syria, Armenia, recently Iraq and even Greece, a fellow NATO ally.

I will give you a few of my own views now more specifically.

Internally, the road ahead for Turkey could be difficult as it attempts to define its future within the region and toward Europe. Turkey's internal efforts to implement difficult political, social and economic reforms in anticipation of membership in the European Union must be encouraged to continue. Turkey's role as a sensible alternative to the fundamentalist and anti-western views promoted by some in the region, I think, must be reinforced.

We must continue to support the Turkish government leadership as it faces these challenges and as it continues with a commitment to those values that we share.

With respect to United States-Turkey relations, as stated at the outset the United States and Turkey, of course, have long been close friends and strategic partners. As the anchor of NATO in the southeastern region of Europe, Turkey provided us with invaluable assistance during the entire period of the cold war.

After September 11, Turkey was one of the first to join us in the struggle against global terrorism. Turkey became a staging area for the Afghan operation and later took command of the international security force there. Over the past 12 years, as we implemented our campaign to isolate and contain Saddam Hussein, Turkey has provided invaluable support.

I watched what happened when Turkey was requested to permit American forces to move through Turkey for staging purposes. The government was very new at the time. I have every belief that the governing party expected the vote would be positive in the Parliament. I think there was some understandable ineptitude in the way things were handled and they were surprised, as many were in this country and elsewhere, that the vote did not pass.

I think officials in the American government in some cases were far too hard on Turkey and they wielded too strong an arm on Turkey during this period of time and there would be reason for some resentment. I know what the polls were showing with respect to American military activity in Iraq, those polls within Turkey, and the fact that they were willing to try to have that vote and expected to be able to have it and to provide an opportunity for Americans to launch some forces into northern Iraq was itself a fairly courageous step.

I would say that today what appears to many here as Turkey's inability to define a role in Iraq has led some in this country, including in parts of our own government, to begin to question our relationship with Turkey and to treat Turkey as if it were no

longer a very close friend and ally. They are limited in number and I think they are wrong in this respect. They should not be influencing, in my judgment, our policies toward the Turkish nation.

The ill feelings of just a few people in the Administration and some perhaps in the Congress toward Turkey and some in Turkey today toward the United States should, I think, not be the excuse used to promote an attitude that the United States-Turkey relationship must be redefined with the view in mind that the relationship is no longer as important as it has been.

For this Member of Congress, Turkey remains a vital element of America's strategy in NATO, in the eastern Mediterranean, in the Caucasus region and in the Middle East.

In today's hearing, we hope to review recent developments in Turkey to determine how Turkey views its own political identity and its role in the world. We will also revisit our relationship with Turkey to better understand what is going on in that country and what we need to do as Turkey moves toward the future. In doing that, however, we should do whatever we can to reduce the frictions, I think, which have recently entered the relationship and reaffirmed Turkey's importance to the United States.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses, but I would first like to turn to the distinguished Ranking Member from Florida, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Wexler.

Mr. Wexler?

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bereuter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DOUG BEREUTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEBRASKA, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

TURKEY'S FUTURE DIRECTION AND U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS

Today the Subcommittee meets to assess recent developments in Turkey. We will also seek views on the future direction that Turkey will likely take. Finally we will reevaluate U.S. relations with Turkey, one of our long-time friends and strategic partners.

This is the first time in recent memory that the International Relations Committee has held a hearing specifically focused on Turkey.

Turkey is certainly a study in contrasts.

When this Member visited Istanbul and Ankara last year, it was clear that in this overwhelmingly Muslim nation where loudspeakers still call the faithful to prayer each day, modern capitalism, in the form of upscale restaurants and bars, shopping malls, and dance clubs featuring a wide range of music from American jazz to European techno-rock, has become a major component of Turkish society.

Today, in the aftermath of a stunning election outcome last Fall, Turkey is governed by a single political party rooted in Islamic traditions. Yet, it appears the AKP leadership remains loyal to the vision of Ataturk that Turkey must retain a secular, moderate, democratic and tolerant, political orientation.

Turkey's governing system is seen by many as a political model for a region fraught with authoritarian rule, intolerance and anti-western views. Yet many in Turkey yearn to be recognized as European and fully express their desire to be invited into the European community.

Turkey maintains a popular and influential military establishment and maintains a significant armed force. Turkey has also been a long and valued member of NATO. Yet Turkey's leaders remain ever cautious, defining real and potential threats from Kurds, Iran, Syria, Armenia, recently Iraq, and even Greece, a fellow NATO ally.

Internally, the road ahead for Turkey could be difficult as it attempts to define its future within the region and towards Europe. Turkey's internal efforts to implement difficult political, social and economic reforms in anticipation of membership in the European Union have been impressive but must be encouraged to continue. Turkey's role as a sensible alternative to the fundamentalist and anti-western views promoted by some in the region, must be reinforced.

We must continue to support the Turkish government leadership as it faces these challenges and as it continues with a commitment to those values that we share.

With respect to U.S.-Turkey relations, as stated at the outset, the United States and Turkey have long been close friends and strategic partners. As the anchor of NATO in the southeastern region of Europe, Turkey provided us invaluable assistance during the entire period of the cold war. After September 11, Turkey was one of the first to join us in the struggle against global terrorism. Turkey became a key staging area for the Afghan operation and later took command of the International Security Force there. Over the past 12 years as we implemented our campaign to isolate and contain Saddam Hussein, Turkey has provided invaluable support.

It was unfortunate and truly disappointing that the political forces in Turkey were unable to provide a second front for U.S. military operations against the Iraqi regime. The rancor which followed the vote in the Parliament was intense. Incidents, such as the one which took place over the July 4 period in northern Iraq, were regrettable.

Today, what appears to many here as Turkey's inability to define a role in Iraq has lead some in this country, including in parts of our own government, to begin to question our relationship with Turkey and to treat Turkey as if it were no longer a close friend or ally.

These views are wrong and must not influence our policy toward that nation. The ill-feelings of some here toward Turkey and some in Turkey toward the U.S., should not be the excuse used to promote an attitude that the U.S.-Turkish strategic relationship must be redefined with a view in mind that the relationship is no longer as important as it has been.

For this member, Turkey remains a vital element of America's strategy in NATO, in the Eastern Mediterranean, in the Caucasus and in the Middle East.

In today's hearing we hope to review recent developments in Turkey to determine how Turkey views its own political identity and its role in the world. We will also revisit our relationship with Turkey to make sure we understand what is going on in that nation and what we need to do as Turkey moves toward the future. In doing that, however, we should do whatever we can to reduce the frictions which have recently entered the relationship and reaffirm Turkey's importance to us.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses today.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Chairman Bereuter, and in this instance a special thank you for arranging this meeting and a special appreciation to the witnesses, some of which have made a double trip because of our schedule during the hurricane.

As America faces its most difficult foreign policy challenges since the end of the cold war it is critical that we acknowledge and work closely with those nations with whom we share common values, strategic interests and economic ties. Those nations who have contributed to the war on terror and those nations, such as Turkey, with whom we have an historic partnership that has remained steadfast over the past 50 years.

From the Korean War through Operation Enduring Freedom, Turkey has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States as one of our most valuable strategic partners. For more than a decade following the end of the Gulf War, Turkey permitted American and British pilots to patrol northern Iraq which debilitated and contained Saddam Hussein, provided a safe-haven for millions of Kurds, and contributed significantly to the overwhelming military superiority our forces recently enjoyed in Iraq.

Following September 11, Turkey demonstrated testimony steadfast commitment to aiding the United States by leading the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, Turkey opened the use of its airspace for the deployment of coalition forces and permitted the use of its territory and equipment for the overland transfer of fuel and humanitarian aid.

Unfortunately, this multi-faceted alliance was strained following the decision of the Turkish Parliament not to open its soil to United States troops in Iraq. While reciprocal political missteps leading up to the March 1st vote represented a low point in United States-Turkey relations, we have no choice but to pick up the pieces and look forward to a future of cooperation. A future of joint efforts rebuilding and securing Iraq. A future of promoting democracy and combating extremism. A future of deepened bilateral economic and political ties.

We must remember history, Mr. Chairman. We would be foolish to dismiss the past 50 years because of the past 6 months. The American-Turkish partnership is too deep and too meaningful to allow it to become a casualty of the war in Iraq.

This is why I strongly urge the Turkish government to support the deployment of its troops to serve side-by-side with American forces in Iraq. As a NATO ally, Turkey is uniquely capable of enhancing stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The Turkish military speaks the language, knows the lay of the land and represents one of the most capable armed forces in the world. Additionally, Turkey has an enormous amount at stake in terms of Iraq's economic, political and military future, and a vested interest in promoting democracy and security in its own backyard. Finally, this cooperation will put to bed the recent strains in American-Turkish relations. Of course, there are strategic steps and confidence-building measures that must be taken by the United States to coincide with the Turkish Parliament's debate on the deployment of troops to Iraq.

First, the Administration must enhance direct lines of communication with Turkey to ensure that the mistakes and misunderstandings of this past year are not repeated. And there were, indeed, several significant American mistakes. The Bush Administration must begin to appreciate that our allies may have legitimate national interests and concerns that do not coincide with those of the United States. Likewise, I hope the Administration recognizes that the strategy of public confrontation employed with Turkey leading up to the war in Iraq was a failure and contrary to American objectives. Allies of 50 years do not militarily confront one another, like we did on July 4th, without exhausting every diplomatic precaution and employing every alternative means of resolution.

Coordination among our militaries, which has traditionally been strong, must be increased in the hopes of avoiding clashes reminiscent of July 4th. The United States must assure that PKK terrorists will not renew bloodshed in northern Iraq and Turkey and there must be a clear and public recognition, by the Bush Administration, that the alliance with Turkey is extremely important to the United States. That Turkey is a strategic partner in Iraq, a valued interlocutor in the Middle East peace process and a bridge to central Asia. The mistakes were made on both sides in the past year, and now it is time to move on.

Equally important to our military alliance is the enhancement of our economic and political ties. The United States should begin to increase bilateral trade and foreign investment and consider pursuing a free trade agreement with Turkey. Furthermore, the Bush Administration should praise more than it has Turkey's recent po-

litical reforms and continue to strongly encourage its entrance into the EU. Recent improvements in human rights law and a fundamental alteration of the political-military dynamic demonstrates Turkey's commitment to meeting the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey must ensure these reforms are thoroughly implemented and the EU should stop raising the bar and embrace Turkey as a future Member State.

Mr. Chairman, the redefinition and renewal of bilateral relations between the United States and Turkey is critical to defending shared national interests and defeating mutual security threats. Moreover, cooperation between our nations is essential to ensuring that Iraq becomes a source of stability and democracy in the Middle East. I am hopeful that the Bush Administration, which recently approved \$8.5 billion in loans to Turkey, and I applaud that, will seize on this new opportunity to reach out to our ally and set a new path for future relations.

Mr. Chairman, if you would indulge me for 10 more seconds, I was in Brussels 2 weeks ago and had an opportunity to spend some time with the NATO commander, an American general, General Jones, and he offered, I think, what to me was some of the most positive consultations regarding the American-Turkish relationship in defining the new discussions that the American military and the NATO military are having with Turkey and he defined them as being at a level of cooperation that he has not seen in a long time and I think that is a wonderful thing.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for having this hearing.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Wexler follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT WEXLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mr. Chairman,

As America faces its most difficult foreign policy challenges since the end of the Cold War, mounting security threats and obstacles to world peace, it is critical that we acknowledge and work closely with those nations with whom we share common values, strategic interests and economic ties. Those nations who have contributed to the war on terror, and those nations—such as Turkey—with whom we have a historic partnership that has remained steadfast over the past fifty years.

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Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Wexler.

The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Whitfield, is joining us here. He is the co-Chairman of the Turkey Caucus but is not a Member of the Committee. Without objection, I intend to allow him to participate in the question period to follow.

Is there an objection?

[No response.]

Mr. BEREUTER. Hearing none, Mr. Whitfield, you will be able to do that as we proceed through the Members.

I would like now to introduce the witnesses one at a time and assure all of you that your entire written statements will be made a part of the record. You will have about 8 minutes to make an oral presentation in any fashion that you would like.

First, we will hear from Dr. Soner Cagaptay. He is a Soref Fellow and Coordinator of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Dr. Cagaptay has written numerous articles on United States-Turkey relations, Turkish domestic politics, Turkish nationalism, Kemalism and the Balkans.

Dr. Cagaptay has also taught courses on the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe in the History Department at Yale University, where he holds his Ph.D. He also holds a B.A. in international relations from Marmara University in Istanbul and an M.A. degree in international relations from Bilkent University in Ankara.

Dr. Cagaptay, you may proceed as you wish.

STATEMENT OF SONER CAGAPTAY, PH.D., SOREF FELLOW AND COORDINATOR, TURKISH RESEARCH PROGRAM, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congressman, for giving me the chance to come here today and speak about very important issues, including the future of Turkey, as well as United States-Turkish relations. It is an honor to have been invited to testify before this prestigious body today.

We have a number of issues today and I think I would like to focus on three of them, namely, first the Turkish-EU relations; second, Turkey's role in Iraq; and, third, the future of United States-Turkish relations in order to draw some eventual policy suggestions for the sake of this panel.

I think a discussion of Turkish-EU relations is germane to our debate today because the desire to join the EU is perhaps one of the most significant political forces in Turkey right now.

Although Turkey applied to join the EU back in 1963, for many decades, not much was done on this front because the EU objected to Turkish membership on the grounds that Turkey did not satisfy the political leg of its accession rules, the so-called Copenhagen criteria. The argument was that Turkey was a flawed democracy because its military had too much influence over politics and that it had a poor human rights record because of its treatment of the Kurds.

Mr. Chairman, I believe today it has become difficult to draw such conclusions about Turkey or it is becoming increasingly more difficult to do so.

Turkey is changing and it is changing very fast. Over the past couple of years, the country has passed significant reforms to qualify for EU accession. These reforms, including laws on par with the first amendment here, have altered the countries political landscape and are doing so as we speak.

In this regard, for instance, the military's executive powers are now being trimmed and things are also changing on the Kurdish front. Subsequent to the recent EU reforms, Turkey has given cultural rights to the Kurds in the country who are now allowed to receive education, run T.V. programs and carry out election propaganda in Kurdish. Accordingly, I would argue that when it comes to the Copenhagen criteria of "respect of minorities," Turkey is now in safe territory.

Although the recent reforms apparently have made Turkey a likely candidate for EU accession, I will argue that I am quite skeptical about the EU offering Turkey membership any time soon.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Turkey may indeed not be a stellar example of Anglo-Saxon democracy, I will grant that, but I think my point is that subsequent to the recent reforms Turkey qualifies for EU

membership as much as the countries of Eastern Europe which are slated to join the Union in May 2004.

Some of these countries themselves have significant political and economic problems, yet they are going in and not Turkey, so the question is why?

I believe and I am convinced this is because of the fact that Brussels has neither the financial capability nor the political vision to make a country the size of Turkey a full member any time soon, regardless of how ready Turkey is for membership.

Even if it does not result in Turkey's eventual EU membership, I think the EU process has been beneficial because it has catalyzed significant and much-needed political reforms in Turkey, yet it is also important since we are discussing foreign policy today to note that the powerful force behind the EU reforms is also symptomatic of Turkey's emerging pro-European tendency in foreign policy, especially toward Iraq.

It is possible to say, for example, that Turkey's reluctance over the past winter to fully support the idea of a northern front in the Iraq campaign was at least in part a product of Ankara's desire to align itself with European foreign policy. It may come as a surprise that this resonates even with Turkey's AKP government since many analysts regard the AKP as a party with an Islamist pedigree, so the party's pro-European bias brings questions to a lot of people's minds.

I believe we should judge the AKP not by what we think about it, but rather through its actions. From Washington's perspective, I would suggest that until now AKP's performance has been mixed. On the one hand, the party has singlehandedly passed the much needed reforms toward EU accession, putting Turkey on a track of political restructuring, but on the other hand I would also suggest that AKP has not been a consistent supporter of America's Iraq policy.

Back in the winter, for example, when the Turkish Parliament was debating the idea of American troop deployment in Turkey, while some people in the AKP leadership were trying to muster support for that initiative, there were others in the leadership who were opposing it and a few of them even cited Muslim solidarity as the basis of their objection an American campaign against Iraq.

This was, of course, not the only reason why Turkey did not fully cooperate with the United States in the Iraq war. The perception that America's campaign would in the end create a Kurdish state in northern Iraq I would say was one of the biggest concerns.

Now, this may come as a surprise and many people would ask why is there such a big concern in Turkey over the Kurdish question? Why cannot the Turks just get over the Kurdish issue?

I think the answer is the PKK. This is a terrorist organization which is on the State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organizations list. It has been active since the early 1980s. Today, the PKK has about 5000 militants in northern Iraq. In the past, it has launched many very bloody attacks from northern Iraq into Turkey, and so there is a fear that the PKK's presence in northern Iraq is a continuing threat to Turkey and this was also the perception back in the winter.

The PKK's violence, just to put it into perspective, has cost Turkey since the early 1980s about 30,000 casualties. I would suggest that the pains that the PKK has created in Turkey are similar to the trauma of the September 11 terrorist attacks here and this is why I think Turkey's long fight against terrorism has created a deep distrust in Turkey toward both PKK as well as Kurdish nationalism.

Mr. Chairman, when we analyze the reasons that underlined Turkey's aversion to an Iraq campaign back in March, which I have just highlighted, and when we look at Turkey today, we reach a conclusion that the factors that underlined this aversion still loom large in Turkey. So the question is if not much has changed in the Turkish view, vis-a-vis Operational Iraqi Freedom, the question is can anything be done to clear the air between Washington and Ankara?

Mr. Chairman, I believe the key to rebuilding the relations goes through establishing a new foundation for the United States-Turkish partnership. Now, we know, and I am sure the other speakers will elaborate very well on that, that the United States-Turkish partnership since the end of World War II, what was termed as a strategic partnership was a working relationship; it was based on mutual interests in the sense that the United States as a superpower took care of Turkey's global interests, whether protecting Turkey against communism during the cold war or promoting Turkey's EU accession in the 1990s, and supporting the idea of a Baku-Ceyhan pipeline in the Iggos and, in return, Turkey provided America with support in its neighborhood, from the Balkans to the Caucasuses and Middle East, both during the cold war and since then.

The question today is whether Turkey can still provide such support for America. In other words, is Turkey still strategically important for the United States?

In the long run, America may indeed not need Turkey for all the reasons of the past, but I will suggest that the United States will still need Turkey for a variety of very important reasons. If you go through them briefly:

Assistance in Iraq, whether it is military or not, it is substantial to maintaining and achieving security and stability there.

