

TITLE
IS TURKEY REALIGNING?
A THREE DIMENSIONAL INVESTIGATION
OF TURKISH-IRANIAN SECURITY RAPPROCHEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the underlying reasons for Turkish-Iranian security rapprochement during the Erdogan Administration, and attempts to discover whether the ongoing rapprochement indicates Turkey's realignment in the international system. It employs a rigorous qualitative analysis to explore the perceptions of the key decision makers throughout the intergovernmental partnership process with Iran on three major security policies: counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security. It counterposes the threat perceptions and major arguments of the pro-status quo and revisionist elites. The data has been collected through extensive elite/expert interviews and content analysis of the Turkish and international media.

Findings of this research indicate that the Turkish and Iranian governments cooperate in counterterrorism policy because both are mainly concerned with the spillover effect of micronationalist independence movements in the post Iraq War security landscape. The Erdogan Administration supports the Iranian nuclear initiative mainly because the key political actors believe that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons and Iranian nuclear program poses no significant threat to Turkey's national security. In addition the Erdogan Administration forged an energy partnership with Iran not only to meet increasing domestic energy demands but also to promote Turkey's strategic interests through development of trans-regional pipeline networks.

The investigations revealed that Turkey's growing security partnership with Iran does not indicate realignment from the West to the Muslim world. Turkey's rapprochement with Iran is driven by practical and rational calculations rather than Islamic identity or aspirations. Even though many key actors in the Justice and Development Party government comes from religious

social networks, their statements indicate that the Erdogan Administration does not seek to align itself with the Muslim World at the expense of the existing pro-Western orientation. Instead, Turkey's rapprochement with Iran is an integral part of the *Strategic Depth* doctrine of Foreign Minister Davutoglu to expand Turkey's interrelations with the East in line with national interests. In so doing, the Erdogan Administration not only addresses the practical security interests but it also attempts to regain the strategic superiority in the Near East.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP =Justice and Development Party

ANP= Motherlands Party

AVSAM= Eurasian Strategic Research Center

BOTAS= Petroleum Pipeline Corporation

BTC= Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project

CENTO= Central Treaty Organization

CHP= Republican People's Party

DTM= Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade

DTP= Democratic Turkey Party

D-8= Developing Eight

EB= Ministry of Energy

ECO= Economic Cooperation Organization

EGM/TNP= General Directorate of Security

EIA= U.S. Energy Information Administration

HUMINT= Human Intelligence

IAEA= International Atomic Energy Agency

IBDA/C= Great Islamic Raiders Front

ISRO= International Strategic Research Center

ILSA= Iran-Libya Sanctions Act

LEU= Low Enriched Uranium

LNG= Liquefied Natural Gas

KDP=Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Mesud Barzani

KOM= Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime

MFA= Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MHP= Nationalist Movement Party

ME=Ministry of Energy

NPT= Non-proliferation Treaty

OECD=Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHAL= Turkish Marshall Law (1987-2002) mainly in Southeast Anatolia

ORSAM= Middle East Strategic Research Organization

RP = Welfare Party

PJAK= Party for Free Life in Kurdistan (The terror organization that targets Iran)

PKK= Kurdistan Workers Party (Separatist terror organization)

PUK=Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Talabani Family

SDE=Institute of Strategic Thinking

SETAV= Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research

TBMM= Turkish Parliament

TAF/TSK=Turkish Armed Forces

TAV= Tepe Akfen Construction

THB=Turkish Hezbollah

TNSC= Turkish National Security Council

TPAO=Turkish Petroleum Corporation

TUIK= Turkish Institute of Statistics

TUPRAS= Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation

TURKSAM= International Relations and Strategic Research Center

USAK= International Strategic Research Center

USSR=Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

UTSAM= International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Center

WMD= Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. THESIS STATEMENT

Turkish foreign policy changed profoundly after the 2002 election victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). This change coincided with the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the War on Terror. In the new era, traditional strategic security alliances with the U.S. and Israel no longer dominate the agendas of foreign and security apparatus of the state. Instead, the Turkish government has turned to regionalism, promoting energy, security and trade relations with the Middle Eastern and Caspian countries. Many analysts consider the new posture as a reorientation towards non-Western venues at odds with the traditional course of Turkish foreign policy. The shift in foreign policy became most apparent in Turkey's rapprochement with Iran. Indeed, the Erdogan administration (2002--) signed comprehensive energy, security and trade agreements with the Iranian government. Apart from these agreements, the Erdogan Administration (AKP government) supports the Iranian nuclear energy program and opposes international sanctions without having substantial evidence on weapons grade enrichment. The Erdogan Administration's new posture undermines the Western nuclear containment policy and provides at least tacit support for Iran's nuclear ambitions. It undercuts the security interests of Turkey's traditional military allies, the United States and Israel, in the Middle East.

Traditionally, Turkey had pursued a pro-Western foreign policy, as the governmental leaders aspired to transform the country into a modern Western power.¹ Turkey joined the OECD (1948), Council of Europe (1949) and NATO (1952) to facilitate its integration into the Western world.² Concomitantly, Turkey formed a trilateral alliance with the United States and Israel against regional security challenges such as Soviet expansionism, Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.³ In parallel, pro-status quo military elites, who had been dominant actors in the National Security Council (MGK), saw post revolutionary Iran as the center of global terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.⁴

In the pre-AKP period, the Turkish National Security Council (MGK) frequently lambasted the Iranian government for providing logistical support to Turkish Hezbollah (THB)⁵ and The Great Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA/C)⁶ and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)⁷ terror organizations.⁸ Iran's support to the THB and IBDA/C was considered as a particularly insidious effort to export its fundamentalist regime to secular Turkey. Concurrently, the Iranian nuclear program and missile technology aroused grave concerns in the Turkish National Security Council (MGK) particularly after the Shabab-3 and Shabab-5 missiles were tested.⁹ The military wing in the MGK was strongly in favor of bandwagoning with the U.S. and Israeli containment

¹ Nasuh Uslu, *Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period*, Nova Science Publishers. 2003; Stephen Kinzer, *Crescent and star: Turkey between two worlds*: Farrar Straus, Giroux, 2002

² Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Drinlik: Turkiye'nin uluslararası konumu*, Kure Yayinlari, Istanbul/Turkey, 2007; Idris Bal, *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post Cold War Era*, Brown Walker, Boca Raton, 2004

³ Alptekin Dursunoglu, *Stratejik Ittifak: Turkiye Israil Iliskilerinin Oyusu*, Anka Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2005

⁴ Yucel Bozdaglioglu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A constructivist Approach*, Routledge, 2003

⁵ Turkish Hezbollah is different from the Lebanese Hezbollah. It emerged after mid 1990s at Southeastern Anatolia. It was accused of assassinating secularist elites such as Ugur Mumcu (Journalist), and Gaffar Okkan (Police Commissioner of Diyarbakir Province).

⁶ Great Islamic Raiders Front (IBDA/C) was another radical Turkish terror organization determined to establish Islamic Caliphate through use of force.

⁷ PKK=Kurdistan Workers Party, is a ethnic terrorist organization that aims free Kurdistan in Southeastern Turkey, Northern Iraq and Northwestern Iran.

⁸ Mehmet Saray, *Turk-Iran Iliskileri*, Ataturk Arastirma Merkezi, Ankara/Turkey, 2006

⁹ Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, *Iran Nuclear Krizi*, Usak Yayinlari/Uluslararası Iliskiler Dizisi, Ankara/Turkey, 2009; Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, Iran and Nuclear Risks", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 3(2), 89–112. 2004

of Iran's nuclear program, because they believed that a nuclear armed Iran would radically shift the balance of power in the Middle East.¹⁰ Before the Iraq War (2003), pro-status quo military leaders strongly opposed an improvement of political, economic and security relations with Iran. Regardless of Turkey's relentless quest for alternative energy suppliers and Iran's desperate need for new markets, Ankara and Tehran avoided a major energy and security partnership until the mid-1990s.¹¹

Despite the security and identity concerns of the pro-status quo military leaders, the Erbakan Administration (1996-1997) forged the first rapprochement policy with the Rafsanjani Administration of Iran.¹² As Hakan Yavuz put it, the pro-Islamist Welfare Party government had been a devoted opponent of Turkey's "obsessive" pro-Western trajectory and sought to reorient Turkish foreign policy towards pan-Islamic venues.¹³ Prime Minister Erbakan pioneered establishment of the organization of the Developing 8 (D-8)¹⁴ to promote economic and political integration among the largest Muslim nations; Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.¹⁵ In this context, Iran emerged as the most favored neighbor of Turkey. Ankara and Tehran forged comprehensive bilateral energy and trade agreements despite strong opposition from the pro-status quo Kemalist military elites. Prime Minister Erbakan and Iranian President Rafsanjani signed a \$20 billion energy contract in 1997 that proposed

¹⁰ Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1974-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, CA, 2004.

¹¹ Tayyar Ari, *Gecmisten Gunumuze Ortadogu; Siyaset, Savas ve Diplomasi*, Alfa, Istanbul/Turkey, 2007

¹² Gurkas, 2007 Karakoc, 2009

¹³ Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey", *Comparative Politics*: 63-82, 1997

¹⁴ D-8 has been established in 1997 at the Istanbul Declaration of Summit of Heads of State/Government. The organization aims to facilitate economic integration and development of major Muslim countries. D-8 is dedicated to improve facilitate cooperation on energy, trade, industrialization, agriculture, tourism and transportation. More information can be obtained from the organizations official website <http://www.developing8.org/index.php>

¹⁵ Haldun Gulalp, "Political Islam in Turkey: The rise and fall of the Refah Party", *The Muslim World*, 89(1), 22-41, 1999

construction of a joint pipeline and annual transfer of 140 billion cubic meters of natural gas.¹⁶

However, Prime Minister Erbakan's attempts to reorient Turkish foreign policy created a backlash in domestic politics, particularly among the ultra secularist military elites, who crafted a postmodern coup¹⁷ in 1997 to preserve the status quo and perpetuate the pro-Western stance of the country. The Turkish-Iranian detente came to a halt after the resignation of Prime Minister Erbakan in June 1997. Indeed, bilateral relations deteriorated after the Iranian Ambassador was deported for attempting to overthrow the secularist system in Turkey.¹⁸ Bilateral relations remained at loggerheads during the successive coalition government (DSP, MHP and ANAP), as key political and military leaders preserved the anti-Iran stance.

1.1.1. The shift in Turkish foreign policy and rapprochement with Iran

Turkish foreign policy has undergone profound changes since the landslide election victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002 elections. The rapprochement with Iran resumed and Turkey enjoyed unprecedented intergovernmental relations with its neighbor in three respects. First, Ankara and Tehran developed a mutual counterterrorism and regional security postures against growing Kurdish separatism arising out of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.¹⁹ The Turkish and Iranian governments signed successive security and counterterrorism cooperation agreements in 2004 and 2009. These agreements allow enhanced exchange of

¹⁶ BOTAS "The natural Gas Trade Agreement with Iran" September 15, 2008, available at <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>faaliyetler/anlasmalar/iran.html>, [accessed September 19, 2008]

¹⁷ Post modern coup is a frequently used term in Turkish politics. It refers to the military intervention in government politics in February 28, 1997. Rather than a military takeover of the governmental administration, the Turkish armed forces coerced the government to enact a list of precautions to preserve the secular stance of the country.

¹⁸ Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1974-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, CA, 2004.

¹⁹ Erkan Dogan, *Turkey's Iran Card: Energy Cooperation in American and Russian Vortex*, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, 2004

intelligence and joint operations against the PKK and its subordinate network PJAK. Particularly since 2003 Iranian authorities mounted numerous operations against the PKK/PJAK strongholds in both Iran and Iraq. The traditional intransigent resistance of secularist Turkish elites towards collaboration with Iran gradually disappeared after 2003 and there has been a consensus within the state's foreign policy machinery. In parallel with resentment to U.S. policies in Iraq, Iran's new posture against the PKK is highly appreciated both by the higher echelons of the Erdogan administration and the predominant majority of Turkish society.

Second, Iran became a major trade partner of Turkey as the bilateral trade volume increased more than eight-fold between 2002 and 2009.²⁰ Prime Minister Erdogan and Iranian President Ahmadinejad signed major energy agreements in 2007²¹ and 2008. The amended bilateral energy agreement in 2008 proposed: i) transfer of 35 billion cubic meters of natural gas over Turkey annually (half will be diverted into domestic markets), ii) \$12 billion investment by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO)²² in the South Pars field of Iran, iii) transfer of Turkmenistan gas to Turkey via transit pipeline through Iran, and iv) construction of 2000 kilometers of pipelines extending from Turkmenistan to Turkey.²³ Turkey had been purchasing less than four percent of natural gas from Iran before 2002. The new contracts increased the overall volume of natural gas trade between Iran and Turkey over 800 percent.²⁴ The Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS) anticipates supplying over 19 % of natural gas from

²⁰ TUIK, "Foreign Trade Statistics Database" February 8, 2009, available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, [accessed September 20, 2009]

²¹ This agreement was amended and expanded by the consecutive agreement in 2008

²² A state energy company

²³ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, "Turkiye Iran Arasinda Imzalanen Dogalgaz Mutabakati" available at <http://www.usakgundem.com/yazarlar.php?id=1073&type=17>, [accessed May 30, 2009]; BOTAS "The natural Gas Trade Agreement with Iran" September 15, 2008, available at <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>faaliyetler/anlasmalar/iran.html>, [accessed September 19, 2008]

²⁴ TUIK, "Foreign Trade Statistics Database" February 8, 2009, available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, [accessed September 20, 2009]

Iran in 2010.²⁵ According to the Turkish Institute for Statistics, Iran emerged as the primary crude oil supplier of Turkey and oil purchases from Iran increased 71% between 2002 and 2007.²⁶ The intensity and volume of bilateral cooperation on energy and security expanded dramatically after the U.S. occupation of Iraq.²⁷

Third, the Iranian nuclear program has become a serious foreign policy issue for the Erdogan Administration, as the conflict moved towards the forefront of international politics. The U.S government demanded that the Erdogan Administration collaborate in containment of Iran's nuclear program. As a strategic ally, Turkey is expected to make substantial contributions to overcome this strategic security threat to traditional allies. However, key foreign policy actors have made it clear that Turkey will endorse neither economic containment nor military intervention. Prime Minister Erdogan, President Abdullah Gul and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu asserted that Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy and Turkey will support Iran's peaceful nuclear program.²⁸ Key state actors reiterated that the Turkish government does not believe that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. In United Nations Security Council meetings Turkey constantly voted against the sanctions on Iran. More recently, on June 9, 2010, Turkey voted against the UN Security Council resolution 1929 proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Erdogan Administration's posture contradicts the American and Israeli policies of preventing nuclearization of a "rogue" regime that could pose an "existential" threat to Israel. The Turkish government's policy towards the Iran's nuclear program astonished many of the Western powers and Israel, as they had been Turkey's military allies in the cold war and beyond.

²⁵ BOTAS "The natural Gas Trade Agreement with Iran" September 15, 2008, available at <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>faaliyetler/anlasmalar/iran.html>, [accessed September 19, 2008]

²⁶ TUIK, "Foreign Trade Statistics Database" February 8, 2009, available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, [accessed September 20, 2009]

²⁷ Abdullah Karakoc, *Turkey's Relations with Iran and the United States: A Shift in Alignment*: Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, 2009.

²⁸ *ibid*

Many foreign policy analysts argue that the Erdogan Administrations' new posture towards Iran indicates a profound shift in the traditional course of Turkish foreign policy. Graham Fuller, a Middle East analyst at the RAND Corporation, argues that Turkey's energy and security interests began to clash with the American and Israeli interests in the Middle East.²⁹ For him, discord over regional security became most apparent in containment of the nuclear Iran. Turkey's energy agreements undermined the U.S. containment of Iran, because the hydrocarbon exports enabled the Ahmadinejad Administration to sustain its hardliner stance in nuclear proliferation. Moreover, the increasing price and volume of natural gas sales finances the Iranian government's arms buildup for a potential military confrontation with the United States or Israel. Many security analysts also argue that Iran uses the petrodollars to support terrorists and insurgents who attack American and Israeli targets in the Middle East.³⁰

1.1.2 Literature gaps and the significance of this study

The shift in Turkey's posture has focused the attention of the foreign policy community. Different schools of thought have identified various internal and external developments to explain the substantial changes in foreign policy. Students of international security mainly look at the external environment and claim that shifting dynamics of external security have compelled the Turkish government to reformulate its alliance strategies in the post Iraq War security landscape. For them, the major threat in the region is no longer an expansionist nuclear power (Soviet Union); but the real threat is growing ethno-sectarian terrorism that undermines the

²⁹ Graham Fuller, *The new Turkish Republic: Turkey as a pivotal state in the Muslim world*, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007

³⁰ Rowan Scarborough, "Iraqi Insurgent Linked to Iran, Hezbollah", *Washington Examiner*, May, 21. 2007

regional status quo and territorial integrity of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey.³¹ Professor Sait Yilmaz argued that alliance patterns have been reformulated to preserve the political integrity of the states and regional status quo in the Middle East.³² There is a broad consensus among Turkish security analysts that the U.S. occupation of Iraq exacerbated regional instability and increased the volume of ethno-sectarian conflicts. As Idris Bal put it, the collapse of the Baathist regime created a power vacuum in Northern Iraq, and the Kurdish quest for an independent state has been stimulated in this fertile ground.³³ Ankara and Tehran strongly oppose the creation of an independent Kurdistan in Northern Iraq, as both are gravely concerned with the spillover of independence movements into their homelands. Karakoc notes that the changing nature of threats forced Ankara and Tehran to sign a bilateral counterterrorism agreement and develop a joint posture against Kurdish separatism.³⁴

Many energy analysts argue that the shift in Turkey's Iran policy has been fundamentally driven by growing energy dependency on Russia and supply disruptions in Iraq. These countries had been major energy providers to Turkey.³⁵ According to the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), Turkey's natural gas demand increased from 1.2 billion cubic feet to 37.8 billion cubic feet between 1988 and 2008.³⁶ The BP Annual Statistical Review indicates that domestic oil consumption in Turkey increased from 466,000 barrel per day to 677,000 barrels.³⁷ Nevertheless Turkey remains highly vulnerable to major supply disruptions as it is 99 percent

³¹ Tayyar Ari, *Geçmişten Günümüze Ortadoğu Siyaset, Savas ve Diplomasi*, Bursa, 2008

³² Sait Yilmaz, *21. Yüzyılda Güvenlik ve İstihbarat*. Milenyum Yayınları, İstanbul, 2007

³³ Idril Bal, "Instability in the Middle East and the Relevant Role of the PKK". In Idris Bal (Eds), *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post Cold War Era*, Brown Walker Press, Boca Raton, 2004

³⁴ Abdullah Karakoc, *Turkey's Relations with Iran and the United States: A Shift in Alignment*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, 2009.

³⁵ Necdet Pamir, "Kafkaslar ve Hazar Havzası'ndaki Ülkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarının Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliğine Etkileri", Harp Akademileri, 2006

³⁶ BOTAS, "Yıllar İtibariyle İthal Edilen Doğal Gaz Miktarları", Ankara, BOTAS, 2009

³⁷ BP, "Statistical Review of World Energy", London, BP, June 2008.

dependent on foreign natural gas and 90 percent on foreign oil.³⁸ Particularly, Turkey's dependency on Russian hydrocarbon resources reached an alarming ratio of 60 percent in the early 2000s.³⁹ Turkish students of energy security argue that the Turkish-Iranian rapprochement is mainly driven by supply diversification of the Turkish government.⁴⁰ Cagri Kursat Yuce notes that Turkish foreign policy makers are dedicated to diversify hydrocarbon suppliers to reduce vulnerability to potential supply disruptions in Russia and Iraq.⁴¹ He believes that the current Turkish-Iranian energy rapprochement is a balancing strategy against Russia's monopolistic control of regional pipeline networks. Necdet Pamir, a prominent Turkish energy expert, even argues that the ongoing energy partnership with Iran is an integral part of the Erdogan Administration's efforts to transform Turkey into an interregional energy hub that would regain strategic importance in world politics.⁴²

Redirection of Turkish foreign policy has become an increasingly popular debate among the institutionalists who focus on the innenpolitik to explain foreign policy behaviors. Many of them claim that the ongoing foreign policy change has been driven by the power shift from the ultra secularist military to the pan-Islamist politicians.⁴³ Traditionally, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) had been dominating the policy making process in the National Security Council (MGK). TSK represented the pro-Western status quo, whereas civilian leaders sought revision both in domestic politics and foreign policy. A growing array of institutionalists claims that the balance

³⁸ Atilla Sandikli and Hasret Bilgin, *Türkiye'de Enerji ve Kalkınma Sempozyumu*. TASAM Yayinlari, Ankara, 2006

³⁹ Necdet Pamir, "Kafkaslar ve Hazar Havzası'ndaki Ülkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarının Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliğine Etkileri", Harp Akademileri, 2006

⁴⁰ Necdet Pamir, "Kafkaslar ve Hazar Havzası'ndaki Ülkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarının Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliğine Etkileri", Harp Akademileri, 2006; Cagri Kursat Yuce, *Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Enerji Kaynakları Üzerinde Mücadele*. Otuken, Istanbul, 2006; ⁴⁰ İlyas Kamalov, "Rusya'nın Yeni Enerji Politikaları", AVSAM, 2008

⁴¹ Cagri Kursat Yuce, *Kafkasya ve Orta Asya Enerji Kaynakları Üzerinde Mücadele*. Otuken, Istanbul, 2006

⁴² Necdet Pamir, "Kafkaslar ve Hazar Havzası'ndaki Ülkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarının Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliğine Etkileri", Harp Akademileri, 2006

⁴³ Metin Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish military and democracy", *South European Society and Politics*, 10(1), 33-44, 2005

of power within Turkey's foreign policy machinery has fundamentally changed throughout the EU accession reforms. Aydinli, Ozcan and Akyuz highlighted that there has been a constant transition of power from the military to the civilians in the post-Helsinki process as the EU strongly recommended demilitarization of Turkish politics.⁴⁴ Metin Heper notes that post-Helsinki adaptational pressures not only curtailed the power of pro-status quo military leaders, but it also strengthened the hands of the revisionists in Turkish politics. Karakoc maintains that strong military leaders were able to impede Turkish-Iranian rapprochement during the Erbakan administration (1996-1997) but after the transition of power they failed to prevent the ongoing rapprochement with Iran during the Erdogan Administration.⁴⁵

Another group of foreign policy analysts seek the roots of the change in Turkish foreign policy in shifting national aspirations and political identities. For them, re-Islamization of the sociopolitical domain shifted the aspirations of the governing elites towards pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic platforms.⁴⁶ Barry Rubin asserts that, after the end of Cold War "Ankara had to look elsewhere for alignments and sources of identity consistent with the country's goals and self-image...Bitterness and disappointment [with the EU] over past treatment had already set Turkey on the path of a multiregional approach in defining its identity and interests."⁴⁷ Ahmet Davutoglu, a prominent Turkish scholar and foreign minister of the Erdogan Administration, advocates an expansionist foreign policy, in which Turkey emerges as a core state of the Middle East, Caspian Region, Balkans and the Muslim World.⁴⁸ Hakan Yavuz argues that Turkey's

⁴⁴ Ersel Aydinli; Nihat Ali Ozcan, & Dogan Akyaz, "Turkish Military's March toward Europe", *Foreign Affairs*, 85(1), 77-90, 2006

⁴⁵ Abdullah Karakoc, *Turkey's Relations with Iran and the United States: A Shift in Alignment*. Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, 2009

⁴⁶ Jenny, B. White, *Islamist mobilization in Turkey: a study in vernacular politics*, University of Washington Press, 2003

⁴⁷ Barry Rubin, *Turkey in World Politics. An Emerging Regional Power*, Boulder and London, 2001, p.252

⁴⁸ Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Turkiye'nin uluslararası konumu*, Kure Yayinlari, Istanbul/Turkey, 2007

rapprochement with Iran coincided with the rise of pan-Islamic and neo-Ottomanist aspirations and fall of pro-Western images in domestic politics.⁴⁹ Duran concurs that Islamic aspirations of the Welfare Party (RP) and Justice and Development Party (AKP) paved the way for the rapprochement process between Turkey and the post-revolutionary Iran.⁵⁰

Turkey's rapprochement with Iran raised considerable interest among the foreign analysts in Turkey, U.S. and Israel. However, existing studies failed to provide substantial analysis of the prolonged detente as they failed to amass empirical data to examine the perceptions of policy makers. Even though the foreign policy literature has grown exponentially, the literature on Turkish-Iranian security partnership is disparate, descriptive and noncumulative. Former studies presents the diachronic evolution of Turkish-Iranian relations in a descriptive manner but often fail to shed light on the internal and external drives of the policy making process. Another pitfall of existing studies is their overemphasis on the statics of the bilateral relations but neglect of the dynamics of change. This dissertation aims to address this gap in the literature through investigating the underlying reasons for the tectonic shift in Turkish foreign policy and detente with Iran. The primary importance of this study is reliance on an extensive field research, including elite/expert interviews and content analysis. Semi-structured interviews with the elites and experts are designed to explore the perceptions and motivations of the policy makers. Since the interviewees have been selected from a wide array of experts, this research contributes to our understanding of divergent institutional and individual stances on rapprochement with Iran in three security realms; counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security.

⁴⁹ Hakan Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, University of Utah Press, Glen Canyon, 2006

⁵⁰ *ibid*

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The core research question of this dissertation is “Why did the Erdogan Administration forge a three-tiered security partnership with Iran when the United States pushed for containment of the emerging nuclear power?” There are a number of subordinate questions:

- Why did the Erdogan Administration forge counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian government?
- Why did the Erdogan Administration support Iran’s nuclear energy program and oppose international sanctions?
- What are the underlying reasons of bilateral partnership on energy security?
- How did the Islamic identity of the key actors in the Erdogan Administrations affect the detente with the post revolutionary Iran?
- How does intergovernmental security partnership with Iran affect Turkey’s alignment in the international system?

1.3. METHODOLOGY

This study deploys qualitative case study and process tracing as the principal research methods to investigate the underlying reasons of Turkish-Iranian security partnership during the Erdogan administration. Turkey’s ongoing intensive security cooperation with Iran was selected as a case study for two reasons. First, the new posture of the Erdogan Administration indicates a profound shift in Turkish foreign policy and contradicts the traditional patterns of Cold War alliances. Second, this intergovernmental security partnership took place at a very sensitive time when the

United States and Israel were increasing efforts to prevent Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons capability.

Selection of the case study as an investigative tool has been driven by three major advantages of the method that are articulated in Alexander George and Andrew Bennett's landmark work, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.⁵¹ First, case studies enable in-depth investigation of the action arena as the researcher discovers the factors that are most relevant to the policy making process. The researcher designs a relevant interview protocol and looks for the insiders who have first hand experience in the investigated sets of events. In this study, in-depth interviews with experts provided more insightful explanations on the *raison d'état* of the Turkish government than a large-N survey of non-expert individuals. A quantitative study would provide insufficient and superficial implications of the motivations of the policy makers in this multifaceted issue. Second, case studies facilitate "heuristic identification" of further strong predictors of the investigated phenomenon. During the semi-structured interviewing process, the researcher is able identify and probe new factors that had been omitted by the initial research design. Third, case studies allow adjustment of "complex casual relations such as equifinality, complex interaction effects and path dependency".⁵² In this study, qualitative content analysis and expert interviews provided substantial information about the complex interaction among Turkish foreign policy makers. Power and constituencies of each actor are more easily traced by the in-depth qualitative case studies than quantitative statistical analysis with standard data sets.

⁵¹ Alexander George, and Andrew Bennett, *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2005

⁵² *ibid*

George and Bennett note that qualitative case studies necessitate extensive *process tracing evidence* to explicate multifaceted aspects of the historical events.⁵³ They maintain that in the process tracing method, the investigator “examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (p.6).⁵⁴ Moreover, the research process may require interviews to fill the gaps in secondary data that are collected from the open sources such as government documents, archives and foreign policy chronicles. This study uses the process tracing technique to map out the patterns of shifts in regional security dynamics, energy geopolitics, institutional power distribution and political aspirations of the Turkish foreign policy elites during the Erdogan Administration. As there is no relevant data set, necessary qualitative data has been collected through intensive expert interviews, media broadcasts, governmental documents and think tank reports. The expert/elite interviews function as a verification mechanism for the secondary information sources. In many political processes, secondary data only provide a superficial record of the complex interactions among the policy makers. In this research elite interviews enabled the principal investigator to delve into the black box of the state machinery and question the government officials who directly witnessed the investigated events. Moreover, the written materials may not document important processes that can incorporate key information to draw strong inferences about the research questions. Author’s interviews with the elites filled these gaps by recorded re-narration of the past events from an insider’s perspective. Given the complexity of the issues investigated and paucity of substantial secondary data, this research employed expert/elite interviews as the principal source of process tracing technique.

⁵³ *ibid*

⁵⁴ Alexander George, and Andrew Bennett, *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2005

1.3.1. Sources of data

Throughout the research process, I examined three major sources of data. The first source has been semi-structured interviews with 32 experts/elites. I visited Turkey for several months to conduct interviews with pre-identified elites/analysts and snowballed sample of key experts. Selection of the interviewees depends on two primary criteria: i) my long term observations and investigations of Turkish-Iranian intergovernmental relations, and ii) references of the pre-identified elites/analysts. The interviews were conducted entirely on a voluntary basis. The interviewees were informed about the place, time and subject of the interviews in advance. Broadly, the following elites and analysts were targeted for the expert interviews:

- Existing and previous members of the Parliamentary Commissions on/of Foreign Affairs
- Acting/retired officials/advisors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Analysts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Former ambassadors and attaches to Iran, Israel and US
- Acting/retired officials/advisors of the Ministry of Energy
- Retired army officers who work at security think tanks
- Counterterrorism experts at the General Directorate of Security
- Government affiliated security think tank analysts
- Energy analysts at major think tanks , TURKSAM⁵⁵, ORSAM⁵⁶, SDE⁵⁷, SETAV⁵⁸ and USAK⁵⁹

⁵⁵ International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM)

⁵⁶ Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM)

⁵⁷ Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE)

⁵⁸ Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV)

⁵⁹ International Strategic Research Organization (USAK)

- Foreign policy correspondents of major newspapers
- Independent expert analysts

These interviews lasted from 25 minutes to 2.5 hours. Even though I had an initial semi-structured interview protocol, I readjusted the questions in line with the expertise areas and backgrounds of the interviewees. Throughout the interviews, as well as delving into the standard questionnaire, I probed alternative themes that were emphasized by the subject. This helped to discover new factors that had been omitted by the initial research design. References of my initial interviewees lead to identification of other key interviewees in the field. I have tape recorded 18 of 32 interviews but remaining interviewees rejected any records that would reveal their identity. The interviews provided a penetrating insight into the perceptions of the policy makers throughout the change in intergovernmental relations with Iran.

The second source of data has been qualitative content analysis of the documents in Turkish, American and Iranian media broadcasts and think tank reports. Secondary interviews and special reports of major Turkish think tank organizations such as TURKSAM, ORSAM, SDE, SETAV and USAK have been obtained from their official websites. Moreover, I have been collecting the statements of the Turkish, Iranian and American government officials from the Turkish and international media between 2003 and 2010, when the change of foreign policy became apparent. The collected secondary data has been filtered, coded and integrated into the overall qualitative research process. Further updated statements of the key officials will be integrated into the ongoing data analysis process.

The third source of data is the official reports of the government agencies and international energy corporations such as the Turkish Ministry of Energy (EB), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), The Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), the Turkish Petroleum

Refineries Corporation (TUPRAS), the Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade (DTM), the Turkish Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Relations, the General Directorate of Security (EGM), Turkish Institute for Statistics (TUIK), the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) and the British Petroleum (BP). Governmental news sources such as the Diary of Foreign Affairs (Disisleri Guncesi), History of the Month (Ayin Tarihi), institutional press releases and institutional minutes of the meeting reports have been scrutinized to trace the official processes. Moreover, I reviewed various U.S. executive branch and congressional reports that are relevant to the research questions. I also obtained the predominant portion of the relevant official data and documents from these agencies since 2003. This official data has been integrated into the overall qualitative analysis process.

1.3.2. Data Analysis

As suggested by Michael Patton, the qualitative investigation methods engender voluminous data sets that may initially look unmanageable.⁶⁰ I have collected a great deal of secondary qualitative data through filtering the statements of energy and security policy makers in Turkish, Iranian and American media. The volume of the data grew even larger after transcription of the interviews. Analysis of the qualitative data is a process of sorting, reorganizing and restructuring the mass of collected information.⁶¹ For Marshall and Rossman, qualitative analysis is a “search for general statements about the relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory”.⁶² From another perspective, Schartzman and Straus claim that “probably the most fundamental

⁶⁰ Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing qualitative research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2006

⁶¹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2002

⁶² Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing qualitative research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2006, p.111

operation in the analysis of qualitative data is that of discovering significant classes of the things, persons and events and the properties which characterize them” (p.110).⁶³ In this research project, data processing and analysis helped the principal investigator to reduce the collected mass of information into manageable and interpretable chunks. I have employed a five stage qualitative analysis process:

- *Data reduction:* Streamlining and filtering out non-usable and non-interpretable data was the first stage of my analytic process. Data reduction rested on a delicate balance of losing valuable information and losing track of scrutiny in a large mass of collected data. I have avoided this problem through systematic categorization and coding of the available data.
- *Categorization:* Throughout this process I identified consistent regularities, indigenous typologies and salient categories in the interviews, media content and relevant parts of institutional reports. The consistent regularities refer to the most frequent concerns in the statements of the foreign policy makers and analysts. Indigenous typologies refer to the common pattern of explanations among certain groups such as party members, military officers, and think tank analysts. The salient categories refer to the predominant themes that are most commonly expressed by the interviewees. This process entailed concerted efforts and heightened awareness to discover the explicit and implicit undercurrents of the statements.
- *Data entry and Coding:* Interview transcripts, relevant media contents and institutional documents were coded and analyzed with NVivo *Software program*, which is an intelligent qualitative analysis tool. This Software facilitated an evenhanded entry of open

⁶³ Leonard Schatzman and Anselm Strauss, *Field research; strategies for a natural sociology*, Englewood Cliff, Prentice Hall, 1973

and axial codes in interview transcripts.⁶⁴ Nvivo helped categorizing, restructuring and reorganization of the available qualitative data. Moreover, it enabled searching, and auto linking of the relevant statements of different subjects. It allowed identification of the gaps and overlapping in the available qualitative data.

- *Interpretation and testing the assumptions:* After the systematic categorization of the data set, I tested the assumptions that are driven from review of the literature. Depending on the grounded theory approach, I investigated the major explanatory factors in three policy areas; counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security, as well as the evidence of foreign policy realignment. In this process, I also looked for alternative explanations on the growing Turkish- Iranian energy and security partnerships. The expert interviews discovered many other explanatory factors that had been omitted by the existing literature.
- *Reporting:* The analyzed qualitative texts were inserted into contextualized dissertation body. I counterposed the arguments of the existing and former policy makers and analysts in an analytical manner. I also presented countervailing arguments and criticisms of the Erdogan Administration's policy of rapprochement with the Iranian governments.

1.3.3. Limitations and field method challenges

I encountered two major field method challenges during this research project. The first challenge was encouraging particularly high ranking security officials to talk on this sensitive issue. To overcome this barrier, I reminded them of the qualitative research safeguards and signed a protocol to maintain their anonymity. I tape recorded more than half of the interviews with a

⁶⁴ For more information please see <http://www.qualrus.com/>

digital voice recorder. Before each interview, I asked for consent of the interviewee for recording and keeping their voices until the transcription. All voice records were kept in network secure hard drives and deleted after the transcription. Some of the subjects rejected revealing their identity and tape recording. In these cases, I took written notes of their statements. I will deliver a copy of my dissertation to the interviewees to assure their protection and accuracy of the quotations.

The second challenge was getting appointments with high level officials within their tight schedules. Some of them rejected my request for an interview. To overcome the reluctance problem I used social networking references. I had no difficulty, however, in getting appointments with the most prominent Iran specialists at the major think tanks, TURKSAM, ORSAM, SDE, SETAV and USAK. As a government official, I had direct connections with many relevant mid-level officials and had no trouble in accessing government employed energy/security analysts.⁶⁵

1.4. CHAPTER OUTLINE

This dissertation is comprised of seven chapters. *Chapter 1* presents the general introduction of the proposed dissertation. It sets forth the thesis statement, background of the problem, the research puzzle, research questions, purpose and significance of the study, and the roadmap of the research process. The second part of this chapter presents the methodology of this research process. It outlines how data was collected, coded, analyzed, interpreted and reported. It first delineates the characteristics of the sample group of experts and strategies in the interviewing

⁶⁵ Many of the targeted interviewees are my former colleagues or their constituents.

process. Second, it provides details of data reduction and categorization process that transformed the data mass into an interpretable information source. Third, it elucidates how qualitative data is handled to draw inferences about each research question. Fourth, it expounds potential field method challenges and my strategies to overcome these barriers.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on theories/models of foreign policy change, and four different approaches to foreign policy change in Turkey. The literature review is divided into three major parts. The first part presents various definitions of the concept of foreign policy change. Then it reviews the premises of major works and models of foreign policy change since World War II. It discusses underlying reasons and various dimensions of foreign policy change ranging from adjustment change to reorientation. It presents strengths and weaknesses of the existing models of change. The second part presents the main arguments and theoretical underpinnings of three systematic approaches to foreign policy change; a security approach, a domestic politics approach and an aspirational approach. The third part of this chapter adopts the security approach as an analytical tool in investigation of intergovernmental rapprochement between Turkey and Iran. It first identifies the key actors in the foreign policy machinery of the Turkish state. Then, it operationalizes the security model to explore the perceptions of decision makers in the action arena. During the operationalization process, core propositions of the security approach are presented regarding counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security policies. It asks further sub-questions to explicate the concerns, motivations and judgments of the policy makers.

Chapter 3 focuses on the underlying reasons for counterterrorism rapprochement between the Erdogan Administration and Iranian governments. This chapter analyzes the effects of nine internal and external factors that have been identified throughout the grounded qualitative

analysis process; i) resurgence of PKK after the U.S. occupation of Iraq, ii) unsatisfactory U.S. cooperation against the PKK, iii) Various crises between Washington and Ankara, iv) Iran's concerted efforts against the PKK, v) Iran's effective public diplomacy, vi) convergence of the regional security policies of Ankara and Tehran, vii) shifting threat perceptions of key foreign policy makers, viii) consensus among the key foreign policy actors, and ix) legitimization of the relations with Iran. It presents the statements of foreign policy elites, analysts and government officials to understand the concerns of the Erdogan Administration that have driven the ongoing bilateral counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian government.

Chapter 4 lays out the underlining reasons for the Erdogan Administration's unequivocal support for Iran's nuclear energy program. This chapter addresses two sub-questions; i) Why did Turkey choose not to bandwagon with American-Israeli containment of nuclear Iran? ii) How do Turkish foreign policy makers conceive Iran's nuclear ambitions? Moreover, this chapter explicates six perceptions held by key officials that infuse the current posture of the Erdogan Administration towards the Iranian nuclear program; i) Iran has an inalienable right to develop nuclear energy, ii) the Iranian nuclear program poses no significant threat to Turkish security, iii) economic sanctions will not work, iv) military intervention will bring about catastrophic consequences, iv) the NPT regime is flawed and serves the nuclear status quo, v) denuclearization in the Middle East should start with elimination of Israel's nuclear arsenal, vi) only multilateral diplomatic approaches that facilitate direct negotiations between Tehran and Washington can resolve the nuclear conflict.

Chapter 5 investigates the exploratory power of the energy security approach in the Turkish-Iranian rapprochement. It discusses why the Erdogan Administration forged an energy partnership with Iran despite strong opposition from the U.S. and Israel. It discusses the impacts

of six factors that have been identified throughout the grounded qualitative research; i) reducing dependency on Russia, ii) balancing Russia's predominance in energy supply, iii) supply disruptions in Iraq, iv) growing domestic demand, v) reducing vulnerability to supply disruptions, v) aspirations to be an interregional energy hub. This chapter attempts to answer the following sub-questions. What were principal concerns of key actors in the Turkish government's energy apparatus? To what extent Turkey has been dependent on Russian and Iraqi energy resources? What are the alternatives to reduce dependency on these two major energy suppliers? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives? Why did Iran emerge as the most viable alternative? Why did Turkey sign major energy agreements with Iran during the Erdogan Administrations? What are the stances of key energy actors in the Turkish government and bureaucracy? What are the arguments of the proponents and opponents of the energy partnership policy with Iran? Why does Turkey disregard American and Israeli demands to terminate the ongoing energy partnership with Iran?

Chapter 6 discusses whether the three-tiered security partnership (counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy) with Iran indicates a realignment of Turkey in the international system. This chapter addresses several sub-questions. To what extent has Turkey been satisfied with its alignment with the West? Is the Erdogan Administration's rapprochement policy with Iran driven by practical concerns or Islamic identity? How did the growth of pan-Islamism affect relations with post-revolutionary Iran? Is Iran the only country with which the Erdogan administration developed partnerships? What is the place of the relationship with Iran in the new grand strategy of Turkey? Who are the proponents (revisionists) of rapprochement with Iran and what are their arguments? Who are the opponents (pro-status quo groups) of policy and what are their main concerns? Why did the revisionist posture prevail during the Erdogan Administration?

What are the advantages of security partnership with Iran at the expense of weakening strategic ties with Israel and the US? Does rapprochement with Iran means realignment towards the Muslim World.

Chapter 7 presents the *conclusions* of this qualitative research project. It compares and contrasts the assumptions of the literature review with the findings from the field research. It presents the ultimate synthesis about the explanatory power of each internal and external factor influencing the Turkish-Iranian energy and security partnerships in a complex geopolitical setting. Second, it provides suggestions for further research projects that are determined to investigate Turkish-Iranian relations from an energy security standpoint

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Change and realignment are two permeating issues in foreign policy analysis. The question of why states realign remains an essential debate in foreign policy discourse. Turkey's rapprochement with Iran during the Erdogan Administration indicates a profound shift in its traditional course of foreign policy. This study investigates why the Erdogan Administration forged a security partnership with Iran, and whether this partnership indicates realignment of Turkey in the international system. In accordance, the following literature review discusses why nations change the course of foreign policy and evaluates the explanatory power of major models.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents various perspectives on the concept of foreign policy change. It then reviews the premises of major works on foreign policy change since World War II. In this context, it presents foreign policy change models of preeminent scholars such as James Rosenau, Kalevi Holsti, Robert Gilpin, Charles Herman, Jerel A. Rosati and Jakob Gustavsson. It discusses underlying reasons and various dimensions of foreign policy change ranging from adjustment change to reorientation. It presents the strengths and weaknesses of existing models of change.