Turkey is needed also outside the Middle East. The Caspian basin, with which Ankara has strong historic and cultural relations, a very volatile region that has the world's second largest oil reserves, is where Turkey will be needed.

Other places from Turkish-Israeli partnership to the war on terror are also where we are going to need Turkish support, especially I have to emphasize that in the war on terror I think Turkey has had a fantastic record, from running post-war Afghanistan to sharing intelligence against the war on terror and I think that is where we have to give the Turks a lot of credit.

If it is indeed the fact that Washington needs Turkey, then the question is does Ankara need Washington? Is this mutual?

My answer is yes. I think this especially becomes important when you look at the question of who is going to be Turkish global partner in a couple of years down the road when it becomes clear,

as I suggest, that the EU is not going to take Turkey in as a full member.

As a regional country with limited power, Turkey is going to need America to guard its global interests, as has been the case in the past.

If American and Turkish interests are likely to overlap in the future, as I suggested, I think the question is can anything be done to bridge the gap between Washington and Ankara. The United States is now Turkey's southeastern neighbor. If the two countries are going to rebuild their relations, they have to start in Iraq and it has to be based on cooperation in Iraq.

Many things can be done here, we can elaborate on that later on, from shutting down the PKK or joint action against the PKK, which, as I highlighted earlier, is a first concern in Turkish minds, to military confidence building measures between the two armies, but also a need, I think, exists to improve economic relations with Turkey so that the next time Washington and Ankara face a challenge their bond will not be standing on the single pillar of military to military relations.

Before I finish, Mr. Chairman, a few more sentences about the Turkish side. I guess with time Turkey will determine what it can do to improve its relations with the United States and Ankara will step up to the plate, but first I believe Turkey will find it useful to decide if in the future it will cash in its strategic importance with America, something it has not done so well recently.

What I mean by that, Mr. Chairman, is that I see a choice for Turkey. If the AKP government refrains from helping America in Iraq or elsewhere, then I think in Washington's eyes Turkey will remain a country with unused and therefore not so valuable strategic importance. But, if on the other hand, Ankara cooperates with Washington on the many issues concerning its neighborhood, with time, I believe Turkey could once again become a valuable ally and subsequently I think the United States-Turkish partnership could be built on even firmer grounds than before.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cagaptay follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SONER CAGAPTAY, PH.D., SOREF FELLOW AND
COORDINATOR, TURKISH RESEARCH PROGRAM, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the chance to come here today and speak about Turkey and the future of U.S.-Turkish relations. It's an honor to have been invited to testify before this prestigious body.

We have a number of issues to discuss today. I would like to focus on three of these topics, namely:

- Turkish-European Union (EU) relations and reforms in Turkey;
- Turkey's role in Iraq, and;
- The future of U.S.-Turkish relations;

in order to draw eventual *policy suggestions* for the sake of this panel.

1. TURKISH-EU RELATIONS AND REFORMS IN TURKEY:

Background: A discussion of Turkish-EU relations is germane to our debate since the desire to join the EU is one of the most *significant* political forces in Turkey today.

Ankara applied to join the EU in 1963, but for decades, little progress was made toward that goal. In this regard, the emergence of the *Kurdistan Workers Party* (PKK)—an organization on the State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organizations

list—in the 1980s played a significant role in delaying Ankara’s membership. During the 1980s and the 1990s, the PKK terrorized Turkey, throwing the country into political *chaos*, and dampening its willingness to carry out the necessary political reforms towards EU membership.

However, things changed in February 1999, when Turkey *captured* the PKK’s leader Abdullah Ocalan. Left without a head, the PKK declared a ceasefire in February 2000. As violence subsided, Turkey *relaxed*. Significant *reforms*, from Kurdish education to new laws on par with the First Amendment, followed.

The future of Turkish-EU relations: Turkey’s chance for EU accession seems to have increased after the recent reforms. In December 2004, Brussels will decide whether to offer Turkey an accession calendar, opening the way for *eventual* Turkish accession into the Union.

For this to happen, Turkey has to satisfy the EU’s accession rules, the so-called *Copenhagen criteria*. So far, the EU’s main objection to Turkish membership has been that Ankara does *not satisfy* the *political leg* of the Copenhagen criteria. The EU has said that Turkey is a flawed democracy since its military has too much influence over politics. It also objected to Turkish membership asserting that Ankara has a poor human rights record because of its treatment of the Kurds.

Mr. Chairman, I believe today it has now become difficult to draw such conclusions. Turkey is *changing*, and it is changing *fast*. In this regard, for instance, the political powers of the military are now being trimmed. In August, EU reforms *civilianized* the Turkish National Security Council (NSC), the country’s top foreign policy body, in which the military used to enjoy dominance. Today, the NSC is an advisory body with a majority of civilian officials, *reporting* to the Deputy Prime Minister. A sign of the military’s changing role was that, last winter, as Turkey was discussing the Iraq War, the army was conspicuously *absent* from this debate. Today, it is not a *far-fetched* conclusion to say that the Turkish military is moving towards becoming an institution of government, instead of an institution over government.

Things are *changing* also on the Kurdish front. In August, Turkey granted *amnesty* to the members of the PKK. A lenient new law makes it possible for the PKK’s foot soldiers to lay down arms and receive only minimal punishment. On the other hand, with the recent EU reforms, Turkey has given *cultural rights* to the Kurds, who are now allowed to receive education, run TV programs, and even conduct election propaganda in Kurdish. Accordingly, when it comes to the Copenhagen (political) criterion of “respect for and protection of minorities,” Turkey is now in *safe territory*.

Although the recent reforms have made Turkey a likely candidate for EU accession, I have to admit that I am *skeptical* about the chances of the EU offering Turkey membership anytime soon.

Mr. Chairman, Turkey may indeed not be a stellar example of Anglo-Saxon democracy. My point is that subsequent to the recent reforms, Turkey *qualifies* for EU membership at least as much as the countries of Eastern Europe slated to join the EU in May 2004. Some of these countries themselves do not quite possess the perfect record to join the EU, especially when it comes to minority rights.

Let’s take two examples: *Slovakia* and *Latvia*. Recent reports indicate that last year; around 150 Roma (Gypsy) women were forcefully sterilized in Slovakia. (In most countries of East-Central Europe, the Roma are treated dismally, cast off to modern ghettos). Then, there is Latvia, where the Russian-speaking community faces outright discrimination. Russian-speakers in Latvia lack citizenship and cannot vote or receive passports. I am not arguing that Latvia, Slovakia, or other countries should be kept outside the EU because of their problems. Joining the EU will only help them become better democracies, and indeed in May 2004, these countries will enter the EU.

What puzzles me is that the EU seems to be accepting countries with less than perfect human rights records, while intending to keep Turkey out.

The answer to this lies in understanding the EU’s expansion dynamics: in 2004, the Union will take in 10 new countries, with a total population of 75 million people. Almost all these countries have income levels *below* that of the EU, and will therefore receive significant *development funds* from Brussels as per the EU’s plans to transfer funds from the wealthier countries to the poorer ones. Since the European economies have been growing very slowly, barely over 1%, for the last decade, the EU has very little money to hand out to the poor incoming countries. At this stage, accepting Turkey, with 70 million mostly poor inhabitants, would make expansion *challenging* for the EU. The EU is *not rich enough* to deal with Turkey right now. Hence, its *unwillingness* to offer Ankara accession.

Even if it does not result in Turkey’s eventual membership, the desire for EU accession has been beneficial for Turkey by *catalyzing* political reforms. Today, most

Turks see EU membership as a positive development. The EU process is a *political avalanche* in Turkey. Because of that, no one wants to be caught in the unpopular position of being culpable for blocking Turkey's EU accession. That explains, among other reasons, why the Turkish military, whose powers have been trimmed as a result of the reforms, did not *outright* object to these changes.

That is also the reason why, over the past 18 months, seven *revolutionary* reform packages, harmonizing the Turkish political system with that of the EU, have been passed swiftly by the Turkish parliament. In the long run, the Turks will benefit from the *consolidation* of their democracy as a result of the EU reforms. Yet, it is important to note that the powerful impetus behind these reforms is symptomatic of Turkey's emerging *pro-European bias* in foreign policy, especially towards Iraq.

2. TURKEY'S ROLE IN IRAQ

Mr. Chairman, it is possible to say that Turkey's *reluctance* over the past winter to support a northern front in the Iraq War was at least in part a product of Ankara's desire to align itself with *European foreign policy*. This attitude is prevalent especially among the foreign policy elite in Ankara. But more importantly, it resonates with Turkey's *Justice and Development Party (AKP)* government. Since many outside observers have come to regard the AKP as an Islamist party, or a party with an *Islamist pedigree*, the party's pro-European bias may come as a surprise. There are two takes on why the AKP has vigorously pursued EU reforms:

- First is that the AKP sees the reform process as a chance to *consolidate* the Turkish democracy,
- And the second is that the AKP views this process as a *means to an end*, using the reforms to curb the influence of the military—the traditional guardian of Turkey's secular democracy—over politics.

Mr. Chairman, I believe we should judge the AKP not by what we think about it, but rather through its actions. From *Washington's perspective*, until now, AKP's *performance* has been *mixed*. On the one hand, the party has *single-handedly* passed EU laws, putting Turkey on a much-needed reform track. On the other hand, however, the AKP has not been a *consistent* supporter of America's *Iraq policy*. Back in the winter, when the Turkish parliament was voting on American troop deployment in Turkey, while some in the AKP leadership were trying to muster support for this initiative, others were *opposing* it. A few of them were citing Muslim *solidarity* as the basis of their objection to a war against Iraq.

There were other reasons why the AKP and Ankara declined to cooperate with the U.S. in the Iraq War. The Kurdish issue was the biggest *concern*. Many people in Turkey feared that America's Iraq campaign would, in the end, create a *Kurdish state* there. (The fact that Turkey was not privy to American plans about post-war Iraq exacerbated such concerns). Why was there such a big fear in Turkey over the Kurdish issue? The reason is the *PKK*, which has 4,000–5,000 militants in northern Iraq from where it has launched attacks into Turkey in the past. The PKK's violence has left over 35,000 deaths behind, creating pains in Turkey whose American equivalent would be *the trauma* of the *September 11* terrorist attacks. For many Turks, the two-decade long fight against terrorism has produced a deep distrust towards the PKK and Kurdish nationalism.

Mr. Chairman, when we review the reasons that underlined Turkey's *aversion* to the Iraq War back in March, and analyze Turkey today, we reach the following conclusion. The factors that made the Iraq War unpopular still *loom* large today:

- The AKP government treats EU foreign policy as a yardstick in deciding Turkish policy towards Iraq.
- The *Islamists* within the AKP are increasingly more upset with what they see as *emerging chaos* in Iraq. They are convinced that the situation is only going to get *worse*, and would like to have nothing to do with it.
- Then, there is a *new factor*: in the light of the upcoming nation-wide local elections in April 2004, the AKP government, which sees the elections as a vote of confidence as well as a means to consolidate power, has an *unfavorable* view of sending Turkish peacekeepers to Iraq. If Turkish troops suffer casualties there, this will have negative ramifications for the AKP's success in the April 2004 elections.
- And finally, the *PKK* is still in northern Iraq. In fact, today, the fear of the PKK is stronger than before: on September 2, the organization renounced its February 2000 *ceasefire*. This has made likely PKK violence infiltrating from northern Iraq the top item on the Turkish agenda.

If not much has changed in the Turkish view vis-à-vis Operation Iraqi Freedom; the question is can anything be done to *clear the air* between Washington and Ankara?

3. FUTURE OF U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS

Mr. Chairman, the key to *rebuilding* U.S.-Turkish relations goes through establishing a *new foundation* for that partnership. As I am sure the other speakers will elaborate on it, for fifty years after the end of World War Two, the United States and Turkey built a *working relationship* that President Clinton named a “strategic partnership” in 1999. This was based on *mutual interests*: as a *superpower*, America took care of Turkey’s global interests (for example, protecting Turkey against communism during the Cold War; or making Turkey a partner on the energy corridor leading out of the Caspian basin and supporting Ankara’s EU candidacy in the 1990s). And as a *regional power*, Turkey provided America with support in its neighborhood, from the Balkans, to the Caucasus and the Middle East.

The question today is whether Turkey can still provide such support to America. In other words, is Ankara still strategically *important* for Washington? Some people argue that America does not need Turkey anymore. Washington may indeed not need Ankara today for all the reasons of the past, but I will argue that in the long run, America will continue to *need* Turkey.

For example, it is becoming increasingly clear that Turkish *assistance* in Iraq, whether it is peacekeepers or reconstruction aid, would be beneficial to the U.S. in achieving security and stability there.

The U.S. will need Turkey outside the Middle East too, such as in the Caspian basin, a *volatile* region with the world’s second largest oil reserves. Turkey’s traditionally good relations with the countries of the Caspian area make Ankara a desirable partner for Washington in facing the challenges awaiting the Caspian region.

There are many other issues on which Washington and Ankara could continue to cooperate, ranging from the *Turkish-Israeli* partnership to the *War on Terror*. In the War on Terror for example, Turkey has had a *fantastic* record, from running post-war Afghanistan to sharing valuable intelligence with America against terror groups.

Finally, there is the symbolic factor that in the post-September 11 environment, America will be interested in Turkey’s *success* as a predominantly Muslim, yet prosperous and peaceful society.

If it is indeed the fact that Washington needs Turkey, then, the question is does Ankara *need* Washington? My answer is yes. Who will be Turkey’s *global partner* when, for instance, it becomes clear in several years that the EU is unable to offer Ankara accession anytime soon? I argue that as a regional country with limited power outside its neighborhood, Turkey will continue to *need* America to *guard* its global interests.

If American and Turkish interests are likely to *overlap* in the future, the question whether anything can be done to *bridge the gap* between Washington and Ankara? The first step towards good mutual relations would be *cooperation* in Iraq. The U.S. is now Turkey’s *southeastern neighbor*, and if America and Turkey are going to rebuild their relations, they will have to start in Iraq.

Mr. Chairman, the following steps may help Washington develop a better rapport with Ankara in Iraq and beyond:

1. *Joint engagement against the PKK*: Turkey sees battle against the PKK as a *sine qua non* of U.S.-Turkish cooperation in Iraq. Besides, if the PKK stays in northern Iraq, this would turn the area into another *southern Lebanon*, a region of nominal government authority where terrorist groups operate freely. This is not in the interests of the United States, or Turkey or of a unified Iraq.
2. *Military to military confidence building measures*: For many decades, military relations formed the *bedrock* of the U.S.-Turkish alliance. While economic, and cultural links between America and Turkey hovered at a minimum (for instance, in 2002, Turkey ranked twenty-ninth among America’s trading partners), military relations *flourished*. Such rapport was not limited to ever-important defense cooperation. Rather, a strong human element lay at the core of the U.S.-Turkish military partnership, with American and Turkish officers working as colleagues, studying at the same academies, and participating in joint military operations. As a result of such first-hand contact, U.S. military officers developed perhaps the most accurate, and therefore the most sympathetic, view of Turkey and the Turks, becoming one of Ankara’s *best allies* in Washington.

Yet, as indicated by the latest events, including the July 4 incident in *Suleymaniye* (when American troops detained Turkish special operations forces on the grounds that they were conspiring to assassinate elected Kurdish officials in northern Iraq), things have changed. The complex game played out over the past year between Washington and Ankara over northern Iraq has *poisoned* U.S.-Turkish military relations to a previously inconceivable level. Many in Ankara believe that the United States is trying to *set up* a Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and many in Washington are convinced that Turkey is aiming to *complicate* things there for the United States. Accordingly, *little trust* can be found today between American and Turkish troops, especially those stationed in Iraq. Thus, as Washington and Ankara negotiate the deployment of Turkish troops to Iraq, a precondition for effective cooperation would be military *confidence-building measures*, including:

- Increased use of *liaison* officers,
 - *Military diplomacy*,
 - *Joint reconstruction* work in Iraq,
 - *Sharing* political plans for Iraq's future with the Turks. (This has not been done quite so well over the past year),
 - *Making Turkey a partner* in Iraq's political and economic reconstruction.
3. *Beyond Iraq, improve economic relations with Turkey*: Develop deeper economic ties with Turkey to buttress U.S.-Turkish relations so that next time Washington and Ankara face a challenge, their bond will not be standing on the single pillar of military to military relations.

The Turkish side: There are many ways for Turkey to step up to the plate and improve relations with the United States. In due course, Ankara will determine what these steps are. But, first, Turkey may find it useful to decide if in the future it will cash in its *strategic importance* with the U.S., something it has not done so well recently.

Mr. Chairman, before I finish, I would like to emphasize that here, I see a choice for Turkey: if the AKP government refrains from helping America in Iraq or elsewhere, then in Washington's eyes, Turkey will remain a country with *unused* and, therefore *not so valuable* strategic importance. On the other hand, if Ankara decides to cooperate with Washington on the many issues troubling its neighborhood, with time, Turkey could once again become a *valuable* ally to America. Subsequently, the U.S.-Turkish partnership could be built on even *firmer* ground than before.

Thank you.

Mr. BEREUTER. Dr. Cagaptay, I thank you very much for your testimony.

Next, we will hear from Dr. Bulent Aliriza. He has been a Senior Associate and Director of the Turkey Project of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC since 1994. He is also co-Director of the CSIS Caspian Energy Project.

Prior to joining CSIS, he was a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His previous activities include close involvement in the Cyprus issue as a Turkish Cypriot representative. He has a B.S. degree in international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a doctorate in diplomatic history from the University of Oxford.

Dr. Aliriza, please proceed as you wish. Thank you for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF BULENT ALIRIZA, SENIOR ASSOCIATE AND DIRECTOR, TURKEY PROJECT, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. ALIRIZA. Mr. Chairman, the old adage that Turkey is an eastern country if you come from the west and a western country if you come from the east has never been more apt.

Literally straddling the Asian and European continents, as you have seen, Turkey has been committed to synthesizing its culture,

traditions and religion, which originate in the east, with a commitment to join the western community of nations.

As a secular, free market democracy, member of NATO and aspirant for European Union membership, with a predominantly Moslem population, Turkey would appear to be the ideal bridge between the western and Islamic worlds. However, particularly since September 11, relations between the two worlds that Turkey belongs to have become even more strained, making Turkey's position on the fault line between civilizations more important and also that much more complicated.

Mr. Chairman, the best example, perhaps, of the new complexity for Turkey in the current international environment was the vote in the national assembly on March 1. We cannot say with any degree of accuracy how much the Turkish public and Turkish Parliamentarians, particularly those from the ruling Justice and Development Party (JDP), which, as I said, has its ancestry in the Islamist political movement, were affected by the new global strains before the assembly failed to muster the requisite number of votes to allow the United States to open a northern front.