The second part examines three systematic approaches to foreign policy change; the security approach, the domestic politics approach and the aspirational approach. The *security approach* propounds that states shift the course of foreign policy in response to emerging

security threats. As the ultimate goal of the states is survival in an anarchic international system, they adjust alliance patterns in line with the shifting dynamics of external security. According to the *domestic politics approach*, foreign policy is formulated within various spheres of competence by pulling and hauling among the presidents, foreign ministers, defense ministers, national security advisers, military commanders and organizational leaders. Foreign policy change is driven by domestic factors such as regime changes, realignment of constituents, institutional restructuring and shifts in domestic distribution of power among the foreign policy makers. The shift in foreign policy can be accentuated by major economic and political crises in domestic politics. According to the *aspirational approach*, norms, identities and aspirations, rather than rational calculations and interests of the key actors, give meaning to foreign policy actions. The course of foreign policy shifts in line with the changes in deeper norms, national aspirations and political identities.

The third part of this chapter adopts the security approach as an analytical tool in the investigation of the intergovernmental rapprochement between Turkey and Iran. It first identifies the key actors in the foreign policy machinery of the Turkish state. Then it discusses the roles, powers and common patterns of interactions among the actors throughout the decision making process. Ultimately, it operationalizes the security model to explore the perceptions of decision makers in the action arena. During the operationalization process, core propositions of the security approach are presented regarding counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security policies. It asks further sub-questions to explicate the concerns, motivations and judgments of the policy makers.

2.1. DEFINITION, DIMENSIONS AND EARLY MODELS OF FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

Over the past three decades we have been observing dramatic foreign policy changes in line with the shifting dynamics of domestic and international politics. Dissolution of the Soviet bloc, triumph of capitalism, rise of political Islam, European integration, rise of East Asia, conflicts over the natural resources and proliferation of non-state security threats precipitated the changes in the course of foreign policy. These developments inspired a number of scholars such as James Rosenau⁶⁶, Kalevi Holsti⁶⁷, Charles Herman⁶⁸, Jerel A. Rosati⁶⁹ and Jakob Gustavsson⁷⁰ to study the underlying reasons of foreign policy change and realignment, which had been mostly neglected throughout the Cold War. During the bipolar strategic rivalry, students of foreign policy devoted much energy to systemic and static analysis but little attention was devoted to the dynamics of change.

After the 1980s, a growing array of analysts began to focus on analysis of change in line with tectonic transformations in domestic politics and the international system. These scholars presented various definitions of foreign policy change that ranged from restructuring to realignment. Among them, Jerel A. Rosati defines change as “foreign policy phenomena that experience broad alteration, ranging from more modest shifts to major foreign policy

⁶⁶ James Rosenau, *The Study of Political Adaptation* F. Pinter; Nichols Pub. Co, New York, 1981.

⁶⁷ Kalevi Holsti, *Why Nations Realign: Foreign Policy Restructuring in the Postwar World* Allen & Unwin Pty, Australia, 1982

⁶⁸ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990.

⁶⁹ Jerel A. Rosati, JD Hagan, and MW Sampson, *Foreign Policy Restructuring: How Governments Respond to Global Change*, Univ of South Carolina, 1994

⁷⁰ Jacob Gustavsson, "How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change?," *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 1, 1999.

restructuring”.⁷¹ He defines continuity as “broad patterns in foreign policy that tend to persist over time, encompassing more micro and incremental changes”.⁷² For James Rosenau, foreign policy is an adaptation instrument to the changes in international politics.⁷³ He maintains that the “political organism is always experiencing both continuities and change, and thus it is always in motion, slipping behind, moving ahead, holding fast, or otherwise adjusting and changing in response to internal developments and external circumstances”.⁷⁴ Therefore, he argues that studying dynamics of political adaptation is essential to comprehend the foreign policy redirection. Volgy and Schwarz define the concept of realignment as “a fundamental and comprehensive change in foreign policy orientation of a nation, over a very short time, as manifested through behavioral changes in a nation’s interactions with other actors in international politics.”⁷⁵ (p.24). Holsti and his associates define restructuring as “the dramatic wholesale alteration of a nation’s pattern of external relations”.⁷⁶

A growing array of analysts concur that the scope of foreign policy change ranges from adjustment change to reorientation.⁷⁷ Charles Herman identifies four major types of foreign policy change. First, *adjustment changes* refer to the shift in efforts and methods to achieve certain goals.⁷⁸ Second, *program changes* indicate qualitative changes in methodology and

⁷¹ Jerel A. Rosati, "Cycles in Foreign Policy Restructuring; The politics of Continuity and Change in the U.S. foreign policy", in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan and Martin W. Samptson, (eds), *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, University of South Caroline Press, South Caroline, 1994,

⁷² *ibid*, p.225

⁷³ James Rosenau, *The Study of Political Adaptation* F. Pinter; Nichols Pub. Co, New York, 1981

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 1-2

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.24

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, (p.ix)

⁷⁷ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990; Holsti, *Why Nations Realign: Foreign Policy Restructuring in the Postwar World*; Rosati, "Cycles in Foreign Policy Restructuring," *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, 1994; Gustavsson, "How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change?," Volgy and Schwarz, "Foreign Policy Restructuring and the Myriad Webs of Restraint," *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, 1994

⁷⁸ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990.

instruments of statecraft. Third, *problem/goal changes* imply the redirection of the goals and aspirations of the state's foreign policy machinery. Fourth, *International orientation change*, is the most fundamental shift in foreign policy direction. Throughout the reorientation process states redefine their allies, policy priorities, purposes and the methods to achieve these goals. In Skidmore's view, change in foreign policy bifurcates into "evolutionary" and "sporadic".⁷⁹ For him, the degree of change associates with relative power of the state within the international system and level of support from domestic constituents. Evolutionary changes are more common in weak states, whereas strong states only experience sporadic changes in foreign policy orientation. Rosenau concurs that domestic and international developments can mutually reinforce each other, and foreign policy shifts "when the developments at home give rise to new needs and wants with respect to their environment, or when developments abroad give rise to political threats to their essential structures."⁸⁰

Gilpin⁸¹, Rosenau⁸² and Rosati⁸³ conceive foreign policy restructuring as a cyclical process that combines continuity, transition and change. The cyclical models entail long-term observation of single cases studies to identify the drivers of change. As seen in figure 2.1, Rosati argues that the "interaction of the state, the society, and the global environment produces a dialectical process where governmental foreign policy evolves through different cycles or phases

⁷⁹ David Skidmore, "Explaining State Responses to International Change; The Structural Sources of Foreign Policy Rigidity and Change", in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan and Martin W. Samptson, (eds), *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, University of South Caroline Press, South Caroline, 1994

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 42

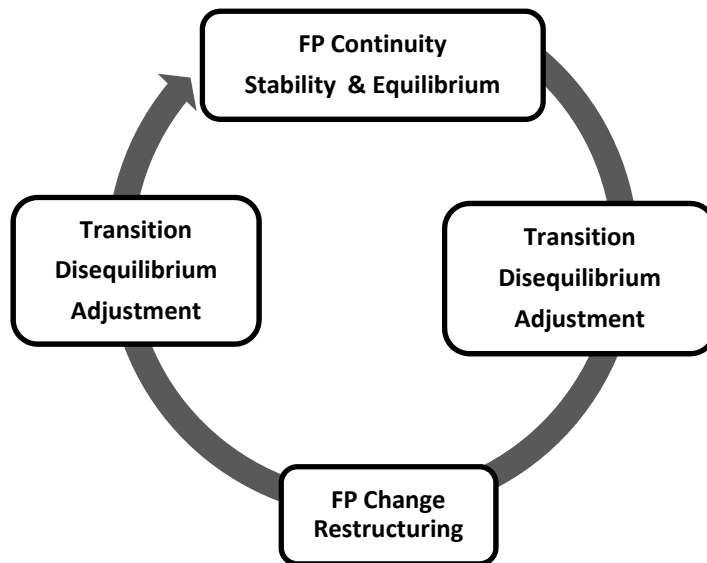
⁸¹ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983

⁸² James Rosenau, "Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy," in Barry Farrell (eds) *Approaches to comparative and international Politics*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1966

⁸³ Jerel A. Rosati, "Cycles in Foreign Policy Restructuring; The politics of Continuity and Change in the U.S. foreign policy", in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan and Martin W. Samptson, (eds), *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, University of South Caroline Press, South Caroline, 1994

over time; from a period of stability in which continuity in policy tends to prevail to a period of transition.”⁸⁴

Figure 2.1: Rosati’s cyclical model of foreign policy change



For Rosati, the periods of transition may produce four major outcomes: i) “intensification”, ii) “refinement”, iii) “reform”, and iv) “restructuring”.⁸⁵ *Intensification* refers to strengthening of existing posture and lack of change in policy objectives and procedures. *Intensification* is more likely when the status quo powers face no major challenge. *Refinement* means minor alterations when the government and the society undergo cyclical continuity and change patterns. *Reform* indicates moderate amendments in the party program and orientation of foreign policy. *Restructuring* is the most dynamic process where governments make profound changes in foreign policy programs and orientation. States may realign to overcome major challenges in foreign policy practice.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.223

⁸⁵ Ibid.

In addition to domestic cycles of change, various foreign policy analysts put emphasis on cycles of stability and transition in the international system. Robert Gilpin argues that the challenge of strong revisionist powers leads to turbulence and may overturn the stability in the international system.⁸⁶ Foreign policies of both revisionist and status quo powers may undergo tumultuous changes during the transition process. The world experiences an era of disequilibrium until a new international system is established. Jerel A. Rosati acknowledges that international organizations, agreements and commitments function as instruments of the status quo, whereas crises may overturn the stability in the international system.⁸⁷ For him, states redefine foreign policy priorities and partnership strategies as the system builds upon new balances of power.

Kalevi Holsti advanced the study of foreign policy restructuring with his prolific works throughout the 1980s. Most notably, in *Why Nations Realign*, Holsti differentiates incremental foreign policy change and restructuring, and notes that restructuring occurs more abruptly and fundamentally than sporadic change.⁸⁸ Holsti identifies four major types of restructuring; i) “isolation”, ii) “self reliance”, iii) “dependence”, and iv) “diversification”.⁸⁹ He investigates foreign policy change in 25 countries and claims that the developed countries are less likely to restructure foreign policy because they are more satisfied with the existing patterns of relations in the status quo. On the flipside, the states at the periphery are more prone to reorientation as they are not content with the international distribution of power. Holsti acknowledges that foreign policy restructuring at the periphery does not propel significant reaction from the major

⁸⁶ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983

⁸⁷ Jerel A. Rosati, "Cycles in Foreign Policy Restructuring: The politics of Continuity and Change in the U.S. foreign policy", in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan and Martin W. Samptson, (eds), *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, University of South Caroline Press, South Caroline, 1994

⁸⁸ Kalevi Holsti, *Why Nations Realign: Foreign Policy Restructuring in the Postwar World* Allen & Unwin Pty, Australia, 1982

⁸⁹ Ibid, p.6

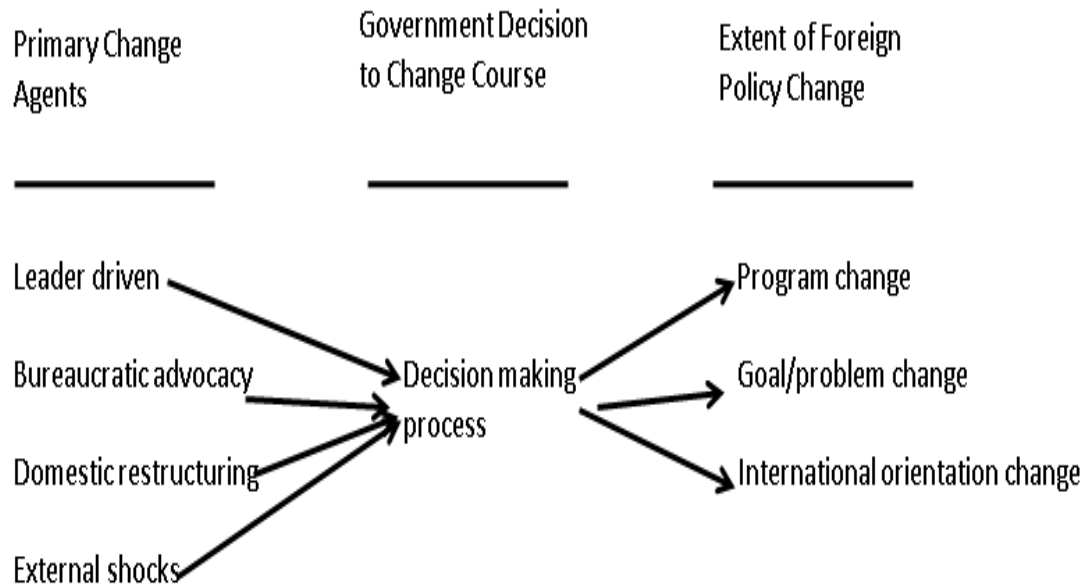
powers because it does not radically change the global balance of power. However, reorientation of the major powers is more likely to “exacerbate international tensions and the result in a variety of coercive, punitive and violent responses by the former hegemons.”⁹⁰

According to Charles Herman, foreign policy change is driven by four different factors; leaders, bureaucratic interplay, domestic realignment and external shocks (See figure 2.2).⁹¹ *Leader driven change* is mostly experienced in autocratic regimes where leaders demonstrate strong proclivity to unilateralism and domestic opposition is weak. In this type, subjective calculations, threat perceptions and the world vision of the leaders underpin the shift in the course of foreign policy. *Bureaucratic advocacy driven change* refers to a multilateral process in the institutional domain. In this approach change is the product of constant bargaining among the organizational leaders. Revisionist and pro-status quo leaders develop coalitions and constituencies to gain the upper hand in the bureaucratic bargaining process. *Domestic restructuring* indicates major shift in postures of politically awakened segments of society. The most common form is transformation of the agents of stability into agents of revision. Domestic realignment intensifies when the public is highly discontent with the dominant political paradigm. Ultimately, *external shocks* precipitate the incentives to redirect foreign policy. The external shocks may be in the form of military encroachment, economic crisis or major energy supply disruptions. The government’s failure to respond to these changes stimulates the incentives to shift the traditional course of foreign policy. For Herman, the primary change agents can be mutually reinforcing. For example, external shocks may have profound implications on domestic politics and may even spark a process of regime change.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p.218

⁹¹ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* , 3-21, 1990.

Figure 2.2: Charles Herman's model of foreign policy change



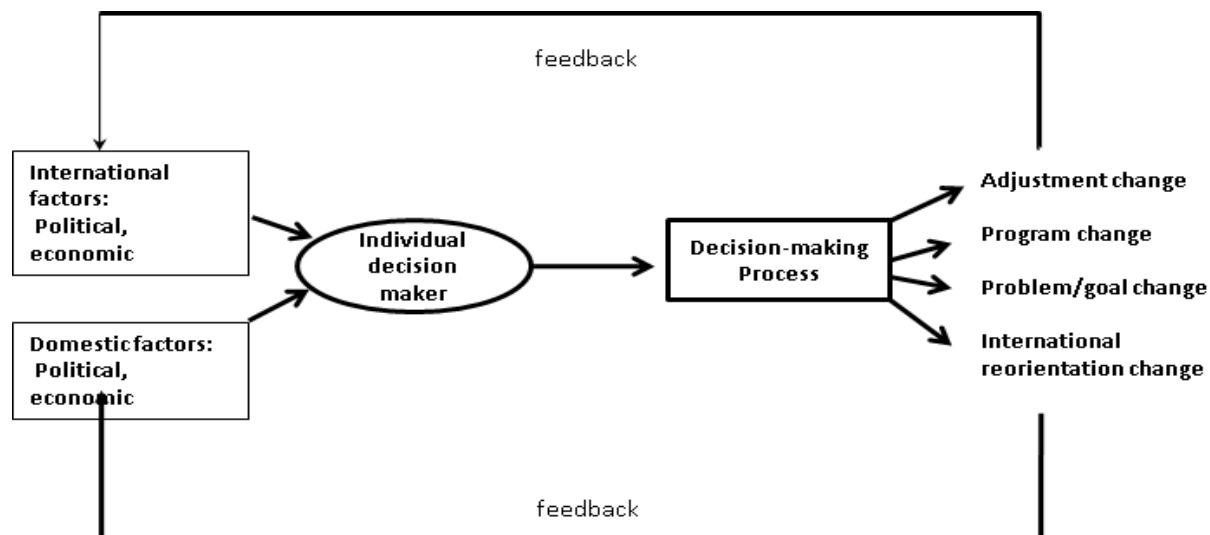
Andriole, Wilkenfeld and Hopple argue that comprehensive foreign policy investigations should employ five levels of analysis; i) “individual, ii) “group”, iii), “composite group” or “state”, iv) “inter and/or multistate”, and v) “global systemic”.⁹² For them, even though the foreign policy behavior of states take place at the fourth level, a foreign policy analyst should take into account the developments at all the levels, because an overwhelming driver might come out of any of these spheres. For Charles Herman, the foreign policy decisions emerge as a response to problems.⁹³ The response of the compartmentalized decision makers at three levels - predominant leader, single group, and coalition- may be fundamentally different from each other.

⁹² Stephen J. Andriole, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, and Gerald W. Hopple, "A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy Behavior," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.19 No.2, 1975

⁹³ Charles F. Hermann, "Avoiding Pathologies in Foreign Policy Decision Groups," *Diplomacy, Force and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander L. George*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1993; Charles F. Hermann, CW Kegley, and JN Rosenau, *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Allen & Unwin Pty., Limited, Australia, 1987; Charles Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy."

If the decision maker is a predominant leader, the analysts need to identify whether the leader is more prone to multiple advocacy or unilateralism. The analysts should investigate the power and characteristics of the key constituents if the leader is more prone to multiple advocacy. Herman notes that the single leaders are less prone to domestic opposition, whereas the pluralist democracies are more concerned with domestic constituencies.

Figure 2.3: Gustavvson’s model of foreign policy change



Jakob Gustavsson’s model offered a more promising analytical framework.⁹⁴ As seen in figure 2.3, Gustavsson argues that foreign policy change is driven by complex array of international and domestic developments that open policy windows towards more favorable environments. For Gustavvson, international factors refer to “power relations and the traditional military aspects of national security” that are examined thoroughly by the realist school of international politics.⁹⁵ The domestic factors bifurcate into economic and political aspects. The political aspect refers to “the support from voters, political parties, and societal actors to uphold a

⁹⁴ Jacob Gustavsson, "How Should We Study Foreign Policy Change?," *Cooperation and Conflict* 34, no. 1, 1999.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p.83

certain foreign policy”.⁹⁶ The economic aspect focuses on “GDP growth, the rate of inflation, and the level of unemployment in addition to institutional conditions influencing the relationship between the state and the parties of the labor market”.⁹⁷ Foreign policy makers deliberate on international and domestic factors and ultimate decisions are made through constant pulling and hauling among competing policy alternatives. Gustavsson believes that the actions of the individual decision makers are socially constructed and cyclical feedbacks in internal and external environment can have determining impact on the decision making process.

Gustavsson argues that foreign policy change will be a turbulent process when policy entrepreneurs face substantial opposition from pro-status quo leaders. Both revisionists and status-quo groups develop coalitions with compatible constituents to bring about the preferred outcome in the governmental bargaining process. Political identities, threat perceptions and cognitive elements define the nature of reformist and anti-reformist coalitions. As well as the power of these coalitions, the level of institutionalization and volume of internal/external crisis and social feedbacks might significantly affect the level of change in the course of foreign policy.

2.2. THREE SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES TO FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

2.2.1. SECURITY APPROACH

According to the security approach, the primary goal of the state is survival in an anarchic international system. Partnership and alliance strategies are built upon rational calculations of

⁹⁶ Ibid, p.83

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.83

balances of threat.⁹⁸ From the security perspective, foreign policy restructuring is fundamentally driven by the shifting balances of threat at the external environment. In other words, governments shift foreign policy alignments or reformulate alliances to respond changing dynamics of external security. The alignment strategy may be in the form of balancing or bandwagoning with the source of external threat. Foreign policy makers rationally chose the most appropriate policy option among two alternatives. In this approach, the states are more likely to balance against growing external threats.

Theoretical underpinnings of the security approach have been drawn from the realist school of international politics. Stephen Walt claims that the perception of the external threat is the main incentive for the alliance-making strategies of states.⁹⁹ In determining the volume of threat Walt looks at four criteria; i) *aggregate power*, ii) *offensive power*, iii) *geographic proximity* and iv) *aggressive intentions*. For Walt, foreign policy makers have greater tendency to balance against growing external threats, because “it is safer to balance against potential threats than to hope that strong states will remain benevolent”.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Kenneth Waltz argues that the states forge alliances to ensure survival in an anarchic international system.¹⁰¹ For him, states realign when they contend that the existing alliance systems are incompatible with national security. For Mearsheimer, states shift the course of foreign policy or alliance patterns when the nature, extent and direction of external threats undergo profound changes.¹⁰²

In the traditional realist lens, the primary source of threats has always been states. Indeed, only a few major states really mattered after the advent of nuclear weapons and intercontinental

⁹⁸ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1987

⁹⁹ Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security*, Vol 72, No.3, 1985

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.15

¹⁰¹ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1979

¹⁰² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, WW Norton & Company, New York, 2003,

ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The disproportionate destruction capability of nuclear weapons made it unlikely that non-nuclear states pursue aggressive postures against major nuclear powers. Therefore, the nonnuclear states sought alliances with either the USSR or USA to take advantage of the nuclear deterrence shields of these superpowers throughout the Cold War. Kenneth Waltz¹⁰³ John Mearsheimer¹⁰⁴ and Stephen Walt¹⁰⁵ do not perceive non non-state actors (i.e. terrorism and transnational crime) as a major threat to the security of the states. They believe that the states will remain as the dominant actors, power projectors and source of threat in international politics. Kenneth Waltz notes that terrorism “hardly pose threats to the fabric of a society or the security of the state...Instead, the effect of September 11 has been to enhance American power and extend its military presence in the World”.¹⁰⁶ Mearsheimer and Walt note that the *ad hoc* counterterrorism alliances or temporary “coalitions of the willing” against the elusive terrorism threat does not change the basic principle of international alliances.¹⁰⁷ For them, the main source of external threat remains major states with nuclear power rather than non-state actors that have no substantial economic, political and military power. Therefore, the threats from the major states will remain as the principal drive of alignment in international system.

Another group of security scholars such as Phil Williams¹⁰⁸, Thomas Risse Kappen¹⁰⁹, Bruce Hoffman¹¹⁰, and Thomas Homer Dixon¹¹¹ argue that non-state actors, mainly terror

¹⁰³ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1, 2000

¹⁰⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, WW Norton & Company, New York, 2003,

¹⁰⁵ Stephen M. Walt, "Beyond Bin Laden: Reshaping U.S. Foreign Policy," *International Security* 26, no. 3, 2002

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Continuity of International Politics," in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne (eds), *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, Palgrave, New York, 2003, p.349

¹⁰⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "An Unnecessary War," *Foreign Policy*, Jan/Feb, 2003

¹⁰⁸ Phil Williams, "Transnational Criminal Networks" in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (eds), *Networks and netwars: the future of terror, crime, and militancy*, RAND, Santa Monica, 2001, ———, "Transnational Criminal Organisations and International Security," *Survival* 36, no. 1, 1994

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995

¹¹⁰ Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006 ———, "The Changing Face of Al Qaeda and the Global War on Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no. 6, 2004

organizations and transnational criminal networks, began to pose a substantial threat to national security in the post Cold War world. Many states listed terrorism as the principal national security threat and counterterrorism has become the primary thrust of national security policy particularly after 9/11 terror attacks. In their view, traditional forms of strategic alliances became obsolete and the states began to develop nontraditional coalitions against elusive terror organizations that can penetrate into any society and strike from any direction.¹¹²

Concomitantly, resurgence of separatist terrorism in many countries such as Turkey, Russia, China, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Syria and India forced these countries to develop security partnerships with other countries that are exposed to the same threat.¹¹³

In addition to conventional state and non-state threats, energy security has become an increasingly important element of security policy over the past century in parallel with the growing importance of hydrocarbon resources for economic, military and industrial performance. According to this approach, “energy indicates national prosperity and underwrites national security. States now desire energy security in the same sense that they desire military and economic security.”¹¹⁴ The energy security approach argues that states shift the course of foreign policy to avoid major supply disruptions and prevent use of hydrocarbon resources as a political

¹¹¹ Thomas Homer-Dixon, "The Rise of Complex Terrorism," *Foreign Policy*, No. 128 (Jan. - Feb., 2002), pp. 52-62

¹¹² M.R. Haberfeld, Joseph F. King, and Charles Andrew Lieberman, *Terrorism within Comparative International Context: The Counter-Terrorism Response and Preparedness*, Springer, 2009; Peter Katona, Michael D. Intriligator, and John P. Sullivan, *Countering Terrorism and Wmd: Creating a Global Counter-Terrorism Network*, Routledge, 2006

¹¹³ M.R. Haberfeld, Joseph F. King, and Charles Andrew Lieberman, *Terrorism within Comparative International Context: The Counter-Terrorism Response and Preparedness*, Springer, 2009; PJ Bolt, C Su, and S Cross, *The United States, Russia, and China: Confronting Global Terrorism and Security Challenges in the 21st Century* (Praeger Security Intl, 2008), Amos N. Guiaro, *Global Perspectives on Counterterrorism* (New York: Aspen Publishers, 2007), RW Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000: The Kurdish and Islamist Questions* (Mazda Pub, 2001).

¹¹⁴ Amelie Hadfield, "Energy and Foreign Policy: Eu-Russia Energy Dynamics," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. S Smith, A Hadfield, and T Dunne (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 323.

leverage.¹¹⁵ The second proposition of the energy security model is that states develop alternative pipeline networks in order to prevent monopolistic control of energy supply networks by certain countries.¹¹⁶ Therefore, in this approach, states shift the course of foreign policy to avoid major energy supply disruptions and balance against monopolistic control of energy transportation networks.

Theoretical foundations of energy security have been laid out since the Arab Oil Embargo (1973) when the developed world experienced a dramatic crisis due to major supply disruptions.¹¹⁷ Since then many scholars argue that energy security should become the pivotal goal of foreign affairs and replace the preponderant military agenda in foreign policy discourse.¹¹⁸ For them, the primary goal of overseas engagement and military deployment should be to ensure continuous supply of energy resources at a reasonable price. Kalicki and Goldwyn propose that the states should “evolve from more traditional foreign policy view, preoccupied with military security issues, to a modern view that addresses economic and political factors and recognizes that world events are determined far more by flow of resources -human and natural- than by flow of officials and diplomats or even soldiers” (p.9).¹¹⁹ In a similar vein, John Gault notes that, energy security is “inextricable from broader economic and foreign policy changes

¹¹⁵ John Ikenberry, *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1988

¹¹⁶ Jan H. Kalicki and David L. Goldwyn, "Introduction: The Need to Integrate Energy and Foreign Policy," in Kalicki, JH and Goldwyn, *Energy and Security: Toward a New Foreign Policy Strategy*, John Hopkins University Press-Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005

¹¹⁷ John Ikenberry, *Reasons of State: Oil Politics and the Capacities of American Government*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1988.

¹¹⁸ Amelie Hadfield, "Energy and Foreign Policy: Eu-Russia Energy Dynamics," in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, ed. S Smith, A Hadfield, and T Dunne (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 323; Kalicki and Goldwyn, "Introduction: The Need to Integrate Energy and Foreign Policy.", D Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (Free Press, 2008).

¹¹⁹ Kalicki and Goldwyn, "Introduction: The Need to Integrate Energy and Foreign Policy."; Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*, Free Press, 2008, , p.9

and solutions”.¹²⁰ Barry Buzan places energy security within the intersecting realms of economic and military security.¹²¹ From an economic standpoint, the centerpiece of oil geopolitics has been sustainable supply of energy at a reasonable price. Uninterrupted energy supply is crucial for economic power projection. From a military perspective, oil became a fundamental instrument for operability of the military forces after the end of World War I. Buzan believes that energy security can drive the “high politics” of the state, despite the fact that it is a “soft” component of the global security.¹²² According to Daniel Yergin, the fundamental principle of oil geopolitics is diversification of suppliers to reduce vulnerability to major disruptions. For him, energy security means consistent and affordable supply of hydrocarbon resources to consumers such as Turkey, EU and the US. For the suppliers such as Russia, Iran and Iraq, energy security means sustainable and absorbing markets for long term export of natural resources. Put another way, the importing countries are more concerned with the security of supply, whereas exporting countries are more concerned with the security of the demand. Yergin suggests that energy dependent countries always search for alternative suppliers to reduce vulnerability to supply disruptions and supplier’s proclivity to use of oil/gas as political leverage.¹²³

2.2.2. DOMESTIC POLITICS APPROACH

The domestic politics model delves into the black box of the executive branch and investigates the roles, concerns, power and constituents of each actor in the decision making process.

¹²⁰ John Gault, "Eu Energy Security and the Periphery," *European Union Foreign and Security Policy: Towards a Neighbourhood Strategy*, Routledge, London, 2004, p.170

¹²¹ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, University of North Carolina Press, North Carline 1983

¹²² Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, University of North Carolina Press, North Carline 1983

¹²³ Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*, Free Press, 2008; Daniel Yergin, "Ensuring Energy Security," *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2, 2006.

Fundamental precepts of this approach have been drawn from the literature on bureaucratic politics, particularly from the works of Graham Allison, and the book by Spanier and Uslaner. In domestic politics approach, the state is not a unitary rational actor. Instead, it is a sphere of competence in which foreign policy decisions are formulated through constant pulling and hauling among the key actors. In this model, bureaucratic leaders are not submissive actors, but strive to influence the governmental decision-making process in line with their institutional views or parochial interests.¹²⁴ Organizational interests range from expansion of power, influence and budget to restructuring of the government machinery. According to the domestic politics approach, realignment of foreign policy is driven by domestic factors such as regime changes, realignment of constituents, institutional restructuring and shifts in domestic distribution of power among the foreign policy makers.

The theoretical foundations of the domestic politics model were laid by the post war institutionalists, who argued that systemic factors could not account for all the variations in foreign policy behavior. In this vein, growing array of foreign policy analysts such as Richard Snyder¹²⁵, Graham Allison¹²⁶ and Morton Halperin¹²⁷ began to place more emphasis on the bureaucratic politics and internal dynamics of the state's foreign policy apparatus. The institutionalists reject the realist assumption that states are rational unitary actors. The domestic politics approach "breaks apart the monolithic view of nation-states as unitary actors. It focuses

¹²⁴ Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII, NO.3, 1969; MH Halperin, P Clapp, and A Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Brookings Institution Press, 1974).

¹²⁵ Richard Snyder, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1954

¹²⁶ Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII, NO.3, 1969

¹²⁷ Morton Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, and Arnold Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 1974

on the people and the unit that comprise the state.”¹²⁸ According to this model, foreign policy making is a multifaceted bargaining process among the political, bureaucratic and military leaders. Allison and Zelikow assert that the outcome of the institutional bargaining process is profoundly different from unilateral rational calculations of presidents.¹²⁹ The domestic politics approach propounds that bureaucratic organizations are quasi-sovereign powers with pivotal roles in “forging and wielding” of the foreign affairs.¹³⁰ Snyder concurs that foreign policy decisions are formulated through interaction of at least three clusters of variables; i) “spheres of competence”, ii) “communication and information”, and iii) “motivation”. For him, foreign policy behavior is the upshot of an intensive bargaining process among various “spheres of competence” in the government.¹³¹ Throughout the decision making process, each actor applies various strategies to promote specific preferences over the countervailing postures.

According to the domestic politics approach, changes in the course of foreign policy are driven by domestic factors such as regime changes, realignment of constituents, institutional restructuring, and shifts in distribution of power among the foreign policy makers. The policy domain is comprised of pro-status quo and revisionist actors. Each of these actors may pursue national, organizational or parochial interests in seeking change or preserving the status quo. Powers, constituencies, images and commitments of each side determine the nature and extent of change. Charles Herman notes that foreign policy processes may have six different outcomes: i) “one party’s position prevails”, ii) “concurrence”, iii) “mutual compromise/consensus”, iv)

¹²⁸ VM Hudson and CS Vore, "Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Mershon International Studies Review* (1995): 210.

¹²⁹ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Longman, 1999).

¹³⁰ Halperin, Clapp, and Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Snyder, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, Allison and Zelikow, Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*.

¹³¹ Richard Snyder, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1954

“lopsided compromise”, v) “deadlock”, and vi) “fragmented symbolic action”.¹³² Herman argues that intensive cohesion among the revisionist decision makers increases the likelihood of fundamental shifts in foreign policy particularly when status quo is discredited by policy failures and crisis.¹³³ Alex George asserts that high levels of coordination and cohesion among the opposition groups may yield dramatic shifts in the original version of the revisionist policy.¹³⁴

According to Alex George, redirection of the foreign policy is more likely during times of sociopolitical instability and crisis, whereas the status quo is more likely to prevail in highly institutionalized stable environments.¹³⁵ For Graham Allison, “dramatic change occurs usually in response to major disasters. Confronted with an undeniable failure of procedures and repertoires, authorities outside the organization demand change, existing personnel are less resistant to change and key members of the organization are replaced by individuals committed to change”.¹³⁶ Charles Herman concurs that turbulent change is more likely when large segments of the society are discontented with the existing paradigms.¹³⁷

In this model, foreign policy is an extension of domestic politics and changes in both realms can be mutually reinforcing.¹³⁸ This model posits that “political processes do not operate independently, but rather are important to the extent that they condition the impact of the broader

¹³² Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990

¹³³ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990

¹³⁴ Alex George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, Westview Press Boulder, CO, 2000, ———, "Domestic Constraints on Regime Change in U.S. Foreign Policy: The Need for Policy Legitimacy," *Change in the international system* (1980), ———, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *The American Political Science Review* (1972).

¹³⁵ *ibid*

¹³⁶ Graham Allison, "Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis." (p.85)

¹³⁷ Charles Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy.", ———, Charles F. Hermann, "Avoiding Pathologies in Foreign Policy Decision Groups," *Diplomacy, Force and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander L. George*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1993

¹³⁸ Joe D. Hagan and Jerel A. Rosati, "Emerging Issues in Research on Foreign Policy Restructuring," in Jerel A. Rosati, Joe D. Hagan and Martin W. Samptson, (eds), *Foreign policy restructuring: how governments respond to global change*, University of South Carolina Press, South Carolina, 1994

domestic and international sources of foreign policy change”.¹³⁹ For them, shifts in the international system and foreign policy realignment may propel significant changes in domestic politics as well as transform the organizational structures and the roles of key foreign policy makers. On the flipside, radical changes in distribution of power and influence among contending institutions may shift the orientation of foreign policy. The power shift in domestic politics is more acute after the revolutions and turbulent victories of opponent political paradigms.¹⁴⁰

2.2.3. IDENTITY BASED AND ASPIRATIONAL APPROACHES

2.2.3.1. Identity and foreign policy change

According to the identity based approach, actions of foreign policy actors are not driven by rational calculations of power and interest; instead, the leaders behave in accordance with national/political identities that are constructed by deeper norms and shared beliefs. In other words, identity- rather than the material capabilities or distribution of power in international system - define interests. Identity is socially constructed and can be fueled by national history, cultures, norms, ideologies and intersubjective interactions. Identity may define the perceptions of enmity and amity among the states, as well as engagement in international conflicts. For instance, imperial identity to promote or protect the image of superpower may propel over engagement in international affairs. According to this approach, key actors and institutions may promote and advocate divergent identities in a competitive setting. Ultimate form of national identity is the upshot of constant bargaining and compromising among various groups.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.272

¹⁴⁰ Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 3-21, 1990

According to this model, the restructuring of foreign policy is impelled by shifts in national and political identities. States realign in the international system when prevailing identities are overthrown by revisionist images. Rise of new identities may be fueled by historical episodes, ideologies, international crisis or major disappointments with the status quo. Rising identities undergo tests of historical, social, cultural appropriateness before accomplishing preponderance. This model claims that states develop alliances with other states that share similar identities.

Theoretical foundations of the identity based approach were laid out by the constructivist school of foreign policy that challenged the materialistic precepts of realist and institutionalist paradigms. According to this school, material calculations of power and interest are not the principal drives of foreign policy conduct. Instead, intersubjectively constructed identities, norms and aspirations define how individuals and states interpret the concepts of power and interest.¹⁴¹ In *What makes the World Hang Together*, John Ruggie concurs that the countries with similar cultures (i.e U.S. and UK) are less likely to be considered as threats, whereas countries with conflicting cultures, and political economic systems are more likely to be accounted as serious threats when they obtain non-conventional weapons capabilities (i.e. Iran, Iraq, North Korea).¹⁴² For Peter Katzenstein, alertness and preparedness of the military forces will depend on the images and identities of the confronting states.¹⁴³ For example, the United States welcomed the nuclear proliferation in Britain but it strongly rejected the nuclear proliferation efforts in North Korea, Libya, Iran and Iraq because of contrasting identities. Friedrich Kratochwil argues that

¹⁴¹ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International organization*, 1992, ———, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 1999

¹⁴² John G Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International organization* 52, no. 04, 2005

¹⁴³ Peter J. Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security," in Peter Katzenstein (Eds), *The culture of national security: Norms and identity in world politics*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996

the American government's intervention in Vietnam and delayed withdrawal was highly related to U.S. identity as a superpower.¹⁴⁴ By overseas military engagement the U.S. reproduced its own *identity of great power*, as well as the image that gave meaning to its action.

2.2.3.1. Aspirations and foreign policy change

Aspirational approach claims that foreign policy change is driven by the shift of aspirations among the ruling elites. A contemporary investigation of the aspirations model was conducted by Anne Clunan, who investigated "Russia's Resurgence" under Putin's rule.¹⁴⁵ She examined the role of aspirations in foreign policy that stem from "the need to maintain positive self esteem or improve negative self esteem" (p.10).¹⁴⁶ For Clunan, aspirations can lay out the underpinnings of national interests and frame governmental efforts to increase national self esteem. She argues that national self esteem is promoted by national self images that are "sets of ideas about the country's political purpose and international status."¹⁴⁷ Clunan notes that the governments often deploy "management strategies" to stimulate the national self esteem and certain aspirations. However, in many cases, there is no broad consensus among the governing elites on the appropriate type of aspirations to be promoted. The political elites may propose competing models of aspirations. Some of them can make references to historical achievements while others may have greater proclivity to ideological or religious aspirations. According to Telhami and Barnett, political aspirations that are more relevant to the socioeconomic and historical context

¹⁴⁴ Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989

¹⁴⁵ Anne Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2009

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.10

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p.10

are more likely to prevail in a competitive setting.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Anne Clunan suggests that history, culture and identity are strong indicators of the national aspirations. Clunan notes that “once a majority of political elites are persuaded of the correspondence among a national self-image, historical aspirations, and reality, that self image becomes dominant and defines national interests...it becomes a national identity on which a collectively valid social order can be built.”¹⁴⁹ She uses history and efficacy tests to predict whether certain political identities will prevail (see figure 2.4). The history test measures whether the political identity match up with the historical experiences and aspirations. Efficacy tests measure the extent to which certain political images are realistic and appropriate to deal with contemporary issues. Clunan notes that “a national image that passes both history and efficiency tests should dominate the competitors. National self-images that are congruent with shared historical aspirations should appear more legitimate to political elites.”¹⁵⁰

According to this model, foreign policy shifts in two situations; i) when aspirations of the ruling elites undergo substantial change, ii) when another political group with different aspirations assume power in national government. The incumbent governments forge three strategies to preserve the dominant aspirations; i) “mobility”, ii) “competition” and iii) “creativity”.¹⁵¹ Strategies of mobility are designed to increase the intensity of behavioral orientations among the people who share the dominant aspirations. Competition strategies, on the other hand, project contending programs and policies against the rising alternative images. The

¹⁴⁸ Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Cornell Univ Press, New York, 2002

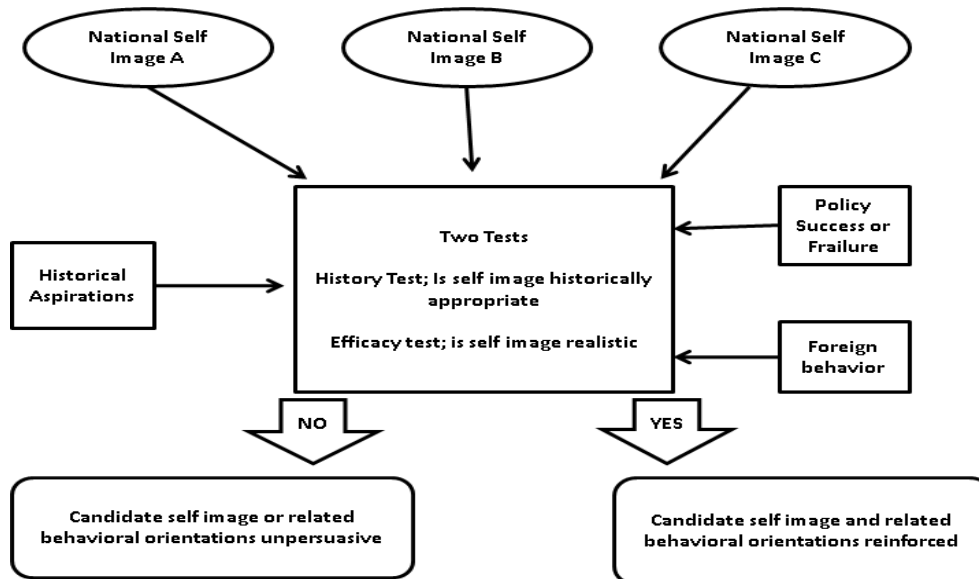
¹⁴⁹ Anne Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2009 , p. 45

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.52

¹⁵¹ Anne Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2009

strategies of creativity include revision of the political aspirations in line with the new economic, political and military developments in international politics.

Figure 2.4: Anne Clunan's model for domination of self images (p.39)



All of the above mentioned models have made significant contributions to systematization of foreign policy change. Particularly parsimonious works of Richard Snyder¹⁵² and Graham Allison¹⁵³ achieved significant breakthroughs in redirecting the focus from systemic analysis to interactions among policy makers. Foreign policy analysts began to delve into the black box of state machinery rather than presuming the state as a unitary rational actor. However, all of these foreign policy analysis models have various weaknesses. First, the structural models in particular paid too much attention to inertia and static factors, but failed to comprehend the shifting dynamics of decision making in international and domestic

¹⁵² Richard Snyder, *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1954

¹⁵³ Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII, NO.3, 1969; Graham Allison, *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban missile crisis*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971

environment. The second drawback of these models was their inability to combine the structural and domestic variables in change models. Kenneth Waltz's¹⁵⁴ *three images* and Graham Allison's¹⁵⁵ *conceptual models* combined three levels of static analysis, but later studies failed to adopt these models into study of foreign policy change. Third, some of these models (i.e Rosati's model) over-generalized the patterns of behaviors and became inapplicable to idiosyncratic events in foreign affairs. On the flipside, some other models (i.e. Holsti's analytic frameworks) failed to produce generalizable assumptions about what motivates states to reorient their foreign policies. Fourth, foreign policy change models are predominantly applied to the United States. There are only limited numbers of case studies that test the validity of these assumptions in other countries. Ultimately, these models disregarded the ideational, aspirational and cultural motives of change. Many of these models were developed before the upsurge of the constructivist school in international politics. Eventually, study of ideas, cultures, norms and aspirations became a main pillar of the study of foreign policy but none of these issues are reflected in the models of foreign policy change. Thus, the need for more comprehensive analytical frameworks became evident as the existing models failed to catch up with the dynamics of foreign policy practice.