However, in line with the rest of the Islamic world, opinion polls in Turkey prior to the vote consistently indicated strong opposition to supporting the United States in the imminent conflict with Iraq.

The vote was undoubtedly a major reversal for the JDP government which had its own reservations about the imminent conflict, but forwarded the motion in accordance with the overriding need for cooperation with Turkey's most important ally, the United States.

JDP had every reason to believe that its overriding majority would ensure passage. However, it had come into the office only a few months earlier and the Chairman of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had still to take over the premiership. At the same time, the powerful Turkish military refrained from giving an unambiguously clear approval or recommendation in favor of the motion. The President of the republic, along with the parliamentary opposition, the Republican People's Party, were against the motion. However, the reality is that the vote went down ultimately because of defections from the JDP.

The vote was also a shock for the U.S. Administration, which included access for United States ground forces through Turkey in its war plans. Turkey subsequently allowed the use of its air space and provided important help, as Congressman Wexler said, through other means as Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul, who visited in Washington in July have repeatedly stressed. However, while the visit of Secretary of State Colin Powell to Ankara back in April soon after the war along with the inclusion of a one billion grant for Turkey in the supplementary request underlined continuing United States interest in Turkey, I would argue that the bilateral relationship is far from fully back on track.

Several months after the vote, the Turkish government is once again moving cautiously toward another major decision with significant implications for United States-Turkish relations. However, sending Turkish troops to support the United States in stabilizing post-war Iraq is not backed by the majority of Turkish voters, the parliamentary opposition or the President again, and the JDP's

handling of this issue will have inevitable domestic as well as external reverberations.

I will get back to United States-Turkish relations later, but let us look briefly at the domestic picture.

Parallel to the major global developments during the past 2 years, there have been very important domestic changes in Turkey. The general elections of November 2002, which can rightly be characterized as a political earthquake, crushed the three political parties, which had gone into the polls in coalition government, along with the main opposition party. None of these parties which had dominated Turkish politics for decades, were able to gain parliamentary representation.

The JDP, which had been established only in August 2001, swept into office as Turkey's first single party government in over a decade on the back of a massive backlash against the chronic mismanagement of the economy, cronyism and corruption by gaining nearly two-thirds of the seats in the assembly.

Many of the leaders of the JDP were members of the National Salvation Party and the Welfare Party which served in previous coalition governments but were subsequently banned for Islamist activities. In fact, prior to its dissolution, the Welfare Party was ousted from government in 1997 following pressure from the Turkish military. Committed to the preservation of Turkish secularism, Turkey's armed forces have carried out four interventions as part of their broadly defined mission to defend the republic.

Understandably, the JDP government has been stressing its break from the Islamist movement and specifically rejects the Islamic label. Its leaders instead define the JDP as a conservative democratic party and as the heir to the Democratic Party which governed Turkey between 1950 and the coup of 1960, as well as Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party, which came into office in the first elections after the 1980 coup.

At the same time, the JDP has been carefully avoiding the inflammatory statements and actions which previously characterized the Turkish Islamists in government. For example, although the wives of most of the JDP leaders wear Islamic headscarves, the JDP has not made any moves on this very controversial issue.

As we move toward the first anniversary of its election victory, it remains to be seen whether the JDP has transformed the Turkish political landscape in a lasting manner. This, I believe, will depend on a great deal on the success of the subjective redefinition by Erdogan and his colleagues which is directed at the majority of the Turkish voters who did not vote for them and who still have lingering suspicions about their ultimate aims.

Recent opinion polls suggest that the JDP has been able to broaden its appeal, but this may be more a reflection of the disarray in opposition ranks than the success of the JDP itself. Currently, none of the other political parties is in a position to challenge the JDP, as the local elections are likely to confirm next year.

Mr. Chairman, the most important component of the JDP strategy in government is the pursuit of the linked goals of Turkish accession to the European Union (EU) and political reforms in accordance with the EU's Copenhagen criteria.

In marked contrast to the Welfare Party-led government under Necmettin Erbakan, who gave the impression that his main goal in foreign affairs was to strengthen links with the Islamic world, the JDP government has been stressing EU membership as its primary objective. Most of Erdogan's visits have been to European capitals.

At the same time, the JDP, as has been noted, has been accelerating the process of reforms it inherited. The national assembly passed a legislative package directed mainly at Kurdish speaking citizens which reduced the scope of the anti-terror laws and provided conditional amnesty for individuals involved in Kurdish separatist activities. Much more significantly, I would argue, the JDP then pushed through a package effectively reversing the expansion of the influence of the Turkish armed forces, particularly through the National Security Council (NSC).

During the past 20 years of its 4-decade existence, the NSC, which brought together in its monthly meetings Turkey's civilian and military leadership, expanded its powers far beyond its original advisory role. The NSC Secretary General, always a four-star general, accumulated and wielded virtually unsupervised power in a very wide sphere of Turkish life. The new legislation has curbed the powers of the NSC, authorized the nomination of a civilian as NSC Secretary General and gave responsibility for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of NSC recommendations to a Deputy Prime Minister.

Although Erdogan apparently agreed at the last minute to refrain from proceeding immediately to the appointment of a civilian as NSC Secretary General, the changes are likely to be very significant.

Mr. Chairman, despite the parliamentary majority and public support, the JDP would not have been able to proceed smoothly to the restructuring of civilian-military relations without the support of the current military leadership, in particular the Chief of Staff.

As the inheritor and defender of the Kemalist commitment to westernization, the Turkish military has acknowledged that accession to the EU would commit Turkey to finally proceed to full membership of the western community. Accordingly, Chief of Staff Ozkok has signalled that the Turkish armed forces would not be an impediment in this important process.

Nevertheless, dissenting voices have been raised within the military establishment relating to the advisability of the reforms and although some of the generals who were most vociferous have retired, there are others still in uniform who voice similar concerns.

Each of the four military interventions in the past followed domestic ferment. That is not present today and one does not get the feeling that we are on the eve of the kind of problems with the military that Turkey had in the past.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I will quickly look at a couple of the problems ahead and United States-Turkish relations.

It is not clear whether the EU will ultimately proceed to accession negotiations with Turkey when it takes up the issue in December 2004. In fact, it is possible that Turkey's EU journey could be brought to a halt by the Cyprus problem.

Although the solution of this long-running dispute is not a specified condition for Turkish entry, the admission of the island into the EU in May 2004 with or without a settlement will certainly complicate Turkey's own accession plans.

The logical way out of the predicament is a negotiated solution by May 2004 under the auspices of the U.N., as the EU and U.S. have been advocating.

For its part, the JDP government has stated that despite its flaws, the current U.N. plan could provide the basis for a settlement, apparently recognizing that while active diplomacy will bring certain domestic dangers in a confrontation with its opponents and the Euroskeptics who reject the U.N. plan, these are outweighed by the diplomatic dangers of allowing the current stalemate to continue beyond May 2004.

There will also have to be major improvements in the Turkish economy to conform to the EU's Maastricht criteria. After all, Turkey is a country of 70 million with a per capita income around \$3,000 and the current economic recovery is due to a great extent to the \$39.5 billion from the IMF as part of standby packages, as well as the \$1 billion in grants which will be converted to \$8.5 billion in debt relief.

Although foreign debt is manageable, the domestic debt is worrisome because previous governments have run up the domestic debt to finance their mismanagement of the economy. There are populist pressures from below which could force the government to relax fiscal and financial discipline.

Last but not least, there is the thorny question of religion and culture that the EU and Turkey ultimately have to tackle. For the moment, the issue of whether a predominantly Moslem country can be integrated into the EU has been put on the back burner. Meanwhile, the JDP leaders continue to underline Turkey's role as a bridge, but it remains to be seen whether the EU will reciprocate their gesture.

Finally, on Turkey and the United States, as I said at the outset, playing the role of a bridge to prevent the clash of civilization is something that Mr. Erdogan has been stressing and he raised this with President Bush when he came here in December 2002. It is impossible to overemphasize how difficult this is for Turkey, given the current global ferment, but also impossible to overemphasize the contribution Turkey could make in complementing the current military campaign with its own unique example as a country that belongs to both worlds.

This is not to downplay the contribution Turkey could make in the military sphere. Turkey has been discussing with the United States the idea of sending troops to Iraq and the government may seek parliamentary authorization with the backing of the military as early as this month. This will be a very difficult decision, fraught with great consequences. The Turks are not going into northern Iraq where most of the Turkish public would want them to go for reasons that you are very familiar with. The U.S. is opposed to that. They would instead go into the so-called Sunni triangle and subsequent Turkish casualties will almost certainly cause major problems for the government.

The troop deployment would have to be justified by the government as an essential component of Turkey's responsibility as a regional power toward a troubled neighbor. Another major aspect of the policy that would have to be stressed is Turkey's ability and desire to play a significant role in the economic reconstruction of Iraq.

Finally, we need to note that the troop issue is at the forefront of the current debate and the decision makers at both ends have to realize that the underlying problems that were revealed and accentuated by the March vote cannot be eradicated simply by sending Turkish troops to Iraq. The relationship was a product of vital mutual needs during the cold war era and continued with ad hoc adjustments, particularly on Iraq, even after the common foe, the Soviet Union, disappeared over a decade ago. The issue of restructuring and redefining the relationship has been avoided and although it is a very difficult task, it needs to be tackled as soon as possible.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Aliriza follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BULENT ALIRIZA, SENIOR ASSOCIATE AND DIRECTOR,
TURKEY PROJECT, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO TALK ABOUT TURKEY AND US-TURKISH RELATIONS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COMMEND YOU AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE FOR FOCUSING ON THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE OLD ADAGE THAT TURKEY IS AN EASTERN COUNTRY IF YOU COME TO IT FROM THE WEST AND A WESTERN COUNTRY IF YOU COME FROM THE EAST HAS NEVER BEEN MORE APT.

LITERALLY STRADDLING THE ASIAN AND EUROPEAN CONTINENTS, TURKEY HAS BEEN COMMITTED, PARTICULARLY SINCE KEMAL ATATURK CREATED THE MODERN TURKISH REPUBLIC OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE 80 YEARS AGO, TO SYNTHESIZING ITS CULTURE, TRADITIONS AND RELIGION, WHICH ORIGINATE IN THE EAST, WITH A COMMITMENT TO JOIN THE WESTERN COMMUNITY OF NATIONS.

AS A SECULAR, FREE MARKET DEMOCRACY, MEMBER OF NATO AND ASPIRANT FOR EUROPEAN UNION (EU) MEMBERSHIP, WITH A MOSLEM POPULATION, TURKEY WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE IDEAL LINK OR BRIDGE BETWEEN THE WESTERN AND THE ISLAMIC WORLDS. HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY'S TWO WORLDS HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE STRAINED, MAKING TURKEY'S POSITION ON THE FAULT LINE BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEFORE BUT ALSO MUCH MORE COMPLICATED.

MR. CHAIRMAN, PERHAPS THE BEST EXAMPLE OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR TURKEY WAS THE VOTE IN THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON MARCH 1.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WITH ANY DEGREE OF ACCURACY HOW MUCH THE TURKISH PUBLIC AND THE TURKISH PARLIAMENTARIANS, PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM THE RULING JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (JDP), WHICH HAS ITS ANCESTRY IN THE ISLAMIST POLITICAL MOVEMENT, WERE AFFECTED BY THE NEW GLOBAL STRAINS BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY FAILED TO MUSTER THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF VOTES TO ALLOW THE US TO OPEN A NORTHERN FRONT IN THE WAR AGAINST IRAQ.

HOWEVER, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT, IN LINE WITH THE REST OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD, OPINION POLLS IN TURKEY PRIOR TO THE VOTE CONSISTENTLY INDICATED STRONG OPPOSITION TO SUPPORTING THE US IN THE IMMINENT CONFLICT WITH IRAQ.

THE VOTE WAS A MAJOR REVERSAL FOR THE JDP GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD STATED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE IMMINENT CONFLICT, BUT NEVERTHELESS FORWARDED THE MOTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OVER-

RIDING NEED FOR COOPERATION WITH TURKEY'S MOST IMPORTANT ALLY.

THE JDP SURELY HAD EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY IT ENJOYED IN THE ASSEMBLY WOULD ENSURE PASSAGE. HOWEVER, IT HAD COME INTO OFFICE ONLY A FEW MONTHS EARLIER AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY, RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN, HAD STILL NOT TAKEN OVER THE PREMIERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME, THE POWERFUL TURKISH MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT HAD REFRAINED FROM GIVING AN UNAMBIGUOUSLY CLEAR RECOMMENDATION IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION, THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, AHMET NECDET SEZER, HAD OPENLY INDICATED HIS RESERVATIONS AND THE MAIN OPPOSITION IN THE ASSEMBLY, THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY, HAD CHOSEN TO MOUNT AN ALL OUT CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MOTION. HOWEVER, THE REALITY IS THAT ULTIMATELY THE VOTE WENT DOWN BECAUSE OF JDP DEFECTIONS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE VOTE WAS ALSO A SHOCK TO THE US ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAD INCLUDED ACCESS FOR US GROUND FORCES THROUGH TURKEY IN ITS WAR PLANS. TURKEY SUBSEQUENTLY ALLOWED THE USE OF ITS AIR SPACE AND PROVIDED IMPORTANT HELP THROUGH VARIOUS OTHER MEANS, AS ERDOGAN AND FOREIGN MINISTER ABDULLAH GUL, WHO VISITED WASHINGTON IN JULY, HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED. HOWEVER, WHILE THE VISIT OF SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN POWELL TO ANKARA BACK IN APRIL UNDERLINED CONTINUING US INTEREST IN TURKEY, THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAS NOT YET GOT BACK ON TRACK.

SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE VOTE, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IS ONCE AGAIN MOVING CAUTIOUSLY TOWARDS ANOTHER MAJOR DECISION WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS FOR US-TURKISH RELATIONS. JUST AS IN MARCH, SENDING TURKISH TROOPS TO SUPPORT THE US IN STABILIZING POST WAR IRAQ IS NOT BACKED BY THE MAJORITY OF TURKISH VOTERS, AND THE JDP'S HANDLING OF THIS ISSUE WILL ALSO HAVE DOMESTIC AS WELL AS EXTERNAL REVERBERATIONS.

MR. CHAIRMAN, PARALLEL TO THE MAJOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THERE HAS ALSO BEEN IMPORTANT DOMESTIC CHANGES IN TURKEY. THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF NOVEMBER 2002, WHICH CAN RIGHTLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS A POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE, CRUSHED THE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES, WHICH HAD GONE TO THE POLLS IN COALITION GOVERNMENT, ALONG WITH THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY. NONE OF THESE PARTIES, WHICH HAD DOMINATED TURKISH POLITICS FOR DECADES, WERE ABLE TO GAIN PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION.

THE JDP, WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED ONLY IN AUGUST 2001, SWEEPED INTO OFFICE AS TURKEY'S FIRST SINGLE PARTY GOVERNMENT IN OVER A DECADE ON THE BACK OF A MASSIVE BACKLASH AGAINST THE CHRONIC MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY, CRONYISM AND CORRUPTION BY GAINING ALMOST 2/3 OF THE SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY.

MOST OF THE LEADERS OF THE JDP WERE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY AND THE WELFARE PARTY WHICH SERVED IN PREVIOUS COALITION GOVERNMENTS BUT WERE SUBSEQUENTLY BANNED FOR ISLAMIST ACTIVITIES. IN FACT, PRIOR TO ITS DISSOLUTION, THE WELFARE PARTY WAS OUSTED FROM GOVERNMENT IN 1997 FOLLOWING PRESSURE FROM THE TURKISH MILITARY. COMMITTED TO THE PRESERVATION OF TURKISH SECULARISM, TURKEY'S ARMED FORCES HAVE CARRIED OUT FOUR INTERVENTIONS AS PART OF THEIR BROADLY DEFINED MISSION TO DEFEND THE REPUBLIC.

UNDERSTANDABLY, THE JDP GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN STRESSING ITS BREAK WITH THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENT AND REJECTS THE ISLAMIST LABEL, PREFERRING TO DEFINE THE JDP AS A CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE JDP LEADERS CLAIM THAT THE PARTY IS THE HEIR TO THE DEMOCRAT PARTY, WHICH CAME INTO POWER IN 1950 WITH THE ENTRY OF TURKEY INTO THE ERA OF GENUINE MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY AND SERVED FOR A DECADE BEFORE THE MILITARY COUP OF 1960, AND TURGUT OZAL'S MOTHERLAND PARTY, WHICH CAME INTO OFFICE IN THE FIRST ELECTIONS AFTER THE 1980 COUP.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE JDP HAS BEEN AVOIDING THE INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS, WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE TURKISH ISLAMIST PARTIES IN GOVERNMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH THE WIVES OF MOST OF THE JDP LEADERS WEAR ISLAMIC HEADSCARVES,

THE JDP HAS NOT MADE ANY MOVES TO EASE THE EXISTING RESTRICTIONS.

HOWEVER, AS WE MOVE TOWARDS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ITS ELECTION VICTORY, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE JDP HAS TRANSFORMED THE TURKISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN A LASTING MANNER. THIS WILL DEPEND TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THE SUCCESS OF THE ONGOING SUBJECTIVE REDEFINITION BY ERDOGAN AND HIS COLLEAGUES WHICH IS DIRECTED AT THE MAJORITY OF THE ELECTORATE WHO DID NOT VOTE FOR THEM AND RETAIN LINGERING SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE ULTIMATE AIMS OF THE JDP.

RECENT OPINION POLLS SUGGEST THAT THE JDP HAS BEEN ABLE TO BROADEN ITS APPEAL. HOWEVER, THIS MAY BE MORE A REFLECTION OF THE CONTINUING DISARRAY IN OPPOSITION RANKS AND THEIR FAILURE TO FASHION AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO CONFRONT THE JDP THAN OF THE SUCCESS OF THE JDP ITSELF. IN ANY CASE, THE REALITY IS THAT NONE OF THE OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES ARE CURRENTLY IN A POSITION TO CHALLENGE THE JDP, AS THE LOCAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED IN THE SPRING OF 2004 ARE LIKELY TO CONFIRM, PARTICULARLY IF THE TROUBLED TURKISH ECONOMY CONTINUES TO IMPROVE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, A VERY IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE JDP'S STRATEGY IN GOVERNMENT IS THE PURSUIT OF THE LINKED GOALS OF TURKISH ACCESSION TO THE EU AND POLITICAL REFORMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPENHAGEN CRITERIA FOR EU MEMBERSHIP. IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE WELFARE PARTY-LED GOVERNMENT UNDER NECMETTIN ERBAKAN, WHO GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HIS MAIN GOAL IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS TO STRENGTHEN LINKS WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD, THE JDP GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN STRESSING EU MEMBERSHIP AS ITS PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. UNLIKE ERBAKAN, ERDOGAN HAS POINTEDLY CHOSEN TO MAKE MOST OF HIS FOREIGN TRIPS TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE JDP HAS BEEN ACCELERATING THE PROCESS OF REFORMS IT INHERITED. BEFORE ITS SUMMER BREAK, THE ASSEMBLY ADOPTED A LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE DIRECTED AT KURDISH-SPEAKING CITIZENS, WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE SCOPE OF THE ANTI TERROR LAWS. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A BILL TO GRANT CONDITIONAL AMNESTY FOR INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN KURDISH SEPARATISM. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, THE JDP THEN PUSHED THROUGH A PACKAGE EFFECTIVELY REVERSING THE EXPANSION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY THROUGH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC).