2.3. OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE SECURITY APPROACH TO THE CHANGE IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

This dissertation adopts a modified/qualified security approach to investigate the underlying causes of intergovernmental rapprochement between Iran and Turkey. Security approach has been adopted, because the most dramatic change in Turkish Iranian relations are observed in

¹⁵⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959

¹⁵⁵ Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII, NO.3, 1969

three security fields; counterterrorism, nuclear security and energy security. Assumptions of the security approach provide the best framework in investigation of the ongoing three dimensional security partnerships between Ankara and Tehran. “Why” questions in foreign policy analysis require that we probe the governmental decision making process that takes into account “spheres of competence of the actors involved, the flow of communication and information and motivations of the various players”.¹⁵⁶ This study seeks to answer why the Erdogan Administration forged a three-tiered security partnership with Iran, and seeks to understand the perceptions of key actors in the state machinery. Fundamental tenets of the security approach have been drawn from precepts of the realist paradigm in international politics. However, contrary to the mainstream realist approaches, the security model adopted here does not assume the state is a unitary actor. Instead, this study draws elements of Graham Allison’s analytic framework¹⁵⁷ and proposes that security policy is the outcome of constant bargaining among the major government elites in the National Security Council.

This model acknowledges that Turkey’s grand strategy and alignment in the international system is not unilaterally determined by the chief executive. Instead, as in most democratic countries, it is shaped by constant pulling and hauling among six major types of actors: i) the President, ii) Prime Minister, iii) Council of Ministers, iv, leaders of security institutions, v) bureaucratic leaders v) military leaders, and vi) opposition parties. These actors function under the scrutiny of the parliament (TBMM), media, civil society organizations and the citizenry. This approach concedes that key actors’ policy preferences may be fundamentally different from

¹⁵⁶ Valerie M. Hudson and Christopher S. Vore, "Foreign Policy Analysis Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Mershon International Studies Review* 39, pp 909- 238, 1995, p.213..

¹⁵⁷ Graham Allison *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1ed. Little Brown, 1971

each other owing to divergent views, professional experiences, political and institutional affiliations, ideology and aspirations.

Traditionally, Turkish presidents had only symbolic power and function in foreign affairs. Even though the Law on National Security (1983) increased the responsibilities of the president as the chairman of the National Security Council, the President remains a largely symbolic figure in the practice of foreign affairs.¹⁵⁸ The Turkish Prime Minister is the most important actor in the foreign policy decision making process. He not only commands the executive branch but also exerts powerful influence on the legislative branch. As the chairman of the largest party group in parliament, the Prime Minister's views are often ratified by the Turkish Grand Assembly (TBMM). Prime Ministers have the authority to appoint ministers, organizational leaders and military commanders. Even though the Prime Minister does not appoint the president, he/she plays a defining role in the presidential election process.¹⁵⁹

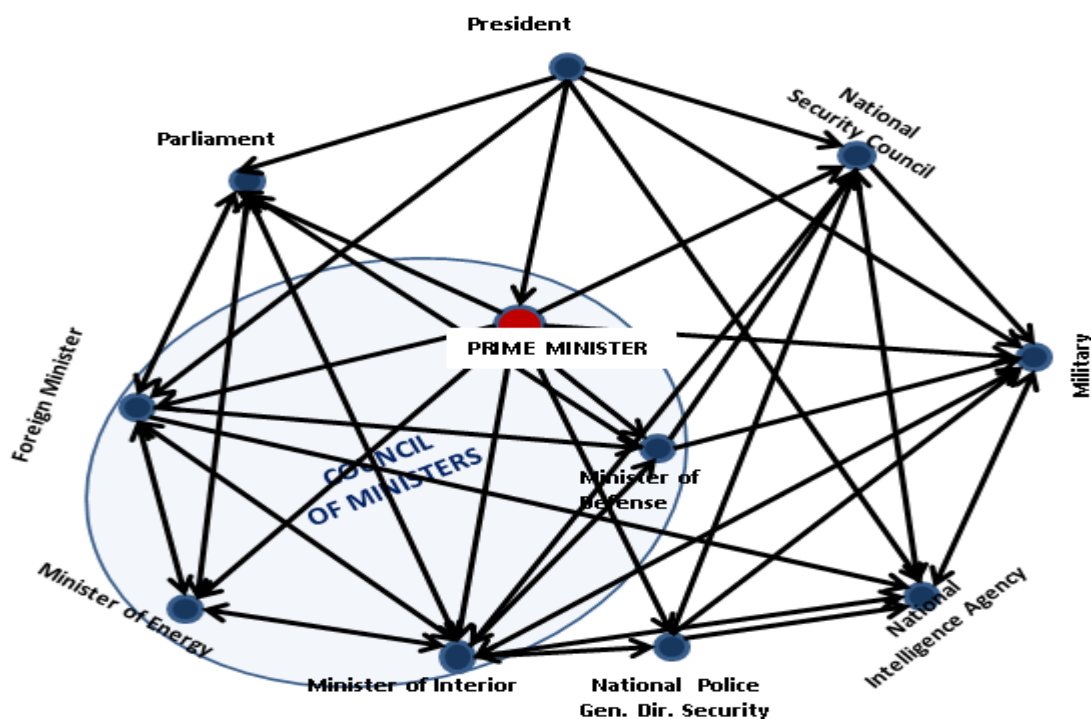
The Prime Minister is assisted by the cabinet members and organizational leaders in practice of foreign affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs runs day to day bureaucratic operations of Turkish foreign policy. The Foreign Minister advises the Prime Minister and supervises the implementation of the recommendations of the Council of Ministers and National Security Council. The Ministry of Energy is the principal actor in energy security and pipeline politics. It coordinates the operations of state energy companies and institutions such as the General Directorate of Petroleum Affairs (PIGM), the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), and the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO). The Prime Minister is also assisted by the National Intelligence Agency (MIT), Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and General Directorate of

¹⁵⁸ Osman Metin Öztürk, *Ordu Ve Politika*, Gündogan Yaynları, Istanbul, 1993

¹⁵⁹ The presidents of Turkey have been elected by the parliament until 2007. The constitutional amendments in 2007 abolished parliamentary voting and adopted popular voting but the existing president was elected by the parliament before the constitutional amendments. President Gul had been the deputy of current Prime Minister Erdogan

Security (EGM) in security related issues. These agencies provide necessary information/intelligence to the Prime Minister, President and the National Security Council. Turkish Parliament (TBMM) is not a principal actor in day-to-day operations of foreign affairs. The parliament's Foreign Relations Committee functions as an advisory board to the prime minister. The committee presents draft legislation and proposals on behalf of the parliament. According to the article 92 of the Turkish Constitution, deployment of troops outside Turkey and authority to station foreign troops in the Turkish homeland is subject to parliamentary approval.¹⁶⁰

Figure 2.5: Key foreign and security policy makers in Turkey



The National Security Council (MGK) had been the highest board of decision making in Turkish foreign policy. According to the Law on National Security Council (1983), the MGK is

¹⁶⁰ See Turkish constitution

comprised of the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, Minister of Interior, Minister of Defense, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Justice, Chief of General Staff and Commanders of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Gendarmerie.¹⁶¹ When necessary the Director General of Security (Chief of Turkish National Police) and the Director of the National Intelligence Agency are invited to discuss relevant matters.¹⁶²

2.3.1. Operationalization of the security approach

Turkish-Iranian security cooperation mainly takes place in three policy areas: counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security. The security model will be operationalized under three categories because judgments of foreign policy elites might be entirely different in each policy area. Moreover, key foreign policy actors change according to the policy area and decision making takes place in a different setting. This study is designed to explore judgments of the key foreign policy actors in each policy area. It will counterpose the threat perceptions and major arguments of the pro-status quo and revisionist elites.

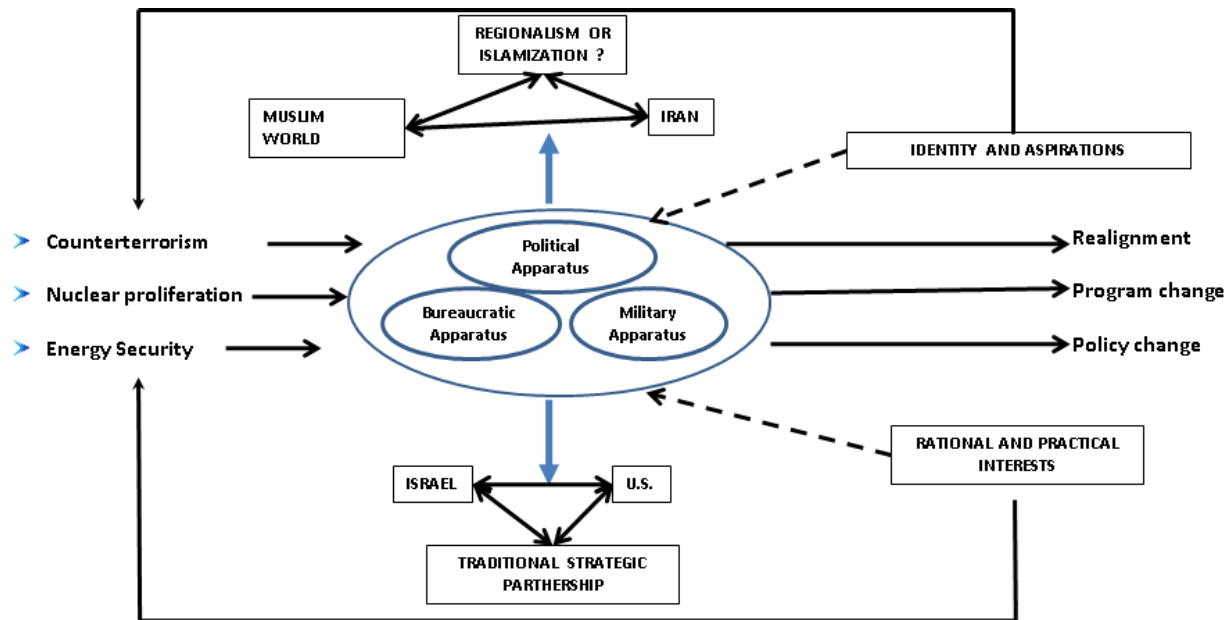
During the operationalization process, my integrated security model projects more specific questions to clarify the vague aspects of Turkey's rapprochement processes in the three policy areas since 2003, when the change in foreign policy began to emerge. Why did the Erdogan Administration shift the policy? What are the main concerns, preferences, political affiliations and aspirations of the key policy makers? What are the arguments of the pro-status quo actors? What are the arguments of the revisionist actors? Why did the revisionist camp

¹⁶¹ MGK ve MGK Genel Sekreterliği Kanunu, (The Law on National Security Council and Secretariat No: 2945, November, 11, 198

¹⁶² Until the 2003 amendment in the Law on National Security Council and the Secretariat, the Secretary General of the MGK had been military officials. Since the Prime Minister and the President appoints civilian Secretary Generals.

prevail in intergovernmental relations with Iran? To what extent does the ongoing partnership indicates a realignment by Turkey.

Figure 2.6: Analytical framework for investigation security rapprochement



2.3.1.1. Counterterrorism dimension

The core argument of this approach is that states reformulate alliance strategies to respond to shifting external security threats. The demise of strategic nuclear rivalry and upsurge of non-state security threats such as terrorism and ethnic separatism compel a shift in traditional partnership patterns. In other words, rather than further commitments to strategic alliances, states look for practical partnerships to overcome regional security challenges. According to this approach, the shift in Turkey's alignment is driven by the shift in the balance of threats in the external security environment. The main argument is that the threats posed by Soviet power have been replaced by Kurdish separatism as the principal national security concern. Therefore, Turkey seeks new pragmatic alliances to eliminate Kurdish separatism and preserve the regional status. This sub-

model seeks to answer the following sub questions: How did the key security actors conceive major shifts in the external security environment? How do they respond to resurgence of the PKK/PJAK threat? Do the foreign policy elites believe that former strategic alliances are sufficient to overcome emerging regional security threats, particularly after the U.S. occupation of Iraq? What are the new partnership proposals to neutralize micronationalist Kurdish independence movements? Why policy makers chose Iran as an ally against PKK/PJAK terrorism in post Iraq invasion security landscape? Who are the proponents of counterterrorism rapprochement with Iran and what are their arguments? Who are the opponents and what are their arguments? What are the implications of the new partnership policy for Turkey's alignment in the international system?

2.3.1.2. Nuclear proliferation dimension

The core argument of this approach is that the states balance against emerging nuclear powers because the spread of nuclear weapons radically shifts the balances of threat. Emergence of new nuclear states shifts the regional patterns of alliances as non-nuclear neighbors tend to coalesce against asymmetric nuclear threats. In conventional wisdom, the Erdogan Administration is expected to balance against Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons. However, it supports Iran's nuclear program and opposes international sanctions against Iran. The Administration's posture tends to undermine Turkey's traditional alliance patterns, as well as the containment policies of the U.S. and Israel, Turkey's longtime strategic partners. This study investigates the underlying reasons of this phenomenon and analyzes the perceptions of key foreign policy actors in the Erdogan Administration. It seeks to answer the following questions. How does the Turkish

government perceive the Iranian nuclear program? Why did Turkey choose not to bandwagon with American-Israeli containment of nuclear Iran? What are the arguments of the proponents and opponents of Turkey's foreign policy in this area?

2.3.1.3. Energy security dimension

The core argument of this approach is that the states seek alternative suppliers to reduce vulnerability to major supply disruptions and use of energy as a coercion mechanism in foreign policy. According to this approach, the Turkish government developed an energy partnership with Iran to reduce dependency on its major energy suppliers, Russia and Iraq. In so doing, the Erdogan Administration sought to diversify energy suppliers and reduce vulnerability to major disruptions. The disruptions can be driven by four factors; i) technical problems and malfunctioning of the transportation infrastructures, ii) sudden increase in prices, iii) use of hydrocarbon resources as a coercive mechanism in foreign policy, and iv) wars and internal strife. This study seeks to answer the following questions in order to understand the underlying reasons of the energy partnership with Iran: What is the level of annual hydrocarbon consumption in Turkey? To what extent has Turkey been dependent on Russian and Iraqi energy resources? What are the alternatives to reduce dependency on these two major energy suppliers? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these alternatives? Why has Iran emerged as the most viable alternative? What are the stances of key energy actors in the Turkish government and bureaucracy? What are the arguments of proponents and opponents of the energy deals with Iran? Why did Turkey disregard American and Israeli demands to terminate its energy partnership with Iran?

2.3.1.4. Is rapprochement with Iran an indicator of Turkey's realignment?

Through three dimensional probing this study seeks to explore whether Turkey's security partnership with Iran is an indicator of realignment towards the Islamic world. Concomitantly, it seeks to uncover if Turkey's entente with Iran is driven by Islamic identity or by practical national interests. In order to provide a penetrating view on the issue this study seeks to answer the following sub questions. Do key actors in Erdogan Administration follow practical rational interests in counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security policies? Do the Islamic identity and aspirations of these actors play any role in intergovernmental rapprochement with Iran? To what extent has Turkey been satisfied by the traditional alliance with the West? Does rapprochement with Iran develop at the expense of Turkey's relationship with the West? What is the place of Iran in the new grand strategy of Turkey? Does the Erdogan Administration forge similar partnerships with other countries? If yes, what are the common characteristics of these countries? What other factors play a role in Turkey's new posture in international politics?

CHAPTER 3

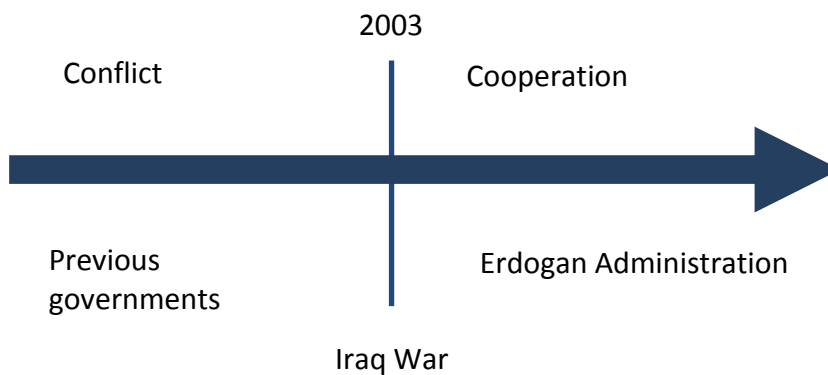
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP ON COUNTERTERRORISM

Iran's posture towards the PKK¹⁶³ terror organization has been the principal barometer of Turkish-Iranian relations. The previous Turkish governments had low profile security relations with the post revolutionary Iran due to several conflicts, primarily the harboring of terrorism against each other. On the one hand, the Iranians accused Turkish governments of supporting the Mujahid Al-Khalq and other regime opponents; on the other, Turkey accused Iran of supporting the Turkish Hezbollah (THB) and the PKK. Iran was perceived as the principal external threat by the Turkish National Security Council (MGK) during the 1990s. In particular, the military wing in the MGK often argued that Iranian officials trained and equipped PKK militants. Even though both sides rejected these claims, Turkey and Iran remained at loggerheads until the Erdogan Administration came to power in 2002.

¹⁶³ The Partiya Karekeren Kurdistan (PKK), is a separatist terror organization which was established in 1978 in Diyarbakir Province of Turkey. Its terror operations began in 1984 and gradually increased until mid 1990s. According to the vast majority of Turkish terror experts, ideological basis of PKK was formed in 1974, when Abdullah Ocalan was a student of Political Science in Ankara University. Ocalan participated in the leftist Revolutionary People's Liberation Army and involved in the activities of Revolutionary Youth organization. However, instead of liberating the Turkish proletarian class, he believed in the liberation of ethnic Kurdish groups. The leaders of PKK represented themselves as the "savior" of the Kurdish ethnic minority in Turkey, which are allegedly discriminated from major privileges of a nation. It embraced a Marxist-Leninist ideology, Stalinist leadership paradigms and Maoist strategy for the conquest of power. The organization is responsible for killing of over 35,000 Turkish citizens that includes Kurdish peasants, soldiers, police officers, village guards, doctors, teachers, and civil servants. The enrollment policy of PKK is significantly different from Al-Qaida or Hezbollah which recruits qualified and voluntary members to the organization. On the contrary the basic enrolment policies of PKK rely on abduction of male and female teenagers especially from the southeastern Turkey. The abducted individuals are forcefully taken to the training camps in Syria and Northern Iraq. Death is certain for the militant candidates who try to escape from training camps. The PKK was re-named KADEK in 2002 and KONGRA-GEL in 2005. The organization is recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States, European Union and many other states in the World, as well as multilateral security institutions such as NATO, INTERPOL and EUROPOL.

During the Erdogan Administration, however, Ankara and Tehran entered into an unprecedented counterterrorism partnership (See figure 3.1). The Turkish and Iranian governments signed successive security and counterterrorism cooperation agreements in 2004, 2006 and 2009. These agreements allow enhanced exchange of intelligence and joint operations against the PKK and its subordinate network PJAK. Particularly after 2003, Iranian authorities mounted numerous operations against the PKK/PJAK strongholds in both Iran and Iraq. The traditional intransigent resistance of secularist Turkish elites against collaboration with Iran gradually disappeared after 2003 and there has been a consensus within the state's foreign policy machinery. In parallel with the resentment at U.S. policies in Iraq, Turkish security elites began to appreciate Iran's value in counterterrorism and regional security policy. Iran's new posture against the PKK is highly appreciated both by the higher echelons of the Erdogan administration and the predominant majority of Turkish society.

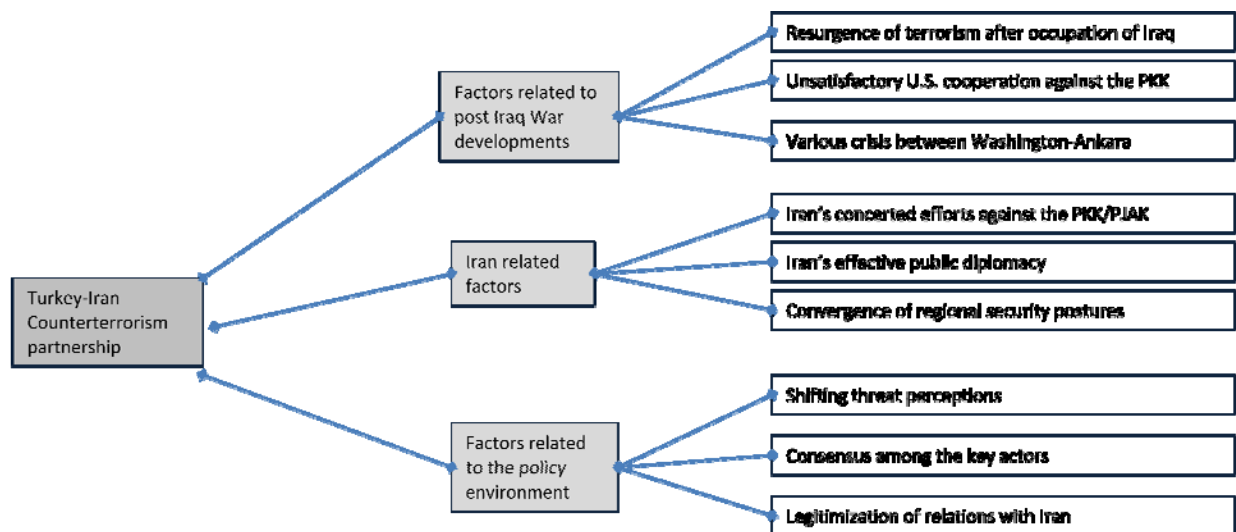
Figure 3.1: The shift of security relations: Turkey-Iran



This chapter discusses the underlying reasons of the growing counterterrorism partnership between Ankara and Tehran since 2003. According to the security approach, foreign policy restructuring is fundamentally driven by the shifting balances of threats. My

investigations revealed that this security approach has been a useful framework in understanding the foreign policy changes in Turkey. The existing literature mostly asserted that resurgence of the PKK and convergence of the security interests laid out the grounds for counterterrorism partnership between Ankara and Tehran. My field research confirmed these projections, and identified seven additional factors that motivated the key Turkish security actors to forge a counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian government ; i) unsatisfactory U.S. cooperation against the PKK, ii) Various crises between Washington and Ankara, iv) Iran’s concerted efforts against the PKK, v) Iran’s effective public diplomacy, vi) shifting threat perceptions of key foreign policy makers, vii) legitimization of relations with Iran, and ix) consensus among the key foreign policy actors. After presenting the predominant views among the elites, arguments of the critics will be laid out at the end of the chapter.

Figure 3.2: The factors of counterterrorism cooperation between Iran and Turkey



3.1. Resurgence of the PKK terrorism after the Iraq War

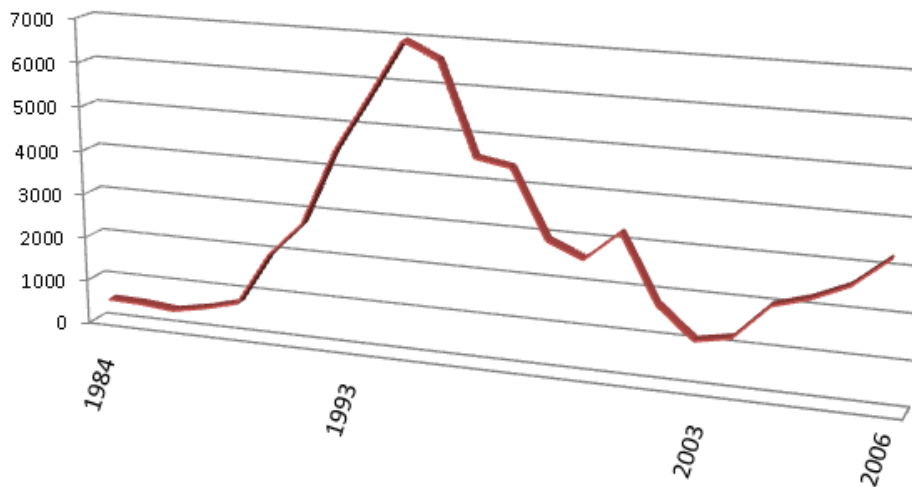
The PKK had been dormant since the incarceration of Abdullah Ocalan in 1999. Many security analysts projected that the leaderless PKK would soon dissolve due to waning state sponsorship and weakening leadership. The remnants of the PKK were expelled from Syria and the existing PKK cells in northern Iraq were put under sustained pressure by Turkish security forces.

However, the U.S occupation of Iraq created new safe havens for PKK militants in mountainous terrains of Northern Iraq.¹⁶⁴ The PKK exploited these camps as a launching pad and intensified attacks against key targets in Turkey. In 2003, the PKK began to assault more sensational targets such as crowded shopping malls and tourist resorts that would instigate the utmost fear in Turkish society. Statements of government executives, counter terrorism experts and government statistics clearly indicate that the PKK's armed campaign surged dramatically after the 2003. On numerous occasions Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces and the Director General of Security emphasized on the increase in terror attacks since 2003. This fact is also voiced by prominent Turkish counterterrorism analysts. For instance, Ihsan Bal, director of Terrorism Research Center at the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), highlighted that "The PKK attacks have been on constant increase since the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The terror attacks peaked by summer 2006."¹⁶⁵ Moreover, institutional statistics of the Turkish Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior and General Directorate of Security confirms the statements of the governing elites and analysts. As seen in Figure 3.3, statistics of the General Directorate of Security (EGM) clearly demonstrates the rising trend of PKK attacks after 2003.

¹⁶⁴ This fact has been voiced by almost all of Author's interviewees.

¹⁶⁵ Ihsan Bal, "Turkiye Iran Iliskilerinde Talabani Faktoru", Usak Stratejik Gundem, November 13, 2007.

Figure 3.3: Number of PKK attacks against Turkish targets



Source: General Directorate of Security, Counter Terrorism Statistics, 2009

As Ambassador Faruk Laloglu put it, the resurgence of the PKK's armed campaign escalated governmental and societal sensitivity to the costs of the prolonged terror campaign since 1984.¹⁶⁶ These costs can be summarized in several pillars. First, the PKK's armed campaign resulted in nearly 35,000 deaths throughout Turkish society; including civil servants, military and law enforcement officers, teachers, doctors, businessman, village guards and indigenous Kurdish citizens.¹⁶⁷ Second, economic costs of the counterterrorism operations since 1984 exceeded \$200 billion.¹⁶⁸ Owing to the prolonged terror campaign, the Southeastern Anatolia region remained relatively underdeveloped. According to the 2006 report of the Turkish Institute for statistics, the GDP per capita in the Marmara district is over \$16,000 but it remains

¹⁶⁶ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry.

¹⁶⁷ Author's Interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM)

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*

around \$5,000 in the regions that were intensively exposed to terrorism.¹⁶⁹ Third, the PKK remains the single most important threat to territorial integrity of the state as it claims vast portions of Southeastern Anatolia. Fourth, the prolonged counterterrorism campaign boosted military power projection in domestic politics. In Southeast Anatolia, the government structure resembled a “garrison state”, under the OHAL Marshall Law (1987-2002).¹⁷⁰ This phenomenon inhibited democratization of Turkey's sociopolitical domain at least for two decades.

Given these concerns, the Erdogan Administration put forth concerted efforts to eliminate the remnants of the PKK organization. Murat Mercan, the Chairman of the Parliament’s Foreign Relations Committee, asserted that the resurgence of the PKK put the Erdogan administration under enormous public pressure.¹⁷¹ Prime Minister Erdogan emphasized that the “Kurdish Problem” and the PKK had become Turkey’s most important agenda in domestic politics, as well as the foreign policy of the AKP government.¹⁷² Concomitantly, the PKK reasserted itself as the principal issue in National Security Council meetings. The state's security apparatus became quite sensitive towards resurgence of the PKK attacks, because the prolonged terror campaign undermined public trust in governmental institutions.¹⁷³ The key security institutions, Turkish Armed Forces, General Directorate of Security and National Intelligence Agency, re-committed themselves to combating the resurgent terrorism problem.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Turkish Institute of Statistics. “Gelir Yontemi ile GYSH veritabani (GDP per capita database with income methodology)” Available at <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/ulusalhesapapp/ulusalhesap.zul?tur=4> [accessed April 20, 2010]

¹⁷⁰ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

¹⁷¹ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

¹⁷² *ibid*

¹⁷³ Author's Interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM)

¹⁷⁴ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

The common perception of Turkey's governing elites was that the U.S. intervention into Northern Iraq created a safe haven for the survival and flourishing of the PKK.¹⁷⁵ Key actors in the Erdogan Administration expressed their resentment at this in various venues. Ali Babacan, the former Foreign Minister (2007- 2009) noted that "Northern Iraq has become a terror base. We will not just watch the terror attacks that are launched from there."¹⁷⁶ Yasar Buyukanit, the Former Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces (2006-2008), noted that "The War in Iraq allowed positioning of PKK camps in Northern Iraq. The PKK uses these camps as a launching pad in its attacks against Turkey. The camps in Iraq serve as principal venues of logistics, training and financing. The PKK coordinates its smuggling activities from these camps."¹⁷⁷ Similar threat assessments have been projected by predominant portion of the author's interviewees from the security apparatus of the government. According to Celalettin Yavuz, a retired military officer and security strategist at the TURKSAM¹⁷⁸, "The PKK was almost neutralized after the capture of Ocalan in 1999. However, the U.S. occupation of Iraq provided a safe haven and the PKK has revived due to protection and logistical support"¹⁷⁹ Yavuz maintained that "Every American intervention in this region is making things worse. Foreign intervention is the principal catalyst of ethnic and sectarian terrorism. We are the ones that suffer from the aftereffects of their catastrophic mistakes."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Almost all of Author's interviewees reported this

¹⁷⁶ Ali Babacan, "ABD ile Isbirligi, PKK Irak'tan Cikana Kadar Surecek", Haberler, December 10, 2007

¹⁷⁷ Yasar Buyukanit, "Genelkurmay Baskani Buyukanit PKK Makalesi Yazdi", Milliyet, May 22, 2007. Available at <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/05/22/son/sonsiy16.asp>, [accessed April 29, 2010]

¹⁷⁸ International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM) December 12, 2007

¹⁷⁹ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

¹⁸⁰ ibid

3.2. Unsatisfactory cooperation of the U.S. forces in Iraq

Subsequent to various sensational PKK attacks in the post-Iraq War period, the Erdogan administration demanded that the Bush Administration take rapid action against stationing of PKK camps in Northern Iraq. Turkish authorities including the President, Prime Minister, military officials, the Director General of Security and various diplomats reiterated this demand. Even though the Bush Administration made bold promises, the U.S. forces in Iraq preserved their non-cooperative posture against the PKK until 2007.¹⁸¹ My field research reveals that a major reason that Turkey forged a counterterrorism partnership with Iran was the disappointment with the U.S. posture in counterterrorism policy. Almost all of the author's interviewees and many other key government officials maintained that U.S. inaction against the PKK camps in northern Iraq radically shifted the Erdogan Administration's alliance strategy against the terrorism threat that is the principal issue in Turkey's National Security Strategy. The shift of policy has been supported by almost all echelons of bureaucratic institutions, the military, civil society organizations and Turkish society in general.¹⁸²

Turkish foreign policy makers became convinced that the U.S. occupation forces would not assist in counterterror efforts against the PKK. The resentment of the Turkish government is very evident in the public statements of key actors in the Erdogan Administration who are also the principal decision makers in the National Security Council. Prime Minister Erdogan himself has been highly critical of the U.S. failure to cooperate against the PKK. Erdogan noted that "The Turkish government is gradually losing patience as America continues to avoid military

¹⁸¹ *ibid*

¹⁸² Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

action against the Kurdish terrorists who are presently based in Northern Iraq”.¹⁸³ General Ilker Basbug, the Chief of Staff in the Turkish Armed Forces highlighted that the Turkish state has no patience left for inaction on the part of the U.S. occupation forces against the PKK.¹⁸⁴ He maintained that “The Americans should understand and see that it is not time for words but action.”¹⁸⁵ In June of 2008, General Basbug announced that Turkey and Iran has forged a counterterrorism alliance against the mutual threats of the PKK and PJAK.¹⁸⁶ On several occasions General Basbug clearly asserted the shift of partnership preferences of the Turkish Armed Forces in counterterrorism policy.

Many of the interviewees shared a similar perspective with the public statements of the MGK members. Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, who currently serves in the advisory board of the Foreign Minister, highlighted that “We could not receive the desired support neither from the Americans, nor from the Europeans. It is quite natural that we are cooperating with our neighbors who are exposed to the same threat... We are thinking practically not ideologically.”¹⁸⁷ Another interviewee Celalettin Yavuz maintained that, “Americans have never been sincere in fighting against the PKK. They have done some minor things, but they neither gave actionable intelligence nor did they attack the PKK strongholds around the Qandil.”¹⁸⁸ Ihsan Bal, a prominent Turkish counterterrorism expert noted that “Turkey was punished by the neo-conservative elements of the Bush Administration for not providing the military assistance prior to Iraq War... Therefore, the PKK terror organization has been persistently ignored by the

¹⁸³ Global Security, “Kurdistan”, June 20, 2007.

¹⁸⁴ The Journal of Turkish Weekly, “Turkish General Basbug slams U.S. inaction against the PKK”, September 25, 2007.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid*

¹⁸⁶ Cumhuriyet Newspaper, June 6, 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry.

¹⁸⁸ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

U.S. since 2003.”¹⁸⁹ According to Nasuh Uslu, a senior foreign policy analysts in Turkey, “Americans never really care about Turkish security interests. Since 1990 everything they have done undermined Turkey’s national interests. The non-fly zone in Iraq, Operation Poised Hammer, dual containment of Iraq and Iran, revival of the PKK and ultimately occupation of Iraq inflicted serious damages on Turkish national interests.”¹⁹⁰ Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Organization highlighted that “Turkey waited for a long time expecting that Americans would destroy the terror camps. We waited and waited. There was no real response, no real action.”¹⁹¹ These statements clearly indicate the intensity of resentment among Turkish elites towards the U.S. non cooperation against the PKK.

Prior to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Turkish security forces conducted frequent incursions into Northern Iraq to dismantle PKK enclaves. In some of these incursions the Turkish Armed Forces deployed 35,000 troops to destroy the remnants of the PKK.¹⁹² Even though these incursions could not inflict much damage on ultra-mobile PKK cells, they prevented the buildup of PKK forces across Turkish territories. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, however, the existence of the U.S forces in northern Iraq inhibited Turkish incursions into the Iraqi territories. High ranking American officials, including President Bush objected to a Turkish invasion of northern Iraq on the grounds that it would destabilize the only stable part of Iraq.¹⁹³ Moreover, several U.S. government officials such as General Petraeus and Governor Paul Bremer maintained that the PKK was not a priority for the occupation forces that have been overly engaged with combating insurgents and sectarian violence.

¹⁸⁹ Ihsan Bal, “Why PKK so Desperate?”, The Journal of Turkish Weekly, July 19, 2007.

¹⁹⁰ Author’s interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

¹⁹¹ Author’s interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinci. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

¹⁹² USAK, “Kuzey Irak Operasyon Raporu”, Ankara, June 13, 2007

¹⁹³ Author’s interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM)

The U.S. inaction against the PKK exacerbated existing anti-Americanism in Turkish society and among government officials. Many public surveys indicated that the sympathy towards the U.S. deteriorated to historically low levels. By 2010, a predominant majority of the Turks, regardless of their political affiliation, perceived the U.S. as the principal threat to national security.¹⁹⁴ Ihsan Bal, a terrorism analyst in Turkey, highlighted that “U.S. inaction against the PKK has been the primary reason for increasing anti-Americanism in Turkey.”¹⁹⁵ Some of my interviewees noted that growing anti-Americanism coincided with growing sympathy to Iran. As Bayram Sinkaya put it, this sympathy is not driven by admiration of Iran’s fundamentalist regime, but it is boosted by Iran’s enhanced counterterrorism campaign against the PKK/PJAK enclaves.¹⁹⁶

Many of the officials and analysts that I interviewed emphasized that the U.S. failure to cooperate against the PKK is the “principal driver” of the Turkish-Iranian counterterrorism partnership. According to Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, a senior Middle East Analyst at USAK, “The U.S. refusal to act against the PKK is a key motivator of Turkish-Iranian counterterrorism cooperation. Americans promised to eliminate the terror camps in Northern Iraq. However, the reverse has occurred. The PKK regained its strength thanks to American protection and assistance. Seizure of numerous American weapons at the hands of the PKK is a clear indicator of this.”¹⁹⁷ A former military officer and analyst Celalettin Yavuz asserted that “American reluctance to cooperate against the PKK is a principal drive of Turkish-Iranian security rapprochement. This is quite natural... There are CIA agents in the PKK. Barzani has organic

¹⁹⁴ USAK, “4. Dis politika algilama anketi”, August 14, 2009 available at <http://www.usak.org.tr/haber.asp?id=196>

¹⁹⁵ Ihsan Bal, “Turkiye Iran Iliskilerinde Talabani Faktoru”, Usak Stratejik Gundem November 13, 2007.

¹⁹⁶ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

¹⁹⁷ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

ties with the PKK, even he provides a safe haven for the PKK operatives.”¹⁹⁸ Nasuh Uslu, a prominent foreign policy analyst in Turkey, argued that the U.S. non-cooperation against the PKK has laid out the grounds for the ongoing partnership between Turkey and Iran. Uslu noted that, “If the Americans had been cooperative and if they had not instigated ethno-sectarian violence in Iraq we might not need security partnership with Iran.”¹⁹⁹

Apart from the US position, the reluctance of the Iraqi government to cooperate against the PKK has been another pivotal incentive for the Turkish foreign policy makers to forge closer ties with Iran.²⁰⁰ In the post intervention period, the Turkish government frequently demanded the eradication of PKK operatives in Northern Iraq. In bilateral meetings Turkish governments provided necessary intelligence and the coordinates of the PKK camps, but the Iraqi government remained inactive.²⁰¹ Ironically, Iraqi officials argued that they could not find the PKK camps in northern Iraq. But these camps were too easily found by numerous Western journalists who had never been to Iraq before. For instance, American Journalist Reese Erlich confirmed that “The Iraqi government says that they can’t possibly stop these people because they are so high up in the remote mountains. They claim that they don’t even know where they are located... Well, with two cell phones calls I set up an interview with the head guy of PJAK... Everybody in town knows where these PJAK camps are except the Iraqi government.”²⁰² Ali Babacan, then Turkish Foreign Minister responded that “If the journalists are able to find the camps, then you [Iraqi

¹⁹⁸ Author’s interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

¹⁹⁹ Author’s interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

²⁰⁰ Author’s interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bagci is a prominent Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU).

²⁰¹ Author’s interview with a retired military official (X.20), Ankara/Turkey, on December 23, 2009.

²⁰² Reese Erlich’s speech at the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center on May 8, 2007. Available at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6906119868285777096#> [accessed April 20, 2010].

government] can certainly find them too.”²⁰³ It was evident that almost none of the key foreign policy makers believed the statements of Iraqi officials. The mistrust towards the American occupation forces, the Iraqi government, the KDP and the PUK boosted the search for alternative cooperative initiatives by the Turkey’s foreign policy machinery. In this context, Iran emerged as a more reliable partner in combating the PKK.

3.3. Various crises between Washington and Ankara

In the post Iraq occupation security landscape, the interrelationship between Ankara and Washington has undergone several crises that undermined the Erdogan Administration’s reliance on American occupation forces. Almost all the interviewees asserted that a chain of crises has been sparked by the March Resolution of 2003 (Mart Tezkeresi) that was a defining moment in Turkish-American relations. Most believe that the Turkish Parliament’s rejection of the transfer of American troops overland through Turkish territories prompted a payback from the American government. The March Resolution was followed by three other crises; i) the bag incident, ii) the unraveling of the US-PJAK connection, and iii) redrawing of the regional map by Pentagon officials. My field research indicates that these crises undermined the intergovernmental trust between the Erdogan and Bush administrations. They consolidated the belief among the Turkish government officials that the U.S. was not a reliable partner against the PKK terror threat.

3.3.1. March resolution (Mart Tezkeresi)

According to the Turkish Constitution, deployment of foreign troops in the Turkish homeland rests on a majority decision by the Turkish Parliament. Before the Iraq war, the Bush administration requested permission to transfer American troops and logistics through Turkish

²⁰³ The Journal of Turkish Weekly, “Foreigners join the PKK Terrorists in fighting against Turkey, October 29, 2007.

territories. This would facilitate a northern front in the Iraq war, where Saddam's control was weakest. On March 1, 2003, however, the Turkish parliament rejected deployment and transfer of American forces through Turkish territories. Despite strong encouragement of the AKP leaders, the parliamentary voting process resulted in the defeat of the pro-resolution camp. The Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Movement Party, Democratic Turkey Party (DTP), Motherlands Party (ANAP) and True Path Party (DYP) strongly rejected Turkey's contribution to a highly unpopular war. Public surveys indicated that around 95 percent of the Turkish community was against the U.S. attack against Iraq and Turkey's support for such an initiative.²⁰⁴ In this context, parliamentary rejection of the March 1, 2003 resolution ushered in an era of mistrust between Turkey and the United States.²⁰⁵

During my field research, many interviewees traced back the roots of bilateral crisis to the March resolution. Many of them perceived the U.S. inaction against the PKK as retaliation against this resolution. According to Kaan Dilek, a senior foreign policy analyst at the Institute of Strategic Thinking, "The March Resolution is a turning point in Turkish-American relations. American refusal to deal with the PKK is a payback for the Turkish government's failure to cooperate with the occupation forces."²⁰⁶ Serdar Erdurmaz, a retired military officer, noted that "After the 1 March resolution, Americans implemented the plan B which rested on collaboration of the Kurds. They gave many promises to Talabani and Barzani including an independent Kurdistan. Quite naturally they rejected our demands in countering the PKK."²⁰⁷ Mehmet Sahin,

²⁰⁴ Ramazan Gozen, "Turk Dis Politikasinda Vizyon ve Revizyon", Zeynep Dagi (eds), *Ak Partili Yillar: Dogudan Batiya Dis Politika*, Orion Press, Ankara, 2006

²⁰⁵ Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bagci is a prominent Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU).

²⁰⁶ Author's interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2015. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Dilek is an Iran specialist at Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE).

²⁰⁷ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

a foreign policy analyst at the Gazi University, argued that “After the 1 March Resolution the Americans kept Turkey out of the negotiation table. As a response Turkey created an alternative diplomatic venue with the neighbors of Iraq. Participants in the new diplomatic setting have been Turkish, Iranian, Syrian and Saudi Arabian governments. After a while, this platform has become the most revered diplomatic initiative, whereas the American table has been overshadowed with crisis of legitimacy.”²⁰⁸ Sahin notes that the crisis after this resolution sparked regional security partnerships to counterbalance the external forces of instability, mainly the foreign occupiers of Iraq.²⁰⁹

3.3.2. Bag incident (arrest of a Turkish Special Forces squad by American troops)

Another crisis emerged between Ankara and Washington when U.S. occupation forces arrested a dozen troops from the Turkish Special Forces in Sulaimaniya/ Northern Iraq. The Turkish Special Forces were coordinating intelligence and monitoring Kurdish movements in Iraq. The United States was informed about the team’s activities, and the arrest was a shocking incident for the Turkish government. It is considered as another payback for the “Mart Tezkeresi”. Serdar Erdurmaz claimed that, “The Americans knew that we had Special Forces in northern Iraq but they arrested our military officials in an indecent manner. They implied that there is no place for Turkey in Northern Iraq. They expelled our forces. Then the Americans began to support the PKK and PJAK. Their logistical support facilitated survival of both organizations.”²¹⁰ Mumtaz

²⁰⁸ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University.

²⁰⁹ *ibid*

²¹⁰ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

Soysal, a former foreign minister noted that “The event was considered by many Turks to be the gravest crisis between Turkey and the United States since the establishment of their alliance, although the arrested Turkish officers were freed 48 hours after their capture. The damage was already done. The confidence between the two allies had been eroded.”²¹¹

3.3.3. Redrawing the map of the Middle East

After the U.S. occupied Iraq, Turkish foreign policy elites become increasingly sensitive to possible partition of Iraq which was seriously discussed among American foreign policy elites. Key actors in the Erdogan Administration believed that an autonomous Kurdistan in Iraq could provoke Kurdish separatism in Turkey and become an irredentist magnet for the Kurds of Southeast Anatolia. In this context, several American think tanks in Washington released a redrawn map of the Middle East that showing an independent Kurdistan not only in Iraq but also in Southeastern parts of Turkey.

One of these maps was published in a book by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Peters, *Never Quit the Fight*.²¹² This map was also demonstrated in his article “Blood Borders: How a better Middle East would look”, in the *U.S. Armed Forces Journal* (See table Figure 3.4).²¹³ Apart from this map, several other redrawn maps have been released by prominent Think Tanks in Washington. These maps found broad coverage in Turkish media. Many interviewees noted that these maps exacerbated the view held by Turkish intellectuals that the U.S. had a “secret agenda” to reshape the Middle East in line with its “neo-imperial” interests.²¹⁴ Many Turkish government

²¹¹ Mumtaz Soysal, “The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Martin, G. Lenore (Eds), The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, Cambridge. 2004, p. 55

²¹² Ralph Peters, *Never Quit the Fight*, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburgh, 2006

²¹³ Ralph Peters, “Blood Borders: How a better Middle East would look”, *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006

²¹⁴ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

officials voiced deep resentment against redrawn maps that showed large Turkish territories under “Free Kurdistan”.

Figure 3.4: The redrawn map of the Middle East by Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters



Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=3882> [accessed April 24, 2010]

Some interviewees noted that there had been deep suspicions in governmental sphere about the stated goals of the U.S. government in Iraq. In their view, even though the U.S. publicly declares that occupation forces are dedicated to territorial integrity of Iraq, there is a “secret campaign” to enhance the autonomy of the Kurds.²¹⁵ The enhanced autonomy would eventually give way to an independent Kurdish state. For Example, Suleyman Ozeren, director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center, highlighted that “The Kurds have become semi-autonomous after the U.S. occupation of Iraq. We are pretty sure that the

²¹⁵ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

Americans are clandestinely laying out the basis for an independent Kurdish state.”²¹⁶ For many interviewees, the Turkish state began to see Iran as a critical ally in countering the “secret agenda” of Washington and preserving the regional status quo.

3.3.4. Revealing of the U.S.-PJAK connection

The degree of resentment in the Turkish governmental sphere peaked when high ranking security officials, including General Edip Baser and former Director of Intelligence Bulent Orakoglu, revealed the connections between American officials and PJAK operatives. Many government officials have been extremely irritated with the American logistical support to various Kurdish groups particularly the PJAK. Within the security machinery of the state, the common perception is that the revival of the PKK was facilitated by the fertile ground after the American occupation of Iraq. Even though the higher echelons of the Erdogan Administration preserved their diplomatic discourse, the lower echelons of the bureaucratic institutions, independent analysts, and retired officials (both high and low ranking) were extremely critical of the U.S. policies in Iraq and the disclosed PJAK connection.

Turkey’s security elites see no difference between the PKK and PJAK, because the latter is a subcontractor to the former even if it aims to undermine Iranian national security. In their view, providing logistics to the PJAK means backing up the PKK, because they are coexistent twin networks.²¹⁷ From the beginning, it was evident that the PKK and PJAK have been sharing the terror camps, logistics, equipment and ideological documents.²¹⁸ Even though U.S. support for the PJAK was crafted to undermine the stability of Iran, the Turkish elites perceived it as an

²¹⁶ *ibid*

²¹⁷ Author’s interview with a high ranking security official (X 18), Ankara/Turkey, December 17, 2009.

²¹⁸ *ibid*

attempt to undermine Turkish territorial integrity, because it became evident that the PJAK operatives shared resources with the PKK militants who attend the same training camps.²¹⁹

In 2007, The General Directorate of Security (EGM) reported that 14,000 American weapons had been diverted to the PKK and PJAK since the beginning of the Iraq war.²²⁰ According to the report, these weapons consisted of RPG rocket launchers, sniper rifles, pistols and MP-5 automatic rifles. In his speech at the Commission on Foreign Relations, Prime Minister Erdogan asserted that “There are American made tanks, artillery, and other heavy weapons in the PKK camps. We have seized many American weapons from the arrested terrorists. American authorities admitted this eventually.”²²¹ The Bush Administration sent an investigation team of 20 experts consisting of FBI, CIA and Pentagon officials to discuss the issue with the Turkish authorities. The joint commission revealed that 190,000 American weapons had been lost since the beginning of the Iraq war, many of which ended at the hands of the PKK/PJAK operatives.²²² Even though the American authorities denied providing weapons to the terrorists, the institutional report of the General Directorate of Security was more than enough to convince the politicians and the society about the U.S.-PJAK connection.

Many government officials voiced lack of trust to U.S. policies in Iraq and argued that the United States has been funding the KDP, PUK and PEJAK, which are closely affiliated with the PKK terrorists. Edip Baser, a retired four star general who represented the Turkish side on Counterterrorism Coordination Initiative, highlighted that “We have uncovered that the United States is supplying logistics to the PKK... We gave a CD to the American military authorities. In

²¹⁹ Author’s interview with a security analyst (X 31), Ankara/Turkey, on December 22, 2009

²²⁰ Ortadogdu Gazetesi, “14 bin ABD silahi PKK’da”, January 6, 2007 available at <http://www.tumgazeteler.com/?a=1881255> [accessed April 25, 2010]

²²¹ Prime Minister Erdogan, “PKK’nin elinde ABD mali tank var”, Zaman September 29, 2007

²²² Stargazete, “ABD Silahların Pesinde”, October 5, 2007

this CD, there were all the evidences of US-PKK connection. One picture for example, was screening an American logistics vehicle in a PKK camp. There was an important American military officer in this vehicle.”²²³ One retired security official noted that “We demanded that the Americans crack down on the Qandil camps. They have never done this. On the contrary they began delivering logistical support to the PKK militants at the same camp.”²²⁴ Dogan Gunes, the former Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, asserted “We have identified that the American helicopters were delivering logistics to the PKK operatives. I immediately ordered to shoot them down. I told this to the American General in charge. They gave up delivering those logistics to the PKK camps.”²²⁵ In one of his interviews, Bulent Orakoglu, a former Director of Intelligence, argued that the PKK was backed up by the United States and Israel which he named the “rogue states” in the Middle East. ²²⁶

Throughout these interviews, I observed that the Turkish government officials and security analysts were exceedingly convinced that a U.S-PJAK connection existed. Celalettin Yavuz, a retired high ranking military officer, noted that “Support of the PJAK means support of the PKK. They are training and sheltering in the same terror camps such as the Qandil enclaves. The only difference is that the PJAK directs its terror campaign against Iran, while the PKK remains focused on Turkey. I’m not the only one saying this. Everyone knows what is going on. Even the former American National Security adviser Brent Scowcroft admitted that the United

²²³ Edip Baser, “ABD’nin PKK yardimini belgeledi”, Aktifhaber, September 18, 2009, www.aktifhaber.com/news_print.php?id=245735 [accessed October 19, 2009]

²²⁴ Author’s interview with a retired security official (X-19), Ankara/Turkey, January 13, 2010

²²⁵ Aktifhaber, “Apo Ecevit’e Karayilan Erdogan’a”, October 16, 2009, available at www.aktifhaber.com/news_print.php?id=250369 [accessed October 16, 2009]

²²⁶ Interview with Bulent Orakoglu, by Saadettin Ustaosmanoglu, April 18, 2008

States was providing substantial amounts of logistics to the PJAK.”²²⁷ During her interview, Arzu Celalifer Ekinici stated that “There is abundant evidence in our hands about the U.S. and PKK connection. We have many documents of the meetings between the PKK operatives and American officials. We have even seen them many times on the TV news. These kinds of information changed the threat perceptions of the Turkish foreign policy makers...I have to say that the Americans are in no position to prevent our security cooperation with the Iranians.”²²⁸

Resentment in the Erdogan Administration’s security apparatus was accentuated by subsequent confessions of various American elites and the PKK leaders. Osman Ocalan, a high ranking PJAK leader and brother of Abdullah Ocalan, noted that the PJAK enjoys a “good relationship” with the U.S. occupation forces and receives “some military and economic assistance” in return for this “good” interrelationship.²²⁹ Ibrahim Polat, Osman Ocalan’s driver who surrendered to Turkish security forces, said that “A high ranking American commander used to visit our camps on a monthly basis. He talked with Murat Karayilan and sometimes rendered cash money loaded in large bags. This money was used for constructing three shelters to defend against Turkey’s air strikes.”²³⁰ Semdin Sakik, PKK’s former second commander in chief, asserted that “Americans by no means want dissolution of the PKK because they want a Turkish-Kurdish war after which they can reshape the Middle East. Turkey’s governing elites

²²⁷ Author’s interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

²²⁸ Author’s interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

²²⁹ Los Angeles Times, April 16, 2008

²³⁰ Aktifhaber, “ABD-PKK iliskisi raporu”, July 11, 2007

understood that the Americans never wanted to eliminate the PKK. They understood that the Americans want an armed confrontation between the Kurds and the Turks.”²³¹

Various American officials and journalists also draw attention to the U.S. support of PJAK in order to undermine Iran. Brent Scowcroft, the former National Security adviser and Chairman of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under George W. Bush, stated that “PKK and its PJAK branch were also operating against Iran. That is why we were giving support to and encouraging them. However, the situation has changed. We do not want to give harm to the people we want to get on well with. We want Iran beside us.”²³² In a similar vein, Investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, asserted that the U.S. and Israel has been supporting the PJAK against Iran.²³³ Hersh noted that “in the past six months, Israel and the United States have been working together in support of a Kurdish resistance group known as the Party for Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK). This group has been conducting clandestine cross border forays into Iran...The government consultant said that Israel is giving the Kurdish group equipment and training.”²³⁴ Robert Baer, a former CIA officer highlighted that “I understand that the U.S. provides intelligence to the PJAK so that they are better able to protect themselves in any conflict with the Iranians. This force protection intelligence is given to them through Delta

²³¹ Semdin Sakik, “Amerika Kimlerle Istihbarat Paylasiyor”, Aktifhaber, March 4, 2008. Semdin Sakik had been the second commander of the PKK until his capture in 1998. He currently serves a life prison in Diyarbakir province. Sakik has turned into a prolific writer in his prison cell. He published many books and articles about the PKK since his imprisonment.

²³² Enduring America, “Scowcroft in Turkey: Did someone talk about Turkey”, April 5, 2009. Available at <http://enduringamerica.com/2009/04/05/scowcroft-in-turkey-did-someone-talk-about-hate/> [Accessed April 20, 2010].

²³³ Seymour Hersh, “U.S. Israel Support PKK’s Iran Wing”, Turkish Dailly News, November 21, 2006, There has been many speculations about Seymour Hersh’s report. Many security experts believe that the Turkish State had provided these documents to Hersh.

²³⁴ Seymour Hersh, “U.S. Israel Support PKK’s Iran Wing”, Turkish Dailly News, November 21, 2006

Forces.”²³⁵ Unraveling of this issue exacerbated the bitterness and grievances of Turkish elites toward the Bush Administration.

However, not all the security and intelligence officers have negative perceptions about the United States in counterterrorism policy. Some key officials continue to appreciate provision of intelligence, weapons and ammunition by the United States in the fight against the PKK militants. The officials in this group argue that we should preserve security partnership with the United States and avoid acting on speculations. For instance, Hanefi Avci,²³⁶ former deputy director of intelligence at the General Directorate of Security, asserted that “When we think objectively we can see that the United States really supports Turkey against the PKK. The United States sells us many weapons and ammunitions that we use in our counterterrorism operations. We could not bring Ocalan from Kenya without assistance of the Americans. They are allowing our air strikes in Iraq.”²³⁷ Avci maintained that “we should not wipe the positive things out depending on speculations... Some people may accuse me of being a pro-American, but objectively, we have really benefited from U.S. assistance in counterterrorism.”²³⁸

3.4. Collapse of the bilateral cooperation mechanism

The Erdogan and Bush administrations forged a bilateral counterterrorism coordination mechanism in 2006 to overcome the growing mutual mistrust. On the Turkish side, General Edip Baser was appointed as the chief coordinator and on the American side this task fell to General

²³⁵ Spiegel Online April 14, 2008

²³⁶ Hanefi Avci is one of the most respected law enforcement officers in Turkey. He was the provincial director of intelligence in Diyarbakir and Istanbul provinces. Then he served as the deputy director of intelligence at the General Directorate of Security. In 2003, he became the Director of the Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime. By 2010 he serves as the Police Commissioner of Eskisehir Province.

²³⁷ Interview with Hanefi Avci, by Cuneyt Ozdemir. August 26, 2010. Available at <http://www.dipnot.tv/YaziDetay.aspx?ID=1527>, [accessed August 27, 2010]

²³⁸ *ibid*

Joseph Ralston. Initially both sides made positive statements about the prospects for eliminating the reciprocated mistrust. General Ralston promised timely exchange of actionable intelligence against PKK activities in Iraq. In an interview with the CNN Turk correspondent, General Ralston noted that “First of all, the primary purpose of our mission is to counter the PKK. Let’s make no mistake about it. That is the primary focus. If in fact we are successful with that, then there is no question that will do much to fix the state of relations between the United States and Turkey, and make it stronger than what it has been in the recent past. Turkey is a very, very valued ally of the United States.”²³⁹

Over time, however, this coordination mechanism proved to be far less effective than the Erdogan administration anticipated. The mechanism was overshadowed by General Ralston’s statement that a military action against the PKK was the last option. The Turkish security officials were annoyed with these statements because military action had been the first option of the American government to neutralize terror threats against U.S. national security.²⁴⁰ Ihsan Bal commented that “When the matter came to Turkish national security the American authorities were pronouncing the military action as the last resort but they immediately resort to military force when their interests are at stake.”²⁴¹ As one terrorism analyst put it, over time, this coordination mechanism turned out to be exceedingly impractical, because the Americans did not provide actionable intelligence nor did they conduct operations against the PKK camps in

²³⁹ Interview with General Joseph Ralston, By CNN Turk Correspondent, October 19, 2009, Available at http://istanbul.usconsulate.gov/ralston_intv_101906.html

²⁴⁰ Ihsan Bal, “Terorle Mucadele’de Koordinasyon ve Isbirligi: Baser ve Ralston Pasalar”, USAK Stratejik Gundem, November 13, 2007.

²⁴¹ *ibid*

Northern Iraq.²⁴² Turkish elites came to believe that the Coordination Mechanism was used as a “delay tactic” by the American’s to prevent Turkish intervention into northern Iraq.²⁴³

Because the Erdogan Administration was completely at odds with the U.S. posture against the PKK, the Prime Minister demanded a right to intervene unilaterally. In various bilateral talks Erdogan warned the American officials that U.S. inaction would compel Turkey’s unilateral intervention into northern Iraq. Even though U.S. forces in Iraq began to provide intelligence against the PKK, Turkish security officials and analysts were not satisfied with the level of cooperation. Sedat Laciner, the director of the International Strategic Research Organization asserted that “after the Iraq war, the Americans promised so much but have done almost nothing...They complained about the difficulties of fighting against the PKK militants. They said that the mountains are too high, air is so cold and primarily you [Turkey] should tackle the terrorists in your territory first. However, they have not taken any measures in Iraq that would disturb the PKK.”²⁴⁴ According to Serdar Erdurmaz, a retired military officer:

When the Americans understood that we were serious about incursion into Northern Iraq, they immediately began to provide some intelligence, which turned out to be quite useless against the PKK cadres. The Americans were just pretending to cooperate to prevent any Turkish intervention into the region, because they were preparing an independent state. The intelligence feedback was really superficial. It did not lead to any major counterterrorism operations.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Author’s interview with a terrorism analysts, (X-21), Ankara/Turkey, January 16, 2010

²⁴³ Sedat Laciner, “Unites States and the PKK: Why did coordinator not help out?”, The Journal of Turkish Weekly, January 9, 2007

²⁴⁴ Sedat Laciner, “Unites States and the PKK: Why did coordinator not help out?”, The Journal of Turkish Weekly, January 9, 2007

²⁴⁵ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

The disappointment with the U.S. refusal to take action against the PKK and subsequent crises shifted the perceptions of key Turkish foreign policy makers. Throughout the field research, a predominant majority of the persons that I interviewed noted that the Erdogan Administration does not perceive U.S. forces in Iraq as an instrumental partner in counterterrorism policy. Instead, many Turkish elites believe that the U.S. occupation forces set out to aid the establishment of a free Kurdistan. Many pro-American and pro-Western elites shifted their postures after the U.S. Occupation of Iraq and became increasingly critical of American policies. General Hilmi Ozkok, the former Chief of Staff of Turkish Military criticized the United States “I have difficulty understanding those [Americans] who claim there is a threat across the ocean and don’t believe us when we [Turkey] say that the same threat exists next door. This is unbelievable.”²⁴⁶ Sedat Laciner maintained that “As long as the United States does not take initiative and the PKK continues its attacks there will be permanent wound in the relations between Turkey and the United States.”²⁴⁷ Concomitantly, public opinion increasingly turned against the United States after the invasion of Iraq. A majority of the Turkish people believes that the United States protects and nourishes the PKK terror organization.²⁴⁸

In this context, political and military elites began to lay emphasis on the value of a regional security partnership with Iran and Russia, rather than remaining dependent on the “impractical” NATO framework.²⁴⁹ As the Americans proved to be over-reluctant in counterterrorism policy, Turkey began to develop new diplomatic overtures with Iraq’s neighbors to promote national security interests and preserve territorial integrity. Prime Minister

²⁴⁶ Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1974-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, CA, 2004. p.190

²⁴⁷ Sedat Laciner, “Unites States and the PKK: Whid did coordinator not help out?”, *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, January 9, 2007

²⁴⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

²⁴⁹ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

Erdogan asserted that “there is no positive progress in fight against terror. From now on we want concrete results. We cannot just sit and wait anymore.”²⁵⁰ Malfunctioning of the coordination mechanism and revelations of the connections between the U.S. officials and PJAK operatives deepened the mistrust among Turkish foreign policy elites in the Erdogan Administration and Turkish society. Even though Turkish security analysts agree that the US-PJAK connection was terminated by the Obama Administration, disclosure of this connection created grave and lasting mistrust against the American forces in the Middle East.

3.5. Iran’s concerted campaign against the PKK/PJAK

After the U.S. occupation of Iraq, Iranian government skillfully exploited Turkey's relentless efforts to forge international alliances against resurgent PKK terrorism. Both the Khatami and Ahmadinejad Administrations sought to win the hearts and minds of Turkish foreign policy elites by executing a vigorous counterterrorism campaign against the PKK/PJAK. My field research indicates that the Iranian security authorities embarked on a four-tiered campaign against the PKK and PJAK terror networks. First, they attacked the PKK compounds in Iran and Iraq which killed numerous PKK operatives and disabled their operations.²⁵¹ Second, many key PKK/PJAK operatives were executed for engagement into terrorism plots. Third, over 150 PKK terrorists were extradited to Turkey through the Bilateral Security Cooperation Commission. Fourth, Iranian security and intelligence institutions began to provide actionable intelligence to Turkish security institutions.²⁵² Iran's new posture has been appreciated not only by the political

²⁵⁰ Sedat Laciner, “Unites States and the PKK: Whid did coordinator not help out?”, The Journal of Turkish Weekly, January 9, 2007

²⁵¹ Author’s Interview with a security analyst (X 31), Ankara/Turkey, on December 22, 2009

²⁵² Author’s interview with a retired Intelligence officer, (X-17), Ankara/Turkey, on January 5, 2010

apparatus of the state but also by the security establishment which began to voice its appreciation.

Since 2003, Iran's geographic position has been an elemental advantage in the joint counterterrorism ventures of Ankara and Tehran. Many of the PKK/PJAK enclaves are positioned at the Qandil Mountains located on Iraq's border with Iran (See figure 3.5). The mountain range extends over the Iranian territories. According to a recent strategy report of the International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), Turkish air fighters need to fly 456 kilometers and Turkish land forces needs to traverse 90-150 kilometers over a highly mountainous terrain to reach the terror camps in the Qandil Mountains.²⁵³ In most circumstances, PKK operatives in the Qandil camps receive advance warnings from PKK cadres in Turkish territories before a military incursion is launched. Thanks to this pre-warning system, PKK operatives in Qandil camps immediately evacuate the camps and camouflage themselves in nearby villages. Turkish security experts agree that the Turkish air strikes do not inflict much damage on the Qandil camps that are well positioned in mountain caves and tunnels. According to one retired intelligence officer, "We know that there are at least three large PKK sanctuaries that could shelter thousands of PKK operatives. They are buried under deep ground. Air strikes do not inflict much damage unless we catch them off guard. Secondly, there is highly sophisticated anti-aircraft weaponry at these camps... What I mean is that an air strike is not the best option to attack the terrorists in Qandil."²⁵⁴

²⁵³ ISRO-USAK, "Kuzey Irak Operasyon Raporu", Ankara, June 13, 2007

²⁵⁴ Author's interview with a retired Intelligence officer, (X-17), on January 5, 2010

Figure 3.5: Location of the Qandil Terror Camps



As seen in figure 3.5, Iran is located just a few miles from the Qandil Camps. The Iranian artillery easily strikes the PKK/PJAK operatives without transporting troops into Iraqi territories. Beginning in 2003, Iranian military constantly bombarded the Qandil camps. Many security experts claim that these attacks have been much more effective than Turkey's long-range air strikes. According to the USAK report on transborder military incursions, one advantage of the Iranian security forces is their penetrating knowledge of the safeguards systems in the PKK/PJAK camps as they have frequently raided the terror compounds.²⁵⁵ For instance, in April 16, 2010, a joint Turkish-Iranian counterterrorism incursion ended up killing of 9 PKK/PJAK

²⁵⁵ USAK, "Kuzey Irak Operasyon Raporu", Ankara, June 13, 2007

operatives.²⁵⁶ Subsequent to the operation, three terrorists surrendered to Turkish security forces. In August 2008, Iranian security forces killed 11 PKK/PJAK operatives including Celil Kerima and Faruk Savasli, the top PJAK operatives in Iran.²⁵⁷ Seventeen other militants were arrested with all their equipments during the same operation. In the following month three of the terrorists were sentenced to death and executed in Tabriz Province.²⁵⁸ These are only some examples of Iran's active campaign against the PKK/PJAK terror networks. According to one Iran specialist, Turkish Iranian cooperation yielded very positive results such as surrendering of over 156 terrorists only in 2009.²⁵⁹ Iran's frequent operations against the PKK were highly publicized by the Turkish media, which gradually melted down the resentment of Turkish elites towards Iran for its support of PKK during the 1990s.

In this vein, the joint counterterrorism commission of Turkey and Iran met 12 times. High level of officials from the Ministry of Interior, Turkish Armed Forces, General Directorate of Security, National Intelligence Agency and General Command of Gendarmerie participated in the bilateral commission meetings.²⁶⁰ These meetings have been quite instrumental in eliminating reciprocal mistrust and facilitating further cooperation. One benefit of the Commission has been extradition of 150 PKK militants to Turkey from Iran.²⁶¹ Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Muhtac, who participated in these meetings, asserted that "There is no difference between the PKK and PJAK... Turkey and Iran are fighting in close cooperation against this joint threat."²⁶² An Iranian diplomat noted that "We are equally concerned about Kurdish separatism. We think the PKK and PJAK are great threats to the territorial integrity of

²⁵⁶ Yenicag, "Turkiye-Iran operasyonu teroristleri perisan etti", April 17, 2010

²⁵⁷ Habervitrini, "Iran, PKK'nin ulke sorumlusu ile 11 militani oldurdu", August 08, 2008

²⁵⁸ *ibid*

²⁵⁹ Author's interview with an Iran specialist, (X-32), Ankara/Turkey, December 11, 2009.

²⁶⁰ Bugun Newspaper, "Iran'la PKK muzakeresi Basliyor", April 15, 2004.

²⁶¹ *ibid*

²⁶² *ibid*

both countries. We are cooperating because this PKK terror is a mutual threat. Turkey's security means Iran's security... We have never supported the PKK in the past. This is a big lie”²⁶³

Given such cooperation cases, Turkish security elites, including most of my interviewees, believe that Iran has turned into an invaluable partner in countering the PKK/PJAK threat from the Northern Iraq. One high ranking security official noted that “Iran has turned into a quite instrumental ally in Turkey's counterterrorism policy...Iranians are not just talking but acting. American's on the flipside keep promising but do nothing.”²⁶⁴ According to Soner Cagaptay, “The same country that had PKK camps in the 1990s is now actually combating against the PKK. By combating I really mean combating, not just providing intelligence against terror as Syria does but combating as in actually fighting and actually bombing PKK camps... And Iran is doing this masterfully.”²⁶⁵ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, stated that “The PKK members can easily move from Turkey to Iran, then to Syria or Iraq. They have been doing it for a long time. Whenever they feel the threat in one country they immediately move to another. Therefore, it is quite natural that we are collaborating with the Iranians and Syrians. We have to do it because we are threatened by the same terror network.”²⁶⁶

3.6. Iran's effective public diplomacy

Iran's efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Turkish government and society were not limited to the counterterrorism campaign against the PKK. As Bayram Sinkaya put it, when the American officials were deploying various delay tactics, the Iranian government initiated a

²⁶³ Author's Interview with an Iranian diplomat, (X-24), Ankara/Turkey, on January 15, 2015

²⁶⁴ Author's interview with a security official (X-20), Ankara/Turkey, December 23, 2009

²⁶⁵ Soner Cagaptay's speech at the Transatlantic Institute, Brussels, Belgium, November 22, 2006. Dr. Cagaptay is the Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

²⁶⁶ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

skillful public diplomacy campaign towards the Turkish government and society.²⁶⁷ The Khatami and Ahmadinejad Administrations skillfully exploited growing anti-Americanism in Turkey emphasizing the connection between the U.S. officials and PJAK operatives. Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, an Iranian expatriate who works as a Middle East Specialist at USAK, reported that the Iranian media allocated broad coverage to the U.S.-PJAK relationship.²⁶⁸ Throughout my content analyses, I have found hundreds of newspaper articles in the Turkish media that focused on Iran's achievements in counterterrorism and American reluctance to cooperate against the PKK. There has been a great deal of consistency between the statements of my interviewees and the contents of the newspaper articles from diverse Turkish media.

Since 2003, Turkish and Iranian government officials frequently exchanged visits to develop a joint posture against the PKK/PJAK threat. After each bilateral meeting, Iranian officials/leaders delivered provoking statements to undermine Turkish-American relations. Iran claimed that the United States provided logistical support and protection to the PKK/PJAK militants in Northern Iraq. They asserted that the United States and Israel have a "secret agenda" to create a free Kurdistan that would undermine the territorial integrity of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. For instance, Ali Larijani, Director of Iran's National Security Council, visited Turkey on December 2008. During the reception at the Iranian Embassy, Larijani informed the Turkish authorities about the U.S.-PKK connection and stated that "American's are giving friendship signals to Turkey. But they are negotiating with the PKK leaders in Musul and Kirkuk. They are

²⁶⁷ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

²⁶⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK). .

fueling terrorism but claiming that they are the friends of Turkey.”²⁶⁹ This view was shared by many Turkish elites, particularly among the conservative nationalists, socialists and the Islamists.

Concomitantly, Iranians used the fight against the PKK as a public diplomacy tool to win an ally against Western containment of Iran. President Ahmadinejad’s visit to Turkey in August 2008 was an astutely designed attempt to loosen the containment of Iran. The timing of the visits was carefully selected when the United States and Israel took initiatives to tighten the economic sanctions against the Ahmadinejad Administration. In parallel, timing of the Iranian bombardments against the PKK camps was carefully selected in accordance with the public diplomacy strategy of the Iranian governments.²⁷⁰ Arif Keskin, a prominent Iran specialist at TURKSAM, observed that “Iran attacks the PKK terrorists whenever a Turkish government official visits Washington or whenever an American official comes to Turkey. Here Iran deploys astute public diplomacy. It sends a straight message to the Turkish community that they should be collaborating with Iran rather than the American government.”²⁷¹ Soner Cagaptay, Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, provided a penetrating insight into the timing of the Iranian counterterrorism operations:

In February 2006, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice goes to Ankara, because the Turks are so angry over the fact that PKK is in northern Iraq and Americans are not doing anything about the PKK in northern Iraq. Condoleezza Rice says all the right things in Ankara. She says we are together in the war on terror. Of course, we are going to support Turkey's struggle against the PKK but we can't truly do it now but we are in principle with you... The same day Secretary Rice was in Ankara, Iran was bombing PKK camps. So here is this piece of news on the front page of Turkish newspapers. What Secretary

²⁶⁹ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, “ABD-Iran kiskacindaki Turkiye”, International Strategic Research Organization, December 23, 2008.

²⁷⁰ Soner Cagaptay’s speech at the Transatlantic Institute, Brussels, Belgium, November 22, 2006. Dr. Cagaptay is the Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

²⁷¹ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

Rice said and next to it is a piece of news about what Iranians are doing... As I said Iranians are really doing this masterfully because it realizes how importantly the PKK issue shapes Turkey's relation in the Middle East.²⁷²

In this connection, a large majority of the Turkish elite has been appreciative of Iran's counter terrorism policy. My interviews indicated that Iran's public diplomacy has been effective in changing the perceptions of the Turkish elites and society. One analyst asserted that "Iran has been masterfully deploying various public diplomacy tools to change our perceptions. They intensively broadcast what they accomplish against the PKK...Iran does what we cannot do. We cannot even execute Apo [Abdullah Ocalan] while the Iranians are doing it for each terrorist regardless of their position in the organization."²⁷³ According to Bayram Sinkaya, "Iranians became more cognizant of the functioning of Turkish security apparatus. They deployed the public diplomacy campaign to influence the decision making process within the security establishment. They acknowledged that the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) was pretty influential in crafting of national security policy. Therefore they began to invest in relations with the military establishment. This helped the TSK to change the organizational posture against Iran."²⁷⁴

3.7. Convergence of the security interests of Iran and Turkey

In the aftermath of the U.S. intervention in Iraq, the primary regional security concern for both the Turkish and Iranian foreign policy makers has been preserving the territorial integrity and

²⁷² Soner Cagaptay's speech at the Transatlantic Institute, Brussels, Belgium, November 22, 2006. Dr. Cagaptay is the Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

²⁷³ Author's interview with a security official (X-20), Ankara/Turkey, December 23, 2009

²⁷⁴ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

regional status quo.²⁷⁵ Both the Iranian government and the Erdogan administration saw foreign intervention as the principal catalyst of regional instability.²⁷⁶ In the convergent view, American intervention has fueled terrorism and sectarian violence throughout the region. Particularly after the U.S. occupation of Iraq various Iranian leaders voiced their commitment to cooperate with Turkey in preserving the regional status quo. During the 2004 D-8 Summit, former Iranian President Khatemi pronounced that Turkey and Iran share the same regional security concerns. He went further to say “Turkey’s security means Iran’s security.”²⁷⁷ In a similar way, in a press speech in Ankara, Iranian foreign minister Muttaki noted that “We consider threats against Turkey a threat against Iran”²⁷⁸ Muhammed Hussein Lavasani, Iranian Ambassador to Turkey, commented that “Turkish Iranian relations have been developing on multiple policy areas...Our security ties have been strengthening. We share the same regional threat perceptions...I talked to General Kivrikoglu [former Chief of Staff of Turkish Military] two years ago. We talked about security partnership... I told him that we don’t want dissolution of Iraq because it will destabilize the region.”²⁷⁹

The Kurdish problem remained at the epicenter of both countries’ regional security policy. The Erdogan Administration and the Iranian government share common apprehensions about the issue. Most interviewees indicated that Ankara and Tehran have been equally concerned about the disintegration of Iraq because they were afraid of the irredentist magnet of Kurdish separatism. Having a large Kurdish minority, the Iranian government was similarly

²⁷⁵ In this case regional status quo refers to existing power relations and territorial borders.

²⁷⁶ Author’s interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

²⁷⁷ Mesut Hakki Casin, and Gonca Oguz Gok, “Basra Korfezinde Yukselen Nucleer Gerilimde Iran-ABD-Turkiye’nin yeni diplomatic yol haritalari” in Kenan Dagci and Atilla Sandikli, *Satranc Tahtasinda Iran Nukleer Program*, Tasam Yayinlari, Ankara/Turkey, 2007, p.56.

²⁷⁸ *ibid*, p.56.

²⁷⁹ Hurriyet, “Iran Buyukelcisi: Kilinc’in sozlerine sasirmadim”, March 28,2002

alarmed about PJAK's efforts to revive Kurdish militant separatism. The Iranian President Ahmadinejad stated that "Everyone in this region is severely affected by the PKK's terror campaign. The PKK is undermining the regional security and stability... The regional governments should collaborate against this shared threat."²⁸⁰ According to Arif Keskin, an Iran Specialist at TURKSAM, "Resurgence of the PJAK's terror campaign exacerbated the apprehensiveness of Iranian officials about the persistence of the revolutionary regime, because it coincided with internal uprising and international containment against the Ahmadinejad Administration. Iranian authorities therefore shifted their postures against the Kurdish separatism."²⁸¹ Keskin asserted that, the Iranian authorities perceive a potential independent Kurdistan as the "second Israel", which would function as a "spy base" for American and Israeli covert operations in the region.²⁸² This view became prevailing among Islamist and conservative nationalist elements of Turkish politics.

Both governments believe that foreign intervention into the region has been the principal driver of terrorism and sectarian violence. The common view is that Western armies intervene with the promise of peace and democracy, but each intervention brings about catastrophic consequences for regional security. Iranian security authorities perceive the U.S. partnership with the Kurds as a coalition that is crafted to undermine the Iranian regime.²⁸³ According to Muhammed Nureddin, "Both Iran and Turkey stand against the Western, American and Israeli policies in the region. Revival of ethnic Kurdish activism after the American occupation of Iraq

²⁸⁰ Habervitrini, "Iran, PKK'nin ulke sorumlusu ile 11 militani oldurdu", August 08, 2008

²⁸¹ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

²⁸² *ibid*

²⁸³ Author's interview with an Iranian diplomat (X-33), Ankara/Turkey, January 15, 2010.

threatens the territorial integrity of both countries.²⁸⁴ Ambassador Laloglu noted that “Iraqi Kurds have over 100,000 militias. This is even stronger than the army of the Iraq’s central government. If the Kurds bid for independence the central government is unlikely to stop it.”²⁸⁵ Murat Mercan, the chairman of the TBMM’s foreign relations committee, put it this way:

We have exerted a great deal of diplomatic efforts against the PKK. We are now enjoying the fruits of these efforts. PKK has been declared a terrorist organization by the international community thanks to our diplomatic initiatives... Our cooperation with Iran is quite normal. We are attempting to overcome regional instability by collaborating with the Iranians. Iran sees PJAK as a principal threat and helps Turkish security institutions to neutralize a joint threat. This is quite natural. There is nothing wrong with that.²⁸⁶

The Erdogan Administration perceived the Iranian government as an ally in reconstructing the post- Iraq war order in the Middle East. Celalettin Yavuz, a former high ranking military official noted that the “Americans will be leaving soon. They don’t care whether they left severe ethnic clashes or instability. They don’t care about the destruction of Iraq. All they wanted was the control of the Iraqi oil. We will be left with all the problems driven by the American intervention into the region. Iran will be our partner to deal with the remaining security problems.”²⁸⁷ As Nasuh Uslu put it, “Turkish foreign policy makers want to put an end to regional conflicts, because they believe that military interventions, terrorism, and sectarian

²⁸⁴ Muhammed Nureddin, “Türkiye-Iran ilişkileri tutarlı”, June 29, 2009, available at www.timeturk.com/yazardetay.asp?newsid=14029, [accessed February 5, 2009]

²⁸⁵ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry.

²⁸⁶ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

²⁸⁷ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

violence have been major predicaments for regional development...Iranians will be instrumental for us in settling the post Iraq war regional order.”²⁸⁸

Both the Turks and the Iranians believe that the West puts overemphasis on the rivalry between Turkey and Iran. Iranian Ambassador Gholamreza Bagheir Moghaddam asserted that “it is irritating that the West continuously emphasizes the rivalry between Iran and Turkey. We no longer view each other from rival lenses. But we are seeking to enhance bilateral economic, political and security relations.”²⁸⁹ Iranian Foreign Minister Mutteki noted that, “We have common interests and concerns with Turkey. We share the same view on Iraq... We want stability and peace in northern Iraq... We have to uproot terrorism from this region. I’m telling this clearly, we should not let others destabilize the region. Turkish, Iranian and Syrian cooperation will eradicate the terror organizations in this region.”²⁹⁰ Celalettin Yavuz emphasized that “Iranian and Turkish interests began to converge. The overlapping interests laid out the grounds for the ongoing rapprochement process on security”.²⁹¹

3.8. Shifting threat perceptions towards Iran

The previous governments perceived post-revolutionary Iran as a principal threat to Turkey’s national security. The security establishment in particular perceived Iran as the center of global terrorism. The antagonism towards Iran peaked in 1997 when Iran was accused of supporting terrorism and attempting to export its revolutionary Islamist ideology. During the Erdogan

²⁸⁸ Author’s interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

²⁸⁹ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, “Son Donem Gelismeleri Isiginda Iran-Turkiye Iliskileri”, September 23, 2008.

²⁹⁰ Mesut Hakki Casin, and Gonca Oguz Gok, “Basra Korfezinde Yukselen Nucleer Gerilimde Iran-ABD-Turkiye’nin yeni diplomatic yol haritalari” in Kenan Dagci and Atilla Sandikli, *Satranc Tahtasinda Iran Nukleer Program*, Tasam Yayinlari, Ankara/Turkey, 2007, p.56.

²⁹¹ Author’s interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

Administration however, the negative image of the Iranian governments dissipated in line with the shifting threat perceptions. Throughout my field research, I found that several developments characterized the new perceptions by Turkish elites toward Iran. First, Iran gave up the efforts to export its revolutionary Islamist ideology after the Khatami Administration. Second, the Ergenekon investigations convinced the ruling political elites that the Iranian government was not the mastermind of speculative plots against the secularist elites in Turkey.²⁹² Third, statements of various intelligence officers and analysts indicated that Iran's support for Turkish Hezbollah (THB) was exaggerated. For many of them, Iran-THB connection never existed. Fourth, Iran's positive contributions to the war against the PKK wiped out the negative images of the precedent conflicts.

²⁹² ERGENEKON trial has been the most popular phenomenon in Turkish political life since 2007. According to the majority of experts Ergenekon or the Turkish Gladio was established by NATO during the Cold War. Their primary mission was organizing resistance against Soviet encroachment if the official government and military is defeated. This networks was clandestine, until it was revealed by Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. (see Ecevit's statements at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYjKelkbB2E>) , After the end of Cold War, however, NATO abolished funding of this network. Then the organization began to pursue parochial interests and dissociated from NATO. According to Samil Tayyar, a prominent Turkish journalist, the primary function of the organization was conducting sensational assassinations and provocations to undermine political stability and democracy. Its members come from a wide array of officials from the military, police, intelligence organizations, universities, banks and trade unions. They destabilize the country to create a fertile ground for military coups. Ergenekon investigations began in 2007 and continues in 2010. Several retired generals, military officers, police administrators, professors, economists and journalists have been arrested by the Istanbul 13th High Penal Court. For more information please see the following sources:

- 1) Can Dundar's documentary on Ergenekon, available at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=4856904056172270595#>
- 2) Erdal Simsek, *300 Soruda Ergenekon Iddianamesi*, Neden Kitap, Ankara, 2008
- 3) Gultekin Avci, *Yasayan Kabus Ergenekon-Asrin Sorusturmasi*, Haber Ajanda Yayinlari, Istanbul, 2008

There is a great deal of debate on Ergenekon investigations. Turkish society is bifurcates in their perceptions of the operation. On the one hand, predominant majority of the liberals, Islamists and Marxists strongly support to the investigations. They name the Ergenekon operations "the trial of the century" as it is the most important initiative to unearth the manipulations of the traditional elites and overthrow the elitist rule. On the other, secularists and majority of the military opposes the operation as it undercuts the power, credibility and immunity of the traditional elites.

3.8.1. End of regime export

In the post revolutionary era, Turkish governments had been highly concerned about Iranian efforts to export its fundamentalist regime. As one interviewee, Idris Bal put it, “Regime fear was a principal predicament of bilateral relations. This fear not only undermined relations with Iran but also with all other Muslim nations including the secular Baathist regimes.”²⁹³ However, the Erdogan Administration feels less threatened by export of revolutionary regime by Iran.²⁹⁴ Prevailing majority of the interviewees maintained that Turkish elites no longer fear transition to an Iran type regime for several reasons.