DURING THE PAST TWENTY YEARS OF ITS FOUR-DECADE EXISTENCE, THE NSC, WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER IN ITS MONTHLY MEETINGS TURKEY'S CIVILIAN AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP, HAD EXPANDED ITS POWERS FAR BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL ADVISORY ROLE. THE NSC SECRETARY GENERAL, A FOUR STAR GENERAL, HAD ACCUMULATED AND WIELDED VIRTUALLY UNSUPERVISED POWER IN A VERY WIDE SPHERE OF TURKISH LIFE. THE NEW LEGISLATION CURBED THE POWERS OF THE NSC, AUTHORIZED THE NOMINATION OF A CIVILIAN AS NSC SECRETARY GENERAL AND GAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND COORDINATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NSC RECOMMENDATIONS TO A DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER.

ALTHOUGH ERDOGAN APPARENTLY AGREED AT THE LAST MINUTE TO REFRAIN FROM PROCEEDING IMMEDIATELY TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A CIVILIAN AS NSC SECRETARY GENERAL, THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF THE CHANGES ON THE TURKISH POLITICAL SYSTEM ARE LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANT.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DESPITE ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY AND PUBLIC SUPPORT, THE JDP WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY TO THE RESTRUCTURING OF CIVILIAN-MILITARY RELATIONS TO CONFORM TO EU NORMS WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE CURRENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP, AND, IN PARTICULAR, CHIEF OF STAFF HILMI OZKOK.

AS THE INHERITOR AND DEFENDER OF THE KEMALIST COMMITMENT TO WESTERNIZATION, THE TURKISH MILITARY HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ACCESSION TO THE EU WOULD PERMIT TURKEY TO FINALLY PROCEED TO FULL MEMBERSHIP OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY. ACCORDINGLY, OZKOK HAS SIGNALLED THAT UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES WOULD NOT BE AN IMPEDIMENT IN THIS IMPORTANT PROCESS.

HOWEVER, DISSENTING VOICES HAVE BEEN RAISED WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT RELATING TO THE ADVISABILITY OF THE REFORMS WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF EU MEMBERSHIP AND THE PERCEIVED THREAT POSED BY THE JDP TO SECULARISM. WHILE A NUMBER OF THE MOST POWERFUL VOCAL CRITICS RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY IN AUGUST, THEIR SCEPTICAL VIEWS HAVE SINCE BEEN ECHOED BY A NUMBER OF THEIR FELLOW GENERALS WHO CONTINUE TO SERVE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT EACH OF THE TURKISH MILITARY INTERVENTIONS FOLLOWED MAJOR DOMESTIC FERMENT, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE INFLUENTIAL TURKISH MEDIA. THAT IS SIMPLY NOT THE CASE TODAY AND THE TURKISH BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WHICH CONTROLS MOST OF THE MEDIA, ALONG WITH THE MAJORITY OF TURKISH VOTERS, APPARENTLY WANT THE UNINTERRUPTED CONTINUATION OF THE EU PROCESS AND THE REFORMS WHICH HAVE HELPED TO BOOST THE ECONOMY.

MR. CHAIRMAN, DESPITE THE RECENT STEPS, IT IS STILL NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE EU WILL ULTIMATELY PROCEED TO ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS WITH TURKEY WHEN IT FORMALLY REVIEWS THE ISSUE IN DECEMBER 2004. IN FACT, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT TURKEY'S LONG EU JOURNEY COULD BE BROUGHT TO A HALT BY THE CYPRUS PROBLEM. ALTHOUGH THE SOLUTION OF THIS LONG-RUNNING DISPUTE IS NOT A SPECIFIED CONDITION FOR TURKISH ENTRY, THE ADMISSION OF THE ISLAND INTO THE EU IN MAY 2004 WITH OR WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT COMPLICATES TURKEY'S OWN ACCESSION PLANS.

THE LOGICAL WAY OUT OF THE PREDICAMENT IS AN AGREEMENT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AS THE EU AND THE US HAVE ALSO BEEN ADVOCATING. FOR ITS PART, THE JDP GOVERNMENT HAS STATED THAT DESPITE ITS FLAWS, THE CURRENT UN PLAN COULD PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR A SOLUTION. THE ERDOGAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT WHILE ACTIVE DIPLOMACY TO PROMOTE A SOLUTION BRINGS DOMESTIC DANGERS IN A CONFRONTATION WITH ITS OPPOSITIONS AND THE EUROSCEPTICS WHO REJECT THE UN PLAN, THESE ARE LIKELY TO BE OUTWEIGHED BY THE DIPLOMATIC DANGERS OF ALLOWING THE CURRENT STALEMATE TO CONTINUE BEYOND MAY 2004.

THE JDP GOVERNMENT ALSO KNOWS THAT ULTIMATE EU MEMBERSHIP WILL REQUIRE ADDITIONAL AND CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OF THE TURKISH ECONOMY IN ORDER TO SATISFY THE MAASTRICHT ECONOMIC CRITERIA OF THE EU. AFTER ALL, A COUNTRY OF OVER 70 MILLION WITH A PER CAPITA INCOME BELOW \$3,000 IS NOT A VIABLE CANDIDATE. THE CURRENT RECOVERY IS DUE IN NO SMALL MEASURE TO THE \$ 39.5 BILLION IN LOANS PROVIDED BY THE IMF AS PART OF ITS CURRENT STANDBY AGREEMENTS. THE \$1 BILLION GRANT TO BE PROVIDED BY THE US, WHICH CAN BE CONVERTED INTO AN \$8.5 BILLION LOAN FOR DEBT RELIEF, IS ALSO A RELEVANT FACTOR IN THE CURRENT RECOVERY.

WHILE THE LARGE FOREIGN DEBT APPEARS MANAGEABLE, THE ALARMINGLY HIGH LEVEL OF DOMESTIC DEBT WITH HIGH INTEREST, WHICH SUCCESSIVE TURKISH GOVERNMENTS HAVE USED TO SUSTAIN BAD ECONOMIC POLICIES, IS A MATTER OF GREATER IMMEDIATE CONCERN. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS THE CONSTANT DANGER THAT POPULIST PRESSURES FROM ITS LOWER INCOME SUPPORTERS COULD FORCE THE JDP TO RELAX FISCAL AND FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE WITH SERIOUS NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, THERE IS THE THORNY QUESTION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE THAT THE EU AND TURKEY ULTIMATELY HAVE TO TACKLE. FOR THE MOMENT, THE ISSUE OF WHETHER A PREDOMINANTLY MOSLEM COUNTRY WITH VERY DIFFERENT TRADITIONS CAN BE INTEGRATED IN THE EU HAS BEEN PUT ON THE BACKBURNER IN THE EU-TURKISH DIALOGUE. MEANWHILE, THE JDP LEADERS CONTINUE TO UNDERLINE TURKEY'S DIVERSITY AND POTENTIAL ROLE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN RELIGIONS AND CULTURES IN THEIR EU CAMPAIGN. HAVING PREVIOUSLY OPPOSED THE EU AS A CHRISTIAN CLUB FROM WITHIN THE TURKISH ISLAMIST MOVEMENT, THIS REPRESENTS A MAJOR CHANGE OF HEART FOR THE JDP LEADERS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE EU WILL RECIPROCATATE THEIR GESTURE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, ERDOGAN MADE THE CASE FOR TURKEY'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN HELPING TO AVOID A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS TO PRESIDENT BUSH WHEN HE VISITED WASHINGTON IN DECEMBER 2002. AS I SAID AT THE OUTSET, SUCH A ROLE IS DIFFICULT IN THE MIDST OF THE CUR-

RENT GLOBAL FERMENT AND THE US-LED EFFORT TO ROOT OUT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, PARTICULARLY IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD. HOWEVER, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO OVEREMPHASIZE THE CONTRIBUTION TURKEY COULD MAKE IN COMPLEMENTING THE CURRENT MILITARY CAMPAIGN WITH ITS OWN UNIQUE EXAMPLE AS A COUNTRY THAT BELONGS TO BOTH THE ISLAMIC AND WESTERN WORLDS.

THIS IS NOT TO DOWNPLAY THE CONTRIBUTION TURKEY COULD MAKE IN THE MILITARY SPHERE. HAVING INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO SEND SOLDIERS TO IRAQ, TURKEY HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH THE US SINCE JULY THE DETAILS OF SUCH POSSIBLE SUPPORT. THE ISSUE WAS CONSIDERED AT THE NSC MEETING IN ANKARA LAST MONTH, AND WITH THE BACKING OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH SHARES THE DESIRE OF TURKEY'S CIVILIAN LEADERS TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE DONE TO US-TURKISH RELATIONS BY THE MARCH VOTE, THE GOVERNMENT MAY PROCEED TO SEEK PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORIZATION THIS MONTH.

HOWEVER, THE JDP REALIZES THAT THIS WILL BE A DIFFICULT DECISION FRAUGHT WITH GRAVE CONSEQUENCES. TO BEGIN WITH, TURKISH SOLDIERS WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM NORTHERN IRAQ, WHERE TURKEY HAS A STATED INTEREST IN CONFRONTING THE TWIN THREATS IT PERCEIVES FROM SEPARATIST TURKISH KURDS AND THE EXPANSION OF IRAQI KURDISH INFLUENCE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE TURKMENS. THEY WOULD INSTEAD GO INTO THE DANGEROUS SO-CALLED SUNNI TRIANGLE NEAR BAGHDAD. CONSEQUENTLY, EVEN IF THE JDP GOVERNMENT SUCCEEDS IN PERSUADING ITS OWN PARLIAMENTARIANS TO SET ASIDE THEIR VERY REAL RESERVATIONS TO PERMIT THE DISPATCH OF TROOPS, SUBSEQUENT TURKISH CASUALTIES WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

THE TROOP DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE JUSTIFIED BY THE GOVERNMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF TURKEY'S MULTI-FACETED POLICY AS A REGIONAL POWER WITH RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS A TROUBLED NEIGHBOR. ANOTHER MAJOR ASPECT OF THE POLICY THAT WOULD BE EMPHASIZED IS TURKEY'S DESIRE TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ. HOWEVER, THE TROOP ISSUE IS INEVITABLY AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE DECISION RELATING TO ENGAGEMENT IN IRAQ AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT DECISIONMAKERS IN WASHINGTON AS WELL AS ANKARA RECOGNIZE THAT THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WHICH WERE REVEALED AND ACCENTUATED BY THE MARCH VOTE CANNOT BE ERADICATED SIMPLY BY SENDING TURKISH FORCES TO IRAQ.

MR. CHAIRMAN, AS I ARGUED IN A JUNE 2003 CSIS TURKEY UPDATE I HAVE SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR A REDEFINITION OF THE US-TURKISH ALLIANCE. THE RELATIONSHIP WAS A PRODUCT OF VITAL MUTUAL NEEDS DURING THE COLD WAR ERA AND CONTINUED WITH AD HOC ADJUSTMENTS EVEN AFTER THE COMMON FOE, THE SOVIET UNION, DISAPPEARED OVER A DECADE AGO. WHILE THE AVOIDANCE OF THE HUGE TASK OF RESTRUCTURING A MAJOR RELATIONSHIP STRETCHING BACK THROUGH FIFTY YEARS IS UNDERSTANDABLE, IT IS A LUXURY THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES CAN NO LONGER AFFORD.

WASHINGTON AND ANKARA NOW HAVE TO DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT EACH COULD EXPECT FROM THE OTHER IN THE NEW GEOSTRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT. THE REDEFINITION OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WILL ALSO NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT TURKEY'S EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EU, AS WELL AS ITS LINKS WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD. THE US-TURKISH ALLIANCE THAT WILL EMERGE AT THE END OF THIS PROCESS WILL SURELY BE DIFFERENT BUT NO LESS VITAL.

TURKEY UPDATE, JUNE 5, 2003, BY BULENT ALIRIZA, DIRECTOR, TURKEY PROJECT

SEEKING REDEFINITION: U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS AFTER IRAQ

It has been three months since the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) failed to muster the appropriate number of votes to allow the United States to open a northern front through Turkey against Iraq. In retrospect it is clear that the March 1 vote reflected the public opposition to the imminent conflict, the perceptible ambivalence of the powerful military establishment and its reluctance to provide an unambiguous recommendation—in particular at the National Security Council

(NSC) meeting one day before the vote—and the attitude of President Ahmet Necdet Sezer. It also reflected the inability of the governing Justice and Development Party (JDP) to overcome its deep misgivings about the war to give a sufficiently clear lead.

However, despite the apparent consensus on the part of the unusual coalition of influential Turkish politicians, bureaucrats, soldiers and commentators that the denial of Turkish territory would constitute a major handicap to American war plans and might even force the Bush Administration to refrain from war, the United States proceeded to quickly defeat and overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman commented on the fundamental Turkish miscalculation after the war by saying that the "U.S. mistake was to let the Turks believe that somehow they were so important to this operation that we could not do it alone, ultimately."

Notwithstanding its current problems in post-Saddam Iraq, the United States is now firmly engaged on its massive project to undertake the transformation of the Middle East. The use of massive American military power has certainly focused the minds of the leaders of the remaining Baathist regime in Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as all other Middle Eastern autocrats and potentates, on their long-term prospects. Although Turkey, a U.S. ally and a democracy, has little reason to share their sense of foreboding, the persistent *frisson* in U.S.-Turkish relations since the vote provides legitimate grounds for concern over the future of its alliance with Washington.

For over fifty years since the Truman Doctrine and Turkish entry into NATO, successive U.S. administrations had unfailingly perceived Turkey as a strategically vital ally. Accordingly, Turkey received significant U.S. military and economic assistance, along with diplomatic support and understanding for periodic lapses in its democratic system and human rights record. Consequently, the unwillingness of Turkey to allow the United States to send ground troops to attack Iraq or to use bombers based at Incirlik air base came as an unwelcome surprise, particularly as the United States had proceeded to modernize Turkish airports and ports in accordance with an earlier TGNA vote in February to pre-position military equipment. "The big disappointment," as Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz characterized the vote, was particularly galling to the Defense Department, Turkey's most ardent defender in Washington.

In the aftermath of the vote, it has become more apparent that the disappearance of the common Soviet foe had effectively removed the Cold War foundation of the strategic alliance between the two countries. Ironically, Saddam's invasion of Kuwait and the immediate Turkish response under President Turgut Ozal had then helped carry the relationship into the post Cold War era. Incirlik was made available to U.S. aircraft during the Gulf War in 1991 and for humanitarian assistance to beleaguered Iraqi Kurds as part of Operation Provide Comfort. During the following decade, the U.S. was allowed to use Incirlik through Operation Northern Watch in the enforcement of the no fly zone in northern Iraq. Consequently, Ankara was able to provide Washington a functioning cooperative arrangement, which encouraged the United States to argue that the alliance was in tact and to seek to embellish it with additional cooperation in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Caspian Sea energy and even Afghanistan.

LOOKING AHEAD

To be sure, there has been no formal announcement from Washington during the past three months that the strategic partnership lauded by President Bill Clinton in Istanbul in 1999 is over or even that it is being seriously reviewed. Long-standing alliances do not wither rapidly and the hastily arranged visit to Ankara of Secretary of State Colin Powell in early April, as well as two subsequent telephone conversations between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President George Bush apparently reassured the Turks that the damage could soon be repaired. After all, Erdogan had argued in the *Washington Post* on March 23, just after taking over as prime minister, Turkey was "part of the coalition," it had done its "utmost" to cooperate and wished to "prevent any watershed" in the relationship. The Turkish sense of optimism was further reinforced by the inclusion of \$1 billion for Turkey in the supplemental U.S. war budget, reportedly through the last-minute intervention of Secretary Powell.

Clearly, sustaining an admittedly difficult relationship with a predominantly Moslem country led by a government with Islamist origins is of value to Washington in its wider diplomatic efforts directed at a mostly skeptical Islamic world. However, at the practical bilateral level, there is an urgent need for repairs as well as redefinition. To begin with, as it won the war without the anticipated Turkish participation, the United States forged a tactical alliance with Iraqi Kurdish militias and

then forced Turkey to back down from its stated intention to send troops into Iraq to counter Kurdish advances into Mosul and Kirkuk and to protect the Turkmens. It is worth noting that if the TGNA vote had gone the other way, Turkey would have established a sizeable and deterrent military presence in a buffer zone in northern Iraq as part of the military, political and economic agreements laboriously negotiated with the United States. Equally importantly, Operation Northern Watch was terminated and U.S. planes assigned to Incirlik were withdrawn, raising serious questions over the future role of Turkey in American forward deployment. Significantly, Chief of Staff Hilmi Ozkok acknowledged at the end of April that the United States might establish permanent bases in Bulgaria and Romania, although he chose to avoid comments on speculation that there might be permanent American bases in Iraq itself.

Washington and Ankara now confront the unavoidable and difficult task of determining exactly what each could expect from the other in the new geostrategic environment created by the Iraq war. For its part, the Bush Administration has made it clear that the immediate priority is for Turkey to prevent additional strains in the relationship by refraining from unilateral action in northern Iraq. The apparent medium-range U.S. goal is to ensure that Turkey will lend effective support to possible action against Syria and Iran. As Wolfowitz pointedly warned, "drawing closer" to those countries was "absolutely the wrong way to go" and Turkish policy towards "Syria or Iran should fit into an overall policy with us." In the longer run, Wolfowitz reportedly told a visiting Turkish business delegation in May, "the ball was in the Turkish court" to define the nature of the relationship. After the recent Turkish rebuff, Washington clearly preferred Ankara to take the lead by saying what it was prepared to do in the future.