First, the Iranian government gave up regime export policy to Turkey after Mohammad Khatami assumed the presidency in 1997. Kaan Dilek, an Iran specialist who had been observing Iranian politics in Tehran by then, noted that Khatami was aware of the fact that the Iranian regime’s export rhetoric was seriously damaging bilateral relations with the neighboring Muslim states.²⁹⁵ Anti-Iranian sentiments in the region had been fueled by the threat of spreading Islamism as a governing ideology. From 1997 onwards, however, the political climate in Iran began to change. Indeed, most Iran experts have referred to this period as the "Second Republic".²⁹⁶ Khatami initiated a more liberal foreign policy and sought to overcome the conflicts with the Muslim World and the West. In one interview Celalettin Yavuz noted that

²⁹³ Author's interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bal is a prominent foreign Policy Analyst Professor of International relations at the School of Security Studies.

²⁹⁴ *ibid*

²⁹⁵ Author's interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Dilek is an Iran specialist at Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE).

²⁹⁶ *ibid*

“Iran gave up regime exportation strategy after the election of Khatami in 1997. They attempted to revitalize neighborhood relations with Turkey and the Gulf states.”²⁹⁷ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, an Iran born specialist at USAK, noted that “Because of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, Iran was contained not only by the West but also by its Muslim neighbors: Iraq, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Khatami understood that the efforts by Iran to export its fundamentalist regime had been undermining its bilateral relations with many Muslim countries. He therefore abandoned that policy.”²⁹⁸

Second, according to my interviewee Bayram Simkaya, Iran's primary target for regime export was not Turkey but the Muslim countries with substantial Shiite populations. These included the Gulf countries of Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.²⁹⁹ In his view, Turkey was a difficult task for regime export for several reasons: i) Turkey had a well established secular system, ii) Turkey had developed strong and sophisticated institutions. It is hard to overcome a strong state with minor terror networks such as Hezbollah, iii) Turkey is an overwhelmingly Sunni country. Turkey's religious elites pay no tribute to the Ayatollah's hardliner approach in Islam. Similarly another interviewee Serdar Erdurmaz highlighted that “Iran cannot export its regime when the regime itself has been shaken by growing protests. The Iranian regime is experiencing a legitimacy problem.”³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

²⁹⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

²⁹⁹ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

³⁰⁰ Author's Interview with Serdar Erdurmaz, Ankara/Turkey, December 17, 2009).

Third, Turkish governments are convinced that the Iranian regime does not appeal the Turkish citizens particularly the mainstream religious Sunni Schools such as the *Naksibendi* and *Nurcular*. Major religious scholars in Turkey have denounced Iran's brutal conduct and human rights violations. Even some prominent religious leaders saw Iran as a serious threat to the Sunni world.³⁰¹ Some Turkish elites believe that the regime export "threat" has been reversed particularly since early 2000s, because the Turkish model that integrated Islam and democracy appeals many Iranians.³⁰²

3.8.2 Turkish Hezbollah connection disproven in the eyes of many elites and experts

Another stumbling block of bilateral relations had been Iran's alleged support to the Turkish Hezbollah (THB) terror organization.³⁰³ The National Security Council had presented the Turkish Hezbollah as a part of Iran's regime export policy during the 1990s, and the THB became a principal issue in Turkish national security, particularly after the assassination of Gaffar Okkan, who had been a highly revered police commissioner of the Diyarbakir province. Even though there was no reliable intelligence, secularist elites asserted that the Turkish Hezbollah received ideological and logistical support from Iran. This view had been shared among the key security actors including members of the National Security Council before the AKP government.

³⁰¹ During the interviews I observed that especially non-political religious elites had very negative image of Iran. In their view, Iran's unduly fundamentalism is undermining the Islam's legacy of tolerance, peace and respect to human rights

³⁰² Author's interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁰³ The Turkish Hezbollah is different from the Lebanese Hezbollah. There is no connection between these two networks.

However, this perception changed even more dramatically after 2003. The predominant majority of the liberal, neo-Marxist, conservative nationalist and Islamist elites concur that Iran's support for the Turkish Hezbollah was insignificant and overly exaggerated by the traditional pro-Western elites.³⁰⁴ According to Suleyman Ozeren, a former security official and subsequent director of the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center, "Iran's connection with the Turkish Hezbollah is much less important than the Ergenekon or Turkish Gladio. During the 1990s, Huseyin Velioğlu told the militants that he would visit Iran. But each time he was going to Istanbul to meet Ergenekon executives rather than going to Iran. So, he was deceiving the grassroots militants about the Iran connection."³⁰⁵ Bayram Sinkaya stated that "After Khatami took over the government; Iran developed a policy of dialogue with her neighbors. Iran gave up supporting extremist organizations such as the Turkish Hezbollah."³⁰⁶ During my interview, a retired intelligence officer, described the situation in this way:

The Turkish Hezbollah was established by the Ergenekon to fight against the PKK. Later on, the Ergenekon began to use it for other purposes such as destabilization of Turkey to justify military coups. Iran's connection to the Turkish Hezbollah has been really exaggerated. Initially the post-revolutionary Iranian governments thought they might use the Turkish Hezbollah as their proxy in Turkey. However, Iran's connection to Hezbollah ended by 1995, when the Iranian intelligence officers demanded sharing of Hezbollah's 'great archive'. Huseyin Velioğlu [Leader of Turkish Hezbollah] rejected this demand. Then the Iranian intelligence organizations abandoned their relations with Turkish

³⁰⁴ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁰⁵ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

³⁰⁶ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

Hezbollah. Since then we don't have any evidence of connection between Iran and Turkish Hezbollah operatives.³⁰⁷

Some interviewees believed that the Turkish Hezbollah was not affiliated with the Iranian government but had functioned as a manipulation tool of Ergenekon.³⁰⁸ Suleyman Ozeren, Director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center, asserted that “The Turkish Hezbollah was a fabricated organization. It had no connections with the Lebanese Hezbollah or the Iranian government. It was established by the Turkish Special Forces to fight against the PKK in Southeast Anatolia. Later on its operational field was expanded. It was used as a suicide machine of Turkish Gladio.”³⁰⁹ According to Nasuh Uslu, a prominent foreign policy analyst in Turkey, “The diehard secularists needed external threats during the 28 Subat process to justify tightening of control over Turkish politics. They immediately found it. Iran! They sought to legitimize their conduct through demonizing the Iranians. They said that Iran was attempting to export regime and supporting the Hezbollah. But none of these claims turned out to be true.”³¹⁰

A parallel view was voiced by several top intelligence officers after their retirement. Bulent Orakoglu, a former Director of Intelligence at the General Directorate of Security, explicated that “While I was the Police Commissioner of Hatay Province, we had a lunch with General T.C. and Colonel V. B.. There was a tall guy standing next to our table...The general invited him to sit with us...Later I understood that this guy was Huseyin Velioglu, the leader of

³⁰⁷ Author's Interview with a retired intelligence officer, (X-17), Ankara/Turkey, January 5, 2010.

³⁰⁸ When people talk about “deep state” in Turkey they are referring to the Ergenekon Terror Network or Turkish gladio

³⁰⁹ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

the Turkish Hezbollah... He was under the command of special forces.”³¹¹ According to Hezbollah specialist Kursat Atalar, the organization was intensively infiltrated by the state’s security institutions and came under the control of Turkish intelligence institutions rather than the Iranians.³¹²

3.8.3. Operation Ergenekon and assassinations of the secularist elites

During the 1990s and early 2000s, pro-American elites in Turkey accused Iran of the assassination of several secularist elites including Bahriye Uçok (October 6, 1990), Muammer Aksoy (January 31 1991), Ugur Mumcu (January 24 1993), Ahmet Taner Kislali (October 21 1999) and Gaffar Okkan (January 24, 2001).³¹³ In parallel with these claims, the Turkish security establishment accused Iran of killing over 200 Iranian expatriates who played key roles in opposing the post-revolutionary Iranian regime.³¹⁴ Ultra secularist Turkish elites presented these assassinations as a fundamentalist strategy to undermine the stability of a Kemalist state. These assassinations fueled anti-Iranian sentiments in the government machinery and led to the deportation of the Iranian Ambassador in 1997. The Islamists, neo-Marxists, conservative nationalists and liberals did not share the Kemalist idea that Iran was behind these assassinations. Particularly in the eyes of the Islamist elites, these assassinations were “vicious plots” by the CIA and the MOSSAD to undermine Turkish-Iranian relations.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, arguments of both sides remained unsubstantiated until recently because the homicide investigators could not

³¹¹ Interview with Bulent Orakoglu, The Former Director of Intelligence at the General Directorate of Security. This interview has been conducted by Ecevit Kilic on April 6, 2009.

³¹² Kursad Atalar, “Hezbollah of Turkey: A pseudo-Threat to the Secular Order?”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol 7, No.2, 307-331, June 2006.

³¹³ A common feature of these elites was their scrutiny on the connection between JITEM and the PKK terrorists.

³¹⁴ Radikal Newspaper, May 29, 2000

³¹⁵ Sevki Yilmaz’s speech in Koln/Germany, 1992. Available at <http://en.kendincos.net/video-hffdfn-sevki-yilmaz-in-1992-de-ergenekon-u-desifre-eden-konusmasi.html> [accessed April 5, 2010]. Similar statements have been given by former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan in his various speeches. See also Islamist Scholar Harun Yahya’s blog, at http://www.harunyahya.org/kitap/hy_terorun_perde_arkasi/Teror1b.html , [accessed April 5, 2010]

find any evidence of the connections of the CIA, MOSSAD or the Iranian intelligence organizations with these cases.

Even though the Iranian government strictly denied involvement in these plots, pro-Western Turkish media continued to present negative images of the Iranian mullahs throughout the 1990s. Public protests were organized by Kemalist NGOs to demonstrate domestic resentment against the alleged Iranian plots to undermine the secularist regime in Turkey. The Iranian media responded that “making a commotion about these murders and accusing Iran of involvement at this junction is due to the pressure from the Zionist regime, which is trying to diver the world’s public attention from the trial of the Iranian Jews who have confessed to spying for the Zionist regime.”³¹⁶ As a retribution for the Turkish governmental claims, the Iranian government accused Turkey of sheltering the regime opponents, particularly the Mujahedin al Khalq.

Assassinations of some regime opponents in Turkey were implicitly admitted by Iran's minister of Intelligence Ali Fallahim, who noted that “We track them [opposition forces] outside the country, too. We have them under surveillance... We have succeeded in dealing blows to many of those groups outside the country and at the borders. Last year we succeeded in striking fundamental blows to their top members.”³¹⁷ One of the interviewees elucidated that throughout the 1990s Iran's intelligence agencies conducted frequent covert operations in Turkey.³¹⁸ He noted that these operations targeted over 200 regime opponents who played key roles in the coalition against the Mullah regime.

³¹⁶ Tehran Times, May 21, 2000.

³¹⁷ Bayram Sinkaya, *op cit.* p.532

³¹⁸ Author’s interview with a retired high ranking security official (X-22), November 28, 2010

Testimonies of numerous witnesses and security officials during the Ergenekon Investigations (2006-2010) revealed that even though Iranian intelligence agencies had conducted several covert operations to silence dissident expatriates in Turkey, they were not involved with assassinations of Ugur Mumcu, Bahriye Ucok, Gaffar Okkan and Ahmet Taner Kislali.³¹⁹ After the Ergenekon operation, many civilian (particularly Islamist and conservative nationalist) elites concluded that these intellectuals had been killed by the Ergenekon Terror Organization (ETO). This belief is substantiated by tactical and methodological similarities with latter assassinations by the organization. Mehmet Sahin noted that “When the secularist elites were killed, some media organs accused Iran right away. Later we learned that Iran killed none of them. Instead, they were assassinated by the Ergenekon terror network. The purpose was simple. They wanted to undermine Turkish-Iranian relations through a set of false accusations.”³²⁰ According to Nasuh Uslu, “Among those assassinated intellectuals Ugur Mumcu was investigating PKK- Ergenekon connection... He was immediately killed. I don’t think Iran had any issue with him. Neither had he any issues with Iran.”³²¹ According to Suleyman Ozeren, director of the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM), the Ergenekon investigations revealed that many terror organizations in Italy, Turkey and other European countries did not really go after the proclaimed ideology.³²² Instead, they were used as a subcontractor of the “Gladio” to manipulate domestic politics and foreign policy.³²³

The Turkish Hezbollah was accused of killing Gaffar Okkan in 2001. He had been a highly respected police commissioner of Diyarbakir province. Many analysts argued that the

³¹⁹ See, bill of indictment at the Ergenekon Trial (Ergenekon Iddianamesi), and its appendixes

³²⁰ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³²¹ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010.

³²² Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³²³ *ibid*

Hezbollah militants were trained and funded by the Iranian government. However, none of these analysts could present convincing evidence about the connection between Turkish Hezbollah and Iran. During the Ergenekon investigations, many witnesses testified that neither Iran nor Turkish Hezbollah played any role in Gaffar Okkan's assassination. Indeed some witnesses testified that he was assassinated by the Ergenekon Terror Organization (ETO). For instance, Yildirim Begler, who worked as an interpreter for the ETO's key operatives, asserted that this plot was organized by an ETO executive, L.G.³²⁴ According to Begler, L.G. later sent the assassination team to Iraq to avoid detection, but on their return to Turkey all 20 assassins died in a plane crash in Malatya province. Kemal Burkay, a Kurdish politician conjectured that "these 18 targeted assassinations were carried out by the Ergenekon terror network to destabilize Turkey and create a fertile ground for a military coup".³²⁵

As Bayram Sinkaya put it, the Ergenekon investigations eliminated the mistrust against Iran among the ruling political elites.³²⁶ Most liberals, Islamists, neo-Marxists and conservative nationalists believe that none of those sensational assassinations were conducted either by the Iranians or by their alleged associates such as Turkish Hezbollah. Instead, a large majority of the Turkish civilian elites and the society believe that the assassinations were the work of Ergenekon or the Turkish Gladio. Many of the persons that I interviewed indicated that Iran's acquittal of these assassination charges in the eyes of the new elites diminished the mistrust towards the Iranian government, which had been the principal impediment for bilateral security relations.

³²⁴ Today's Zaman, "Police Chief Okkan was killed by a state team, says witness", December 24, 2009

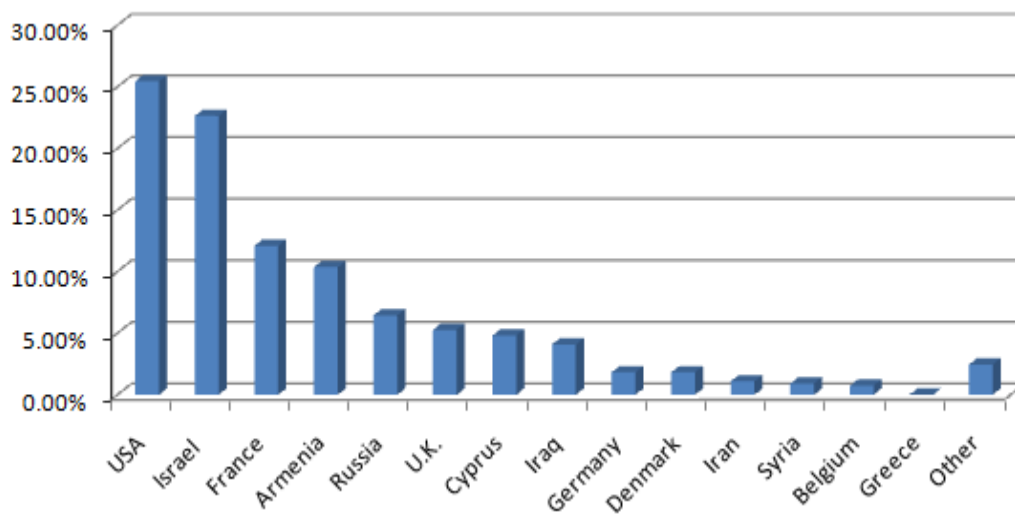
³²⁵ Interview with Kemal Burkay on March 2, 2009, by Ramazan Kerpeten, Correspondent of Zaman Newspaper

³²⁶ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

3.9. Legitimization of bilateral relations with Iran

During the Erdogan Administration bilateral relations with post-revolutionary Iran regained legitimacy because of shifting threat perceptions in the governmental and societal realm. Statements of key security officials and the Ergenekon investigations revealed that Iran's support for terrorism against Turkey had been exaggerated. It became more apparent that Iran was no longer attempting to export its fundamentalist regime into Turkey. Contemporary public surveys indicate that the Turkish community no longer viewed Iran as a major threat to national security. In its place, the United States and Israel took on public perceptions as foreign threat to Turkey's national security (See figure 3.6). By 2010, neither the Erdogan Administration nor the wide society anticipated a serious threat from the Iranian governments.³²⁷

Figure 3.6: Public perceptions of top threats against Turkey



Source: USAK's survey on Turkish foreign policy 2009

³²⁷ Apart from Author's interviews with the elites, I interviewed over 100 people from various spheres of the society. Author's interviews revealed a similar trend. Predominant portion of the Turkish people perceive the U.S. and Israel as the principal threat to global and national security. Iran is not seen a major threat

As Bayram Sinkaya commented, “There was a strong positive correlation between the rise of anti-Americanism and sympathy towards Iran. Turkish community came to see the United States and Israel as much more dangerous than Iran. They anticipated no threats from Iran but they began to accuse Americans and Israelis for every conflict and sensational assassination in this region.”³²⁸ According to the USAK’s highly respected Foreign Policy Perception Survey (2009), only one percent of the respondents perceived Iran as the top national security threat, whereas 25.45 percent of the Turkish citizens perceived the United States as the principal threat (see figure 3.6).³²⁹ The United States is followed by Israel with 23 percent.

The shift in threat perception catalyzed a reevaluation of Turkish-Iranian relations. Many security analysts argued that the Turkish state put disproportionate emphasis on Iran’s support for Turkish/Kurdish terror organizations.³³⁰ Bayram Sinkaya noted that “Our guys always accused Iran for supporting the PKK. Iran always denied it. When we make some self criticism we see that there were terror camps in mountainous districts of the Southeastern Anatolia [Turkey]. Why did we accuse them when we failed to eliminate terror camps in the Turkish homeland?”³³¹ Bulent Aras, director of SETAV, stated that that “Iran is larger than Turkey...Iran’s Kurdish regions are covered with high mountains and deep valleys. Geographical conditions did not allow complete control of terror activities. During the 1990s, Iran was providing intelligence to the Turkish state. It also extradited several PKK members but the Turkish authorities did not really publicize it.”³³²

³²⁸ Author’s interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³²⁹ USAK, “4. Dis politika Algilama Anketi” August 2009.

³³⁰ I have read many interrogation documents of PKK militants. In some of these documents PKK members were referring to organization’s activities in Iran. During early 1990s, limited number of terrorists stated that the Iranian intelligence officers provided training and equipment to the PKK cadres in Iran.

³³¹ Author’s interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³³² Author’s interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

Several interviewees contended that previous Turkish governments accused external forces; including Iran, Greece, Armenia and Russia, because they failed to confront terrorism at home. In other words, previous governments blamed foreign governments to divert attention from their incompetence and failures in counterterrorism policy. Arif Keskin, an Iran specialist at TURKSAM, noted that “When the terror problems began to emerge, incompetent governments began to accuse others to save the future of their political careers. Yes, the PKK was acting as a destabilizer on behalf of the foreign intelligence services. Yes, Iran may have supported the PKK, but it was really exaggerated.”³³³ Suleyman Ozeren, Director of UTSAM, highlighted that “During the mid 1990s, the PKK became very strong. 4500-5000 militants had been conglomerating in terror camps at the mountainous districts of southeastern Turkey. Our National Security Council unduly accused the Iranians. Instead of developing an efficient strategy, the governments accused the Iranians, Syrians or Russians. Iran may have provided some logistics but it is really insignificant.”³³⁴ One retired high-ranking security official noted that “The roots of the Kurdish and Islamist problem have been embedded in domestic politics. But the previous governments and the MGK sought external scapegoats to reduce the domestic pressure... They presented the Iranians, Russians and Syrians as the principal enemies on the grounds that they were supporting terrorism. In this way they found a pretext for their failures, misconducts and incapacibilities.”³³⁵ According to Bulent Aras, “Some Turkish governments were incapable of suppressing the PKK. But they had to come up with an explanation to convince the

³³³ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³³⁴ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

³³⁵ Author's interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010.

tax payers. They claimed that the external forces were stimulating the PKK. This was the easy option.”³³⁶

My field research indicated that the shift of threat perceptions paved the way for enhanced intergovernmental counterterrorism cooperation between Iran and Turkey. Cuneyt Gurer, a security analyst at UTSAM, put it this way, “We don’t consider Iran as a threat anymore. We are not enemies but friends. Iranians understood that they cannot export their Islamic regime into Turkey. Thus they gave up covert operations. We no longer anticipate that Iran would support Hezbollah and other radical groups against Turkey... The shift in the threat perceptions laid the grounds for counterterrorism partnership.”³³⁷ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici reinforced this view, “The rapprochement is partly due to shifting threat perceptions of both Turkish government and society. Revival of the PKK and PJAK attacks against both countries drew Ankara and Tehran closer. We can talk about rapprochement based on mutual threat perception.”³³⁸

3.10. Consensus among the key foreign policy makers

Prior to the Erdogan Administration, there had been strong opposition in domestic politics to developing a security partnership with Iran. Counterterrorism cooperation was considered impossible with a state that “harbored” terrorism. Particularly the military, diplomatic and bureaucratic apparatus of the state preserved their anti-Iran stance until the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Iran’s image as a fundamentalist Islamist regime was another reason for secularist elites to reject cooperation. During the Erdogan Administration however, key actors largely reached a

³³⁶ ibid

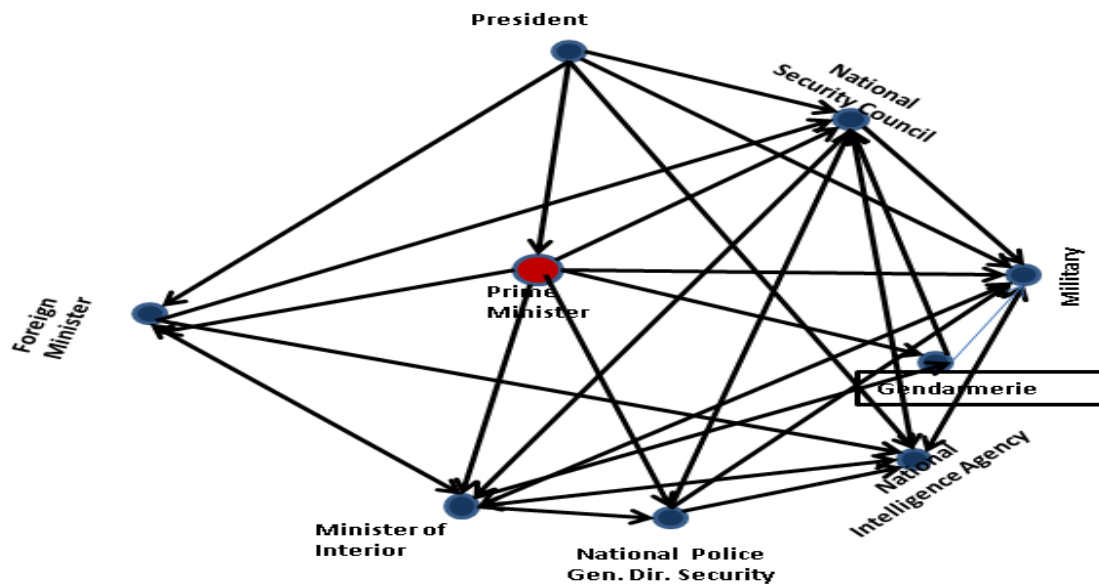
³³⁷ Author's interview with Cuneyt Gurer on December 24, 2009..

³³⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

consensus to forge a counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian government.³³⁹ Despite minor objections, the Erdogan administration deployed all relevant institutions for the ongoing counterterrorism partnership (see figure 3.7). A broad-based consensus emerged among the key security actors to conduct a new counterterrorism campaign against the PKK.

As seen in figure 3.7, there are eight principle actors in Turkey's counterterrorism policy: The President, Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Chief of Staff of the Military, General Directorate of Security, National Intelligence Agency and General Command of Gendarmerie. The latter four are the active combatant institutions against the PKK and other terror threats. They put into practice the decisions that are made by the National Security Council (MGK).

Figure 3.7: Key Actors in Turkey's Counterterrorism Policy



³³⁹ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. This view is also stated by several other interviewees including Murat Mercan, the Chairman of Turkish Parliament's foreign relations committee

The pillars of the national counterterrorism strategy are shaped in the National Security Council (MGK) Summits. These summits are the ideal platforms to understand the concerns of the key actors. However, article 10 of the Law on National Security Council (2945) strictly bans release of the documents, statements and files about the MGK summits.³⁴⁰ Release of MGK materials are perceived as “national treason” by the state’s security machinery. The public is only informed about the outcome of the meetings or the ultimate MGK decisions. Therefore, my arguments about the postures of the key actors depend on interviews with high/mid ranking government officials and media content analysis. The statements of the mid level officials provided penetrating insights on the issue because many MGK files or draft recommendations are prepared by mid level officials rather than the top institutional executives.

My field research indicated that there has been a broad consensus among the key foreign policy elites about the counterterrorism partnership with Iran. Even though the ultra-secularist military elites preserve negative images of the Iranians, they compromised with the Erdogan Administration’s new counterterrorism deal with Iran for two reasons. First, there was a major disappointment with the U.S. failure to cooperate against the PKK threat. This disappointment was exacerbated by the disclosure that the United States assisted the PJAK. In many of their statements General Hilmi Oksuz, General Yasar Buyukanit and General Ilker Basbug, three consecutive Chiefs of Staff in the Turkish Armed Forces criticized U.S. inaction against the PKK camps in Northern Iraq. In June 2008, general Basbug reiterated this resentment and declared that Turkey and Iran has forged a counterterrorism partnership against their mutual enemies, the PKK and the PJAK.³⁴¹ Statements of General Basbug clearly indicate the shift of the institutional posture of the Turkish Armed Forces in counterterrorism policy.

³⁴⁰ Law on the National Security Council (2945),

³⁴¹ Cumhuriyet Newspaper, June 6, 2008.

Other interviewees confirmed this phenomenon. Even though the acting officers hesitated to speak about their resentments against a NATO ally, the retired officers overtly expressed their concerns about the unjustified American intervention in Iraq and reluctance to cooperate against the PKK. Celalettin Yavuz, a retired military official, asserted that a growing array of Turkish military officers had become increasingly resentful about U.S. policies in the Middle East.³⁴² Another Military officer, Serdar Erdurmaz, intimated that the U.S. occupation of Iraq was a turning point for the threat perceptions of Turkish military and other members of the National Security Council.³⁴³ Erdurmaz noted that “Since then [2003] the military has been supportive of the Erdogan Administration’s efforts to forge a closer security partnership with the Iranian government, because the military leaders are highly disappointed with the American posture in Iraq.”³⁴⁴ Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, who served in the Advisory board of Foreign Ministry, noted that “The soldiers do not oppose improvement of bilateral relations with Iran, because they think that Iran has become a quite instrumental partner in counterterrorism strategy.”³⁴⁵ Tuncer Kilinc, the former Secretary General of the Turkish National Security Council, pointed that Turkey’s alliance with the West turned out to be quite impractical against regional security threats such as terrorism. He therefore proposed that Turkey should forge closer security relations with Iran and Russia to stand against regional security threats.³⁴⁶ Murat Mercan, the chairman of Turkish Parliament’s Foreign Relations Committee, posited that the bureaucratic and political actors of the Erdogan Administration are by and large agreed about the desirability of closer security relations with the Iranian government.³⁴⁷ However, he warned that

³⁴² Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁴³ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁴⁴ *ibid*

³⁴⁵ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁴⁶ Tuncer Kilinc, “Türkiye’nin Etrafında Barış Kuşağı Nasıl Oluşturulur?”, March 7, 2002, retrieved from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=24202&l=1>, February 20, 2009

³⁴⁷ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

“cooperation with Iran and cooperation with the United States are not mutually exclusive. We can do both simultaneously. We are preserving our diplomatic relations with both countries.”³⁴⁸

3.11. Critiques of the New Security Posture

Despite the ongoing honeymoon period between the Erdogan and Ahmadinejad administrations, not all Turkish elites believe that the Iranians are reliable partners in counterterrorism policy for several reasons. There are still many pro-Western elites in Turkey, who argue that Turkey should preserve its strategic ties with the United States and NATO. It is hard to classify these elites into a single party or institution. They exist in the military, bureaucracy, security institutions, diplomatic spheres, press, academia, think tanks and various political parties including the Justice and Development Party (AKP). These elites presented several criticism of the Turkish-Iranian counterterrorism partnership.

First, many critics believe that Iran is not a trustworthy ally against Kurdish separatism. In their view, Iran is using their fight against the PKK to win the hearts and minds of Turkey’s governing elites, because they feel increasingly contained by the West. Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, noted that “Iran felt contained by the United States after the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. American military bases surround Iran. As the Mullahs feel further contained owing to the nuclear program, they seek new economic and political partners. Supporting counterterrorism operations against the PKK is a very astute policy to make common cause with Turkish foreign policy makers.”³⁴⁹ Mehmet Sahin asserted that the “Iranians are fully aware that

³⁴⁸ ibid

³⁴⁹ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

they are contained by American forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are American forces all around the Gulf. The only way to get out the siege is Turkey. Ahmadinejad uses counterterrorism against the PKK as a bribe to win over Turkey. At least he wants to make sure that Turkey does not join the anti-Iranian coalition.”³⁵⁰ Arif Keskin, a senior Iran strategist at TURKSAM, argued that Iran cooperates against terrorism because Ahmadinejad wants to ensure access to the European energy markets through Turkey if Western containment tightens. In a similar vein, the USAK report on Northern Iraq criticizes Iran for being an unreliable partner in counterterrorism.³⁵¹ According to the report, Turkish elites; particularly the upper echelons of the security establishment; are concerned that Iran might discontinue cooperation once the United States withdraws troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to several analysts, Iran’s shifting counterterrorism policy is designed to undermine Turkish-American relations. Iran supports the counterterrorism policy with a skilful public diplomacy that presents the United States as the principal promoter of regional instability and terrorism. Bayram Sinkaya postulated that “Iran’s security cooperation with Turkey is partly crafted to undercut the Turkish-American alliance. Mutteki [Iran’s foreign minister] explicitly stated this. He kept on saying that the Americans are the real patrons of terrorism in this region.”³⁵² Another interviewee Arif Keskin, noted that, “Iran’s shifted posture against the PKK is a shrewd strategy and a tool of public diplomacy to undermine Turkey’s bilateral relations with the United States. Quite interestingly Iran attacks the PKK whenever a Turkish politician visits Washington. When the Turkish politician returns with an empty hand, the Iranians began to

³⁵⁰ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁵¹ USAK, “Kuzey Irak Operasyon Raporu”, Ankara, June 13, 2007

³⁵² Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey

publicize their operations and disseminate the message that Americans are the real masters of the PKK.”³⁵³

Many Turkish foreign policy elites are not sure that the Iranians will continue to cooperate against the PKK once the American military withdraws from Iraq. Some argued that Iran will give up counterterrorism cooperation because it could benefit from partition of Iraq. In this view, Iran will have great influence on the partitioned Shiite society once Iraq disintegrates. Kaan Dilek, an Iran specialist at the Institute of Strategic Thinking, argued that “I don’t think Iran is a good partner in counterterrorism, because Iran will benefit from dissolution of Iraq. They will take over the control of Shiite territories at the east. Over the long term Iraqi Shiites may be annexed by Iranians... Tehran has a plan B. If Iraq disintegrates they know what to do. Our plan A is designed to preserve the status quo, but we do not have a plan B. In other words we don’t really know what to do if the Kurds declare independence.”³⁵⁴

Some interviewees noted that security cooperation between Iran and Turkey is not mature in several respects. First, Turkey’s law enforcement, military and intelligence agencies are used to run joint operations with their Western counterparts. Turkish institutions are designed to function optimally with Western standards. One security official noted that “Even though we began to exchange intelligence extensively this does not mean that we will run joint operations as we have been doing with the Western institutions over the past six decades. We are gradually overcoming the trust problem, but there are other problems such as the language, divergences in operational codes of conduct and legislative disharmony.”³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Author’s interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁵⁴ Author’s interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2015. Ankara/Turkey

³⁵⁵ Author’s interview with a security official, (X-19), January 13, 2010, Ankara/Turkey

Second, Iran's image as fundamentalist Islamic regime remains a major handicap in developing a deep and abiding security alliance. Turkish law enforcement, intelligence and military organizations refrain from publicizing their cooperation with Iranian institutions. One interviewee noted that "Iranian revolutionary guards are listed as a terrorist organization by the Bush Administration. Americans are our NATO ally. Our military institutions cannot run joint practices with an organization [Iranian revolutionary guards] that is perceived as a terrorist network by our strategic allies."³⁵⁶ Even though there is an ongoing partnership against the PKK/PJAK, Turkish security institutions continue to oppose further joint military practices that would be perceived as a military realignment of Turkey.

3.12. Conclusions of the Chapter

The Erdogan Administration forged an unprecedented counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian government after 2003. Growing intergovernmental security cooperation appears to be at odds with long-established patterns of alliances in the Middle East. Many critics argued that the new security posture is driven by Islamic sentiments and indicate realignment of Turkey. My field research, however, indicates that Erdogan Administration's alliance policy in regional security and counterterrorism is not driven by the Islamic identity of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Instead, this policy is the result of rational calculations and practical considerations to neutralize the PKK and preserve the regional status quo. By and large state actors are in consensus on this policy regardless of their ideological background or institutional affiliation. Throughout the interviews and content analysis, I found that nine reasons motivated

³⁵⁶ ibid

the Erdogan Administration to forge a counterterrorism partnership with the Iranian governments.

First, the resurgence of terrorism after the U.S. led coalition's invasion and occupation of Iraq has pushed Ankara and Tehran closer as both countries feel increasingly threatened about the growing PKK/PJAK threat and growing Kurdish nationalism. The common perception of Turkey's governing elites is that the U.S. intervention into Northern Iraq created a safe haven for the survival and flourishing of the PKK. The Erdogan Administration came under intensive public pressure after various sensational PKK attacks. The "Kurdish Problem" and the PKK became the most important agenda in domestic politics and foreign policy of the Erdogan Administration.

Second, unsatisfactory U.S. cooperation against the PKK motivated the Erdogan Administration to forge alternative practical security partnerships. After the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, the political and security apparatus of the Turkish state consistently demanded the Bush Administration cooperate in defeating revitalized PKK terror. Even though American officials gave alluring promises, none of the PKK camps in Northern Iraq have been eliminated. Much of the intelligence feedback was out of date and inaccurate. The U.S. inaction created a strong resentment throughout the government and Turkish Society. The disappointment with the major NATO ally compelled the Erdogan Administration to forge alternative practical counterterrorism partnerships with Iraq's neighbors (mainly Iran and Syria) that were exposed to the same ethnic Kurdish terror.

Third, various crises between Ankara and Washington undermined the bilateral trust between the two Cold War allies. The Turkish parliament's rejection of transfer of American forces through Turkish territories ushered in an era of mistrust between Turkey and the United

States. The stress in bilateral relations was exacerbated by three consecutive crises: First, a Turkish Special Forces Unit was arrested by American occupation forces in Sulaimaniya. Second, various prominent think tanks in Washington released a redrawn map of the Middle East depicting an independent Kurdistan, not only in Iraq but also in Southeastern parts of Turkey. Third, disclosure of the U.S.-PJAK connection created a strong resentment among Turkish foreign and security policy elites. These crises downgraded the strategic value of the American coalition forces in Turkey's counterterrorism policy.

Fourth, the Iranian government was highly cooperative against the mutual PKK/PJAK threat after 2003. This cooperation included intelligence exchange and joint operations against PKK/PJAK compounds. Iranian governments neutralized many PKK/PJAK operatives through military attacks and court ordered executions. Moreover, Iran extradited numerous PKK militants to Turkish authorities. Under these circumstances, Iran emerged as an ally of the Erdogan Administration against micronationalist Kurdish separatism that threatened the regional status quo. Iran's new policy was highly appreciated by almost all echelons of the Erdogan administration.

Fifth, the Iranian government's public diplomacy was quite successful in shifting the perceptions of Turkish citizens and the government. Iranian media and officials skillfully exploited the U.S. reluctance to cooperate against the PKK and revealed connections of American officials with PJAK operatives. Iranians propagandized that the U.S. had been fueling ethnic separatism and undermining regional security. Iran conducted frequent counterterrorism operations against the PKK when the Turkish resentment against the Bush Administration peaked after 2003. These politico-military operations intensified whenever Turkish officials visited Washington or an American official visited Ankara. Iranian public diplomacy maintained

that while the United States remained inactive against the PKK, the Iranian government has been fully supportive of Turkey's campaign against the PKK. This view was shared by a majority of Turkey's security elites. The Erdogan Administration became convinced that the U.S. government had used various delaying tactics to retard Turkish intervention into Northern Iraq.

Sixth, regional threat perceptions of Ankara and Tehran converged. Both wanted to preserve the status quo because disintegration of Iraq would stir up the Kurdish independence movements in Iran and Turkey. The Erdogan and Ahmadinejad administrations see each other as allies in reconstructing the post Iraq war landscape of the Middle East.

Seventh, Iran's new posture has been quite instrumental in shifting the threat perceptions of both the Erdogan Administration and Turkish society. Turkey's governing elites no longer anticipate a regime threat or support of terrorism from the post-revolutionary Iranian governments. Public surveys indicate that only one percent of the Turkish people perceive Iran as a principal threat. Instead, the U.S. and Israel became the most dangerous states in the eyes of the Turkish citizens.

Eighth, bilateral relations with Iran have been re-legitimized as a result of shifting threat perceptions. The Erdogan Administration and the Turkish community no longer perceive Iran as an "evil next door". The shift in threat perceptions gradually eroded the negative image of Iran among both Turkish elites and mass society. Accordingly, domestic opposition to relations with post-revolutionary Iran has been replaced by strong nationwide support particularly after the Iraq war.

Finally, the consensus among the key actors of foreign and security policy strengthened the hand of Erdogan Administration. The traditional resistance of the ultra-secularist military

elites gradually disappeared after the U.S. occupation of Iraq. The resentment with U.S. behaviors in Iraq undercut the adherence to pro-Western security platforms.

Even though there is a broad consensus among the actors of the Erdogan Administration, the Turkish-Iranian security rapprochement has been criticized by Turkish intellectuals. Many critics believe that Iran is not a trustworthy ally in countering the PKK, because Iran's policy is forged to win the hearts and minds of members of the Turkish government when they feel increasingly contained by the West. The critics suspect that Iran will abandon cooperation once the Obama Administration withdraws troops from the region. Other critics argue that Iran is fighting against the PKK to undermine Turkish-American relations. Iran supports the counterterrorism policy with a skilful public diplomacy that presents the United States as the principal promoter of regional instability and terrorism. Some critics argued that Turkish institutions are designed to function optimally by Western standards. Even though Iran and Turkey began to exchange information, Turkey's security institutions will not sustain the partnership due to lack of joint standards of operation. Even though there is a partnership with Iran against terrorism, the Turkish security institutions will resist further alliances with Iran that would be perceived as military realignment of Turkey.

CHAPTER 4: NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION:

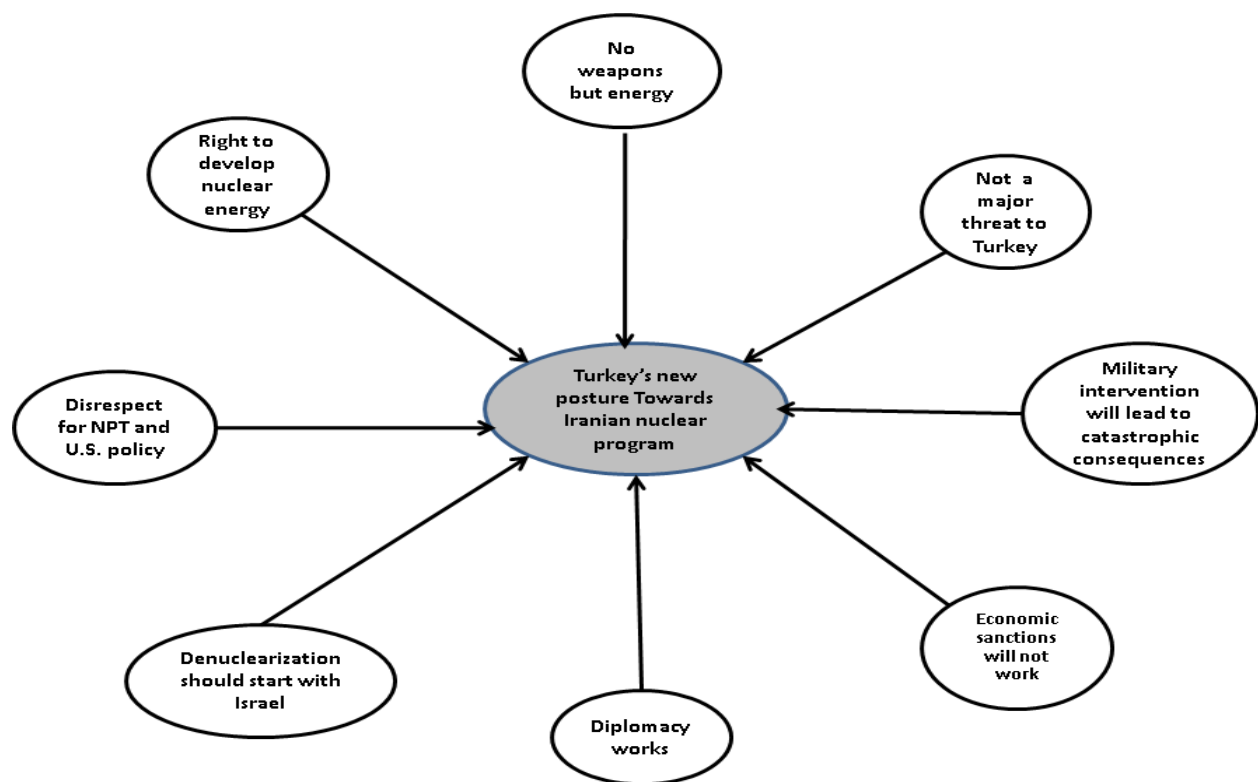
WHY TURKEY DOES NOT SUPORT THE SANCTIONS ON IRAN?