To be sure, there have been Turkish moves to repair the rift. A number of senior JDP officials were recently in Washington and Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ugur Ziyal is due to arrive later this month. However, the Turkish task is not an easy one. While the Turkish government and the military are fully cognizant of the need to avoid misunderstandings with the United States in northern Iraq, serious Turkish misgivings over the enhanced position of the Kurds and the parallel weakening of that of the Turkmens could lead to future tensions. Moreover, while Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul condemned terrorism as a "scourge" that had to be "eradicated" at the recent Islamic conference in Teheran and frequently stresses his coordination with Powell relating to ongoing contacts with Syria and Iran, Turkey may find it difficult to maintain its delicate balancing act if Washington eventually moves towards outright confrontation with Damascus and Teheran. In fact, the Turkish government could once again find itself in a situation similar to its predicament during the prolonged build up to the Iraq war when it was involved in ultimately fruitless negotiations with Washington while maintaining a dialogue with the doomed regime in Baghdad. At the broader level, Turkey will also need to somehow dispel the widespread impression that has developed within the Bush Administration, Congress, media and the American public at large that it is no longer a totally reliable ally.

The redefinition of the U.S.-Turkish relationship will also require coordination and consensus in the Turkish system. For its part, in addition to the U.S.-Turkish relationship, the JDP government is also having to focus on the current recovery in the economy and the standby agreement with the IMF, as well as on its declared goal of beginning accession negotiations with the European Union (EU). However, as Erdogan and Gul have acknowledged, achieving the latter goal depends indirectly on a solution of the Cyprus problem. At the same time, there needs to be an adjustment of the Turkish civilian-military relationship to conform to European norms, in particular, of the composition and role of the NSC. Although the JDP has been moving very cautiously, the two issues have helped to bring to the surface strains between the JDP and powerful elements in the military establishment. The reported tensions recently prompted General Ozkok to publicly deny "growing discontent on the part of young officers" and Deputy Chief of Staff Yasar Buyukanit to reaffirm the military's full support for EU membership. However, Ozkok also chose to stress that the entire military establishment had "deep concerns and sensitivities" and Buyukanit to warn the goal of EU membership could "not be used as a vehicle for the achievement of the aims of those opposed to the country's unitary and secular system." Consequently, it seems all too likely that the coming months will once again witness difficult negotiations and maneuvering within the Turkish system with their unavoidable effects on the repair of the relationship with Washington.

Mr. BEREUTER. Dr. Aliriza, Thank you very much.

Next, we will hear from Mr. Sedat Ergin. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University where he studied

international relations. He has been active in journalism since 1975, moved his way up that ladder in various news organizations. He has written extensively on Turkish-American relations. He is a regular political commentator on CNN-Turk news channel. He is a recipient of the prestigious Sedat Simavi Journalism Prize.

You can correct me on the pronunciation on that, Mr. Ergin. We are very pleased to have you as our witness as well. You may proceed as you wish.

**STATEMENT OF SEDAT ERGIN, SENIOR EDITOR, HURRIYET
DAILY**

Mr. ERGIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I think I should begin by expressing my thanks for the invitation extended to me to speak before the Subcommittee. In my presentation, I would like to reflect on internal Turkish developments.

Any analysis of the present political scene in Turkey has to begin with a sound reading of the elections which were held on November 3, 2002.

The Turkish electorate discharged the majority of the center right and left parties which had ruled the country since the mid 1980s and ushered in a newcomer on the political scene, the Justice and Development Party, the AKP, of Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Ergin, would you pull that directly in front of you, please?

Mr. ERGIN. Yes.

Mr. BEREUTER. I am not sure everybody is hearing it in the back.

Mr. ERGIN. Is that fine now? Okay.

The victory of the AKP means political stability after a decade of ongoing instability stemming from the struggles of the coalition governments and widespread corruption charges.

Yet, the AKP victory also highlights an anomaly in the Turkish political system. This stems from a legally imposed very high 10 percent election hurdle, which in the 2002 elections had the impact of nullifying almost 44 percent of the votes case. The hurdle is the highest in any European democracy.

The AKP, which received one-third of the votes, secured two-thirds of the seats in Parliament. Of the 31.5 million votes which were cast, 15.8 million, or almost 45 percent, were declared null and void. These votes having been cast for parties who did not receive the necessary 10 percent of the total were simply thrown aside. This figure equals almost the total populations of Israel, Ireland and at least two baltic states.

By stating this, I am by no means suggesting that the elections were not held in a fair and correct fashion. It simply means that as presently construed, there is a representation problem in Turkish democracy today. The fact that the victor of the election was an offspring of the Islamist Welfare Party, Mr. Necmettin Erbakan, makes the picture more confusing.

The Welfare Party was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1998 on the grounds that it was advocating Sharia, the Islamic law.

This court decision was upheld by the European Court of Human Rights in 2000, which was convinced of the evidence for closure.

The court in Strausburg ruled that advocacy of Sharia does not comply with the freedoms granted by the European Court of Human Rights.

The irony facing us is that the majority of the AKP deputies elected in the November 2002 were former members of the Welfare Party and therefore shared political responsibility of the activities of that legally banned entity.

There is more to this irony. The AKP in its platform today and in its discourse drastically deviates from that formerly espoused by the Welfare Party. It is trying to move to the center. By adding several prominent figures from center right-liberal parties to its election ticket, it displayed a considerable effort to appeal to centrist votes.

Indeed, the performance of the new government on many fronts suggests a transformation which would have been inconceivable in the 1980s for an Islamist political party in Turkey.

In the course of the last 10 months, they have pursued a steadfast agenda to expedite Turkey's accession to the European Union. They have delivered two landmark democratization packages to comply with the EU political criteria, including a major amendment curbing the powers of the National Security Council, besides they have concluded two major reviews with the IMF and received a strong enforcement from the fund. However, the ongoing debate in Turkey still would focus on the sincerity of the changes which the AKP is going through.

There are three identifiable schools of thought in this debate.

Proponents of the first school would strongly argue that the changes are genuine and the performance of the AKP government to date corroborates this interpretation.

The second school argues that the whole story is a deception and that the party is nothing more than a sinister effort to deceive the whole nation. They claim the AKP has no true commitment to secularism, but rather has a hidden agenda whose purpose is to replace Ataturk's secularism with Islamic dominated government.

Finally, there is a third school, the skeptics. Their premise is that the Islamists have indeed embarked on a process of change, one which deserves encouragement, and that they are entitled to the benefit of doubt. They would also argue that the secular institutions and elements of society should carefully monitor any potential efforts by the party to dilute the secular foundations of the republic.

Clearly, the AKP deserves some careful study and analysis. It would be fair to say that the party is still in a stage of transformation and represents a reinterpretation of the evolution of political Islam in Turkey.

The fact that it is an eclectic structure, a coalition of many different political groupings with a strong Islamic flavor suggests that the dynamics of change are in the making and as they expose themselves to the center, the European Union and to the west in general, this interaction could lay the ground for moderation.

Not every group or individual in the party would go in the same direction. It may be useful to observe how these groups and individuals will play out against each other. The outcome will determine the depth and scope of the change.

For many political observers, what lies at the heart of the political controversy is the issue of confidence. If the leadership of the ruling AKP manages to establish confidence in the system and in the society, this no doubt will help the party to entrench itself and enable it to exist as a permanent player on the political scene.

This largely depends on their ability to break away from their traditional Islamist agenda. Whether or not they will be held captive by their Islamist roots and agenda will be an important indicator.

As you would recall, these difficulties became apparent when the AKP government and the party majority in the Parliament failed to deliver the famous motion for full cooperation with the U.S. for the northern front on March 1st.

Mr. Chairman, I think I should stop here, but one last point. While I was boarding the plane on my way to Washington, DC, the Court of Appeals in Ankara came out with a ruling which could mean turbulence for the Turkish political system in the following weeks. The Court of Appeals decided to uphold the convictions for the leaders of the Democratic People's Party who were found guilty of entering the November 3rd elections with false documents. This in a way invalidates the participation of this party in the elections. It has some legal and political ramifications for the Parliament and the government.

The Supreme Election Board will soon look into the matter. There are many possibilities. The board could conclude that the election process has been finalized. One possibility discussed is redistribution of the seats in Parliament. Another possibility mentioned, it is not very likely, but still it is a possibility, is calling early elections. But under every possible scenario, it is likely that the governing AKP party will remain in office.

This is a very complicated legal issue. You went through a similar problem during the presidential elections in 2000 and it took, I think, 2 or 3 months for your courts to decide. In our case, the Turkish courts do not work quickly.

If any Member of the Subcommittee is interested, I would be delighted to explain the issue in length, but I would need time for this since it is very complicated.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ergin follows:]

TURKEY'S FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND US-TURKISH RELATIONS

**SEDAT ERGİN
ANKARA BUREAU CHIEF
HURRIYET DAILY**

**TESTIMONY PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE OCTOBER 1, 2003**

Any analysis of the present political scene in Turkey has to begin with a sound reading of the elections which were held on November the third 2002.

The outcome of the elections had the impact of an earth quake on the Turkish political landscape.

The Turkish electorate discharged the majority of the center right and left parties which had ruled the country since the mid 1980's and ushered in a new comer on the political scene, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The AKP, by securing 34 percent of the vote was able to take over almost two thirds of the seats in parliament. Consequently, the party today is in a position that by gaining only two votes from among the five independents in parliament can easily reach the threshold needed to amend the constitution.

The victory of the AKP means political stability after a decade of ongoing instability stemming from the struggles of the coalition governments, most of which were composed of political parties identified with corruption and political expediency by the Turkish electorate, with only a few of them being the exception.

Yet, the AKP victory also highlights an anomaly in the Turkish political system. This stems from a legally imposed very high 10 percent election hurdle which in the 2002 elections had the impact of nullifying almost 44 percent of the votes cast. The hurdle is the highest in any European democracy.

This in return resulted in a disproportionate representation in parliament. The AKP which received one third of the votes secured two thirds of the seats.

Of the 31.5 million votes which were cast, 15.8 million (45 percent) were declared null and void. These votes having been cast for parties who did not receive the necessary 10 percent of the total were simply thrown aside. This figure equals almost the total populations of Israel, Ireland and at least two Baltic states.

By stating this I am by no means suggesting that the elections were not held in a fair and correct fashion. It simply means that as presently construed there is a representation problem in Turkish democracy.

The fact that the victor of the election was an offspring of the Islamist Welfare Party of Mr. Necmettin Erbakan makes the picture more confusing.

The Welfare Party was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1998 on the grounds that it was advocating Sharia, Islamic law.

This court decision was upheld by the European Commission of Human Rights in 2000 which was convinced of the evidence for closure.

The court in Strasbourg ruled that advocacy of Islamic fundamentalism does not comply with the freedoms granted by the European Convention of Human Rights.

The irony facing us is that the majority of the AKP deputies elected in November 2002 vote were former members of the Welfare Party and therefore shared political responsibility for the activities of that legally banned entity.

There is more to this irony. The AKP in its platform today and in its discourse drastically deviates from that formerly espoused by the Welfare Party.

It is trying to move to the center. By adding several prominent figures from center right-liberal parties to its election ticket, it displayed a considerable effort to appeal to centrist votes.

Indeed, the performance of the new government on many fronts suggests a transformation which would have been inconceivable in the 1980's or 1990's for an Islamist political party in Turkey.

In the course of the last 10 months, they have pursued a steadfast agenda to expedite Turkey's accession to the European Union.

They have delivered two landmark democratization packages to comply with the EU political criteria, including a major amendment curbing the powers of the National Security Council which was largely controlled by the military establishment.

They have concluded two major reviews with the IMF and were able to receive strong endorsement from this institution which resulted in the rescheduling of Turkey's debt payments to the Fund.

However, the ongoing debate in Turkey focuses on the sincerity of the changes which the AKP is going through. Much of the debate focuses on the pedigree of the party.

There are three identifiable schools of thought in this debate.

Proponents of the first school would strongly argue that the changes are genuine and that the performance of the AKP government to date corroborates this interpretation.

The second school argues that the whole story is a deception and that the party is nothing more than a sinister effort to deceive the whole nation. They claim the AKP has no true commitment to secularism, but rather has a hidden agenda whose purpose is to replace Ataturk's secularism with Islamic dominated government.

Finally, there is a third school... the skeptics. Their premise is that the Islamists have indeed embarked on a process of change, one which deserves encouragement, and that they are entitled to the benefit of doubt.

They would also argue that the secular institutions and elements of society should carefully monitor any potential efforts by the party to dilute the secular foundations of the republic.

Clearly, the AKP deserves some careful study and analysis. It would be fair to say that the party is still in a stage of transformation and represents a rupture in the evolution of political Islam in Turkey.

The fact that it is an eclectic structure, a coalition of many different political groupings, with a strong Islamist flavor suggests that the dynamics of change are in the making and as they expose themselves to the center, to the European Union and to the West in general, this interaction could lay the ground for moderation.

Not every group or individual in the party would go in the same direction. It may be useful to observe how these groups and individuals will play out against each other. The outcome will determine the depth and scope of the change.

For many political observers, what lies at the heart of the political controversy is the issue of confidence.

If the leadership of the ruling AKP manages to establish confidence in the system and in the society, this no doubt will help the party to entrench itself and enable it to exist as a permanent player on the political scene.

This largely depends on their ability to break away from their traditional Islamist agenda. Whether or not they will be held captive by their Islamist roots and agenda will be an important indicator.

These difficulties became apparent when the AKP government and the AKP majority in the Turkish parliament failed to deliver the famous motion for full cooperation with the United States for the northern front on March first.

Yet the episode of March first cannot be explained solely in terms of Mr. Erdogan's failure to control his group.

There was a whole constellation of factors which culminated in this road accident.

The episode is behind us. But if we are to ensure that the Turkish-US relationship does not run into similar accidents in the future, we must study and analyze this accident in an attempt to answer the question of "what went wrong".

An objective analysis reveals that both sides committed serious mistakes and blunders. There is a long list of miscalculations on both sides.

On the American side one could say that its heavy handed treatment of the newly elected inexperienced Turkish government was one of the major factors. The problem was the overconfidence of the US administration. The risks taken by the Bush administration in the presence of so many intangibles on the Turkish side were simply too high.

The US administration never fully understood the sentiments of the Turkish society, especially in the absence of a strong UN mandate. It was inevitable that this resentment would somehow be translated into the Turkish parliament.

On the Turkish side the biggest mistake of the government was to undertake too huge a commitment to deliver in parliament. There were perceptual problems as well. Many Turkish policy makers did not fully grasp the resolve of the Bush administration to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime at any cost.

Then there was a joint mistake committed by both administrations. This was to define the scope of the military relationship as full cooperation.

Instead a modest level of cooperation limited to air corridors and perhaps the use of air bases would have been a much more reasonable and achievable option and would have saved the relationship from the hazards of failure.

Ironically at the end, the use of air corridors turned out to be the level of cooperation which was actually implemented.

The relationship suffered further damage due to the heavy handed reaction of some American decision makers after the accident.

Statements to the effect that Turks should acknowledge that they had made a mistake in parliament on March first, statements reflecting themes of "crime and punishment" led to growing anti US-sentiments and more frustration in the Turkish public.

These sentiments reached a peak when US forces with the help of Kurdish peshmergas raided Turkish special forces in Suleymaniyah on July the fourth and covered their heads with hoods, the kind of special treatment usually reserved for members of Al Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

It was ironic that the Commander of the US European Command General James Jones who visited Ankara to resolve this unfortunate event used the occasion to make a sounding as to whether Turkey could contribute troops to Iraq to help the US forces.

While Turkish and US military authorities were investigating the Suleymaniyah event, on a different military to military channel discussions had already begun regarding possible Turkish troop commitments for Iraq.

The symbolism here is worth underlining.

It highlights the fact that independent of their respective sentiments vis a vis each other, Turkey and the United States would often find that they share the same agenda, face the same stakes and have to work together to address common challenges.

The agenda very often dictates itself on the governments and the bureaucracies. And the agenda is not limited to Iraq.

It is relieving to see what appears to be a change of mood in Washington D.C. these days. The period in which the relations were held captive by emotions, the days when there was no room for rational thinking in the relationship are over.

Yet, the relationship now is face to face with a new crucial test.

This time the test centers on the question of sending Turkish troops to Iraq. The Turkish government and the Turkish parliament will soon decide on this issue which like its predecessor does not enjoy popular support in Turkey.

A UN Security Council resolution authorizing the presence of an international peace keeping force and an official invitation by the Transitional Governing Council of Iraq would undoubtedly ease the pressure on the government and parliament.

Also whether the United States will take concrete steps to eliminate the PKK groups in northern Iraq will have an enormous impact on the Turkish decision.

In addition, even if these conditions were to be met, the fact that Turkish soldiers could become targets of unknown assassins in Iraq already makes this decision a highly emotional one.

We should also bear in mind that both the treatment of Turkey during and after the northern front controversy and the raid on Turkish troops in Suleymaniyah by American forces still heavily impact Turkish perceptions.

Finally, in order to avoid the kind of downturn seen after the March first vote, it is important that this time the issue of sending troops should not be overemphasized in the relationship.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Ergin, thank you very much.

Next, we will hear and we are pleased to see once again in this capacity Ambassador Mark Parris.

Mark R. Parris is currently a Senior Public Policy Advisor in the Washington, DC office of Baker, Donelson. Prior to joining Baker, Donelson, Mr. Parris served as our Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey from 1997 to 2000. From 1995 to 1997, he served as Special Assistant to the President, Senior Director, for the Near East and South Asia at the National Security Council. Prior to joining the NSC staff, Mr. Parris then served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

Mr. Parris has also served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv from 1989 to 1992. He received his degree from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Mr. Parris, nice to see you again. You may proceed as you wish.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK PARRIS, SENIOR PUBLIC POLICY ADVISOR, BAKER, DONELSON, BEARMAN, CALDWELL & BERKOWITZ, P.C.

Mr. PARRIS. Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to see you again. It is a pleasure to be here.

In the interests of time and as there are members of the panel clearly more qualified than I to discuss Turkish internal dynamics, including my friend immediately adjacent, I will with your permission focus, in my prepared remarks, on matters relating to United States-Turkish relations.

During the late 1990s, the United States and Turkey worked together with unprecedented closeness and effectiveness to deal with a wide range of emerging challenges and opportunities. Among our common achievements during this period were making the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline a reality, protecting Muslim minorities in the Balkans, rolling up the PKK inside Turkey, and supporting the cause of Middle East peace.

Even on issues where our perspectives were quite different, Iraq being a primary example, we were able to find solutions that accommodated by and large one another's interests.

In November 1999, President Bill Clinton gave this phenomenon a name. He called it "strategic cooperation." Regardless of what you call it, the impact on mutual perceptions in both countries was striking. Polls at the time consistently showed that Turks viewed Americans as their best friends abroad and in America Turkey's image as a reliable ally was finally gaining ground on its reputation as the setting for the film *Midnight Express*.

I think it is safe to say, Mr. Chairman, that the relationship has lost ground since, and particularly since the Turkish Parliament last March 1st failed to authorize the transit of United States forces through Turkish territory to invade Iraq. You are probably familiar with polls released earlier this year suggesting that well over 50 percent of Turks today view American policies as the single greatest threat to Turkish security.

Similarly, the typical reaction of average Americans when they find that I have served in Turkey is to ask how such good friends could have let us down last spring.

The proximate cause of this dramatic shift has been the U.S. decision to depose Saddam Hussein, a decision, I state for the record, that I supported.

Turks typically view that decision as legally questionable, as a dangerous precedent and as ill-advised from a geostrategic perspective. Their doubts have been reinforced by our inability promptly to restore order and essential public services in Iraq.

There is a widespread suspicion that Turkish firms are being excluded from programs to rebuild Iraq in order to punish Turkey for the March 1st vote and that future United States economic aid has been conditioned on Turkey's agreeing to dispatch troops to Iraq.

Suspensions remain that ultimately the United States will accept an outcome in Iraq that leads to the establishment of a *de jure* or a *de facto* independent Kurdish state.

On the American side, it is clear that despite disclaimers, official confidence has been shaken that Turkey can be relied upon in the future to play the kind of role that it has played in the past in places like Somalia, or Kosovo or Afghanistan.

There is a lingering sense that Turkey overplayed its hand in negotiations preceding the March 1st vote, and one can hear persistent speculation that Ankara is using the Turkomen population in northern Iraq to pursue some kind of hidden agenda.

It would be easy to conclude, Mr. Chairman, based on things that have been said or whispered in Ankara or Washington since March, that this is a relationship on the rocks—or dangerously close to them. I think it is therefore important to state clearly that the reality is nowhere near as dire.

First, with respect to Iraq, the Turkish government has as much at stake in Iraq's coming out right as does Washington. That gives it a strong incentive to work with us there, and Turkish officials have repeatedly made clear before and after March 1st their readiness to do just that.

At both the official and unofficial level, Turkey has made important contributions during and since the war to help meet Iraq's humanitarian and practical needs. Turkish firms are, in fact, competing successfully for tenders by United States prime contractors in Iraq.

On the United States side, meanwhile, it appears simply not to be true that Washington has conditioned new loans to Turkey on any specific *quid pro quo* regarding Iraq, and United States actions by and large have been consistent with its public commitments before and since the war to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity.

I am convinced, moreover, that as policy makers in Washington and Ankara wrestle with the long-term implications of the dynamics unleashed on September 11, 2001, two in particular are going to concentrate their minds. The first is that Turkey must come to terms with the fact that America has moved in next door, is likely to remain in the neighborhood a long time, and has brought with it an agenda that is going to have an important impact on Turkish interests.

And, second, America will inevitably find as the focal point of our strategic thinking is inexorably drawn to the region surrounding Turkey and to the Muslim world more generally, that we have to work either with Turkey or around Turkey. I am willing to venture

that both sides will normally conclude that “with” is a better solution than “around.” Which gets us to the question of the Bush Administration’s pending request that Turkey deploy troops to Iraq.

There are those, Mr. Chairman, who see a Turkish decision to send such troops as a panacea for United States-Turkish relations. I am not so sure. It is probably true that such a decision would restore some of the luster scuffed off the bilateral relationship last spring. It is probably true that such a decision would give Turkey a stronger voice in coalition discussions of Iraq’s future. It is probably true that an outright refusal by Turkey would consign official relations to cool correctness for an indefinite period.

But it is not clear to me that a deployment of Turkish forces, should it occur, would prove the boon for bilateral relations that some have predicted.

I am struck, for example, by the extent to which Turkey’s political leadership has been at pains to differentiate any role Turkish forces might play there from United States policies. If we get to a point where there are actual Turkish boots on the ground, I am not sure one can simply assume that we and the Turks will always be on the same page. And, if God forbid, Turkish forces should be targeted in the way that the U.N. in Jordan already have been, whom would the Turkish man in the street hold responsible?

I do not know whether or not Turkey will ultimately decide to send forces to Iraq. I must say it is hard for me to imagine its leaders recommending such a course until they have a good answer to the question of what we are doing to finish off the PKK in the north.

On balance, my sense is that the current political and military leadership are trying to find a way to respond positively to our request. But this is not in the bag.

What does it mean for the future?

Well, obviously, a lot depends on how Iraq comes out. It is hard to speculate in much detail until we know that.

This much, however, I am prepared to predict: United States-Turkish relations are going to be qualitatively different in the future from what they were during the era of classic strategic partnership, or indeed during the past 50 years. The reason for that has less to do with how Turkey’s Parliament voted March 1st, or whether or not Turkey will send troops to Iraq, than with two fundamental shifts in underlying dynamics that I sense have not been fully digested in either Ankara or Washington.

The first, on the U.S. side, is a function of the fall of Saddam Hussein. When Saddam disappeared last April, so did the relevance of the concept of containment as it applied to Turkey. Containment of the Soviet Union, of course, was the core of United States foreign policy for 4 decades. Containment of Saddam Hussein was a top priority for U.S. foreign policy for a decade more. Turkey was essential to both objectives. And that enabled Turkey from 1949 really until this spring consistently to box above its weight here in Washington in terms of the quality and level of the official attention it commanded.

The post-Iraq phase of United States-Turkish relations will be unique in our recent history in that, with the possible exception of a nuclear armed Iran, there is no overarching threat to contain

from Turkey. Circumstances will arise where Turkish cooperation is useful. Circumstances will arise where Turkish cooperation is important. But it is difficult to envision circumstances today in which Turkey's contribution will be "essential" in the same sense that it was in containing the U.S.S.R. and Saddam. That cannot help, in my view, but make a difference in the way that Washington looks at Turkey in the future.

On the Turkish side, the big change is a function of Turkey's evolving relationship with Europe. After some mixed signals in the late 1990s, Europe at last December's Copenhagen EU summit promised Ankara an up-or-down decision by the end of 2004 on opening the negotiations for EU membership.

That is the single biggest fact in Turkish political life today. A commitment to grasp that opportunity was at the core of the successful election campaign last fall of Turkey's ruling and Justice and Development, or AK, Party. It is AK's highest priority today, as you have heard from previous panelists. Overwhelming popular support for that goal has given AK the parliamentary majority and self-confidence necessary to pass reforms that have the potential radically to transform Turkish politics and society, including in such previously taboo realms as the role of the military.

It is too early to tell if the United States will give Turkey a green light. But as this drama plays out, I suspect we will find Ankara more closely attuned to European views than has been the case in the recent past. For some here, especially those who have held up a special relationship with the U.S. as a viable alternative to EU membership, that may take some getting used to.

Does the end of containment on the American side and a growing preoccupation with Europe on the Turkish mean worse United States-Turkish relations in the future?

No. Just different ones.

For reasons that I have already described, America's relationship with Turkey will remain a strategic one. My guess is that more often than not we will find ourselves working as partners, even if we do not describe ourselves formally as such. I can even envision circumstances under which Turkey could regain the pride of place in American strategic thinking that it enjoyed for the past 50 years.

The key to such an achievement, I have argued elsewhere, is for Turkey to close the gap between the potential that analysts have identified there for years and a reality that never quite measures up.

In an epoch that America's enemies would like to make a clash of civilizations, a Turkey that is democratic, prosperous, internally harmonious—in a word, a successful Turkey—will be a compelling fact, whether in Washington, or Europe or, for that matter, Baghdad, Damascus or Tehran.

I will stop there. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Parris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE MARK PARRIS, SENIOR PUBLIC POLICY ADVISOR, BAKER, DONELSON, BEARMAN, CALDWELL & BERKOWITZ, P.C.

Mr. Chairman, in the interests of time, and as there are members of the panel more qualified than I to address Turkey's internal dynamics, I will with your permission focus my prepared remarks on matters relating to U.S.-Turkish relations.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In November, 1999, I had the honor to sit in the hall of Turkey's Parliament Building and hear President Bill Clinton declare Turkey to be a "strategic partner" of the United States.

On March 1 of this year, Turkey's Parliament in that same hall failed to approve the transit of American forces through Turkey to invade Iraq. Ever since there has been a debate on both sides of the relationship as to whether or not U.S.-Turkish "strategic partnership" is dead.

Sometimes lost sight of in that debate is a clear sense of what "strategic partnership" meant when Bill Clinton said the words. From my perspective, the concept comprised three elements:

- First, the emergence, after the end of the Cold War, of a specific set of issues on which U.S. and Turkish interests largely overlapped;
- Second, an explicit recognition by both sides of that convergence of interests;
- And, third, a realization that, by working together, we were more likely to advance our common interests than by pursuing them separately.

The interplay of these three factors produced some impressive results in the late nineties. One could cite, for example, American-Turkish successes in making the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline a reality; in protecting Muslim minorities in the Balkans; or in rolling up the PKK inside Turkey. Even on issues where our perspectives were quite different—like Iraq—we found solutions that accommodated each other's interests.

In short, on a wide range of issues that mattered to both societies, and in very concrete terms, we were delivering for Turkey, and Turkey was delivering for us. Not coincidentally, polls at the time consistently showed that Turks viewed Americans as their best friends abroad. And in America, Turkey's image as a reliable ally was finally gaining ground on its reputation as the setting for the film, "Midnight Express."

LOST GROUND

I think it is safe to say, Mr. Chairman, that the relationship has lost ground since.

You are probably familiar with polls released earlier this year suggesting well over 50% of Turks today view American policies as the single greatest threat to Turkey's security. Similarly, the typical reaction of average Americans when they find I have served in Turkey, is to ask how such "good friends" could have let us down last spring.

The proximate cause of this dramatic shift has been the U.S. decision to depose Saddam Hussein.

Turks typically view that decision as legally questionable, as a dangerous precedent, and as ill-advised from a geo-strategic perspective. Their doubts have been reinforced by our inability promptly to restore order and essential public services in Iraq. There is a widespread suspicion that Turkish firms are being excluded from programs to rebuild Iraq in order to punish Turkey for the March 1 vote, and that future U.S. economic aid has been conditioned on Turkey's agreeing to dispatch troops to Iraq. Suspicions remain that ultimately the U.S. will accept an outcome in Iraq that leads to the establishment of a de jure or de facto independent Kurdish state.

On the U.S. side, it is clear that, despite disclaimers, official confidence has been shaken that Turkey can be relied upon in the future to play the kind of role that it has in the past in places like Somalia, Kosovo or Afghanistan. There is a lingering sense that Turkey overplayed its hand in negotiations preceding the March 1 vote. And one can hear persistent speculation that Ankara is using the Turkomen population in northern Iraq to pursue a hidden agenda.

It would be easy to conclude, based on things that have been said or whispered in Ankara and Washington since March, that this is a relationship on the rocks—or dangerously close to them.

REALITY CHECK

It is therefore important to state clearly that the reality is nowhere near as dire. First, with respect to Iraq:

- Ankara has as much at stake in Iraq's coming out right as does Washington. That gives it a strong incentive to work with us there. And Turkish officials have repeatedly made clear their readiness to do just that.

- At both the official and unofficial level, Turkey has made important contributions during and since the war to helping meet Iraq's humanitarian and practical needs.
- Turkish firms are, in fact, competing successfully for tenders by U.S. prime contractors in Iraq.
- On the U.S. side, meanwhile, it appears simply not to be true that Washington has conditioned new loans to Turkey on any specific quid pro quo regarding Iraq.
- And U.S. actions, by and large, are consistent with its public commitments before and since the war to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity.

I am convinced, moreover, that, as policymakers in Washington and Ankara wrestle with the long-term implications of the dynamics unleashed on September 11, 2001, two in particular will concentrate their minds.

- Turkey will have to come to terms with the fact that America has moved in next door, is likely to remain in the neighborhood a long time, and has brought with it an agenda that will have an important impact on Turkish interests;
- America will inevitably find, as the focal point of its strategic thinking is inexorably drawn to the region surrounding Turkey and to the Muslim world more generally, that we will have to work either *with* Turkey or *around* Turkey.

I am willing to venture that both sides will normally find "with" a better solution than "around."

Which gets us to the question of the Bush Administration's pending request that Turkey deploy troops to Iraq.

TURKISH TROOPS TO IRAQ?

There are those, Mr. Chairman, who see a Turkish decision to send troops to Iraq as a panacea for U.S.-Turkish relations. I am not so sure.

It probably is true that such a decision would restore some of the luster scuffed off the relationship last spring. It would certainly give Turkey a stronger voice in Coalition discussions of Iraq's future. On the other hand, an outright refusal would probably consign official relations to cool correctness for an indefinite period.

But it is not clear to me that a deployment of Turkish forces, should it occur, would prove the boon for bilateral relations that some are predicting. I am struck, for example, by the extent to which Turkey's political leadership has been at pains to differentiate any role Turkish forces might play in Iraq from U.S. policies there. If we get to a point where there are Turkish boots on the ground, I am not sure one can simply assume that Ankara and Washington will always be on the same page. And if, God forbid, Turkish forces should be targeted in the way that the UN and Jordan already have been, whom would the Turkish man in the street hold responsible?

Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether or not Turkey will ultimately decide to send forces to Iraq. I must say it is hard for me to imagine its leaders recommending such a course until they have a good answer to the question of what we are doing to finish off the PKK in the north. On balance, my sense is that the current political and military leadership *are* trying to find a way to respond positively to our request. But this is not in the bag.

LOOKING AHEAD

What does all this mean for the future of the relationship? Well, obviously, a lot depends on how Iraq comes out. It's hard to be speculate in much detail until we know that.

This much, however, I am prepared to predict: U.S.-Turkish relations are going to be qualitatively different in the future from what they were during the era of classic "strategic partnership," or indeed during the past 50 years.

The reason for that has less to do with how Turkey's parliament voted March 1, or whether or not Turkey will send troops to Iraq, than with two fundamental shifts in the underlying dynamics of the bilateral relationship that, I sense, have not been fully digested in either Ankara or Washington.

The first, on the U.S. side, is a function of the fall of Saddam Hussein.

When Saddam disappeared last April, so did the relevance of the concept of "containment" as it applied to Turkey. Containment of the Soviet Union, of course, was the core of U.S. foreign policy for four decades. Containment of Saddam Hussein was a top priority for U.S. foreign policy for a decade more. Turkey was *essential*

to both objectives. And that enabled Turkey from 1949 until this spring consistently to box above its weight here in Washington, in terms of the quality and level of the official attention it commanded.

The post-Iraq War phase of U.S.-Turkish relations will be unique in our recent history in that—with the possible exception of a nuclear-armed Iran—there is no overarching threat to contain from Turkey. Circumstances will arise where Turkish cooperation is *useful*. Circumstances will arise where Turkish cooperation is *important*. But it is difficult to envision circumstances today in which Turkey's contribution will be *essential* in the same sense that it was in containing the U.S.S.R. and Saddam. That can't help but make a difference in the way Washington looks at Turkey in the future.

On the Turkish side, the big change is a function of Turkey's evolving relationship with Europe.

After some mixed signals in the late nineties, Europe, at last December's Copenhagen EU summit, promised Ankara an up-or-down decision by the end of 2004 on opening negotiations for EU membership. That is the single biggest fact in Turkish political life today. A commitment to grasp that opportunity was at the core of the successful election campaign last fall of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development (or "AK") Party. It is AK's highest priority today. Overwhelming popular support for that goal has given AK the parliamentary majority and self-confidence necessary to pass reforms that have the potential radically to transform Turkish politics and society, including in such previously taboo realms as the status of Turkey's military.

Will the EU give Turkey a green light? It is too early to tell. But as this drama plays out, I suspect we will find Ankara more closely attuned to European views than has been the case in the recent past. For some here, especially those who have held up a special relationship with the U.S. as a viable alternative to EU membership, that may take some getting used to.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Do the end of "containment" on the American side, and a growing preoccupation with Europe on the Turkish, mean "worse" U.S.-Turkish relations. No. Just different ones.

For reasons that I have already described, America's relationship with Turkey will remain a "strategic" one. My guess is that we will more often than not find ourselves working as "partners," whether or not we formally describe ourselves as such.

One can even envision circumstances under which Turkey could regain the pride of place in American strategic thinking that it enjoyed for the past 50 years.

The key to such an achievement, I have argued elsewhere, is for Turkey to close the gap between the potential that analysts have identified there for years and a reality that never quite measures up. In an epoch that America's enemies would like to make a clash of civilizations, a Turkey that is democratic, prosperous, internally harmonious—in a word, "successful"—will be a compelling fact. In Washington. Or Europe. Or for that matter in Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran.

The economic, political and other reforms that have been undertaken by Turkey's previous and current government, if carried to fruition, could produce such a Turkey in the years ahead. That would create the best foundation I can think of for a bilateral relationship that would serve U.S. and Turkish interests as well in the future as "strategic partnership" did in the late nineties.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you very much, Ambassador Parris, and thanks to all of you for your oral testimony, as well as the written testimony.

The Subcommittee will now proceed under the 5-minute rule for questions.

Dr. Cagaptay, Dr. Aliriza, Mr. Ergin spent a substantial part of his time focusing on the JDP, the AKP, its roots, its history, its activities, its prospects. I wonder if there is anything with which you take exception or disagree or would like to add any kind of caveat. I would like to have some indication of whether this is some indication of whether this represents a consensus or to what extent it might.

Do you have anything you would like to say in that respect?

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Sure. Thank you, Congressman, for raising this very important issue. I will, I think, elaborate on what the other speakers have said and offer you my own views on AKP.

I think the AKP is a coalition party, a coalition of different interests and groups. It is difficult to say that the party has no linkage to Turkey's Islamist movement, it does, but it also has a lot of people and groups within the party who have no links to that sort of a movement, that is why I think it is a very large coalition. It is a conjunctural coalition that was put together before the elections, as Mr. Ergin elaborated on it and the other speakers.

When Turkey's center-right was swept out of power in the last elections, the AKP came in to fill in the vacuum and, as a result of that, it was successful in coalescing many different groups around a common goal of establishing an alternative to Turkey's outgoing parties. And that I think brings the issue of to what extent the AKP is sincerely following democratization in Turkey as well as the EU reforms. I think that there are groups in the party who would sincerely think that is the way to go for Turkey, but I also think that there are two takes on why the AKP is pursuing these reforms so vigorously.

One is that AKP sincerely sees this as a process that is in Turkey's interests to reform and put the country on a new track and the other take is that AKP sees this whole process as a means to an end, as a means to circumvent or restructure the powers of the Turkish military, the traditional guardian of Turkey's secularist democracy. And this, I think, if that is in fact the issue, AKP has done this very successfully because, as the other speakers have highlighted, there is tremendous momentum in Turkey toward the EU reforms and you can achieve a lot of things in Turkey in the name of getting in to the EU. So I think whichever perspective you look at, the EU momentum has helped AKP's goals in the future.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you.

Dr. Aliriza, would you wish to comment in any fashion on Mr. Ergin's remarks about the party?