The Iranian nuclear program became a serious foreign policy question for the Erdogan Administration after 2003, as the conflict moved towards the forefront of international politics. As well as nuclearization of a neighbor, Western economic sanctions and plans for possible military engagement have significant implications for the Turkish government. In this context, the U.S government demanded that the Erdogan Administration collaborate in containment of Iran's nuclear program. This demand has been reiterated by various U.S. government officials, including the Former President George W. Bush, The former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Ambassador Ross Wilson. The security approach assumes that states will balance against the emergence of neighboring nuclear powers, because the spread of nuclear weapons radically shifts the balances of power/threat in the region. However, the Prime Minister and many other key foreign policy actors made clear that, Turkey will endorse neither economic containment nor military intervention. In the United Nations Security Council meetings Turkey consistently voted against the sanctions on Iran. On June 9, 2010, Turkey voted against the UN Security Council resolution 1929 that was proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Prime Minister Erdogan and other members of the cabinet underwrite Iran's efforts to develop nuclear energy. In this context, Turkish government's policy towards Iran's nuclear program

astonished many of the Western powers and Israel that had been Turkey's military allies during the Cold War and beyond.

Decision making regarding Iran's nuclear program is not highly compartmentalized in Turkey. The key actors in this process are the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The President, Minister of Energy, military leaders, parliamentary commission of foreign affairs, and opposition parties play secondary roles. However, the actions of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister are constrained by the recommendations of the National Security Council and negotiations in the Council of Ministers. Throughout the interviews and content analysis I found that the key political actors of the Erdogan Administration are in broad consensus over the Iranian nuclear program.

Figure 4.1: 8 key perceptions that shaped the Erdogan Administration's policy



As seen in figure 4.1, my field research revealed that Turkey's leniency towards Iranian position stems from eight perceptions of the policy makers: i) Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy under the NPT, ii) Iranians are not developing weapons but energy, iii) the Iranian nuclear program poses no significant threat to Turkey's national security, iv) military intervention would bring catastrophic consequences, v) economic sanctions will not work, vi) disrespect for the NPT regime and American nonproliferation policy, vii) denuclearization of the region should start with eliminating Israel's nuclear weapons, and viii) conflicts should be resolved with diplomatic initiatives. After discussing the impact of these eight perceptions, I present the critical views and dissenting opinions among the Turkish elites. I also discuss how Turkey would likely react if Iran tested a nuclear weapon.

4.1. Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy under the NPT

The prevailing view among the political elites in Turkey is that Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy that is granted by the article 4 of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In their view, Iranian government has rightfully pursued peaceful nuclear technology as do other non-nuclear state parties to the NPT. President Gul, Prime Minister Erdogan, Foreign Minister Davutoglu, Energy Ministers Guler and Yildiz have all stated that Turkey supports Iranian efforts to attain nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Even as the Turkish elites stand against Western initiatives to contain Iran's nuclear program, they call on the Iranian government to provide full transparency and compliance with the IAEA safeguards.

In their various speeches after 2003, these key political actors presented convergent views on Iran's nuclear program and voiced support for nuclear energy generation of Iran. In his interview with the Die Presse Newspaper, President Abdullah Gul asserted that "Peaceful use of

nuclear energy and weapons of mass destruction are two different subjects. Iran has the right to develop a nuclear program for peaceful purposes.”³⁵⁷ In another statement, President Gul noted that “Iran is a member of the NPT regime and the IAEA. Therefore, it is entitled to develop nuclear energy and they can benefit from the experiences of the IAEA. In return for this, Iran should be fully transparent towards the IAEA safeguard inspections.”³⁵⁸ Correspondingly, Prime Minister Erdogan asserted that “As we have said many times we are supporting Iran’s nuclear energy production but we oppose development of nuclear weapons... Iran has no weapons program but they are trying to produce energy. The West brings this issue to international agenda incessantly. This is quite unjust.”³⁵⁹ In one of his latter statements Erdogan noted that “Some criticize Iran for continuing nuclear enrichment. It is quite natural that they enrich uranium to generate electric power. This is what the Iranians are doing... They are not developing nuclear warheads as the West argues.”³⁶⁰ Foreign Minister Davutoglu noted that “Like everyone else, Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy. However, Iran should avoid developing nuclear weapons. We are against it.”³⁶¹ In his speech at Washington SETA conference, Foreign Minister Davutoglu noted that “We have three main principles on the nuclear issue. First, every country can have access to nuclear energy production technology. There can be no monopoly in technology. Regardless of the country, whether Iran, Israel or Turkey, all have an right to access to nuclear energy.”³⁶²

³⁵⁷ Interview of Gul by die Presse, On July 21, 2007

³⁵⁸ Interview with President Abdullah Gul by Al Arabia Tv, Istanbul, February 2, 2009

³⁵⁹ Gencturkhaber, “Obama’dan Erdgoan’a itiraf”, December 12, 2009

³⁶⁰ Prime Minister Erdogan, “Her Ulkenin Enerji icin Uranyum Uretim Hakki var”, May 25, 2010, available at <http://zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=988165&title=erdogan-her-ulkenin-enerji-icin-uranyum-uretme-hakki-var>, [accessed; May 25, 2010]

³⁶¹ Ahmet Davutoglu, press speech, February 3, 2010, available at <http://www.haberler.com/davutoglu-bolgemiz-nukleer-silahlardan-haberi/>, [accessed; February 21, 2010]

³⁶² Ahmet Davutoglu, Press speech, “Asil Eksen Degistiren Avrupa”, December 9, 2009

Many analysts presented parallel views on Iran's rights to develop peaceful nuclear energy. For some analysts, Turkey supports Iran's initiative because the foreign policy elites are concerned that Turkey might be exposed to similar sanctions once it begins to run nuclear power plants. According to Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, Chair of Iran Studies at ISRO-USAK, "The Turkish government endorses Iran's nuclear energy program, because the elites are concerned that the same double standards may be imposed on Turkey once we make progress on production of nuclear energy. We support Iran's initiative because we don't want to ossify the double standards and nuclear caste system."³⁶³ According to Mustafa Kibaroglu, a prominent Turkish analyst on nuclear security, "As long as the Iranian nuclear program remains restricted to nuclear energy we cannot oppose it. If the Iranian leaders are claiming that they are not developing nuclear weapons, our President or Prime Minister cannot argue that Iranian government is lying. It is against our diplomatic codes...The same double standards may be imposed on us when we began to produce nuclear energy."³⁶⁴ Similar views have been presented by some of my other interviewees.

Many Western experts criticized the Iranian nuclear program on the grounds that an energy rich country does not need nuclear power plants. My interviewees did not support this argument claiming that Iran's natural resources will soon be depleted and nuclear energy is a major alternative to replace hydrocarbon resources. According to Mehmet Sahin, "Iran's petroleum and gas reserves will soon deplete. Hydrocarbon fired power plants are losing their comparative efficiency. Therefore, Iran is compelled to diversify its energy sources. There is nothing wrong with it. There are over 400 existing nuclear power plants in the world. It would be

³⁶³ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁶⁴ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Middle East Strategic Research Institute, July 2009

ridiculous to claim that all these power plants are less dangerous than Iran's nuclear reactors.”³⁶⁵

Another energy specialist noted that “The West forgets about the peak oil theory when the matter comes to Iran. In the best scenario we will run out of oil and gas by 2050. So, when the West is attempting to diversify energy resources, they are putting pressure on Iran to keep it dependent on hydrocarbon resources. This indicates the hypocrisy of the Western efforts.”³⁶⁶ The statements of government officials and analysts clearly indicate that the Turkish government does not embrace the nuclear threat projections of the West and supports Iran's initiatives to develop nuclear energy.

4.2. Iran is not developing nuclear weapons but energy

There are multiple competing arguments about the extent of the Iranian nuclear program and the intentions of the Iranian government. The hawks in the Bush Administration and Netanyahu government claimed that Iran's nuclear program is much advanced and on the verge of developing nuclear weapons. A preemptive strike was on the table if necessary to prevent it from attaining nuclear weapons. Critics of the hawkish posture argued that there is no sound evidence of diversion into weapons grade enrichment and that diplomatic overtures might still work in resolving the conflict. The Erdogan administration embraced the second posture. Turkish government officials and analysts referred to the IAEA reports maintaining that the West is putting unnecessary pressure on Iran.

The prevailing view among the key political actors of the Erdogan Administration was that Iran was developing nuclear technology and materials for civil energy purposes. This belief was substantiated through bilateral talks with key Iranian officials and IAEA inspectors. On

³⁶⁵ My interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University

³⁶⁶ Authhor's interview with an Energy Official (X. 26) on, January 13, 2009, Ankara/Turkey

numerous occasions, Prime Minister Erdogan noted that there was no evidence of Iran's militarization of its nuclear program. Erdogan stated that Turkey has developed very good relations with Iran and is unwilling to undermine bilateral relations when there is no evidence of nuclear weapons program. Erdogan perceived extensive Western press coverage of Iranian nuclear program as international public diplomacy and psychological propaganda. After his visit to Tehran in October 2009, Erdogan stated that "I have talked about the nuclear issue with key Iranian officials. I'm convinced that Iran is only developing nuclear energy, not weapons."³⁶⁷ At the Munich security conference in 2008, a journalist asked Erdogan why Turkey appears to be unconcerned about the Iranian nuclear program. Erdogan responded that "Our Iranian colleagues tell us that they want energy for peaceful purposes to satisfy their energy needs not for nuclear weapons. I'm afraid some people may accuse us [Turkey] in the future of having ambitions for weapons of mass destruction."³⁶⁸ Foreign Minister Davutoglu, the architect of contemporary Turkish foreign policy, confirmed this view. He asserted that constant drumbeats of IAEA reports clearly indicate that the Iranian nuclear program is just designed to develop nuclear energy.³⁶⁹ An important interviewee, Murat Mercan, Chairman of Parliament's Foreign Relations committee noted "I do not believe that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Iranians need more time to gain this capacity. The Western non-proliferation efforts are not sincere and credible. I also don't think that the UN Security Council will be able to enact a resolution for economic containment or military engagement. Russia and China will not allow that. We won't go with the sanctions either."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Prime Minister, "Nukleer Enerji Calismasi Barisci", Radikal, October 27, 2009

³⁶⁸ Erdogan's Press Speech at annual Munich Security Conference, February 9, 2008

³⁶⁹ Foreign Minister Davutoglu, "Esas Hedefimiz Baris, Istikrar ve refah koprusu olabilmek", Haber Merkezi, November 18, 2009

³⁷⁰ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

Even though many Western foreign policy elites questioned the statements of Iranian leaders, key political actors in the Erdogan Administration appeared to take them at face value. According to Prime Minister Erdogan “Iran’s nuclear power plants are designed to produce energy not weapons. If someone says Iran cannot do it, he is not an honest fellow. Those countries who oppose the Iranian nuclear program have nuclear power plants themselves. In addition there are other countries in the region that have nuclear plants and weapons. Therefore putting pressure on Iran and disregarding the others is truly an unjust conduct.”³⁷¹ On an interview to the Guardian Newspaper, Prime Minister Erdogan referred to Iranians as “friends” of Turkey and reiterated that he believed the statements of Iran’s leaders.³⁷² He suggested that Western allegations that Iran is developing nuclear weapons are no more than “gossip”. He added that a Western attack against Iran would be “madness” and would have catastrophic consequences.³⁷³ Erdogan believes in the statements of Ayatollah Ali Khamanei who maintains that there is no countervalue targeting [attacking civilian populations] in Islam as it strictly forbids collateral damage to innocent civilians. Before leaving for a visit to Tehran, Erdogan told the guardian correspondent that;

The top authority on Iranian nuclear program made a press speech recently. He said that countervalue weapons are forbidden by Islam. He added that Iran is only developing nuclear energy, not nuclear weapons. It will be pretty wrong to accuse them of lying. In our religion, countervalue weapons are forbidden. No collateral damage that would kill innocent people is permitted...Instead of believing the gossips and speculations; I prefer obtaining the information from the source [Iranian authorities]. We will evaluate this

³⁷¹ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Russia Today Tv, December 11, 2009, available at <http://www.haberturk.com/haber.asp?id=192667&cat=180&dt=2009/12/11> [accessed; February 21, 2010]

³⁷² Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 26, 2009

³⁷³ *ibid*

issue [with Iranians] in a brotherhood environment. I believe that we will take most auspicious decisions for the future of our region.³⁷⁴

One common perception among the security elites is lack of trust of American or Israeli intelligence estimates. Many government officials and security analysts asserted that American threat projections on Iranian nuclear program are “fabricated” by team B intelligence professionals. In their view, none of the existing threat projections is based on sound evidence; it is speculation to create fear among the American people. A common argument was that, these exaggerated threat estimates were designed to shift the perceptions of anti-war elements of democratic Western societies. For instance, one Iran specialist noted that “Americans are occupying countries based on fabricated evidence and faulty intelligence estimates. Now they want us believe in similar fabricated information about Iran... Iraq did not have any nukes. They killed over a million innocent Iraqi citizens but they have not stopped yet. After destruction of Iraq, they said they could not find any WMD. What? You destroy two countries [Iraq, Afghanistan] depending on cooked intelligence and try to fool the international community again.”³⁷⁵

However, this view is not shared by all the elites in Turkey. Many military analysts and diplomats argue that Iran will eventually develop nuclear weapons. Accordingly, Turkey will soon have to make a very strategic decision. They believe that if Turkey does not assist in the Western containment strategy it will lose strategic superiority in the region. In their view, a nuclear armed Iran would obtain substantial strategic advantages at the expense of Turkey. Concomitant development of Iranian ballistic missiles would boost Iran's power projection capabilities in the region. Many military experts are more reserved in their support for Iran's

³⁷⁴ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 3, 2009

³⁷⁵ Author's Interview with an Iran Specialist, (X.32), on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

right to develop nuclear power. General Hilmi Ozkok, the former Chief of Staff of the Turkish Military, noted that “unless the crisis over nuclear weapons is resolved diplomatically, Turkey would soon be faced with important strategic choices. Otherwise we would be faced with the possibility of losing our strategic superiority in the region.”³⁷⁶ Current Chief of General Staff Basbug, stated in Washington that the Turkish military is following the developments on Iranian nuclear program with “apprehension” and opposes attainment of nuclear weapons by a neighbor.³⁷⁷ General Buyukanit, the former Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) commented that “Iran is under the spotlight of Turkey and the rest of the World. Iran's nuclear program should be limited to civilian purposes and Iran should assure the international community about its intentions. It is important for a nuclear free, peaceful and stable Middle East to follow commonsense policies to avoid new problems.”³⁷⁸

Some military officials believe that Iran has a “secret agenda” and is seeking to develop nuclear weapons. Serdar Erdurmaz, Director of the Disarmament Institute at TURKSAM, noted “Iran’s words and deeds do not match. They claim that their nuclear program is peaceful but they are not fully transparent. They are hiding nuclear facilities under mountains such as the one in Kum Province. They have been able to enrich uranium up to five percent. This indicates that Iran will be able to enrich fissile material up to weapons grade. The IAEA has been unable to inspect all nuclear facilities in Iran. The inspectors are not allowed to visit all facilities. We are not quite sure about what is hidden behind the restricted zone.”³⁷⁹ Gunduz Aktan, a retired senior diplomat

³⁷⁶ *ibid*

³⁷⁷ Star Newspaper, June 5, 2008

³⁷⁸ Quoted in Emrullah Uslu “Can Turkey's anti-terrorism cooperation with Iran Lead to strategic partnership”, Terrorism Focus Volume: 5, Issue, 24, June, 24, 2008

³⁷⁹ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

and a current MP from the Nationalist Movements Party (MHP), noted that “Iran's being on the path to producing nuclear weapons is a secret everybody knows”.³⁸⁰

Many elites in this camp, however, argue that Turkey should not oppose Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons, because it is the only way to deter an apocalyptic war in the Middle East. According to this perspective, the United States and Israel are determined to attack Iran sooner or later, which would have dramatic consequences on Turkey's national interests. For them, Iran can only prevent a potential American or Israeli encroachment through developing a nuclear deterrence capacity. In their view, having a pro-status quo nuclear neighbor is preferable over experiencing another wave of war and destruction in the Middle East.

4.3. Iranian nuclear program is not a major threat

Unlike the Americans and Israelis, Turkish foreign policy makers believe that the Iranian nuclear program poses no substantial threat to the national security of Turkey. This belief is driven by two perceptions. First, there is no evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Second, even if Iran develops nuclear weapons, Iran will not use them aggressively, particularly against Turkey. Turkish security elites believe that Iranian authorities are rational and deterrable. In their view, the West is unduly concerned that Iran might initiate a preemptive nuclear assault. They believe that, even if Iran develops nuclear weapons, it will only use them to deter a potential encroachment by either Israel or the United States, which are much more aggressive actors in international politics in the eyes of the majority of Turkish citizenry.

Turkish elites do not perceive Iran as a principal threat as the government anticipates no confrontational or adversarial interrelationship in the foreseeable future. A large majority of

³⁸⁰ Gündüz Aktan, “Bolgenin Istikrari,” [Stability of the Region], *Radikal*, March 22, 2005

Turkish government officials and security analysts does not share Western threat perceptions on Iran. Indeed, many Turkish analysts argue that Iran has been a pro-status quo regional power and has avoided aggressive military ventures. The prevailing view among the Turkish elite is that Israel and the United States are much more aggressive than the Iranians. Many government officials observed that Iran has not attacked a single country over the past century and has been on defensive posture against attacks by the Russians, British, Americans and Iraqis. During his interview with the Guardian Newspaper, Prime Minister Erdogan noted that, "Israel is no less aggressive than Iran. Israel's foreign minister threatened to use nuclear weapons against Gaza. What threat do the Palestinians pose against Israel? The Israeli Coalition leader talks about enjoying destruction of Palestinians by tanks. The world should take these things into account."³⁸¹ One former high ranking security official noted that, "Iran has not occupied a single country or did not spark a major war over the past century. However, the American's attacked and occupied many countries with ridiculous pretexts. Here I can count some of them: Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Cuba and many others".³⁸² He added that "Now they [Americans] are threatening to attack Iran. They are the only ones that used nukes. Then the American leaders appear in the media and accuse Iran of being an aggressive evil regime. They want us to believe in these ridiculous arguments."³⁸³ Omer Ersun, a former Ambassador, noted that "Iran feels under serious threat. They feel contained by the West. Their regime is being threatened by the Americans. There is no guarantee that they [Americans] won't conduct air strikes against Iran...

³⁸¹ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 3, 2009

³⁸² Author's interview with a retired security official (X19), On January 13, 2010, Ankara/Turkey

³⁸³ *ibid*

Iranians are right to be concerned with [an American or Israeli] attack. It is quite natural that they want nuclear weapons to stop enemy aggression.”³⁸⁴

A broad consensus developed among the elites that even if Iran develops nuclear weapons, Turkey will not be a target. Iranian nuclear weapons will be designed to counterbalance the United States and Israel’s unconventional attack capabilities. According to foreign Minister Davutoglu, “Iran is not a threat to us. We do not feel threatened by the Iranian missiles either. We do not want another Cold War around us. We want this region free of sanctions and military interventions. Sanctions turned out to be futile in the past.”³⁸⁵ Many of my interviewees presented similar views. One diplomat observed that “When we meet Americans they warn us that one morning we might wake up with a nuclear neighbor. It may be true but even if Iran develops nuclear weapons Turkey will not be its target. Iranians will use it to deter potential American or Israeli aggression.”³⁸⁶ The security establishment does not feel threatened about a nuclear assault by Iran but they see the Iranian nuclear program as a strategic move to gain the upper hand in regional politics. Put another way, the military is more concerned with loss of strategic superiority than a nuclear attack. One security official argued that “The notion of Iranian nuclear program will pose grave threats to Turkish security is propagated by American and Israeli officials. They argue that Turkey might be a target for Iran's unconventional weapons. This argument remains unsubstantiated. We have no enmity with Iran. We do not anticipate an

³⁸⁴ Interview with former Ambassador Omer Arsun, by Nuriye Akman, March 4, 2007

³⁸⁵ Foreign Minister Davutoglu, “Iran Fuzesini Tehdit Olarak Gormuyoruz”, Milliyet Newspaper, December 23, 2009

³⁸⁶ Author's interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

Iranian nuclear assault. Nevertheless, we don't want Iran to acquire nukes because we don't want them to gain military and strategic superiority in the region.”³⁸⁷

Turkish elites also believe that even a nuclear armed Iran would pose no imminent threat to the United States and Israel, because both nations have highly developed nuclear arsenals. Moreover, both nations have sophisticated and accurate delivery vehicles. Iranians are rational enough not to attempt a nuclear attack against rivals with second strike capabilities as well as superior unconventional forces. In their perception, Iran is aware that sparking a nuclear confrontation assures total annihilation of the country. In this view, the United States is unduly concerned about Iranian aggression and there is no reason to believe that deterrence will not work against the Iranians. According to Celalettin Yavuz, a former military officer, “If Iran wanted nuclear weapons it would be for deterrence. They may obtain nukes to deter Israeli or American encroachment. Iranians are fully aware that Israel is under American protection in case of a nuclear assault. One cannot separate Israel's nuclear capabilities from the Americans.”³⁸⁸

Another security official argued that:

The Americans frequently forget the lessons from five decades of deterrence experience. We all know that if two rivals have nuclear weapons, they are less likely to fight even a conventional war. Deterrence worked against a symmetric power [USSR], it will definitely work against asymmetric powers [i.e Iran]. There is one question we need to answer here. Why are the Americans allowing Israel to develop nuclear weapons but pressuring the Iranians to stop its nuclear activities? I think this is about preserving the U.S. hegemony in the Middle East. Americans do not want anyone to challenge their control. They think they have the right to intervene anywhere with unsubstantiated pretexts. We cannot accuse the Iranians if they are developing nukes, because it is the

³⁸⁷ Author's interview with a retired military officer, (X.20), On December 23, 2009

³⁸⁸ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

only way to keep the Americans out of their country. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Iranian nuclear weapons may bring more peace to the Middle East.³⁸⁹

Many of my civilian interviewees also argued that Iranian leaders are as rational and deterrable as the existing nuclear powers. They do not share the belief that Iranian leaders are predetermined to attack Israel or the United States. In their eyes also, the deterrence mechanism against Iran will work even if Iran develops nuclear warheads. Mehmet Sahin observed that, “The West claims that Iran is precarious and undeterrable on the nuclear issue. Turkey asks them how do you know Iran is undeterrable and what is your evidence? We ask the West why don’t you first start with disarmament of existing nuclear powers, and then the Western officials remain silent.”³⁹⁰ Idris Bal, a prominent foreign policy analyst in Turkey, noted that “The West tries to sell weapons and missile defense systems to the Gulf States and Turkey. To be able to sell these weapons they exaggerate the Iran threat. They present Iran as a potential nuclear bully ...governed by irrational leaders. This is not true. Iranian leaders are as rational as foreign policy makers in the Western countries. Iran has not pursued an aggressive foreign policy over the past century.”³⁹¹ Ambassador Omer Ersun noted that, “Iranians are rationally concerned with security. Americans should first stop covert activities to topple the Iranian regime. We should first give them a security guarantee. I mean they should not worry about American attack.”³⁹² Ersun maintained that “I’m quite sure that the Iranians seek deterrence capacity against the American aggression. They have many quite rational concerns in this matter. As long as their security concerns are not addressed, they will continue to behave in this way.”³⁹³

³⁸⁹ Author’s interview with a Security official, (X.22), on November 28, 2009, Ankara/Turkey

³⁹⁰ Author’s interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁹¹ Author’s interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁹² Interview with former Ambassador Omer Arsun, by Nuriye Akman, March 4, 2007,

³⁹³ *ibid*

4.4. Economic sanctions will not work

Most Turkish elites believe that economic sanctions will not work against an energy rich country particularly when world energy demand follows a continuous upward trend. In many cases, Turkish foreign policy elites stated that they would not support economic sanctions against Iran unless there is objective evidence that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Despite pressure from the Bush Administration, the Erdogan Administration signed bilateral trade agreements with Iran and continues to expand bilateral trade relations. Turkish foreign policy elites believe that even if Turkey endorses economic sanctions, many other countries such as Russia, China and India are unlikely to take part in the U.S. propelled economic embargo.

Many key foreign policy actors also maintained that economic sanctions would not compel the Iranian governments to surrender the Western demands. They believe that in the new global context the Obama Administration is unlikely to convince a sufficient number of states in containment of Iran. On his return from the UN Security Council meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu noted that “We don’t believe that economic sanctions will work [against Iran]. The sanctions against the Saddam regime did not hurt his dictatorship but eroded Iraqi society which suffered from growing poverty. In the same way, the economic sanctions against Iran will not weaken the government but it will damage the Iranian society. Moreover, Turkey will be adversely affected by economic embargos against Iran.”³⁹⁴ Prime Minister Erdogan asserted that “The West could not isolate Iran so far. Economic containment did not work. Therefore, we can say that the sanctions have been unofficially abandoned. Some American companies seem to be complying with governmental policies but others are indirectly selling

³⁹⁴ Ahmet Davutoglu, “Barisci nukleer teknoloji herkesin hakki”, Press Speech, February 23, 2010

products to Iran. You can see many German, French and British products in Iran.”³⁹⁵ Most of my interviewees presented converging views about the economic sanctions. Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, one of my diplomat interviewees, argued that “It is almost impossible to force Iran to stop its nuclear activities. The entire nation is behind this scheme. Americans cannot discourage the Iranians to stop nuclear enrichment. I don’t think the economic sanctions will work.”³⁹⁶ According to another interviewee Huseyin Bagci, who escorted Prime Minister Erdogan during his visit to Tehran, “unless there is a UN Security Council resolution, Turkey is unlikely to go along with the Western containment of Iran. An extensive UN sanction is quite unlikely under the existing circumstances.”³⁹⁷ Bagci added that:

Iran’s nuclear program has become an issue of national honor. All Iranians embrace this program. It is impossible to prevent it. Turkey can do nothing substantial to stop Iran’s nuclear enrichment. I have attended some of Prime Minister Erdogan’s negotiations in Tehran. I participated in many other bilateral talks. I have talked to Ali Larijani and other key officials. I’m still keeping in touch with them. After so many interactions I have concluded that Iranians will not give up nuclear enrichment. Sanctions, economic containment or even a military strike will not work. Iranians will eventually get what they want.³⁹⁸

In various speeches, Prime Minister Erdogan and other key members of his administration made it clear that Turkey will not support international economic sanctions against Iran. They asserted that Turkey will continue to expand bilateral trade with Iran in line with Turkey’s national interests. In his speech at European Politics Center at Brussels, Erdogan indignantly responded to a question about Turkey’s participation into anti-Iranian sanctions, “We

³⁹⁵ Irna, “Basbakan Erdogan: Iran Yaptirimlarla bugune kadar tecrit edilemedi”, December 8, 2009, available at www.irna.ir/tr/news/ivew/line.118/09122080876125131.htm, accessed [February 1, 2010].

³⁹⁶ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009.

³⁹⁷ Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey.

³⁹⁸ Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey.

will never cut our economic relations with Iran! None can define our policy. Turkey is not a tribal state. We are a nation of great history. We decide what to do in an independent manner. No one can tell us whom we will trade with.”³⁹⁹

Turkish foreign policy makers accuse the European governments of hypocrisy with respect to the Iranian nuclear program. The Prime Minister and many other key officials draw attention to the growing trade volume among the major European powers and Iran that coincide with the EU3 initiative. Prime Minister Erdogan noted that “On the one hand the West is trying to impose sanctions, on the other they are clandestinely attempting to develop trade relations with Iran. They should not do it... If they continue this policy, it would be naïveté to anticipate that the sanctions will work.”⁴⁰⁰ Erdogan suggested “Let’s wait and see the proposed economic sanctions... But we [already] see that American, German, British and French products are entering the Iranian market through different channels. They cannot deny it. They should be more sincere if they want to impose sanctions.”⁴⁰¹ One interviewee, Murat Mercan, Chairman of the Parliament’s Foreign Relations Committee, asserted that “Some Western countries are not sincere in economic containment of Iran. In front of the press they seem committed to pressure Iran, but behind the scenes they have been continuously increasing their bilateral trade with the so called “rogue regime”. They are not credible. We cannot rely on them in our Iran policy. I’m distancing myself from existing Iran analyses in the Western media.”⁴⁰² Similar views have been reported by the Iranian dissidents. Jahangir Amuzegar, a former Iranian finance minister,

³⁹⁹ Aktifhaber, “Erdogan Brukselde sert cikti”, January 19, 2009

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Russia Today Tv, December 11, 2009, available at <http://www.haberturk.com/haber.asp?id=192667&cat=180&dt=2009/12/11>

⁴⁰¹ Gencturkhaber, “Obama’ dan Erdgoan’a itiraf”, December 12, 2009

⁴⁰² Author’s interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

reported that the trade between Iran and the EU grew 29 percent between 2001 and 2005.⁴⁰³ For Amuzegar, economic sanctions against the Iranian regime are unlikely to achieve the desired outcome as the major European countries continue to expand clandestine trade with Iran.

Apart from the growing European trade with Iran, some interviewees drew attention to Iran's economic partnership with the major Asian states. Because it has become evident that all-encompassing economic sanctions against Iran are unlikely, Turkish foreign policy makers see no point in restricted U.S. led economic sanctions. In their view, Russia, India and China are unlikely to pass a UN Security Council resolution that would impose heavy economic sanctions on Iran. One interviewee, Serdar Erdurmaz pointed out that "Iran is an energy rich country that has the second largest natural gas resources and third largest oil reserves. In an increasingly energy hungry world, there will be strong demand for Iranian gas and oil for the foreseeable future. China has made over \$120 billion investment in Iran. China is a leading customer of Iranian hydrocarbon resources. They don't want to undermine these investments by complying with the Western containment strategy."⁴⁰⁴ According to Ambassador Laloglu, "The sanctions against Iran do not work. I don't anticipate that they will work in the future. There is only one way to stop Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons. It is Washington's direct negotiation with Tehran. Both sides should explicate their concerns and propose their solutions."⁴⁰⁵ He added that "Here is the problem. Americans never really seek a diplomatic solution... Even the Obama administration disregards diplomatic settlement."⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ Jahangir Amuzegar, "Nuclear Iran: Perils and Prospects", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIII, No.2, Summer 2006

⁴⁰⁴ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁰⁵ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009.

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.*

Some of interviewees laid emphasis on the economic hazards of U.S. containment policies to the Turkish economy. Nasuh Uslu, a prominent foreign policy analyst in Turkey, noted that “We have been suffering from the aftereffects of the embargos against Iraq, Iran and Libya. We have lost over a hundred billion dollars because of the embargo against Saddam. Americans promised to reimburse our costs but have never done so. Now they want the same against Iran. We will not make this mistake again.”⁴⁰⁷ According to Suleyman Ozeren, director of UTSAM, “Turkey has been seriously affected by the previous American embargos in the region. An economic Embargo against Iran will not just thump the Iranians; it will also undermine our economic interests. It will cut down our trade not only with Iran but also with Central Asia. What do the Americans offer us in return if we support sanctions? They offer nothing tangible. We might end up losing hundreds of billions dollars.”⁴⁰⁸ Given these concerns, Turkey, as a member of the UN Security Council, is determined to vote against any sanctions against Iran. In accordance with these perceptions, Turkey voted against the UN Security Council Resolution 1929 on June 09, 2010, that proposed economic sanctions against Iran.

4.5. Military intervention would bring catastrophic consequences

The prevailing view among the Turkish elites and analysts is that military intervention either by the United States or Israel is unlikely to achieve a positive outcome. Because Iran’s nuclear facilities are widely dispersed and buried under the ground, short/sharp surgical air strikes could not completely destroy Iran’s nuclear capabilities. Moreover, it may bring catastrophic consequences to Iran, the United States, Israel and the people of the region. In their view, a war

⁴⁰⁷ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁰⁸ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

against Iran could have unforeseen collateral damage engulfing the entire region. The Turkish President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and many other key actors have taken the position that Turkey opposes a military strike. They have made it clear that Turkey will not provide logistical or strategic support for military aggression against Iran.

These officials and experts have indicated that Turkey would not only condemn a military intervention but it might also launch an active campaign to stop Israeli or American aggression. In his various speeches and interviews, President Gul has made it clear that Turkey will not allow use of Turkish bases for an attack against Iran, a country that is now an important trade and security partner.⁴⁰⁹ This view is shared by Prime Minister Erdogan and other members of the Council of Ministers. Prime Minister Erdogan pointed that, “an attack against Iran would be madness. We will not remain silent against a military strike, because this will hurt us deeply.”

⁴¹⁰ Erdogan suggested that an-Israeli or American strike against the Iran would bring unforeseeable consequences for the regional stability. ⁴¹¹ In another speech, Prime Minister Erdogan stated that “We don’t want a military solution. This would be a great mistake. We are all observing what is going on in Iraq. Over a million people died and a civilization collapsed. But nothing has been accomplished. Now we are seeing similar intervention rhetoric against Iran. The only pretext is alleged nuclear weapons. Many other countries have nuclear warheads, why don’t we talk about sanctions against them?”⁴¹² Other key officials gave parallel statements suggesting that an American or Israeli attack against Iran will bring about calamitous costs to regional security. Hilmi Ozkok, the former Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Military, maintained that an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would entail catastrophic

⁴⁰⁹ See, interview with President Gul, by Aljazeera TV, November 28, 2009

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 3, 2009

⁴¹¹ *ibid*

⁴¹² Hakan Albayrak, “Turkiye Iran’I Satmiyor”, *Yenisafak*, December 28, 2009

consequences for regional security and stability.⁴¹³ Therefore, he noted, Americans and Israelis should resort to diplomatic tools rather than military engagement.⁴¹⁴

In general, Turkish government officials and security analysts believe that a military attack against Iran is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome for several reasons:

- i. Iran has learned profound lessons from Israel's surgical air strike against Osiraq.⁴¹⁵ Iranian nuclear facilities are dispersed over 400 different locations. Many sorties would be required to destroy all the nuclear sites. As interviewee Serdar Erdurmaz put it, "They need to hit the same point seven or eight times to have an impact on underground infrastructure. Israel cannot achieve this without substantial assistance from the Americans."⁴¹⁶ The attack aircraft would be vulnerable to the Iranian defense systems.⁴¹⁷ According to Erhan Basyurt, "Israel needs at least 90 aircraft to hit dispersed targets in Iran and it should supply fuel during the operations. The best option to supply fuel is Turkey. However, the Turkish government is adamant not to allow the Israelis to use Turkish facilities."⁴¹⁸
- ii. The likelihood of success for a surgical air strike remains limited as many of the nuclear facilities are hidden under the ground. The United States or Israel will need ground forces to destroy nuclear facilities, but this would be a disaster for

⁴¹³ Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar, "Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey", Middle East Policy, Vol. XV, No 4, Winter 2008

⁴¹⁴ *ibid*

⁴¹⁵ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴¹⁶ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM)

⁴¹⁷ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴¹⁸ Interview of Erhan Basyurt by Dursun Karatepe, October 23, 2009, available at www.moralhaber.net/haber_id=69378, February 13, 2010

- the United States. Iran has a powerful army and nearly 13 million paramilitary forces. An invasion of Iran is unlikely to succeed without tremendous costs.⁴¹⁹
- iii. Even if the county is invaded, Iran is almost four times larger and three times more populous than Iraq. It is also mountainous and hard to control even with a large scale invasion force.⁴²⁰
 - iv. Already bogged down in Afghanistan and Iraq, a land war would be a great strategic mistake for the United States.⁴²¹ The Pentagon would not want another war with a much tougher enemy.
 - v. The United States and Israel lack human intelligence support to provide coordinates to precision guided missiles. Satellite intelligence is unlikely to provide actionable information unless it is verified by the human intelligence sources.⁴²²
 - vi. Iran has developed a sophisticated missile program that includes ballistic missiles such as Shabab 3 (1400 km), Shabab 5 (4600km) and Shabab 6 (ICBM range).⁴²³ This means that the U.S. homeland might be vulnerable to those missiles. If the United States attacks, Iran will definitely respond. The response could be destroying Israel with chemical and biological weapons.⁴²⁴
 - vii. The United States will not enjoy the coalitions that are crafted against Afghanistan and Iraq. The international community has become more cautious about the intelligence estimates of the United States after the Iraq experience.

⁴¹⁹ Author's interview with an Iran Specialist, (X.32), on December 11, 2009, Ankara/Turkey

⁴²⁰ Author's interview with Cuneyt Gurer on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴²¹ Author's interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²² Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²³ *ibid*

⁴²⁴ *ibid*

Russia, China, India, Japan, Turkey and the EU are unlikely to support a military strike because their energy security would be threatened.⁴²⁵

- viii. Muslim societies would be outraged by a military attack against Iran.⁴²⁶ Several recent military interventions of the United States were deployed against Muslim Countries. Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Libya and Lebanon (Syria and Egypt indirect involvement). A military strike against Iran would lead credence to arguments that a “Jewish-Christian crusade” is determined to destroy the Muslim countries step by step under various pretexts.⁴²⁷
- ix. A military attack would unite the Iranians and strengthen Iran’s fundamentalist rulers, unifying the entire nation⁴²⁸

According to my primary research interviewees, a war against Iran would undermine Turkey’s national interests in several respects. First, it could destabilize the entire region and might lead to dissolution of Iran along ethnic lines.⁴²⁹ Micronationalist movements could spill over and a separatist Kurdish campaign might undermine the territorial integrity of Turkey. Second, a potential war will undercut Turkey’s bilateral trade with Iran.⁴³⁰ Turkish exports and imports from Iran would likely decline sharply. Fourth, major energy supply disruptions would certainly follow, driving up the price of oil and gas for an energy dependent country.⁴³¹ Soaring energy prices would have negative consequences for national industry and commerce. Fifth, military action against Iran could disrupt Turkey’s access to Central Asian markets that are the

⁴²⁵ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²⁶ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²⁷ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴²⁹ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴³⁰ Author's interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴³¹ Ibid

major consumers for Turkish products.⁴³² Finally, a U.S. strike against Iran would stir up anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism among the Turkish community. Turkish governments would have hard time in preserving the ties with the West and Israel.

Many Turkish elites believe that the real target of the United States is not nuclear weapons but the Iranian regime. Therefore, a military intervention could not be limited to destroying the nuclear facilities but it would also expand to overthrow the fundamentalist regime in Tehran. According to this perspective, the United States wants to implant a puppet regime in Tehran that would allow privatization of natural resources so that American companies would get the lion's share from extraction and marketing of the Iranian oil and natural gas. In this context, the American threat consolidates the hardliner regime in Tehran, retarding the domestic opposition movements. One of the interviewees Kaan Dilek asserted that "The American strategy is completely wrong. Their ultimate goal is not eradication of nuclear weapons but a regime change. We all know it. By putting military intervention on the table, the Americans escalate the tensions."⁴³³ Dilek maintained that "Under these circumstances, Iranian radicals are more likely to remain in power. Ahmadinejad is not a really capable man. He is not really skillful leader. He can only stay in power as long as foreign threats remain."⁴³⁴

4.6. Growing disrespect to the NPT regime and American nonproliferation policy

Statements of key government officials and experts indicate a profound disrespect both for the NPT regime and American nonproliferation policy. The common perception is that the NPT

⁴³² Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴³³ Author's interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴³⁴ Ibid

upholds the nuclear status quo and serves the interests of the existing nuclear powers. It sets forth a de facto class system in international politics as it prevents non-nuclear states from joining the prestigious club. Another common perception is that the NPT is enforced selectively with profound double standards. There are no sanctions against pro-Western regimes but anti-Western administrations are exposed to varying degrees of sanctions that include economic containment and military intervention. At the same time, existing nuclear powers avoid denuclearization and make dedicated efforts to preserve nuclear hegemony. As in the case of Iraq, Turkish elites believe that the existing nuclear powers put forward unsubstantiated contentions of proliferation to justify military intervention and regime change.

In his various speeches Prime Minister Erdogan characterized the global non-proliferation regime as “unjust” treatment. In his response to a Guardian correspondent, Erdogan noted, “I can definitely tell there is an unjust treatment [of Iran’s nuclear program]. The five members of the UN Security Council have large nuclear arsenals... Some non-members of the NPT also have nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, it is the nuclear powers that are placing pressure on Iran. I find their attitudes quite unjust. I don’t feel that they have the right to campaign against the Iranian nuclear program.”⁴³⁵ In another statement Erdogan highlighted that, “Those who criticize Iran's nuclear program continue to possess the same weaponry... Those who want these arrogant sanctions need to give up these weapons first. We shared this opinion with our Iranian friends.”⁴³⁶ In a third speech Erdogan said, “Those who counsel Iran not to acquire nuclear

⁴³⁵ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 3, 2009

⁴³⁶ Reuters, October 31, 2009

weapons, should not have these weapons in the first place... They should undergo nuclear disarmament before pressuring Iran.”⁴³⁷

Most Turkish foreign policy elites believe that the West imposes a double standard with regard to nuclear proliferation. On the one hand, the West provides clandestine support for some nuclear states (Israel, Pakistan and India); on the other, they make disproportionate efforts to prevent other suspected nuclear energy initiatives (i.e. Iran and Iraq) that have no proven diversification to weapons grade enrichment. Ambassador Omer Arsun asserted that, “The IAEA is the guardian of injustice. But they are working to prevent the worst case. It is true that five members of the UN Security Council have created a caste system. They are pressuring the others not to attain the same power. Al Baradei’s position is really tough. God bless him for having the guts to be able to tell things that Americans don’t enjoy. He looks like a good diplomat. It is not easy. You have Bush on the one side and Ahmadinejad on the other.”⁴³⁸ One interviewee, Idris Bal noted that, “Turkey has experienced many double standards from the West. As a result, the Turkish community has become quite sensitive against double standards. They immediately take an anti-Western stance when they feel those double standards even against others. This is true for the Iranian nuclear program.”⁴³⁹ Arzu Cealifer Ekinici, another one of my key interviewees, propounded that “The Turkish government is equally concerned that the West may use some double standards against Turkey when we want to build our nuclear power plants. Turkey supports Iranian nuclear program because it is afraid that the West may impose similar

⁴³⁷ Barkey, p.71,

⁴³⁸ Interview with former Ambassador Omer Arsun, by Nuriye Akman, March 4, 2007,

⁴³⁹ Author's interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

containment strategies when Turkey begins to construct nuclear power plants.”⁴⁴⁰ Similar views have been projected by various security officials. According to one security official:

American nuclear policy is entirely unrespectable. It is full of double standards. Yes we should prevent nuclear proliferation but we should also eliminate the existing nuclear arsenal that has been stationed in the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain, Pakistan and Israel. Existing nuclear powers never compromise on their nuclear capacity. All SALT and START agreements turned out to be useless. If you are a friend of America you can develop nuclear weapons, even use NBC against your non-Western enemies. Nothing will happen. No one will penalize you. If you are anti-Western, their posture immediately changes. In this case, your country may be exposed to the harshest sanctions including a military occupation.⁴⁴¹

A predominant majority of Turkish elites believe that non-proliferation is enforced selectively. In their view, the major powers never castigate pro-Western regimes but they immediately ignite various overtures to stop nuclear enrichment in unfriendly regimes. Serdar Erdurmaz, chair of the Disarmament Institute at TURKSAM, noted that “it was the Americans who established a nuclear research reactor in Iran in 1967. America was highly supportive of the Shah Administration's efforts to develop nuclear power. What happened? A pro-American puppet government was overthrown by the fundamentalists. Americans immediately changed their threat perceptions toward Iran. Iran became the most dangerous regime and the Iranian nuclear program became the primary target of U.S. non-proliferation efforts”⁴⁴² Another security official noted that “the same Americans who played a key role in development of Iran's nuclear capacity are now taking the lead in containment of Iran. Dick Cheney was the Chief of Staff in the White House and Rumsfeld was secretary of defense in 1976 when President Ford signed an

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴⁴¹ Author's interview with a retired military officer (X-20), December 23, 2009

⁴⁴² Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

agreement to process plutonium in Iran.”⁴⁴³ According to interviewee Kaan Dilek, “Turkish elites do not respect the United Nations Security Council thoroughly. Everyone knows that the institution is under heavy American influence. We don’t anticipate that UN Security Council resolutions serve the global peace. Instead, they help the major powers to preserve the status quo.”⁴⁴⁴ Dilek maintained that “With respect to nuclear proliferation, the institution functions as a manipulation tool of the existing nuclear powers to prevent others from attaining the nuclear power status.”⁴⁴⁵ Many other interviewees came up with similar arguments against the UN Security Council.

One common view among the Turkish elites is that the United States has used the allegation of nuclear enrichment as a pretext to intervene in unfriendly regimes. According to this understanding, once the United States is determined to change an anti-American regime, Washington launches an astute public diplomacy that puts special emphasis on WMD. My interviewee Suleyman Ozeren noted that “Americans are pursuing a neo-imperialist grand strategy. They are fabricating pretexts to occupy other countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Now there are rumors about an occupation of Yemen. They would immediately devour Iran if it had been a digestible morsel.”⁴⁴⁶ One non-proliferation expert noted that “everyone knows that the enmity between the two nations [U.S. and Iran] extends beyond the nuclear issue. The current crisis is a product of over three decades of negative interaction between the two nations. The enmity exacerbated after the revolution. Even if the Iranians stop nuclear proliferation it will continue to be the target of American governments that are now using Iran’s nuclear program as

⁴⁴³ Author’s interview with a security analyst (X.31), December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁴⁴ Author’s interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁴⁶ Author’s interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

a pretext to change the unfriendly regime in Tehran.”⁴⁴⁷ According to Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, “The 2007 intelligence estimate of the CIA disproved the arguments that Iran is on the verge of becoming a nuclear state, but Bush preserved his hardliner stance and crusade rhetoric. He wanted to get the job done once and for all. He didn’t really care about the nukes. All he cared was toppling an anti-American regime in the Gulf region that projects increasing power.”⁴⁴⁸ Iran’s non compliance with the IAEA safeguards was justified by some analysts in the following way. Sedat Laciner, Director of ISRO-USAK, noted that “Iran is right not to grant full transparency. Because they know that Israel previously bombed the Osiraq reactor in Iraq. They know that the Israelis or the Americans will bomb if they reveal the coordinates of the facilities... The West is no more reliable than the Iranians.”⁴⁴⁹

In general, Turkey's non-proliferation experts believe that American and Israeli officials are determined to project Iran's nuclear program as a military threat even if they don't have sound evidence. Many security analysts in Turkey do not believe in the threat projections of the American and Israeli intelligence agencies. Some of them claim that the “Neocons” in the Bush Administration pushed the intelligence agencies to fabricate intelligence to justify an attack against Iran.⁴⁵⁰ Suleyman Ozeren, Director of UTSAM, asserted that “Americans are fabricating various pretexts to justify military interventions and occupations. There is no cause-effect relationship between existence of American forces in Iraq and pre-war discourse... So we do not trust the statements of American officials about Iran. None of their so called security projects is making the region more secure. Every intervention has had catastrophic consequences for the

⁴⁴⁷ Author’s interview with a non-proliferation expert (X.30), December 17,2009, Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁴⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁴⁹ Sedat Laciner, “Iran Nukleer Krizi: Turkiye Oyunu Bozdu”, Uluslararası Stratejik Arastirmalar Kurumu, June 2, 2010

⁴⁵⁰ Kibaroglu op cit.

people of region”⁴⁵¹ One security official asserted that “Those Israelis and neocons have been claiming for the past 15 years that Iran is very close to nuclear weapons. After 15 years we have learned that Iran is far away from that capacity. Moreover, there is no substantial evidence whether Iran has a nuclear weapons program. Therefore, American and Israeli threat projections have lost their reliability. We cannot take action depending on cooked intelligence.”⁴⁵² Murat Mercan, Chairman of Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, argued that;

Americans have been undermining their credibility with false statements. They claimed that Iraq had WMD but it turned out that this was entirely wrong. Second, they claimed that Iran is developing nukes but the IAEA reports refuted the intelligence estimates of the White House. Many reliable sources report that Iranian nuclear program is restricted to energy generation. Americans are quite sensitive about Iranian nukes but they did nothing when the Israelis used WMD against the Palestinians. Even the UN Security Council remained silent. Under these circumstances none can expect us to trust American non-proliferation policy. There is a crisis of trust.”⁴⁵³

Almost all of my subjects, particularly politicians and the analysts, were concerned that U.S. Iran policy has been highly influenced by the pro-Israeli lobby. In their view, Iran could pose no threat to the United States that has incomparably stronger conventional and non-conventional weapons capabilities. They perceive the Israeli lobby as the main promoter of diplomatic gridlock and a militaristic attitude toward Iran. Interviewee Nasuh Uslu noted that, “Many Turks, particularly the elites, are cognizant that America’s policy towards Iran is crafted by pro-Israeli officials and the Neocons. Everyone knows that the pro-Israeli lobby in Washington has been pushing hard for a military strike against Iran. They don’t want a diplomatic solution. They want to overthrow the Iranian regime. Therefore the Turkish

⁴⁵¹ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁵² Author's interview with a security official (X-22), November 28, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁵³ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

community has no respect for Washington's nuclear proliferation policy.”⁴⁵⁴ According to another nonproliferation expert, “The hardliner stance, avoiding diplomatic talks and consistent false intelligence estimates indicates that pro-Israeli spheres of influence are determined to attack Iran. Sooner or later they will come up with another fabricated intelligence estimate to justify a military strike.”⁴⁵⁵

One major criticism is that the United States exaggerates the Iran threat in order to sell weapons to the Gulf States. According to this view, the Americans are putting too much emphasis on the conflict between Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States to extract petrodollar surplus. This view gained more gravity after Hillary Clinton's visit to various Gulf States in the summer of 2009, when Clinton offered a nuclear umbrella to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. In this perspective, American public diplomacy continuously promotes aggressive images of Iran to shift the threat perceptions of the Gulf Arab states. In this way, the United States will be able to sell more weapons and defense systems in exchange for petroleum imports.

At the far right, diehard Turkish nationalists and Islamists believe that it is all about the “Great Israel Project”. Although this view is extreme and a classic conspiracy theory, they constitute significant portion of the electorates of the Saadet Partisi (SP) and Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP). In their view, Iran is not a target because of its nuclear program, but for its strong resistance against establishment of the “Great Israel”.⁴⁵⁶ They argue that the “Jewish lobbies” are fabricating threats to crush their enemies with American power, without even using the Israeli

⁴⁵⁴ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁵⁵ Author's interview with a security official (X-19), January 13, 2010. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁵⁶ There are abundant websites, and internet forums belonging to these political groups. I have been reading their comments regularly over the past two years. Their comments clearly indicate that the Great Israel Project is seen as the root cause of all the current troubles in the region.

military. For them, the occupation of Iraq was a stage in the establishment of “Great Israel”. Now the focus is on the second largest; Iran. According to their perception, after Iran has fallen they will turn to the dissolution of Turkey. They believe that the current revival of the PKK is an Israeli project as they want to use Kurdistan to stage a divide and conquer strategy. For them, once the Kurds declare independence, Northern Iraq will be an easy target for the Israelis.

Although they are more mainstream, many highly influential Islamist intellectuals perceive the current non-proliferation regime as discriminating against Muslim countries. In their discernments, the West and Israel are determined to prevent nuclearization of the Muslim World due to civilizational conflicts along the lines set forth by Huntington. Concomitantly, the Western campaign against Iran is considered as an integral part of Western discrimination policy. Ibrahim Karagul, a prominent Islamist columnist at *Yenisafak Newspaper*, asserted that “The Israelis and the Americans are acting as if they are the victims of Iranian aggression. The axis of US/UK/Israel has launched a region-wide war to divide larger countries and establish small puppet states... Israel has a large nuclear arsenal, but they are getting prepared to attack Iran claiming that it has a nuclear weapons program. Once they eliminate the “threat from Islam” they can establish a colonial empire throughout the region.”⁴⁵⁷ Fehmi Koru another prominent Islamist columnist wrote that “unfortunately we are not living in an equal world. Yesterday neo-imperial America destroyed Iraq; today they are planning the same vicious plot against Iran. They want to destroy another Muslim country. Nuclear proliferation is just a pretext.”⁴⁵⁸

Many Turkish security analysts have argued that the NPT has been weakened and delegitimized. It could not stop the nuclear armament of North Korea, Pakistan, India, South

⁴⁵⁷ Ibrahim Karagul, *Bolgesel Istila ve Nihai Hesaplasma*”, *Yenisafak*, July 21, 2006

⁴⁵⁸ Fehmi Koru, “Nukleer Ihtilaf mi, acgozluluk mu”, May 26, 2010

Africa and Israel. The North Korean test of a nuclear device received only a minor response from the existing nuclear powers. Throughout the interviews, I observed that particularly Islamist officials and analysts are quite resentful about selective enforcement of the non-proliferation regime. In their view, the enforcement of the NPT towards Iraq and Iran was instigated by the anti-Islamist lobby. For them, the pre-war public diplomacy against Iran is identical to that before the Iraq War. Some Turkish elites believe that if the West pushes too hard, Iranians may leave the Non-proliferation Treaty. According to Ambassador Omer Arsun, “Everyone is afraid that Iran may leave NPT. Iran would leave now, if it was not afraid of surgical air strikes. The North Koreans did it. Then they wanted higher bribes. The unjust nuclear order is providing opportunities for rogue states. Technology is rapidly advancing. I see a darker future for humankind.”⁴⁵⁹

4.7. Non Nuclear Middle East: start with eliminating Israel’s nukes

The key foreign policy actors of the Turkish state made it explicit that they want no nuclear weapons in the region. They strongly reject Iran’s attainment of nuclear weapons as well as Israel’s preservation of its nuclear arsenal. They argue that Israel should undergo nuclear disarmament if the Israelis want Iran not to develop nuclear weapons. Even though everyone knows that Israel has a significant arsenal, Israeli government officials follow a policy of opacity, neither confirming nor denying possession of nuclear weapons. Turkish government officials have become resentful of Israel’s posture and accuse the Israelis of deceiving the international community. In their perception, Israel is far more aggressive than the Iranian regime. Therefore, the Turkish elites propound that the international community should deal with

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with former Ambassador Omer Arsun, by Nuriye Akman, March 4, 2007,

Israel's existing nuclear weapons rather than imposing sanctions on Iran that has no proven weapons grade enrichment.

Various government officials clearly indicated that Turkey strongly resists all nuclear weapons in the region. In his interview with Al Arabia TV, President Abdullah Gul noted that "We are against any nuclear weapons in the region and we are against other types of weapons of mass destructions as well. Especially we don't want nuclear neighbors. It's not about Iran. We feel the same about the others. Nuclear energy is an inalienable right of Iran. But acquisition of nuclear weapons is a different issue."⁴⁶⁰ In another interview, President Gul emphasized that "Not a single country in the region, Including Israel, should have weapons of mass destruction.... The entire Middle East should be free of nuclear weapons. As a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the NPT, Iran is obligated to grant complete transparency. Iran lacks this transparency."⁴⁶¹ Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu agreed "We are against any nuclear weapons in this region. Not as a Foreign Minister but as a Turkish citizen, I'm saying that nothing can justify use of nuclear weapons... We do not differentiate Iran or Israel. We want eradication of nuclear weapons in the conflict prone Middle East."⁴⁶² General Hilmi Ozkok noted that creation of a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East is Turkey's policy and Turkey will oppose nuclear armament in any countries regardless of the type of regime.⁴⁶³ Murat Mercan concurred, "We don't want nuclear weapons in this region. We want no country to preserve nuclear assault capacity. Existing nuclear powers should disarm themselves instead of pressuring

⁴⁶⁰ Interview with President Abdullah Gul by Al Arabia Tv, Istanbul, February 2, 2009

⁴⁶¹ Gundem Info, "Gul: ortadogu nukleer silahlardan arindirilmali", April 15 2009

⁴⁶² Ahmet Davutoglu, Press speech, "Asil Eksen Degistiren Avrupa", December 9, 2009

⁴⁶³ Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar, "Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey", Middle East Policy, Vol. XV, No 4, Winter 2008

the countries that have no proven nuclear weapons program.”⁴⁶⁴ Prime Minister Erdogan noted that “We will not let diversion of Iranian nuclear reactors to weapons program, because we don’t want any neighbor with nuclear weapons. We have told this many times to our Iranian colleagues. But if Iran would give up nuclear weapons, Israel should not have them too.”⁴⁶⁵ On his speech to after the UN Security Council Meeting at New York (September 25, 2009), Prime Minister Erdogan maintained that;

We have talked about non-proliferation at the UN Security Council. Our wish is to annihilate all nuclear weapons in the world. To be able to do that the permanent members of the United Nations should first start with terminating their nuclear arsenals. Those who give advice to others [Iran] should implement it first. If they don’t behave accordingly, they don’t have a right to give advice to others. They cannot pressure others for not doing so. Nuclear weapons pose existential threats to human security. We never know who can use it against whom. Humankind should not live under the threat of total destruction. If we want global security, we should destroy all nuclear warheads. You can spend lots of money on nuclear weapons but you can never claim that it gives prosperity to your citizens.⁴⁶⁶

In this context, rather than Iran’s nuclear power plants, Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons has become a greater concern for the Turkish elites. In their eyes, Iran may only develop nuclear weapons to deter Israeli or American aggression. They see Israel’s nuclear weapons as a provocation for a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Therefore, the Erdogan Administration asserts that the international community should first eliminate Israel’s nuclear arsenal rather than focusing on Iran’s nuclear program when there is no evidence of enrichment

⁴⁶⁴ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁶⁵ Prime Minister Erdogan’s speech to Turkish citizens at Marriot Hotel, September 26, 2009, available at www.internethaber.com/news_id=208695, [accessed February 23, 2010]

⁴⁶⁶ Prime Minister Erdogan’s speech to Turkish citizens at Marriot Hotel, September 26, 2009, available at www.internethaber.com/news_id=208695, [accessed February 23, 2010]

uranium up to weapons grade. Prime Minister Erdogan noted that, “We don’t want nuclear weapons in the Middle East. But if one country [Israel] has nuclear weapons in the region and if you don’t impose any sanctions on the existing nuclear states it would be a truly unjust endeavor. If those powerful states do not provide justice we cannot talk about global peace. We are seeking global peace and working for it. We should render Iran its right to develop nuclear energy.”⁴⁶⁷ During the press speech with President Hariri, Prime Minister Erdogan took the position that “Those who are putting great pressure on Iran, turn to a blind eye towards the Israeli Nuclear Program. Iran is the victim of unjust non-proliferation regime. We will always be with the victims. Our policy will be designed to protect the victims from oppression of the great powers.”⁴⁶⁸

Contrary to the previous Turkish governments, the key actors in the ruling Justice and Development Party believe that Israel is much more aggressive than Iran and more likely to use Weapons of Mass Destruction when its interests or survival are at stake. In a speech at Marriot Hotel at New York, on September 26, 2009, Erdogan criticized Israel for embracing an aggressive posture, using phosphorous bombs and threatening to use nuclear weapons against the Arabs.⁴⁶⁹ Interviewee Arif Keskin noted that, “Prime Minister Erdogan is quite angry with Israel because Netanyahu deceived him. On his visit to Ankara, Netanyahu never talked about attacking Gaza. He pretended that he was leaning towards a peaceful solution. Two days after his return, Israel attacked Gaza and brutally massacred the Palestinians. Israel abuses the existing

⁴⁶⁷ Prime Minister Erdogan, “Nukleer Silah Istemiyoruz”, available at <http://www.timeturk.com/erdogan---nukleer-silah-istemiyoruz-121266-haberi.html>, [accessed March 23, 2010]

⁴⁶⁸ HaberFX, “Erdogan-Hariri Ortak Basın toplantısı”, January 11, 2010

⁴⁶⁹ Radical Daily Newspaper, “Erdogan’ın sözlerine İsrail Ateş Puskurdu”, October 16, 2009, available at <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetay&Date=&ArticleID=961208>, [accessed February 23, 2010]

military alliance with Turkey.”⁴⁷⁰ Iranian president Ahmadinejad praised Erdogan’s posture towards Israel’s nuclear arsenal many times. For instance, during Erdogan’s visit to Tehran, Ahmadinejad told him that “When an illegitimate regime owns nuclear weapons, none else can speak about other nation’s rights to develop nuclear energy...Your unambiguous stance against Israel has created very positive effects on the Muslim World and everyone is happy about it.”⁴⁷¹

Similar to the Turkish elites, a majority of the Turkish public also believes that Israel is a graver threat to regional security than Iran. Interviewee Arzu Celalifer Ekinici reported that during her field research people immediately and without hesitation declared the United States and Israel as the gravest threats to the peace and stability in the world.⁴⁷² According to foreign policy analysts Erhan Basyurt, who works as the chief editor of Bugun Newspaper, “Israel behaves like a mischievous son of the region. It fights against the Syrians. It hits Palestine and Lebanon. It wants to attack the Iranian nuclear facilities. It pushes the Americans to destroy and occupy Iran. They are the chief anarchist in the region.”⁴⁷³ According to interviewee Kaan Dilek, who stayed in Iran for over a decade, “Israel behaves more irrationally than Iran. They look like an unbridled bully in the Near East. None of their nuclear facilities are subject to IAEA safeguard inspections. Only Americans could inspect their nuclear infrastructure but they will not do it. You know why. You know the lobbies in Washington. I think Israel is much more serious threat to regional security than Iran.”⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ Author’s interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁷¹ Dogruhaber, “Erdogan’ın İran Ziyaretinin Sonucu: Alisveriste Lira ve Riyal Kullanılacak”, available at <http://www.dogruhabergazetesi.com/habergoster.aspx?id=&2843> [accessed February 23, 2010]

⁴⁷² Author’s interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici

⁴⁷³ Interview of Erhan Basyurt by Dursun Karatepe, October 23, 2009, available at www.moralhaber.net/haber_id=69378, [accessed; February 21, 2010]

⁴⁷⁴ Author’s interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

4.8. The conflict should be resolved with diplomacy

One might ask if the Turkish government opposes both economic sanctions and military intervention, how they plan to resolve the growing conflict between Iran and the West. The answer is diplomacy. Many key government officials reiterated their commitments to resolve the conflict with diplomatic overtures. They believe that diplomatic solutions are still viable and there is no need to rush to military intervention. The Turkish government has been critical of both the Iranian and the American diplomatic posture. They criticize Iran for not being truly transparent and they criticize the American government for not engaging in direct negotiations with Iran. Many Turkish elites believe that a solution is unlikely if the United States continues to avoid talking directly with the Iranian government officials. The major diplomatic initiative of Turkey has been the joint Swap Agreement in May 2010 that was drafted in collaboration with the Brazilians and the Iranians. This agreement proposes exchange of low/high enriched uranium in Turkey.

The Erdogan government believes that the conflict over uranium enrichment with Iran should be resolved through diplomatic means. In its view, multilateral diplomatic initiatives and implementation of IAEA safeguards will be sufficient to stop Iran's nuclear armament. Both Erdogan and Davutoglu have made relentless efforts to persuade Iran and the West to negotiate a settlement. In one of his interviews, Erdogan made his position clear, "an attack over Iranian nuclear facilities will bring catastrophic consequences. It will lead to irrecoverable damages....We have very important relations with Iran. We have strategic ties. This conflict should be resolved through diplomatic channels. No one should leave the negotiations. We

should continue until we find a peaceful settlement.”⁴⁷⁵ In his interview with Al Arabia TV, President Gul stated that “We highly value diplomatic dialog to resolve the conflicts on Iran’s nuclear program. War is not an easy thing. It is a destruction and death. Therefore, particularly the soldiers hate war. We should focus on diplomatic solutions and dialogue. Iran should take advantage of the diplomatic opportunities. When there is call for diplomacy, I believe that Iranians will behave accordingly.”⁴⁷⁶ On his return from the UN Security Council meeting, foreign Minister Davutoglu propounded that, “the conflict should be resolved through diplomatic channels. We should not be discussing military intervention at this stage.”⁴⁷⁷ Prime Minister Erdogan, the principal actor in Turkey’s Iran policy, asserted that:

From the beginning we wanted to resolve this issue through a negotiated diplomatic settlement between Iran and the West. We have helped the Americans and Western friends to convince the Iranians. They demanded help and we worked on this together. We took over another initiative in October. We have exerted a great deal of effort but we could not resolve this issue. The West does not keep its promises. They can go nowhere with this intermittent pressure. Instead, they should pay more attention to multilateral negotiations. They should build mutual trust and confidence. I’m against the Western initiatives to isolate or annihilate Iran, because we want a world with enduring peace. On the one hand the West claims that they are serving the global peace, on the other hand they maintain this ridiculous approach towards on Iran that has perennial state experience. It’s impossible to embrace the Western policies on this issue. We now live in a completely different world. We should build global peace together.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, by Spanish El Pais Newspaper, February 22, 2010, available at <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/erdogan-hem-batiyi-hem-de-iran-i-uyardi/siyaset/sondakika/22.02.2010/1202302/default.htm> [accessed February 23, 2010]

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with President Abdullah Gul by Al Arabia Tv, Istanbul, February 2, 2009

⁴⁷⁷ Ahmet Davutoglu, “Barisci nukleer teknoloji herkesin hakki”, Press Speech, February 23, 2010

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Prime Minister Erdogan by Guardian Newspaper, October 3, 2009

During my field research, I found that Turkish elites have been highly critical of American and Israeli diplomacy throughout Iran's nuclear crisis. They believe that the United States and Israel have a "secret agenda" for the following reasons. i) they don't talk with the Iranians directly,⁴⁷⁹ ii) they ignore IAEA inspection reports,⁴⁸⁰ and iii) they continuously publish false intelligence reports that demonstrate Iran as an irrational and aggressive power that is determined to use nuclear weapons against Israel.⁴⁸¹

Turkish elites believe that the only way to achieve a diplomatic solution is direct talks between the Americans and Iranians. My diplomat interviewees recommended that the United States should approach Iran with respect on basis of equality. For Instance, Ambassador Faruk Laloglu noted that "Israel feels threatened by the Iranian nukes. On the flipside, Iranians feel threatened by a potential preemptive strike by the Israelis or the Americans. In this case, the only solution is direct diplomatic negotiations between the United States and Iran. If we want to dissuade Iranians from nuclear program we should spread it over a long time. If unwanted pressures are sustained, Iran will be forced to develop nuclear weapons rather than contending with nuclear energy."⁴⁸² Another diplomat commented that "Iran is the inheritor of a glorious culture and history. So, a respectful approach is very important for them. They feel that the West shows no respect for the Iranian government. We know their psychology and approach them accordingly. We have been able to establish very good relations with the Iranian government

⁴⁷⁹ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁸⁰ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁸¹ Author's interview with a retired diplomat (X.23), on December 18, 2008, Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁸² Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

officials. We know that the West and Iran could hardly understand each other. Therefore, we are trying to mediate and transmit each other's message."⁴⁸³

Some of my non-diplomat interviewees presented similar views on this issue. Celalettin Yavuz recommended that "If I were the Americans, I would seek an entente with Iran, because Iran lies at a very strategic location, at the conjunction of the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. It is a vast and underinvested market. I would take opportunity rather than continuing this ridiculous containment strategy."⁴⁸⁴ According to Nasuh Uslu "The Persians have been a great nation throughout the history. The current Iranians have this pride. Nevertheless the Western officials offend the Iranians by pretending as if they were dealing with a third world state."⁴⁸⁵ One security official noted that, "We are trying to lower the tensions but the Americans are pretty skillful in escalating the conflicts. General Petraus said that they had prepared an invasion plan against Iran. He said that the Pentagon was ready for such an action. Hardliner Americans don't really like a diplomatic solution. They want to get the job done."⁴⁸⁶ Mustafa Kibaroglu argued that "The West missed the opportunity of solving the problem between 2003 and 2005. At the later years of President Khatami, the IAEA could fully inspect Iranian nuclear program with a strong support by the UK, Germany and France. This became unlikely after President Ahmadinejad assumed power in 2005. Since then Iran's technological capacity is much improved."⁴⁸⁷

Turkish non-proliferation experts have been highly critical of U.S. diplomacy and believe that the American posture is not helping the Iranians to stop nuclear activities. They think that

⁴⁸³ Author's interview with a retired diplomat (X.23), December 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁸⁴ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁸⁵ Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁴⁸⁶ Author's interview with a Security Official (X.18), December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Middle East Strategic Research Institute, July 2009

the U.S. preconditions for direct bilateral negotiations are unrealistic and that has become a brinkmanship game for both parties. According to the prevailing view, even if the United States and Israel destroy Iran's nuclear power plants, they are unlikely to eradicate Iran's long term experiences, scientific know how and blueprints of nuclear scientists. Iranians will rebuild the power plants in deeper clandestine locations. Turkish elites criticized the American governments, particularly the Bush Administration, for never really trying diplomatic tools. One retired diplomat noted that “Americans don’t want Iran’s attainment of nuclear enrichment technology. They propose abolishment of all enrichment as a precondition for direct bilateral talks. This makes a diplomatic solution impossible. It leads to diplomatic gridlock.”⁴⁸⁸ Ambassador Omer Ersun summarized the situation in this way, “Americans should first stop underground activities to topple the Iranian regime. The United States should give Iran a security guarantee so that they no longer have to worry about an American attack.”⁴⁸⁹ He went on to say “I’m quite sure that the Iranians aspire to nuclear power status to attain a deterrence capacity against the Americans. They have many rightful concerns for this. As long as their security concerns are not addressed through diplomatic channels, Iran will continue in this way.”⁴⁹⁰

Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s shuttle diplomacy is an obvious indicator of Turkey’s efforts to resolve the Iran conflict without war and destruction. After he assumed office in 2009, Davutoglu frequently visited Tehran, Washington, Moscow, Brussels and Brasilia to reach a negotiated settlement. Davutoglu developed a mutual trust with key Iranian politicians including President Ahmadinejad, foreign minister Manucehr Muttaki, Chairman of Parliament Ali Larijani and Sectetary General of National Security Council and Chief Negotiator Said Jelili.

⁴⁸⁸ Author’s interview with a retired diplomat (X,23), On December 18, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with former Ambassador Omer Arsun, by Nuriye Akman, March 4, 2007,

⁴⁹⁰ ibid

Davutoglu believes that “there is a substantiated common ground on this issue. There is always a diplomatic solution; there are always opportunities to resolve this conflict.”⁴⁹¹ Before his departure to meet Iranian authorities, Davutoglu noted that:

We have been closely following the developments on the Iranian nuclear program and Turkey was involved in all critical negotiations over the past 3-4 years, especially during the past three months. We are helping the parties to understand each other. We are trying to solve diplomatic deadlocks. As you know, Turkey started the initiative on October 13 before Iran-5+1 meeting. Since then, we have closely observed the developments. Before then, we met the delegates from both side in the Munich Conference. In this context, we have some alternative proposals on uranium enrichment. I’m going to Iran to discuss new steps... Our efforts are to keep Iranian nuclear program focused on energy generation and prevent weapons production.”⁴⁹²

Turkey’s major diplomatic initiative regarding Iran’s nuclear program has been a joint proposal with Brazil on swapping low enriched uranium (LEU) with fuel grade material. The agreement was signed in Tehran among top executives in three countries; Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The joint deal on May 17, 2010, proposed that Iran would hand over 1200 kilograms of low enriched uranium (LEU) to Turkey for further enrichment in either Russia or France.⁴⁹³ This constitutes 58 percent of Iran’s LEU stockpiles.⁴⁹⁴ The Turkey-Brazil-Iran deal initially seemed promising as it achieved a significant breakthrough in eliminating the trust gap. Resolution of the Iran conflict with the swap agreement would grant enormous prestige to Turkey and Brazil, which are the two rising powers and non-permanent members of the UN

⁴⁹¹ Servet Yanatma, “Nukleer Krizde, Turkiye yine Devrede, Davutoglu Iran Yolcusu”, Zaman Newspaper, February 10, 2010.

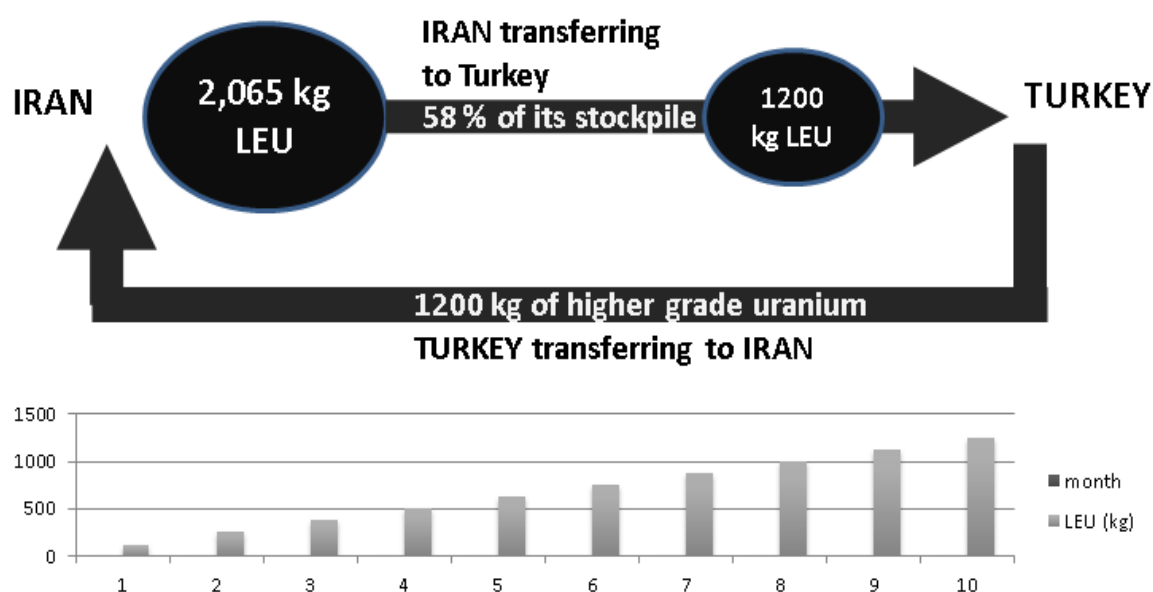
⁴⁹² Press speech of Foreign Minister Davutoglu, February 15, 2010, Available at, <http://www.haberler.com/davutoglu-iran-a-mesaj-iletmeye-gitmiyoruz-2-haberi/> [accessed Feb 12, 2010]

⁴⁹³ Voice of America “Iran Says Uranium to go to Turkey, Brazil for enrichment”, May 17, 2010

⁴⁹⁴ Financial Times, “Iran agrees to send uranium to Turkey”, May 17, 2010

Security Council. A prominent Iran expert Trita Parsi noted that “The Brazilian-Turkish diplomatic breakthrough with Iran has taken Washington by surprise. Clearly, the geopolitical center of gravity has shifted -- five years of EU-led negotiations led nowhere while the new emerging powers Brazil and Turkey only needed a few months to produce a breakthrough.”⁴⁹⁵

Figure 4.2: The content of the swap agreement



Source: Financial Times, “Iran agrees to send uranium to Turkey”, May 17, 2010

As Brazilian President Luiz Silva put it, the initial impression was that “diplomacy emerged victorious. It showed that it is possible to build peace and development with dialogue.”⁴⁹⁶ Turkish government officials noted that the swap agreement would eliminate the

⁴⁹⁵ Trita Parsi, “The Turkey-Brazil-Iran deal: Can Washington take yes for an answer”, Foreign Policy Magazine, May 17, 2010

⁴⁹⁶ Global Security Newswire, “Iran Signs Uranium exchange deal with Brazil, Turkey, May 17, 2010

pretexts for sanctions and military intervention. Foreign Minister Davutoglu noted that “For us, now there are no grounds anymore for new sanctions or measures.”⁴⁹⁷

However, the joint Turkish and Brazilian overture did not appeal to Western foreign policy makers, who continued to call for sanctions.⁴⁹⁸ On May 18, 2010, a day after the Turkish-Iranian-Brazilian deal was announced, Washington applied to the UN Security Council with a new proposal for sanctions. These sanctions were approved by the UN Security council with resolution 1929 even though Turkey and Brazil voted “no”. The Turkey-Brazil-Iran agreement was similar to the Western proposal in October 2009, which was rejected by the Iranian government. Even though Washington was initially sympathetic to swap agreements, American foreign policy makers later backtracked as Iran has gained more centrifuges and stockpiles of LEU since 2006. According to Western critics, the remaining half of Iran’s LEU stockpile will be sufficient for weapons grade enrichment. White House Press Secretary, Robert Gibbs, remarked that “While it would be a positive step for Iran to transfer low-enriched uranium off of its soil as it agreed to do last October, Iran said today that it would continue its 20 percent enrichment, which is a direct violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.”⁴⁹⁹ The U.S. government officials were angered with the Turkish-Brazilian deal as they thought the agreement was just another delaying tactic.

The Western, particularly the American, posture towards the Turkish-Brazilian overture undermined the Turkish elite’s trust in the containment policy. The idea that hardliner Americans oppose diplomatic solution gained more gravity among both the Turkish statesman and the

⁴⁹⁷ Voice of America “Iran Says Uranium to go to Turkey, Brazil for enrichment”, May 17, 2010

⁴⁹⁸ David E. Sanger and Michael Slackman, “U.S. is Skeptical on Iranian Deal for Nuclear Fuel”, The New York Times, May 17, 2010

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid*

public. This view was consolidated after Brazilian President's release of President Obama's letter on May 31, 2010, regarding Iran's nuclear program that had proposed an identical solution to the Swap Agreement. Washington's denial of even a peaceful nuclear enrichment is perceived by the Turkish elites as a mischievous double standard when there are over 400 nuclear reactors around the world. Moreover, Washington's disrespect to Turkish initiatives fueled the commitment of Turkish elites not to comply with sanctions against Iran. Many Turkish elites believe that Washington will only stop sanctions if Iran completely acquiesces. Sedat Laciner, Director of ISRO-USAK, asserted that "Americans did not like the agreement because they were just getting prepared for a military strike. We held the American fist on air before it landed on Iran's face. The agreement does not really meet the demands of the West, but it gave the impression that diplomatic solutions are still viable. The American government became indignant about the deal because it undermined the legitimacy of their aggression."⁵⁰⁰ One security official noted that "the American posture after the Swap Agreement clearly indicates that the United States does not really want a diplomatic solution. Indeed, they get angry whenever a diplomatic opportunity emerges. From now on it is really hard for us to join American policies against Iran."⁵⁰¹ According to Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, "None of the existing nuclear powers are importing enriched uranium. All have their own enrichment plants. So we cannot expect that the Iranians would go along with this offer. Quite naturally they want to gain full control of the nuclear energy cycle."⁵⁰²

The Iranian government expressed its appreciation for Turkey's diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis between Iran and the West. Ramin Mehmanperest, the spokesperson of the

⁵⁰⁰ Sedat Laciner, "Iran Nukleer Krizi: Türkiye Oyunu Bozdu", Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu, June 2, 2010

⁵⁰¹ Aktifhaber, "Türkiye-ABD ilişkileri gerilecek", May 24, 2010

⁵⁰² Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

Iranian foreign ministry noted that “we will not backdown from our right to develop nuclear energy...friendly countries like Turkey are exerting relentless efforts to defend Iran's rights to develop nuclear energy. We really appreciate it.”⁵⁰³

4.10. What if Iran develops nuclear weapons or IAEA finds enough evidence?

Despite the Turkish political actors’ belief that Iran’s nuclear program is constrained with energy generation, Iran may develop nuclear warheads once it obtains a surge capacity. If Tehran tests nuclear weapons or the IAEA inspectors find sound evidences of weapons grade enrichment, there are several policy options for the Turkish government: i) Turkey might seek extension of the NATO nuclear shield. Turkey can forge closer ties with the United States and acquire more sophisticated missile defense system, ii) Turkey might develop its own nuclear weaponry over the long term. Given the existing nuclear capacity, Turkey is unlikely to develop nuclear warheads in the near term. An open nuclear enterprise might well alienate Turkey from the West. iii) Turkey might join the United States, EU, and Israel in containment of Iran.

One common view among the Turkish elites is that an Iranian nuclear weapons capability would radically shift the balance of power in the region and development of its own nuclear deterrent is a viable option for Turkey to counterbalance the power projection of Tehran. As one interviewee put it, “It is true that Iran’s attainment of nukes will shift the regional balances of power in favor of Tehran. It is true that Iranian nuclear program creates a strategic vulnerability

⁵⁰³ Anadolu News Agency, “Iran Turkiye’nin aktif rolunu olumlu karsiliyor”, available at <http://www.tumgazeteler.com/?a=5961358> [accessed June 7, 2010]

for Turkey. But think the other side. We can use it as a pretext to develop our own nukes.”⁵⁰⁴

My field research indicates that Turkey may choose to develop nuclear weapons for several reasons; i) to deter potential attacks by existing nuclear powers, ii) to attain strategic superiority in the region, iii) to preserve the balance of power with its neighbors, iv) to protect the territorial integrity and unity of the Turkish homeland, and v) to enhance national prestige.

A growing array of prominent Turkish government officials and security analysts argue that Iran’s nuclear program will be an impetus for nuclearization of Turkey. According to this view, Iran’s nuclear armament will compel Turkey to revise the existing defense capabilities. Even though Turkey has a large conventional army, it will not be sufficient to counterbalance Iran’s power projection capabilities. According to Umit Ozdag, the former director of ASAM, “Turkey is unlikely to live alongside a nuclear neighbor for a long term. Iran’s self confidence and power projection will be enhanced... We have to produce our own nuclear weapons to preserve the balance of power.”⁵⁰⁵ Celalettin Yavuz, a senior military strategist at TURKSAM, argued that Turkey should make enormous investments to nuclear technology as it lays out the bedrock of unconventional weapons capability that would make substantial contributions to Turkey’s deterrence capability.⁵⁰⁶ According to General Ergin Celasin, “If Iran develops nuclear weapons Turkey should do the same to be able to preserve the balance of power between the two countries and also in the region.”⁵⁰⁷ Vehbi Dincerler, a former minister of state, noted that “Turkey should not only develop nuclear weapons, but the quantity as well as the quality of

⁵⁰⁴ Author’s interview with a nonproliferation expert (X-30), December 17, 2009, Ankara/Turkey

⁵⁰⁵ Umit Ozdag, “Iran Nukleer Silah Sahibi Olmalı Mi?” [Should Iran Possess Nuclear Weapons], *Aksam*, March 7, 2005.

⁵⁰⁶ Celalettin Yavuz, “Turkiye Jeopolitiginin Oncelikleri ve Gereken Stratejiler [Priorities of Turkey’s Geopolitics and the Required Strategies],” *Türk Yurdu*, Vol. 26, No. 222, February 2006.

⁵⁰⁷ Kibaroglu, p.72

Turkey's nuclear arsenal should be on a par with those of the nations in the region”⁵⁰⁸ Col. Taner Altinok, Director of the Institute for Defense Studies, maintains that “Turkey should definitely follow the path that Iran walked over the years, both for energy generation purposes so as to meet Turkey's growing demand for energy and also for attaining a nuclear weapons capability to better protect Turkey's national interests. Regional balances and conjectural developments compel Turkey to do so”⁵⁰⁹ Suleyman Sensoy, director of Turkasia Strategic Research Center (TASAM), noted that “Turkey has been late in nuclear proliferation. Turkey should immediately build nuclear power plants. We should immediately start generating nuclear energy. Turkey’s nuclear investment will not prompt suspicion because we are an energy dependent country. Energy is always important. We are 80 percent dependent.”⁵¹⁰ Dogan Heper, a well known journalist at Milliyet Newspaper argued that nuclear armament would have three main benefits for Turkey.⁵¹¹ First, nuclear weapons would deter foreign encroachment and help preserving the political/territorial integrity of Turkey. Second, it would enhance the power and prestige of a Turkish military that could function as a mediator in conflicts among the countries of the region. Third, it would boost the self confidence of Turkish citizens whose ancestors used to be the people of great empires.

The second option is more integration into Western defense organizations to ensure preservation of a nuclear umbrella. In this case, Turkey could choose purchasing state-of-the-art missile defense systems to deter a potential Iranian encroachment. However, my field research has made it clear that the second option is unlikely at least during the Erdogan Administration,

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, p.72

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, p.72

⁵¹⁰ Interview with Suleyman Sensoy, Director of TASAM, by Fuat Bol, Director General of Turkiye Newspaper, February 12, 2007

⁵¹¹ Dogan Heper, “Turkiye Atom Yapabilir”, Milliyet, January 26, 2006

because this will compel Turkey to comply with the Western sanctions. In other words, even if diplomacy fails, the Erdogan Administration is unlikely to endorse the American campaign against Iran. This became increasingly evident after May 2010, when the Turkish-Brazilian joint bid for a solution was disdainfully ignored by Washington. According interviewee Arif Keskin, “Erdogan Administration thinks that Iran’s nuclear problem can be resolved with diplomatic means. However, even if diplomacy fails, Turkey will stand against American non-diplomatic initiatives, particularly military intervention.”⁵¹²

Since the Gulf War (1991), a growing array of Turkish elites began to question the NATO/US nuclear umbrella. In many cases, the reluctance and sluggishness of the Western response reinforced mistrust about the security guarantee of Western allies. Moreover, increasing anti-Westernism has been undermining the reliability and legitimacy of security partnerships with the traditional allies. One former Ambassador suggested that “If Iran develops nuclear weapons, Turkey will be compelled to develop its own nuclear arsenal, because the Turkish government officials do not really trust the U.S nuclear umbrella.”⁵¹³ Celalettin Yavuz argued that “before the first Gulf War, we demanded ABMs from NATO, because we did not have sufficient defensive missiles. The Germans and the Dutch resisted it on the grounds that NATO commitments were against the Soviets. They argued that since Iraq was not the USSR, the Turkish demand for ABMs should be refused.”⁵¹⁴ According to Kaan Dilek, “Turkey’s membership to NATO no longer helps to protect us from external security threats. NATO cannot help Turkey if Iran attacks us with nuclear weapons. NATO cannot help our terrorism problem.