Mr. ALIRIZA. Thank you. I had referred to the subjective redefinition by Erdogan and JDP of themselves as not being Islamists.

Mr. BEREUTER. They reject that appellation, you said?

Mr. ALIRIZA. Yes, specifically. If you refer to them as an Islamic or Islamists party, they say that they are not. I had also touched on the two other lineages that they now claim in addition to the lineage through the four Islamist parties many of the party members belonged to which have been banned. Understandably, they do not want to be the successors to the parties that have been banned.

As I noted, they want to broaden their appeal by claiming lineage to the Democratic Party that was thrown out of office by the Army in 1960 and Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party, which has virtually disappeared, but which was a very strong force in Turkey's political life after the elections of 1983 for almost 2 decades.

The problem the JDP faces is the objective definition by people who do not believe, as Sedat Ergin underlined, in the process of redefinition that the party is going through. It may be a coalition, they argue, but it is a coalition dominated by the Islamists.

The armed forces are the guardians of the republic. The commanders who went into mandatory retirement because of age con-

straints at the end of August, went out of their way in their farewell speeches to blame the JDP for the deterioration in the vigilance against secularism. And their views have been echoed by other people still within the military establishment.

This objective definition may be successful at the expense of the efforts by the JDP to redefine itself. This is behind much of the tensions in Turkish society, including the EU issue and changing civilian-military relations and the jury is out on how this will end.

Mr. Erdogan spent time in jail because of his Islamist views. Mr. Gul, the Foreign Minister, previously the Prime Minister, was part of the government that was thrown out under military pressure in 1997. So we do have history which cannot be ignored as we look ahead. It is difficult to be certain that there is not going to be trouble although the kind of domestic ferment that usually leads to military intervention, the four interventions that have happened, is simply not there. The majority of the Turkish public, the Turkish business community, the media, are not trumpeting problems as much as they did in the past. That may happen, but as of now, the JDP seems to be very much in charge.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you.

Ambassador Parris, maybe I could work in a question that you could answer quickly.

You mentioned that Turkey will be interested to what extent the United States has been working to finish off the PKK in Iraq's north, something like that, and I wonder if you sense that in any fashion, any information you have, that this is a priority or even is in a mission statement for U.S. forces or coalition forces.

Mr. PARRIS. Well, it is clearly part of the mission statement, Mr. Chairman. As we speak, there is a State Department delegation headed by Cofer Black in Ankara which is discussing this issue as part of a process that began, I think, about a month ago. So clearly it is on Washington's radar screen as something that is going to need to be addressed in some fashion as we continue this discussion with the Turks about the possibility that they are deploying forces.

My sense or reading of the Turkish press and statements by Turkish officials is that, so far, we may not yet have come up to the mark in terms of giving the Turkish political leadership effective talking points to explain to their parliamentary group what the Americans are doing and why that should be sufficient for Turkey to take the risk of putting its own forces there.

Mr. BEREUTER. Is that a reasonable assessment on their part? We have not come up to the mark?

Mr. PARRIS. Mr. Chairman, I do not know what the content of these discussions is. I think that the record is that so far there has been no action by United States forces on the ground in northern Iraq against these residual PKK operatives.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you, Ambassador.

I would like to turn now to Mr. Wexler for his questions.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, like yesterday, I want to congratulate you and your staff for putting together a terrific assembly of witnesses. I think we are the beneficiary of your knowledge and expertise.

I would like to, if I could, ask two questions, one with respect to this additional or newly focused interest in or by Turkey's policy makers in more closely aligning themselves with a European foreign policy, however one may define that, and each of the speakers to a degree touched upon that.

Dr. Cagaptay, I had a different experience when I was in Turkey twice during the March period. In all the meetings we had, all the people we spoke to with respect to the Parliament's vote, I do not think on any single occasion any Turk suggested that part of the reason for what occurred was a focus or interest in more closely aligning Turkey with Europe. I suggested it once because to me at least it would be logical, but what I heard about was cartoons in American magazines that poorly depicted Turkey. I heard about America's failure to include Turkmen in the original organization in northern Iraq. I heard about Paul Wolfowitz's ultimatums on CNN and other public declarations. I heard about public opinion in Turkey. I heard a thousand things, but I never heard this is Turkey's effort or a new strategy to align itself with Europe.

But having said that, it is logical that in the time to come Turkey will either by design or by happenstance will have to evaluate Europe's foreign policy more closely, so taking that as a given, then, what does the group believe, then, how does Turkey play its cards with respect to Cyprus, which when I am talking to European leaders, invariably they will put out as a litmus test of Turkey's entrance into the EU Turkey's behavior with respect to Cyprus and what course Turkey follows.

Second, if I could, with respect to the PKK, as I understand Prime Minister Erdogan's position, which to me seems quite reasonable, he is articulating a view that America must demonstrate with concrete steps our desire to eliminate the infrastructure of terror that has inflicted, as many of you talked about, such extraordinary damage on the people of Turkey.

I would hope that maybe you could share with me because I think Ambassador Parris essentially said I don't want to put words in your mouth, to date we have really failed to address that concern in any meaningful way.

What concrete steps should the United States or could the United States take that would in fact demonstrate to Turkey America's commitment to eliminating the infrastructure of the PKK?

Mr. ERGIN. Congressman Wexler, first of all, the United States Administration, the Bush Administration, is under a presidential obligation, a commitment, to the Turkish government to eliminate the PKK terrorist threat in northern Iraq. This is not limited to a commitment from the Bush Administration to the Turkish government only. As I recall, this commitment is also in the wording of the communique which was issued after the Azores summit, which was held on March 16th. Thus, President Bush made a commitment to the international community that Iraq would no longer be a sanctuary for terrorist groups.

This, I think, was one of the basic objectives of the Bush Administration's decision to move into Iraq militarily. So the Bush Administration is under obligation to the Turkish government and to the whole world to eradicate the terrorist infrastructure in Iraq.

When we look at the terrorist infrastructure in Iraq, we see that for the time being, the PKK, which is mentioned by the State Department's terrorism list as a terrorist group, has around 5,000 guerrillas in the vicinity, most of them are stationed in the area which is controlled by Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union and most of them are in the vicinity of the Kandil Mountain. The American intelligence and the American commanders in Iraq do know the locations of these camps, so something has to be done about these groups.

This is a highly sensitive issue in Turkey, especially at a time when the Turkish government and the Bush Administration are negotiating arrangements for the deployment of Turkish troops in Iraq. The Turkish government has already made this topic a condition indirectly. They would like to see that the Bush Administration takes concrete steps to eliminate the PKK groups in Iraq before Turkey decides to commit troops to Iraq. So it is part of the Gordian knot, if I may say so, on the question of sending Turkish troops to Iraq.

Mr. BEREUTER. If other members of the panel wish to respond, just do so briefly, please.

Mr. PARRIS. I think it would be easy to over-analyze the situation that we have been talking about here. I do not think that it is the case both from my previous experience government and my sense of what is going on now, that there is any love for the PKK or any games being played with the PKK in northern Iraq by the Bush Administration. I think that there are some specific, practical problems that are likely the reason for the restraint that has been shown thus far, rather than anything more insidious.

My sense is that there is an understanding of that on the part of Turkish senior political leaders, which is one of the reasons that they have not formally made this a condition for a decision to deploy troops to Iraq.

I think there is sort of a practical test that we will be coming up against, which is whether or not Mr. Erdogan has sufficient confidence in whatever he has from the administration when the time comes, to go up before Parliament and submit this motion to get the authorization necessary. He will be the best judge of that. My guess is he does not feel he is there quite yet.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. May I also respond? I am going to respond briefly to both of Congressman Wexler's questions, very thought provoking, in fact.

On the PKK, I think it is both in the Turkish and American interests, as well as the interests of a unified Iraq to disband or shut down the PKK because if the PKK does in fact survive in northern Iraq, then this area will likely turn into in southern Lebanon, an area of nominal government authority where terror groups operate freely and this is not in our interests.

What can be done in terms of concrete steps?

This is a non-conventional war. This is a terrorist organization, it is clear that you cannot shut it down by using conventional warfare. So I think creative thought is needed here. First idea, of course, is capturing the leadership which is substantial because we saw from past experience that once the PKK's leader, Abdullah

Ocalan, was captured in 1999, the organization was practically paralyzed.

Now, his captains are on the field and I think they ought to be captured if you want to shut down the PKK. In this regard, I think the United States can provide valuable help to Turkey, by providing intelligence. But there are other ways. Another way of attacking the PKK is to shut down the organization's network in Europe.

Now, the PKK is on our terror list here, but it is not on the terror list in Europe. The organization transformed itself back a few years ago and re-named itself KADEK, the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress and the Europeans then put the former PKK, which is now defunct on its terror organizations list, so practically today the PKK-KADEK function freely within the EU collecting funds, and running cells and I think we have to tell our European allies that has to stop if you want to really shut down this organization.

On the issue of the EU and to what extent it plays a role in Turkey's foreign policy orientation, I had meant to suggest in my prepared remarks that an emerging pro EU tendency is one of the reasons why Turkey did not fully support the Iraq war and I am underlining the word fully. I think there were many other factors here from the Kurdish issue to the other factors that other speakers discussed, but let me elaborate a little bit more on this EU dimension.

EU accession has created a euphoria in Turkey to such an extent that now it is seen as the second best thing that has happened in Turkey since sliced bread. The EU is very popular. And as a result of that, I think a lot of people in Turkey and some people here are confusing two things: That you want Turkey to go into the EU is one thing, and whether or not Turkey will go into the EU is another thing. A lot of people, because they want Turkey to join the EU, think as a result of this pro-EU tendency which is a growing force in Turkish foreign policy scenes in Ankara, that on Iraq and/or other issues, if only Turkey did this or that also, then it would join the EU and Iraq is therefore seen as another accomplishment that Turkey has to achieve before it is given the green light by the Europeans.

Mr. ALIRIZA. Could I just add something, if I may?

There are differences between March 1 and what we are discussing now, particularly the issue of the PKK forces in northern Iraq, illustrates the point. Before March 1 there were negotiations between the two sides resulting in economic, military and political packages. Those would have kicked in if on March 1 the vote had gone the other way.

What is happening now is that both sides are being very careful not to tie the various aspects of the discussions to each other. For example, with the \$1 billion grant which gets converted into \$8.5 billion in loans, both sides stress that this money has nothing to do with the troop issue. Similarly, neither side is tying the troop issue to the PKK presence in northern Iraq. While there were disadvantages with the negotiations prior to March 1, the problem with this kind of situation is the uncoordinated and disjointed way

in which we are proceeding toward what will be a monumental decision by the Turks.

Mr. BEREUTER. The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. McCotter, is recognized.

Mr. MCCOTTER. To any member of the panel, what is the current state of relations between Turkey and Armenia, in your view?

Mr. ERGIN. We know that recently, in the last 5 or 6 months there have been extensive talks behind the scenes between senior representatives of the foreign ministries of both sides. There has been a set of secret talks. We do not know much about the content of these talks. Recently, the Foreign Minister of Armenia went public saying that Turkey could soon open the border to Armenia.

My understanding is that the dialogue between both governments covered the thorny issue of setting up a committee which will look into the historical facts.

In the independence declaration of Armenia there is reference to western Armenia. Western Armenia refers to eastern parts of Turkey, eastern parts of Anatolia.

I think, the government of Armenia has to make a strong statement that it is recognizing the eastern borders of Turkey if two countries are to engage in neighborly relations.

So as seen from the Turkish side, my reading of the problem is that the Turkish government is ready to open the border, provided that the Armenian government would agree to form a committee which would be composed of historians, and this committee could look into the historical claims of genocide and so that the burden of history will no longer be an issue.

I think it is up to the Armenian government to decide. I think they have two options: Either they engage in good relations with Turkey and look to the future and that the future of Armenia is no longer held hostage by the burden of history or they continue to press the claims of genocide, which means the border between Turkey and Armenia will always be a border of tension.

But in my view, if this committee can be constituted, one of the psychological impediments in the process of building relations between Turkey and Armenia, can be overcome. Then close ties between two countries can be established. I think Armenia has only to gain from engaging in close cooperation with Turkey.

Mr. ALIRIZA. Beyond what Sedat Ergin has said, there is also the issue of Karabakh. We are not just discussing a bilateral relationship between Ankara and Yerevan, there is also the fact that Turkey has a special relationship with Azerbaijan, and the dynamics of the triangular relationship between Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan have effectively given Azerbaijan a veto over Turkey opening its borders to Armenia and a rapprochement between the two countries until the Karabakh issue has been resolved. And what we see is a pattern of statements by Turkish officials, and even indications of an interest in opening the border, followed by a reaction from Azerbaijan and the Turks back off. And frankly I do not see that pattern changing in the near future.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. May I also add a point? On the question on the relation between Turkey and Armenia, I am going to give you a very brief anecdote. Every time I am at the airport in Istanbul and I am about to fly back here, if I have any time in my hands, I usu-

ally go in front of the departures/arrivals board and look at the cities to which I can fly directly from my great home city of Istanbul. The last time I was there, I found that there are direct flights going from Istanbul to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. I think that epitomizes the answer to the question, that there are people in Turkey and there is the foreign policy elite that is looking for ways and means of dialogue with Armenia and a direct flight is only a symbol of that. A couple of months ago, there was a Turkish Ambassador who came to the United States to carry out a dialogue with the groups at the Armenia diaspora, to look for counterparts, and the Turkish Foreign Minister has recently met with this counterpart in Madrid, at the Iraq donor summit, as well as on a couple of other occasions. So I think there is room for dialogue.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Thank you, gentleman. Just to make sure I am clear on this, so the status really is that Turkey is a passive participant, according to what I heard, in its relations with Armenia; that if they unburden themselves of the past, which I find fascinating, if they unburden themselves of the past, and then they do not press claims to any part of Anatolia, then maybe Azerbaijan will not veto them having an open border with the Turkish government? Is that pretty much a synopsis of what I just heard?

Mr. ERGIN. I did not say that.

Mr. MCCOTTER. No, but the three of you collectively have laid that out. Is there anything affirmatively the government of Turkey can do in terms of its relations with Armenia to help improve those?

Mr. ERGIN. These are separate issues which fall into the same picture. That is my understanding.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you.

Mr. Engel, the gentleman from New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I came in a little late, so I apologize, but I didn't hear anybody mention the Cyprus situation and I am wondering, there has been a lot of talk about Turkey joining the EU, clearly, the whole question of Cyprus has to be put behind them if they are to join the EU.

Why will Turkey not get out of Cyprus? It seemed to me that several months ago there seemed to be—we seemed to be moving toward a resolution of a Cyprus issue and then from my appearance either intransigence on the part of Mr. Denktash with support presumably from Ankara stopped it. I would like to see and hear your read on the whole issue of Cyprus.

It seems to me that there has been an occupation there for a long time and it is time to end it and I am wondering how you gentlemen see that.

Mr. ALIRIZA. I would like to refer you to my written testimony. I actually touched on this fairly extensively. What we have is a deadline put forward by the EU of May 1 when, with or without a settlement, the Island of Cyprus will enter the EU.

And Mr. Verheugen, who is the EU commissioner for enlargement, in a meeting with Mr. Gul, the Turkish Foreign Minister, yesterday, made it clear that even though Cyprus is not a specified

condition for EU entry for Turkey, nonetheless it is something that needs to be solved.

Just today Verheugen made a statement saying in effect that the Greek Cypriots, acting in the name of the entire island, could veto Turkey's entry into the EU after May 1. So looking at it from the perspective of Ankara and Turkey-United States relations, Cyprus is already an important component in that context.

What we have ahead is a difficult decision by the current government, not just on Iraq and other issues, but also in Cyprus. They have to decide whether they are going to take on the forces of inertia which have been a factor in Turkey for a long time on this issue, or move ahead with a difficult decision to resume the negotiations, iron out the flaws in the current U.N. plan and end the problem that extends not to just to the arrival of the Turkish forces in 1974, but all the way back to 1963.

Frankly, this issue needs to be taken off the international agenda. Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Gul have made very positive statements about the need to solve this problem and I for one am optimistic that negotiations could be resumed and an amicable settlement leading to the satisfaction of all the parties involved, including Turkey, could be achieved.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. If I may also add a point, I am going to look at the Cyprus issue from the perspective of Turkey's European Union accession, since this seems to be one of the stumbling blocks coming up on the way ahead of Turkey's likely EU membership in the future.

From the purely bureaucratic point of view, Cyprus is not part of the accession criteria into the European Union. The European Union has very well defined criteria called the Copenhagen rules and this involves a whole bunch of things, but not the Cyprus issue. But if the EU were in fact to make this issue a condition for Turkey's EU accession, then I think it will be incumbent on the two sides to resolve the issue before they can join the EU and by two sides I mean Turkey which has troops in the northern part of the island and the internationally recognized government of Cyprus which is the Greek majority part of the island.

Basically, I believe it takes two to tango and I think the EU is going to end up with a mess in its hands if it takes in one side of the island. This is going to create huge troubles on the way of Turkey's into the European Union.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. McCotter had asked about Turkish relations with Armenia. What is the status of Turkish relations with Israel now? Obviously, before the new government of Turkey came in, it was excellent, the Ambassador talked about strategic cooperation between us and Turkey, certainly there was strategic cooperation between the Israelis and Turkey as well.

What is the relationship now? Is it as good as it was before this government came to power? Has it deteriorated because of the Islamic nature of some of the people in the government?

Mr. ERGIN. Mr. Congressman, I do not think the relationship between Turkey and Israel has been affected by the change of government in Ankara. In my view, the relationship between the two countries has been institutionalized and will remain so in the fu-

ture. Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul both went public on many occasions in expressing their resolve to expand the relationship with Israel and also it is important to note that relations recently have not been affected by the ongoing crisis on the ground. So it is immunity to the developments on the ground. And I think it is widely held view in Ankara is that under the Justice and Development Party government the relationship will continue on full track.

Mr. PARRIS. Congressman, I think it is worth remembering that this relationship really took root during the tenure in power of Mr. Erbakan's Islamic government in 1996, 1997. Many at the time interpreted the fact that this relationship which grew initially between the two militaries as a means of showing Turks and the world that this government did not necessarily speak for Turkey. The Eberkan government was quite outspoken in terms of its unease over Israeli policies and this was a way of demonstrating that they were not perhaps quite in control.

I think it is interesting that the AK government has gone out of its way not to be put in that position. There have been numerous high level visits between the two countries. They are in the final stages of concluding an agreement under which Israel will buy water which will be shipped from Turkey in tankers. There has been no calling into question of the military to miliary relationship, which has been a very important one for both countries.

So there was certainly scope for question when the government came into office based on the previous history, but so far I would have to say that, whether in Turkey or in Jerusalem, or in the think tanks of this town, most people would say that the Turks are going out of their way to show that it is still intact and is likely to remain so.

Mr. ENGEL. I know my time is up, but Ambassador Parris, you had said and I wrote this down in your testimony, when you were talking about United States-Turkish relations in the future, you said that we might look at it as Turkish cooperation is no longer essential because there is no more Soviet Union, we are now in Iraq—but I would think that because a high priority in this country has been placed on the Middle East peace process that Turkish cooperation is very essential, I think, in moving that process forward.

Mr. PARRIS. Yes. I think what I said was, "essential in the same sense that it was not containing the Soviet threat and Saddam Hussein."

Turkey unquestionably is one of those few countries anywhere in the world that has credibility on both sides of the Arab-Israeli divide and can support what we are doing and what the international community is doing to try to bring them together, and has.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask unanimous consent to put Congressman Pallone's statement in the record.

Mr. BEREUTER. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FRANK PALLONE, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

I would like to express my thanks to Chairman Bereuter and Ranking Member Wexler for allowing me to submit this statement for the record. It is unfortunate that I was unable to attend this hearing, as it is of great importance to me. I wish to address Turkey's relationship with two allies of the United States, Armenia and Cyprus.

Although this hearing today is about Turkey's future direction and its relationship with the United States, an examination of its past and present will give a much more accurate picture. In the past century, Turkey has stood as both friend and enemy to the United States. In World War I, the Turkish Ottoman Empire stood alongside Germany in its quest to reshape Europe. During that time, over 1.5 million ethnic Armenians were deliberately killed and 500,000 more displaced as part of the Ottoman Empire's campaign of Genocide of the Armenian people.

Turkey has also openly flouted international norms and laws over the last thirty years. In 1974, Turkey invaded the independent republic of Cyprus, ostensibly under the cover of protection of the ethnic Turkish Citizens. This invasion and subsequent military occupation that has divided a sovereign nation was widely condemned by the international community, and serves to hamper Turkey's chances of acceding to the European Union.

TURKEY'S ONGOING BLOCKADE OF ARMENIA

- Turkey has imposed a blockade against Armenia since April of 1993. At the time, Armenia was still recovering from a devastating earthquake and experienced a severe energy crisis in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. Armenia relied heavily on vital grain and kerosene shipments from the United States. By imposing a blockade against its neighbor, Turkey assisted Azerbaijan in its war against Karabakh's Armenians.
- Turkey's blockade of Armenia includes denying U.S. and international humanitarian assistance from crossing its borders, a violation of U.S. law, international human rights and humanitarian standards, and Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) commitments to which Turkey is a signatory. Organizations such as the European Union (EU) have repeatedly called on Turkey to lift its blockade against Armenia. The EU, in particular, has made normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations a pre-condition for Turkey's accession to the organization. Turkey, along with Azerbaijan, are the only Council of Europe (CE) states which are engaged in a blockade against a fellow CE state.
- Earlier this year, a State Department report estimated that the blockade continues to inflate Armenia's transportation costs by 30-35 percent, stifling its trade and economy. This report also stated that opening the border would catalyze commercial opportunities for Turkey and Armenia in the fields of energy, trade and tourism valued at \$1 billion per year.

TURKEY'S CONTINUING OCCUPATION OF CYPRUS

- On July 20, 1974, the Turkish military invaded Cyprus, and to this day continues to maintain 35,000 heavily armed troops in the occupied territory. Nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots, who fell victim to a policy of ethnic cleansing, were forcibly evicted from their homes and became refugees in their own country.
- Turkey's continuing occupation of the northern third of the Island of Cyprus is also one of Turkey's most egregious violations of international law. This year marked the 29th anniversary of Turkey's illegal military occupation.
- Tens of thousands of Turkish Cypriots in the north have recently peacefully protested Denktash's decision to reject the U.N. plan to reunify the island, and Turkish Cypriot citizens made this rare public rebuff of Denktash's demanding reunification so that the coming prosperity of the European Union-Cyprus partnership does not pass them by.
- Having signed the Accession Treaty to the European Union, along with nine other countries at a special ceremony in Athens, Greece, on April 16, 2003, Cyprus is on target to join the EU in May 2004. It would be desirable if a negotiated settlement to end the Turkish occupation and reunite the island were to be achieved prior to that date.
- Turkey's own aspirations to join the EU would also be boosted by a resolution of the Cyprus question. Working in good faith to promote a resolution in Cy-

prus is a key criterion set by the EU members for Turkey's eventual accession. U.S. and NATO interests would be well served by a stable, democratic Turkey firmly anchored to the West. Ending the occupation of over one-third of Cyprus's territory would also end a major drain on Turkey's military resources and its struggling economy.

- Since 1974, dozens of United Nations resolutions on Cyprus have been adopted, calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the island, the return of the refugees to their homes in safety and respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus.
- On April 10, the House of Representatives voted unanimously for House Resolution 165, sponsored by Rep. Doug Bereuter, R-NE, Chairman of the European Subcommittee of the International Relations Committee, calling for a renewed effort to find a settlement to the Cyprus problem. The Resolution expresses the House's "very strong regret that Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, rejected the comprehensive settlement offered by the Secretary General and, by refusing to offer the settlement proposal to referenda, denied the Turkish Cypriot community the opportunity to determine their own future."

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. BEREUTER. The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Whitfield, is recognized.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the Committee for having this important hearing on a vital ally of the U.S. and we get a meaningful opportunity to participate in.

I want to thank the panel for joining us today.

In the discussion on Cyprus, we talked about the Copenhagen criteria did not have any references to Cyprus per se and it would depend upon whether or not you made it an issue or not. Recent meetings that we have had with members of the European Parliament indicated that they are going to make it an issue and at least in the previous discussion, the brief discussion about it, it sounded like people were saying, well, we can resolve this, but the more I hear about the issue, what specifically can Turkey do to resolve this issue? I do not see how it can be easily resolved.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congressman. I guess I will elaborate a little bit more on my earlier remarks to answer your question.

The Cyprus issue is not part of the EU accession rules, the Copenhagen criteria. We know that very well. But if the EU were to make the resolution of the Cyprus issue a condition for Turkish accession, my point was that in the past the EU has done that, it has asked prospective member countries to resolve their disputes. They did this with Slovakia and Hungary before these two countries were allowed into the Union. So it can be the same for Turkey, but only if the same condition is also put on the internationally recognized government of Cyprus, too.

Mr. WHITFIELD. But how can that be resolved?

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Well, I guess my point is for the EU to admit one side to the conflict into the union while leaving the other side out is a tactical mistake, which is going to make it even more difficult to resolve the conflict.

Mr. ALIRIZA. To put into the broader context, Congressman, there are a lot of people in the EU who do not want to argue with Turkey on whether the Copenhagen criteria have been implemented sufficiently well for Turkey to be a member of the EU. It would be much easier for them to say you are maintaining troops on Cyprus, whatever your justification; the island has now entered the EU and therefore we simply cannot allow you in. As Mr. Verheugen said

yesterday, the Greek Cypriots may even veto the Turkish application, which would take us into uncharted waters.

You asked what Turkey can do. Frankly, if Turkey does nothing, then the enemies of Turkey's membership of the EU would jump on the Cyprus issue to keep Turkey out.

So therefore, what the Turkish government has to do, and I touched on this in my prepared testimony, is to calculate the costs of dealing with this issue. It is clear that there will be a major fight in Ankara with people who do not want to make any concessions whatsoever in Cyprus, who frankly doubt the motives of not just the Greek Cypriots, not just Greece, not just the Europeans, but also the United States for its willingness to back the current U.N. plan. The government has to balance these costs, the domestic costs, against the international costs of doing nothing.

What Turkey can do is to encourage the process by which there can be negotiations on the current U.N. plan between the two sides. The U.N. Secretary General remains committed to the process. That is also the position of the EU and the U.S. and, frankly, I am an optimist. I think that the differences can be eradicated. After all, this is a small island.

If nothing is done between now and May 1, we are going to run head into a train wreck, as my old boss Mordi Bramowitz used to say, it is something frankly that needs to be done.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. If I may follow up, the first thing I would like to clarify is that I am for a resolution of the conflict on the island and I would like to see the two parts of the island coexist in the spirit of the Cypriot tradition. But I also do not share the belief that the solution of the Cyprus issue will make it possible for Turkey to get into the EU. Even if the Cyprus issue were resolved, I think the bar, as Congressman Wexler stated earlier, is going to be raised a little further up by the EU, with other issues added on to Turkey's list of homework or list of things to be completed.

One very brief remark, Mr. Chairman. I teach at the State Department's Foreign Service Institute, FSI, where I do a lecture on Turkish-Euro relations. And one of the very common questions I get is on my skepticism on Turkish membership. People say, well, do you think Turkey could get in if it was a Christian country?

And the first time I got this question, I had to stop for a minute and think and I said, "Probably not, because it would have been orthodox."

That aside, I think the major issue that the EU has with Turkey is that this is a very large country and the EU simply does not have the money or the political will to deal with Turkey right now. So if not Cyprus, we will have many other things on the agenda, such as a strict implementation of the Copenhagen criteria where you will find a lot of glitches, as such glitches exist all over Europe.

Mr. ALIRIZA. Congressman, I will put it another way. There is no guarantee that Turkey will get into the EU if it solves the Cyprus problem, but it is almost certain that Turkey will not get in if the Cyprus problem is not resolved.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Good point. Good point.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you, Mr. Whitfield.

I believe unfortunately you are right, Dr. Cagaptay. This Member with the help of this Committee ventured into the area of introducing a resolution on Cyprus and in the past when we have had resolutions on the Floor on Cyprus, they were highly contentious. This one passed with only one two negative votes and I think they missed a great opportunity because apparently the Turkish Cypriot people would have voted in a referendum in agreement with coming into the EU then we would have had the federation. And then the question is did the Turkish government do anything positive in that respect or could they have done more.

I want to go on to what seems to be happening and then get your reactions to it. The Erdogan government has hired up to a reported 15,000 new imams, that some of them will be appointed to higher state and national governmental offices. Enrollment in the Imam Hatip schools is said to be up about 50 percent. Is the government moving in a direction of Imams for government positions? Is this worrisome? Why are the Imam Hatip schools so popular and should we be concerned about the popularity of their teachings?

And all Members are welcome to address that.

Mr. ERGIN. Mr. Chairman, could you please repeat the question? Imam schools, you mean religious schools?

Mr. BEREUTER. The Imam Hatip schools. Yes. Why are they so popular? Should we be concerned about the popularity of their teachings. It is reported that their enrollment is up by 50 percent, for example.

Mr. ERGIN. Fifty?

Mr. BEREUTER. Five-zero.

Mr. ERGIN. Percent of?

Mr. BEREUTER. It is up 50 from the previous level.

Mr. ERGIN. After the Justice and Development Party government took office, one of the areas of tension on the political scene, has become the area of education. So far, the Justice and Development Party government has refrained from taking steps which can be construed as challenging the secular institutions of the republic. They have been careful. But still on the question of education, there are misgivings and apprehensions and, from time to time, there are statements from several ministers and deputies of this party to the effect that they want to promote the status of the Imam Hatip schools.

The practice of the Imam Hatip schools began in the 1950s. These schools were established as vocational schools just to educate Imams for the Mosques. So these are in a way technical schools. This is why these educational institutions were established. Yet in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and in the 1980s, somehow the center right politicians, so as to accommodate the religiously conservative groups in Turkey, kept on opening new Imam Hatip schools.

In the end, this led to a duality in the education system in Turkey. You had the regular government schools and the graduates of those schools are people with a pro-western orientation, with liberal values, with strong commitment to secularism, yet graduates of the Imam Hatip schools in the past came out with a different flavor. These were people who look to the East, not to the West. I think unity of education should be one of the basic pillars of a society and when you have a duality in the educational system, in

the long run this could lead to a duality in the society. This could lead to a fragmentation. So this has been a very contentious issue with the new government.

Four or five years ago, a new procedure was introduced so that the graduates of the Imam Hatip schools would not easily be enrolled in the universities, but this procedure does not only apply to Imam Hatip schools, but it also applies to all graduates of technical high schools as well. So all graduates of technical high schools in Turkey are not privileged when they want to enroll in the universities.

There are rumors, there are reports that the new government may try to lift all these restrictions, but, as I said, this is a very sensitive issue in Turkey.

Mr. BEREUTER. Do any of you wish to comment about the number? Because there are people moving into government positions, state and national.

Mr. ALIRIZA. To refer back to my testimony, I talked about the objective definition of the JDP by its opponents, those who were suspicious of its motives, clearly this is one of the issues.

Mr. BEREUTER. Is the suspicion well taken or not? Some suspicions are not, you know, accurate.

Mr. ALIRIZA. Without getting into the arguments within Turkey itself but looking at it from the outside in an objective and academic matter, clearly the Turkish secular system is still as strong as it was. The JDP, notwithstanding what they may really wish to do, have certainly not moved in the direction of establishing a state based on the Sharia. They are willing to live within existing limits. Nonetheless, it is not so much what they do as what they are and their background, including the fact that many of them are products of religious schools, that makes people suspicious of their motives, but it is not yet time to ring the alarm bells. Thank you.

Mr. BEREUTER. We asked the same question the other day about KGB people in the Russian government.

Mr. ALIRIZA. And what was the answer there, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. BEREUTER. "Worrisome," they said.

Would anyone else care to comment on this?

[No response.]

Mr. BEREUTER. All right. We will turn to Mr. Wexler.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

I have the utmost respect for and friendship with our colleague Mr. Engel, I am sorry he left, but I think the manner in which he presented the question as it relates to Turkey with respect to Cyprus in the context of when will Turkey leave Cyprus is an unhelpful presentation of the problem because it fails to recognize that there were atrocities committed by both sides and that there are legitimate concerns expressed by both sides and it seems to me an equally appropriate question or concern is when will the international community demand for Cyprus a resolution which adequately addresses the legitimate concerns of both sides?

And without getting into a debate, because I do not wish to do so, it seems to me that if there was one thing I learned when I visited Cyprus recently from Mr. Denktash was that while we may believe the U.N. process has been a successful one and I do think it is the appropriate forum in which to proceed, that the proposal of-

ferred by the United Nations was sufficiently vague in certain areas and that Mr. Denktash was not yet comfortable with the guarantees that were offered for his people.

Now, I would hope that Mr. Denktash in the future would take a less stubborn position. I hope that he and his Greek Cypriot counterparts would engage in discussion again, but to phrase the issue as one in which when will Turkey leave as if there were no reasons for the Turkish invasion in 1974 I do not believe adequately or appropriately addresses what should be America's perspective in Cyprus.

Having said that, I was hoping that maybe the gentlemen could offer us an observation as to the perspective of the new or the current Turkish government as to Turkey's relations with Iran and Turkey's relations with Syria? Has there been a change? Is there a continuation? Or, more appropriately, what are Turkey's objectives with respect to both Syria and Iran?

Mr. ERGIN. Congressman Wexler, so far, in the course of the last 10 months, I have not seen any major change in Turkey's relations with Syria or with Iran. I have not detected any change in the emphasis or any new tone. We know that behind the closed doors the new government in Ankara is encouraging the Syrian government to take a firm position against terrorism. I am sure the same message is going to Iran as well. But just to sum up, I do not think there has been really much of a change in Turkey's relations with both countries. I think the government is committed to keep good relations with both countries and expand their relations.

Mr. ALIRIZA. If I may? Prime Minister Erdogan is apparently planning a trip to Iran in the near future and it is something that according to the press, the United States Government has expressed some displeasure to Mr. Erdogan about. Bashir Assad is due to make a state visit to Turkey for the first time, I believe, certainly since the Baath came to power in Damascus.

Clearly, Turkey needs to balance any moves it makes with respect to both of these countries, with its this relationship with the United States and to a lesser extent with Europe, which has been somewhat less vigilant on these issues.

Until now, as I suggested earlier, Mr. Erdogan has been very careful to focus on his commitment to continue the westernization process in Turkey.

There is a danger here that there may be a misperception of what he is trying to do, notwithstanding whatever message he gives behind the scenes, both in Iran and to his visitor from Syria.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. When you talk to the foreign policy decision makers in Ankara on what methods Turkey uses vis-a-vis Syrian and Iran, Turkey likes to use the traditional methods that have worked in the past and they like to stick to these methods. With respect to Iran, I would say, the traditional Turkish approach has been engagement. And with respect to Syria it has been engagement and deterrence. And we have seen that work with Syria, back in the 1990s, well, Turkey flexed its muscles and Syria stopped supporting the PKK and since then Turkey has been vigorously engaging Syria and that I think is going to be Ankara's approach toward that country in the near future.

With respect to Iran, I think engagement has been the method and it will be the method in the future, with one caveat. The nuclearization of Iran has not been debated in Turkey, it is not on the radar screen and this, I think, if it did come up on the radar screen would increase the Turkish perception of a threat emanating from Iran, but that is not yet there, so I would say engagement is still there vis-a-vis Iran and will be there for a little bit more in the future.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Whitfield, do you have other questions?

We need to end this session very shortly and I wonder if I could hopefully for the good of the Subcommittee generally ask just one question to Ambassador Parris, since he is no longer in the government.

Could you in bullet point fashion give your recommendations to what our government should be doing to improve Turkish-American relations?

Mr. PARRIS. Mr. Chairman, there is no rocket science set of bullet points for this and I would say they are basically doing the right thing, which is to stay engaged and to be candid, be honest.

I think that, to the extent that we had difficulties last winter in our discussion of whether or not we would be allowed to deploy troops across Turkey, there were breakdowns in a number of areas, among them communication. That was partly a function of new people coming in. It was partly a function of a lack of familiarity with the way these things are done. It was partly a function of American assumptions that everything worked the way it had always worked in the past, and that was not necessarily the case.

I think that to the extent that anything good came out of that process, there is less of a readiness in Washington just to assume that nothing has changed and it is the same address and you can continue to get away with that. I think people are thinking more carefully about how properly and effectively to engage the Turkish leadership and I think it is working more successfully.

If I had to focus on one specific thing that we really have to do, and it has been the key to everything we have done successfully in the past, it is to be honest with one another. Turks occasionally have a tendency to tell us what they think we want to hear and to be overly polite; and we have a tendency to talk and not listen. That can be a prescription for dropped balls. Something like that happened last spring. I think that both sides are playing better right now.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you, Ambassador.

I think we have had some very good hearings recently and this is certainly right at the top of the list because you gentlemen have been so helpful in your written testimony, your oral comments and responses to our questions.

I very much appreciate the fact you have come to spend your time with us to share some wisdom and apparently some of you have come twice as a result of the hurricane. Thank you very much.

Mr. Wexler, do you have any final comment to the panel? That would be welcome.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much.

Mr. BEREUTER. The Subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