⁵¹² Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵¹³ Author's interview with a retired Ambassador (X-23), December 18, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

⁵¹⁴ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

Therefore, the Turkish security apparatus needs a more practical security platform to meet contemporary security challenges.”⁵¹⁵

Even though the elites have been critical of the existing nuclear shield, Turkey’s potential quest for nuclear weapons is opposed by various non-proliferation experts. First, some argue that a nuclear program may bear negative consequences for Turkey in international politics as it may be exposed to economic and political containment.⁵¹⁶ Second, nuclear weapons are unnecessary as Turkey has no imminent enemy or upcoming great conflict that would necessitate exploitation of WMD.⁵¹⁷ Turkey has constructed highly positive relations with all neighbors and bilateral relations have been desecuritized.⁵¹⁸ Therefore, investment in nuclear weapons would be wasting national resources. Third, Turkey needs cooperation with either an existing nuclear state or compatible non-state individuals to build a nuclear enrichment infrastructure.⁵¹⁹ As none of the existing nuclear powers will give open support, any potential nuclear program would need clandestine support. This could prompt the international community to name Turkey another “rogue state” that would undermine Turkey’s international prestige and economic prosperity.

Only a limited number of experts believe that Turkey will participate in American and Israeli containment of Iran. In their view, this might happen because Prime Minister Erdogan will feel deceived by the Iranians if they develop nuclear weapons. Arif Keskin noted that, “If diplomatic efforts fail, and Iran continues to reject full safeguard inspections by the IAEA, Turkey may begin pursuing a tougher policy towards Iran. It may have to join the West and

⁵¹⁵ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵¹⁶ Kibaroglu, *op cit*

⁵¹⁷ Author's interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵¹⁸ *ibid*

⁵¹⁹ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

Israel in containment policy.”⁵²⁰ Keskin maintained that “Currently Erdogan believes in the statements of Ahmadinejad and the Supreme Leader. He is convinced that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons. However, if the inspectors find evidence of weapons grade enrichment Erdogan would be very upset about the Iranian leaders. He will feel cheated and be tougher than the Americans against the Iranian government.”⁵²¹ Arzu Celalifer Ekinici maintained that “If Iran tests nuclear weapons, Erdogan will be very angry. By angry, I mean he will go really mad, because he will feel deceived by the Iranians. As everyone knows Turkey is a member of the United Nations Security Council. Turkey will be harsher than the Europeans once Erdogan feels deceived.”⁵²²

4.11. Critiques and dissenting opinions

Even though a significant majority of the Turkish political community supports the Erdogan Administration’s posture towards the Iranian nuclear program, this position has drawn major criticism from pro-Western and pro-Israeli elites. The AKP government was accused of protecting a fundamentalist regime from international sanctions and helping Iran to attain nuclear weapons that would radically shift the balances of power in the region. Moreover, this posture undermines Turkey’s intergovernmental relations with traditional allies, mainly the United States, Israel and the European Union.

One major criticism is the Erdogan Administration’s protection of the Iranian government from the international sanctions. Turkey not only rejects sanctions, but uses diplomatic overture to prevent economic sanctions or military intervention into Iran. This was

⁵²⁰ Interview with Arif Keskin, by Newsweek Turkey, November 24, 2009. Available through 21. Yuzyil Turkiye Enstitusu (21st Century Turkey)

⁵²¹ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵²² Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

evident in the joint Swap Agreement initiative with Brazil in May 17, 2010. Mehmet Ali Birand, a prominent pro-Israeli journalist made the accusation that “Ankara is protecting Iran in its nuclear program”.⁵²³ For Birand, Erdogan and Ahmadinejad call each other “brother”, therefore Ankara is inherently supportive of Iran’s position in the nuclear debate. One interviewee, Arif Keskin notes that “Turkish elites know that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. Until recently, Turkey was not really involved in international initiatives on Iranian nuclear matters. Why did Turkey change its mood? Because the Erdogan Administration feared that weakening of the Iranian regime may impel American or Israeli intervention. Turkey is actively engaging in this process because we do not want another war in this region.”⁵²⁴ Many analysts, however, claim that the AKP’s posture helps Iran to progress towards acquisition of nuclear weapons. The Erdogan Administration lends a hand to Iranian delaying tactics until Iran obtains a surge capacity.⁵²⁵ Faruk Laloglu, a former Ambassador to Washington and Undersecretary of Foreign Ministry, noted that Iran is inexorably moving towards nuclear weapons unless the international community exerts greater pressure.⁵²⁶

Another group of critics argue that Iran's nuclear program may catalyze an armament race in the region. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states may attempt to develop nuclear arsenals as they experience a heightened threat from the Iranian WMD warheads and missile technology. Author’s interviewee Serdar Erdurmaz, director of the Disarmament Institute at TURKSAM, noted that “As soon as Iran develops nuclear weapons, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt will

⁵²³ Mehmet Ali Birand, “Ankara, Tahran’I nukleer konuda kollar gibi yapıyor”, Posta Gazetesi, February 4, 2010

⁵²⁴ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵²⁵ Surge capacity is the technological capability to produce low enriched uranium. At this level, the technical know how of enrichment allows further enrichment to weapons grade.

⁵²⁶ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey

have a pretext to develop their own nuclear arsenal.”⁵²⁷ According to Mustafa Kibaroglu “The Turkish government is really concerned that Iran’s attainment of nuclear weapons would instigate the Arab governments to obtain nuclear arsenal as soon as possible. We are concerned that Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria could go nuclear after that.”⁵²⁸ Kibaroglu added that, “one of the pillars of current Turkish foreign policy is clearing nuclear weapons out the region. We want Israel to get rid of its nuclear arsenal in order to have a nuclear free Middle East.”⁵²⁹

Iran’s missile program aroused parallel concerns among dissident disarmament experts with military and diplomatic backgrounds. Contrary to the politicians, these experts were more worried about Iran’s attainment of both nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles. One of my retired military interviewees Serdar Erdurmaz noted that “recently Iranians tested a new generation of missiles. It is capable of hitting targets at 2000 km distance. They can increase the range because they learned how to do it. They resolved the reentry problem of the ballistic missiles into the atmosphere. They can easily hit Israel, Eastern Europe, Moscow and every destination in the Arab peninsula.”⁵³⁰ Another disarmament expert noted that, “There is intelligence available through Arabic documents that Iranians are working on trigger mechanisms for nuclear warheads. At this point we have to be more serious about Iran’s nuclear program. In summary they are enriching uranium, they have been developing long range ballistic missiles and now they are working on trigger mechanisms. These all indicate that Iran is on the verge of becoming a nuclear power.”⁵³¹

⁵²⁷ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Middle East Strategic Research Institute, July 2009

⁵²⁹ *ibid*

⁵³⁰ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵³¹ Author’s interview with a disarmament expert (X-30), December 17, 2009, Ankara/Turkey

According to some interviewees Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons would radically shift the balance of power and balance of threats in the region. Iran will gain the upper hand in regional power projection and may blackmail Turkey in regional conflicts. Ozdem Sanberk, a former Ambassador to Washington, noted that "Iran with nuclear production will be the dominant power in the region... There will be an asymmetrical relationship."⁵³² For Huseyin Bagci, "Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons will radically shift the balance of power. Iran will gain the status of a nuclear power. We will have a nuclear zone from the Persian Gulf to China. I know the difference between a nuclear power and a conventional one. We may never be sure about the level of Iran's aggressiveness. They haven't attacked us over the past few centuries. But it doesn't necessarily mean that they will always remain peaceful."⁵³³ Serdar Erdurmaz maintained that "Iran does not pose any threat to Turkey now, but if they attain nuclear weapons, they will be able to project asymmetric power in this region. They will join the prestigious nuclear club. Then Turkey will be concerned about the Iranian nuclear program as much as the Europeans and the Americans."⁵³⁴ According to former Ambassador Gunduz Aktan, "Attaining nuclear weapons will elevate Iran to the status of regional power, which it does not deserve considering its political regime and economic development level."⁵³⁵ Prof. Umit Ozdag, the former director of ASAM, stated that "Iranian attainment of nuclear weapons could cause Iran to gain gravity in regional developments in the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus at the expense of Turkey. For example, a nuclear Iran will have more influence over Azerbaijan."⁵³⁶

⁵³² Karl Vick, "Energy, Iran Spur Turkey's Revival of Nuclear Plans", Washington Post Foreign Service, March 7, 2006

⁵³³ Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵³⁴ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵³⁵ Kibaroglu, p.71

⁵³⁶ Ibid, p.71

Some critics argue that Iran has been using Turkey to open a loophole in the Western containment policy. For them, Iran has been manipulating the process as a delaying tactic and might adopt a completely different stance against Turkey if it obtains nuclear weapons or the West gives up its containment policy. Interviewee Huseyin Bagci wrote several articles recommending that the Erdogan Administration should give up its absolute support of the Iranian nuclear program. Bagci escorted Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu during their visit to Tehran and closely observed the bilateral negotiations. During his interview he noted that “One Iranian journalist told me that Turkey depends on Iran and is really benefiting from the growing partnership. I interrupted him straightly and told him that it is the Iranians who are really benefiting from this partnership. We are saving you from an international containment. You should be really appreciative of this Issue. I think we should implement a more balanced approach towards Iran. We should not allow them to manipulate our partnership.”⁵³⁷

4.12. Conclusions of the Chapter

Iran’s nuclear program has become a principal issue for Turkish foreign policy makers. Contrary to Western containment strategy, the Erdogan Administration opposes international sanctions as well as military intervention. The key government officials believe that the conflict over Iranian nuclear enrichment should be resolved with diplomatic overtures. My field research indicated that the AKP government’s posture towards Iran has been driven by several perceptions of the governing elites.

Fist, Turkish government authorities believe that Iran has an absolute right to develop nuclear energy that is warranted by the non-proliferation treaty. For them, the West puts undue

⁵³⁷ Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey.

pressure on Iran when there are over 400 nuclear reactors in the world. Even though Iran possesses one of the largest reserves of hydrocarbon resources, Iranian authorities are rationally concerned about depletion of natural resources within next three decades. Therefore, Turkish elites believe that Iran has a right to develop nuclear energy to diversify energy supply.

Second, my interviews and content analysis of leader statements indicated that the prevailing view in the Erdogan Administration is that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons, only civilian nuclear energy. Key government authorities asserted that there is no evidence of diversion to weapons grade enrichment. This view is embraced particularly by the political wing of the government and a majority of Turks. The security establishment and diplomats are more reserved in claiming that Iran's nuclear program is only designed for energy production. Some military officials, including my military interviewees, asserted that Iran is clandestinely developing nuclear warheads and using diplomacy as a delaying tactic.

Third, even if Iran develops nuclear weapons, Turkish elites believe that neither Turkey nor the United States and Israel will be targeted by the Iranian government. In their view, Turkey will not be the target of Iran because it has no ongoing conflict with the Iranians. Iranian nuclear warheads will be used to deter a potential American or Israeli strike or invasion. Turkish elites believe that Iranians are as rational and deterrable as the existing nuclear powers. Iranians will never attack the United States preemptively because they are fully aware of the asymmetry of destruction capability. Iranians will not attack Israel preemptively either because Israel has nuclear superiority and protection of the United States. Therefore, the Turkish government is not as concerned about Iran's attainment of nuclear warheads as its Western counterparts.

Fourth, Turkish elites believe that economic sanctions against Iran are unlikely to compel the Iranians to surrender to Western demands. My interviews with government officials and analysts revealed that Turkey's foreign policy elites do not believe that economic sanctions will be effective. They believe that Western efforts are futile and economic sanctions will not work for several reasons explained above. This view has deepened as Turkey, Russia, China, India, and major European countries sign bilateral trade agreements and increase investments in Iran. Turkish government officials accuse the Europeans of hypocrisy, because they overtly criticize the nuclear venture of the Ahmadinejad Administration, and at the same time rapidly increase bilateral trade.

Fifth, the Erdogan Administration asserts that a military intervention against Iran would bring catastrophic consequences for Iran, the United States, Israel and other countries of the region. It would trigger ethno-sectarian war in Afghanistan and Iraq. It would reduce regional energy supply and drive up the prices of oil and natural gas. The elites perceive American, British and Israeli intervention as the principal threat to regional security and stability. Moreover, a military campaign against Iran is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome as nuclear facilities are dispersed and buried underground. Elimination of Iran's nuclear program would require invasion of Iran by land forces. Turkish security experts believe that a land war with Iran is unwinnable for both the United States and Israel, and would impose unacceptable costs on all parties to the conflict.

Sixth, throughout my field research, I encountered a profound disrespect for the NPT regime and American non-proliferation policy. Turkish security analysts maintain that neither the Americans nor the Israelis could present any convincing evidence about Iran's weapon's grade

enrichment. Turkish intelligence and security officials believe that the American threat projections depend on “fabricated” intelligence estimates that have never been confirmed by HUMINT. Prime Minister Erdogan and other key members of the AKP government believe that the West maintains a double standard in enforcement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. They asserted that pro-Western governments never experience sanctions, whereas the anti-Western regimes are selectively targeted by the existing nuclear powers. They assert that the IAEA and the UN Security Council are heavily influenced by the United States and these institutions are unlikely to behave in a just manner. Prime Minister Erdogan renewed his commitment to a nuclear weapons free world. To achieve this goal, five members of the UN Security Council should take the lead in eliminating their existing nuclear arsenals. For him, it is unjust to put pressure on Iran while the U.S., Russia, China, France, and UK have abundant nuclear weapons. According to many security analysts and government officials, U.S. non-proliferation policy is the real problem in disarmament. For them, the United States wants to preserve the nuclear status quo and will use diplomatic and military power to prevent nuclearization of non-friendly regimes that could challenge American hegemony.

Seventh, according to a prevailing majority of the Turkish elites all nuclear weapons should be eliminated from the region. Instead of focusing on “non-existent” weapons of Iran, the West should begin sanctioning Israel, a nuclear power that is not a member of the NPT. None of the key foreign policy makers want Iran to attain nuclear weapons. The president, prime minister, foreign minister, military officials and strategists are in agreement on this issue. According to the Turkish political elite, however, Israel is much more aggressive and likely to use WMD than Iran. Therefore, they assert that denuclearization of the region should start with Israel, the only country with a nuclear arsenal in the Middle East. The international community

puts disproportionate pressure on unproven nuclear activities of Iran when there is an existing nuclear power that shows no respect to the IAEA safeguards and UN Security Council resolutions.

Eighth, Turkish elites believe in the merits of multilateral diplomacy and assert that the conflict over Iran's nuclear program should be resolved within diplomatic frameworks. The AKP government seeks to prevent exacerbation of the nuclear crisis. Turkey has begun to play a critical role in countering Iran's nuclear program. Turkey is currently functioning as a mediator between the West and Iran. Many Turkish elites believe that neither the United States nor Israel wants a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program. Turkish leaders have asserted that Americans and Israelis are determined to attack Iran not only to destroy nuclear facilities but also to change the anti-American and anti-Semitic regime. Statements made by Pentagon officials have aroused grave concerns among government officials in Turkey. They asserted that General Petraeus's proclamation of U.S. preparation for a military strike against Iran undermined Turkey's diplomatic efforts to preserve stability in the region.

Contrary to the prevailing view, some military strategists and diplomats claim that Iran will eventually develop nuclear weapons. However, they are not concerned with a potential nuclear assault by the Iranian government. They are more concerned with the shift of power and emerging regional asymmetry in favor of Iran. If Iran acquires nuclear weapons, its power projection could supersede Turkey's influence in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Therefore, to overcome the emerging asymmetry they propose two options for the government; i) extension of the NATO nuclear umbrella, and ii) development of nuclear weapons. Many security and foreign policy elites increasingly question the effectiveness of the

NATO/US nuclear shield. The sluggishness and reluctance of its traditional allies is forcing Turkey to redefine its alliance structure in the new security environment. Therefore, some Turkish elites have begun to campaign for development of a national nuclear weapons arsenal.

The Erdogan Administration's policy towards the Iranian nuclear program has received moderate criticism from pro-Western and pro-Israeli elites. The AKP government was accused of protecting a fundamentalist regime from international sanctions. In this view, Turkey helps Iran to attain nuclear weapons that would radically shift the balance of power in the region. Moreover, this posture undermines Turkey's intergovernmental relations with its traditional allies, mainly the United States, Israel and the European Union. Some critics argued that Iran's nuclear program may stimulate a nuclear armament race in the region. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Arab states may attempt to develop nuclear arsenal as they experience a heightened threat from the Iranian nuclear capacity. Therefore the AKP government should go along with the United States and Israel to prevent nuclear proliferation throughout the region.

CHAPTER 5

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR ENERGY PARTNERSHIP

This chapter investigates the underlying reasons for the expanding Turkish-Iranian energy partnership between 2003 and 2010. As Iran's nuclear program attracted more interest among the students of international security, the scrutiny over its energy exports intensified. During this period, Iran became a major energy partner of Turkey in two respects. First, Prime Minister Erdogan and Iranian President Ahmadinejad signed two Memoranda of Understandings in 2007 and 2008. The amended bilateral energy agreement in 2008 proposes: i) transfer of 35 billion cubic meters of natural gas through Turkey annually (half will be diverted into domestic markets), ii) \$12 billion investment by the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) in the South Pars field of Iran for natural gas extraction, iii) transfer of gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey via transit pipeline through Iran, and iv) construction of 2000 kilometers of pipelines from Turkmenistan to Turkey, through Iranian territory.⁵³⁸

Prior to 2002, Turkey purchased less than four percent of its natural gas from Iran. The new contracts increased the overall volume of natural gas trade between Iran and Turkey over

⁵³⁸ Arzu Celalifer Ekinci, "Türkiye İran Arasında İmzalanan Doğalgaz Mutabakatı" available at <http://www.usakgundem.com/yazarlar.php?id=1073&type=17>, [accessed May 30, 2009]; BOTAS "The natural Gas Trade Agreement with Iran" September 15, 2008, available at <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>faaliyetler/anlasmalar/iran.html>, [accessed September 19, 2008]

800 percent.⁵³⁹ The Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS) anticipated supplying over 19 percent of natural gas from Iran in 2010.⁵⁴⁰ Second, by 2009, Iran had replaced Russia as Turkey's primary oil supplier, mainly because oil purchases from Iran increased nearly 80 percent between 2002 and 2009.⁵⁴¹ In 2010, energy officials asserted that that Turkey's oil purchases from Iran would continue to increase within the immediate future.⁵⁴² Apart from the burgeoning hydrocarbon trade, Ankara and Tehran agreed that bilateral energy trade will be conducted in Turkish-Iranian currencies rather than the U.S. dollar or Euro.

The energy agreements were signed at a very critical time when the United States intensified efforts for economic containment of Iran's "rogue regime". This agreement was strongly opposed by American and Israeli officials as both countries were exerting relentless efforts to prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear enrichment capability by imposing strict sanctions. These long term contracts not only allowed Iran to access Turkish consumers, but they also provide a gateway to vast European energy markets. The bilateral energy partnership provides substantial economic resources that could be used for Iran's nuclear program, and helped Tehran to resist the U.S. led economic embargo. The Turkish-Iranian energy partnership contributed to the doubts about the effectiveness of the economic embargo and diplomatic initiatives against the Iranian nuclear program. In that case, a preemptive military strike seemed to be more likely to stop the Iranian nuclear program. The growing energy partnership between Iran and Turkey complicates the alliance patterns in the region. Many critics argue that it is an indicator of realignment of Turkey in the international system.

⁵³⁹ TUIK, "Foreign Trade Statistics Database" February 8, 2009, available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, [accessed September 20, 2009].

⁵⁴⁰ BOTAS "The natural Gas Trade Agreement with Iran" September 15, 2008, available at <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>faaliyetler/anlasmalar/iran.html>, [accessed September 19, 2008].

⁵⁴¹ TUIK, "Foreign Trade Statistics Database" February 8, 2009, available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, [accessed September 20, 2009].

⁵⁴² Dow Jones News, "Energy Minister: Turkey-Iran Crude Trade to Continue", June 8, 2010

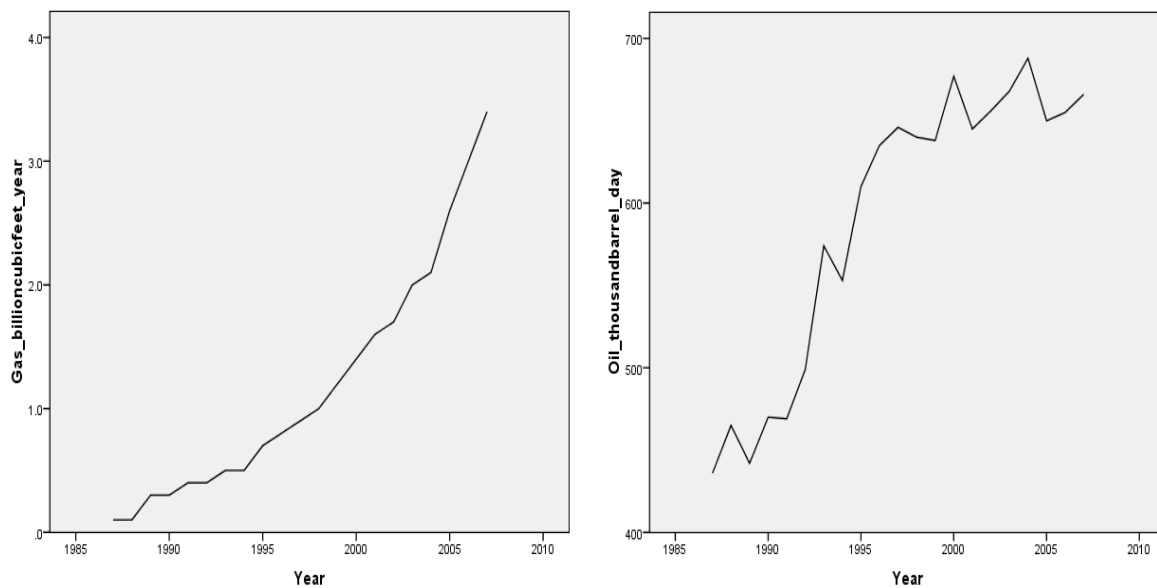
There are six key actors in Turkish Energy policy: the Prime Minister, the Energy Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Director of the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), the Director of Energy Markets Regulatory Authority (EPDK), and the Director of The Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO). My field research indicated that the key actors and prominent analysts were in broad consensus on the necessity of energy partnership with Iran. The core assumption of the energy security approach is that states seek alternative suppliers to reduce vulnerability to major supply disruptions, and the use of energy disruption as a coercive instrument in foreign policy. Throughout the field research, statements by government elites and analysts supported this assumption of the energy security approach. In general my field research identified five factors that drive the energy partnership between Ankara and Tehran: i) growing energy demand and increasing vulnerability, ii) attempts to reduce energy dependency on Russia, iii) supply disruptions in Iraq, iv) strategic gains and the Nabucco project, and v) cost efficiency and security of pipelines through Iran. After discussing the effects of these five factors, I will present the common perceptions among the Turkish elites that led to non-compliance with the U.S. demands to refrain from making major energy deals with Iran. Finally, I will present critical views and dissenting opinions against the energy partnership between the Erdogan and Ahmadinejad Administrations.

5.1. Increasing demand, dependency and vulnerability

Throughout the interviewing process, most government officials and analysts asserted that growing domestic energy consumption had been a principal reason for the Turkish government's energy partnership with Iran. This phenomenon has also been voiced by the highest authorities on Turkish energy policy. For instance, Hasan Koktas, the Chairman of the EPDK, noted that,

“Turkey is one of the fastest growing energy markets. Particularly our demand for natural gas has been constantly increased as we use it for electric generation because of cost efficiency, ease of use and environmental reasons.”⁵⁴³ As stated by Chairman Koktas, Natural gas is increasingly becoming a more important element in domestic energy markets. Figure 5.1 and 5.2 show explosive growth in natural gas and oil consumption, especially after 1995.

Figures 5.1-2: Natural gas and oil consumptions in Turkey 1987-2008



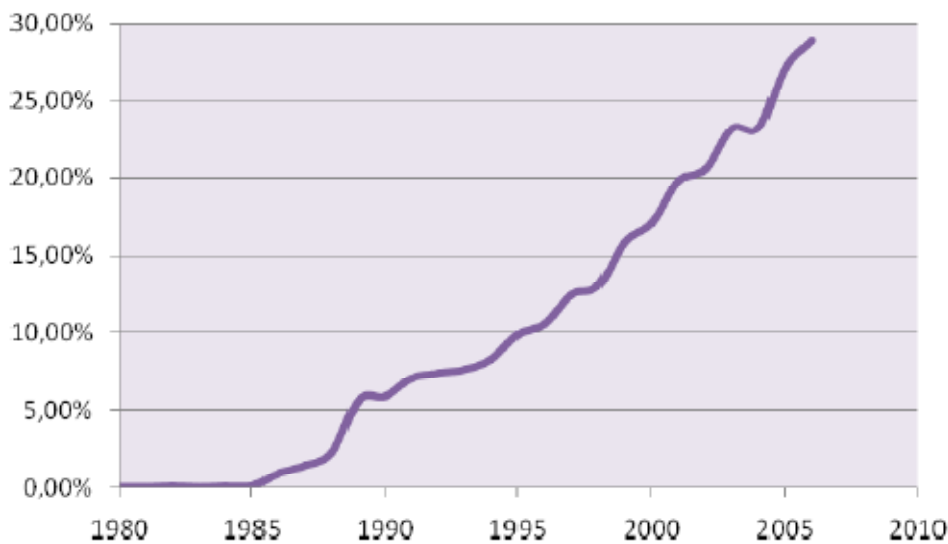
Sources: BOTAS (2009) and the BP Statistical review (2008)

Apart from the elite statements, Turkey’s growing energy demand, foreign dependency and vulnerability to supply disruptions are clearly articulated in institutional reports of the Ministry of Energy, the EPDK, the TPAO and the BOTAS. Throughout the 1990s, domestic natural gas consumption increased over 300 percent thanks largely to a 460 percent expansion in

⁵⁴³ See Hasan Koktas’s statement at “EPDK Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu”, 2009, p.1, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/dogalgaz/2009/2009.pdf, [Accessed June 19, 2010].

industrial energy consumption.⁵⁴⁴ This rapid increase continued after 2000, and it is expected to be much higher by 2030. According to the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, Turkey's natural gas demand increased from 1.2 billion cubic feet to 37.5 billion cubic feet between 1988 and 2008.⁵⁴⁵ The BP Annual Statistical Review indicates that domestic oil consumption in Turkey increased from 466,000 barrel per day to 677,000 barrels within the same period (See figure 5.2). Turkey pays over \$10 billion each year to purchase natural gas. In 2009, the Energy Markets Regulatory Authority estimated that out of 37.5 billion cubic meters, 16.6 percent of natural gas is consumed in electric power plants, 7.2 percent in residences and 6.4 percent in industries.⁵⁴⁶

Figure 5.3: Ratio of natural gas in domestic energy markets



Source: EPDK, Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu, 2009, p.27

⁵⁴⁴ Nilgun Acikalin, "Transit Development in Turkey: Current Situation and Prospective", International Energy Agency, available at <http://www.iaea.org/work/2002/seegas/NMCACY.PDF>, [accessed June 17, 2010] .

⁵⁴⁵ BOTAS, "Yillar Itibariyle Ithal Edilen Dogal Gaz Miktarlari", Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, Retrieved July 30, 2009.

⁵⁴⁶ Energy Market Regulatory Authority, "EPDK Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu", 2009, p.1, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/dogalgaz/2009/2009.pdf, [Accessed June 19, 2010] .

As figure 5.3 demonstrates, natural gas constituted less than one percent of domestic energy consumption in 1985.⁵⁴⁷ By 2010, however, over 30 percent of all domestic energy needs and 60 percent of electric generation was met by natural gas. The EPDK anticipated that natural gas would be an increasingly important component of Turkey's energy market after 2010 as it is relatively cost efficient.⁵⁴⁸ The same upward trend is anticipated in use of natural gas in residential heating, industrial production and electric generation.

According to the Turkish National Energy Security strategy, supply diversification is a principal method to reduce vulnerability to major disruptions.⁵⁴⁹ Turkish governments are strongly encouraged to find alternative suppliers to prevent overdependency on certain energy providers. Nevertheless, Turkey remains over 70 percent dependent on foreign energy resources but the level of foreign dependency is expected to exceed 80 percent by the year 2030.⁵⁵⁰ Turkey is also highly vulnerable to major supply disruptions, because it is 98 percent dependent on foreign natural gas and 90 percent dependent on foreign oil.⁵⁵¹ Turkish energy policy makers are gravely concerned with the looming energy crisis because both foreign dependency and the cost of energy are increasing rapidly. Bulent Aras, the Director of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV), noted that, "Energy dependency is a principal concern for foreign policy makers. There are many industrializing provinces like Gaziantep and Erzurum. We have new bourgeois provinces like Kahramanmaras. They all demand much higher

⁵⁴⁷ Energy Market Regulatory Authority, "EPDK Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu", 2009, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/dogalgaz/2009/2009.pdf, [Accessed June 19, 2010].

⁵⁴⁸ Energy Market Regulatory Authority, "EPDK Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu", 2009, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/dogalgaz/2009/2009.pdf, [Accessed June 19, 2010].

⁵⁴⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). "Turkey's Energy Strategy". MFA, General Directorate for Energy, Water and Environment. June 2006, Ankara. Retrieved from: http://www.econturk.org/Turkisheconomy/energy_turkey.pdf on March 25, 2007. p.2.

⁵⁵⁰ Metin Aslanalp, "Demand and Supply for Energy Resources", Global Trends and Turkey's Energy Policy Series, Bogazici University, TUSIAD policy forum, 2009.

⁵⁵¹ Authors interview with a retired Energy official, (X-27), January 6, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

energy every year. We can provide the cheapest and most secure energy from Russia and Iran. If we didn't make these agreements with Iran we would be 90 percent dependent on Russia".⁵⁵²

My field research revealed that there are two major sources of physical energy vulnerability for Turkey. The major vulnerability is over dependency on Russia which has an increasing monopoly over the Caspian energy resources. According to one Energy official, Turkey remains roughly 65 percent dependent on Russian natural gas and 53 percent dependent on Russian oil.⁵⁵³ For many energy analysts, Russia's growing energy control over the Caspian energy resources increases the likelihood of the use of oil/gas for political leverage. The second source of vulnerability is supply disruption in Iraq owing to the prolonged ethnic war and insurgency.⁵⁵⁴ Turkey remains highly vulnerable to this. The joint pipelines (Kirkuk-Yumurtalik) between Iraq and Turkey ceased to function after the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003. Iraq's proximity to Turkey reduces the cost of energy transportation but lack of pipeline security and unsustainable hydrocarbon flows downgraded Iraq's reliability as an energy supplier.⁵⁵⁵

By 2010, the predominant portion of Turkey's gas purchases are transferred through the Blue Stream Pipeline that crosses under the Black Sea. This pipeline is the world's longest underwater energy transportation system. Turkey's energy security specialists are highly concerned about corrosion of deep water pipelines due to the sulfur rich ooze environment.⁵⁵⁶ Apart from corrosion, supply disruptions could take place due to natural incidents such as volcanic eruption, earthquakes and methane seepages.⁵⁵⁷ Recovery from supply disruptions

⁵⁵² Authors interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Aras is the Director of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV)

⁵⁵³ Authors interview with an Energy Official, (X-26), January 13, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵⁵⁴ Authors interview with an Energy Analyst, (X-28), January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁵⁶ Authors interview with an Energy Official, (X-26), January 13, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵⁵⁷ *ibid*

would be extremely prolonged because the pipelines traverse 2200 meters under the surface of the water.

Overdependency on natural gas in electric power plants is another serious energy vulnerability for Turkey. Turkey's electric generation is 60 percent dependent on foreign natural gas supply.⁵⁵⁸ As Necdet Pamir put it, excessive foreign dependency on natural gas creates vulnerability not only for electric generation but also for industrial production that necessitates larger volumes of electric supply. The life cycle of Turkey's many hydro-electric power plants will come to an end within the next three decades. Turkey's nuclear power plants are still in the development stage. The government signed contracts with Russia in 2010 to construct nuclear power plants but nuclear electric generation will not be viable until 2017. Former Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler projected that Turkey should make over \$100 billion investment into electric power plants by 2020, to avoid major supply disruptions.⁵⁵⁹ Thus, Turkey seems unlikely to reduce dependency on foreign natural gas supply in electric generation.

Another point of vulnerability is Turkey's lack of natural gas storage capacity. Domestic markets are immediately affected by supply disruptions in Russia and Iran. Major storage projects such as the Salt Lake Project and Silivri Storage facility remain in the planning stage. Gokhan Yardim, Director General of the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, cautioned "We have been talking about the Salt Lake Project since 1987. The first engineering contract was in 2000. But there were no substantial investments since then. If we had achieved this project, we would be less vulnerable to supply disruptions in Iran...Our existing storage capacity is 1.6 billion

⁵⁵⁸ Necdet Pamir, "Kafkas ve Hazar Havzasindaki Ulkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarinin Turkiye'nin Enerji Guvenligine Etkileri" Avsam Yayinlari. Available at <http://www.asam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.asp?ID=914&kat1=11&kat2=> [accessed March 25, 2007]

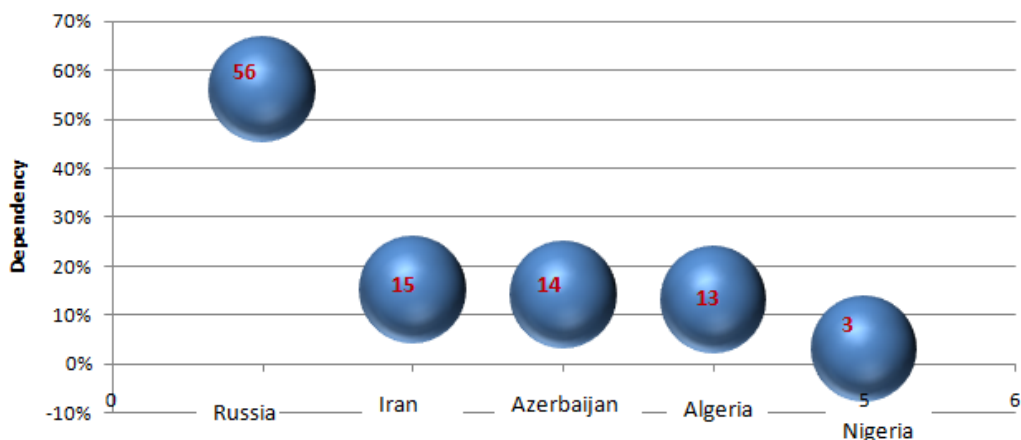
⁵⁵⁹ Katinka Barysch, "Turkey's role in European Energy Security", Centre for European Essays, London, 2007

cubic meters. We can only pump out 14.5 million cubic meters. This is less than 10 percent of domestic demand.”⁵⁶⁰

5.2. Attempts to reduce dependency on Russia

Russia has been the predominant energy supplier of Turkey both for natural gas and petroleum since the 1970s. According to the Energy Markets Regulatory Authority (EPDK), Turkey’s dependency decreased from 62 percent to 56 percent between 2008 and 2009, but Russia still remains by far the most important natural gas supplier.⁵⁶¹ As seen in figure 5.5, Turkey is 15 percent dependent on Iran, 14 percent on Azerbaijan, 13 percent on Algeria and 3 percent on Nigeria. Apart from the natural gas, Turkey was 36 percent dependent on Russian oil in 2008 when the Erdogan Administration signed energy agreements with Iran.⁵⁶²

Figure 5.5: Turkey’s dependency on foreign natural gas



Source: EPDK annual report 2009, Ankara/Turkey

⁵⁶⁰ Director General Yildirim’s statements are available at Tumgazeteler, “Gozler 20 yildir Tuz Golunde”, January 9, 2008.

⁵⁶¹ Energy Market Regulatory Authority, “EPDK Yillik Dogalgaz Raporu”, 2009, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/dogalgaz/2009/2009.pdf, [Accessed June 19, 2010]

⁵⁶² Energy Market Regulatory Authority, “Petrol Piyasasi Sektor Raporu”, 2009, available at http://www.epdk.gov.tr/yayin_rapor/petrol/2009/SektorRaporu2009.pdf, [Accessed June 20, 2010]

A number of energy analysts reported that there are four potential hazards for Turkey of overdependence on Russian natural energy resources. First, for some of the analysts, the historical track record of Russian energy policy indicates a tendency to use oil/natural gas as a weapon of foreign policy.⁵⁶³ Second, Russia sets exorbitant pricing compared to the alternative energy suppliers in Central Asia.⁵⁶⁴ Third, take or pay agreements and lack of artificial reserves wastes substantial amounts of financial resources.⁵⁶⁵ Fourth, the Blue Stream Pipeline, which is the longest deep water pipeline in the world, is highly exposed to physical dangers. In the event of an accident, the repair will be costly and time consuming.⁵⁶⁶ Fifth, large energy contracts with Russia, hinder the projected Trans-Caspian pipeline projects with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.⁵⁶⁷

The Russian tendency to use oil/gas supply as a foreign policy weapon was frequently discussed by my interviewees. Many elites and analysts have argued that Turkish-Russian relations may not always experience the current honeymoon period, and substantial crises may erupt because of power projection policies in the Caspian region and Central Asia. According to this view, Russia might cut down supply of oil/gas in order to compel Turkey to behave in a compromising fashion. For instance, Ambassador Faruk Laloglu argued that “We should break the Russian monopoly on energy. Russia used energy as a weapon in the past. We have seen this against Georgia and Ukraine. In order to avoid potential coercion, we should diversify energy suppliers. We should have alternatives of major energy providers. We signed this agreement

⁵⁶³ Authors interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Minister.

⁵⁶⁴ Authors interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

⁵⁶⁵ Authors interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is an Iran Specialist at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁵⁶⁶ Authors interview with Idris Bal on December 11, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bal is a prominent foreign Policy Analyst Professor of International relations at the School of Security Studies.

⁵⁶⁷ *ibid*

[with Iran] for this reason.”⁵⁶⁸ Sinan Ogan, the General Director of International Relations and Strategic Research Center, noted that “Turkey and Ukraine are different cases. Their relations with Russia are completely different. But we cannot say that Turkey is less prone to the risk of supply disruptions. Supply disruptions may not only occur as a result of political crisis but natural disasters may cut the flow of natural gas... We have to diversify suppliers and build large storage facilities to minimize the risk of supply diversification.”⁵⁶⁹ Nasuh Uslu, a senior foreign policy analyst, maintained that “It is true that we have no major conflicts with the Russians. But there are some nascent conflict nodes such as Georgia and Azerbaijan. If Turkey escalates the conflicts, the supply of natural gas will turn into an important tool for the Russians. They can use gas disruptions to punish us. We don’t want Putin or Medvedev to use energy as a coercion mechanism. Overdependence is not a healthy condition.”⁵⁷⁰

However, the people who are closer to the decision making process rejected the argument that Russia has an inherent tendency to use energy supply as a foreign policy tool. They acknowledge that Turkey is the second largest market for Russian gas after the European Union. In their perception, Russia is as dependent on Turkish markets as Turkey is on Russian supplies. Therefore, Russian ruling elites are unlikely to use energy supply for political leverage. During his visit to Moscow, Prime Minister Erdogan laid emphasis on Russia’s role as Turkey’s primary energy supplier and asserted that there is no expectation of supply disruptions due to political conflicts.⁵⁷¹ One of my interviewees, Huseyin Bagci, accompanied Prime Minister Erdogan during his visit to Moscow. Bagci noted that “Russians will not want to irritate one of their

⁵⁶⁸ Authors interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Minister.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Sinan Ogan by Gulay Altan, Ankara, January 8, 2008. Sinan OGAN is the Director of TURKSAM

⁵⁷⁰ Authors interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

⁵⁷¹ Prime Minister Erdogan’s speech at Moscow State University, available http://www.akparti.org.tr/biz-bolgemizde-nukleer-silah-istemi-yoruz_6599.html, [accessed February 12, 2010]

largest customers. I have talked with many important figures in Moscow, including Putin, Medvedev and Alexey Miller, who is the Chairman of Gazprom. In one of our conversations, I asked Alexey Miller whether Russia could use energy as a foreign policy tool against Turkey. He assured me that this will never happen. They have never done so. I don't think they will do it in the future.⁵⁷²

Another prevailing argument is that Turkey's over dependency on Russia undercuts its bargaining power in pricing. Russia sells the Turkmen gas to Turkey after tripling the price (Russia buys around \$100 per 1000 cubic meter and sell it around \$300 per 1000 cubic meters).⁵⁷³ There is a broad consensus among Turkish elites that Turkey should find alternative suppliers at least to promote competition and reduce the cost. The recent agreements with Iran and Turkmenistan link Turkey to Central Asian gas suppliers and allow direct purchases. Thus, Turkey partly eliminates Russian arbitrage [simultaneous buying and selling] and avoids paying excessive price for natural gas. Necdet Pamir, the former Director of Eurasian Strategic Research Center (ASAM), noted that "Turkey is now 65 percent dependent on Russia. This [Turkish-Iranian agreement] can be seen as a major move against Russia. We are trying to cut down the prices of gas. We are making several moves for this. Mainly we are trying to diversify suppliers."⁵⁷⁴

Many Turkish elites voiced their objection to the monopolistic control of energy transportation networks by Gazprom. In their view, control of energy transportation undergirds Russia's power projection in the Caspian region and Central Asia at the expense of Turkey. These concerns have been accentuated after the initiation of the South Stream Project in 2007.

⁵⁷² During the interview, Huseyin Bagci, showed his photos with Putin, Medvedev and Alexey Miller.

⁵⁷³ Authors interview with an Energy Analyst (X-29), January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁵⁷⁴ Seda Bastug, "Turkiye Iran'la Anlasti Dogalgaz Koprusu Oldu", *Yenisafak Newspaper*, July 15, 2007

According to the South Stream agreement among Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, Gazprom will transport North Caspian natural gas resources through an alternative pipeline (see Appendix four for south stream pipeline chart).⁵⁷⁵ For Ilyas Kamalov, the Chair of the Russian Desk at the Eurasian Strategic Research Center, the South Stream project represents a “comeback” of Russian influence over the former Soviet territories.⁵⁷⁶ Although Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have suffered from over dependency on former Soviet pipeline networks, they accepted the new offer from the Putin Administration. The South Stream pipeline will extend 510 kilometers through Turkmen and Kazakh territories before reaching Russia.⁵⁷⁷ The agreement includes modernization and refurbishment of the pipelines remaining from the Soviet era. The project is expected to be inaugurated by 2012. After full implementation it will have the capacity to transfer 16 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe through Russia.⁵⁷⁸ Onder Karaduman, Director General of AK Energy, noted that “We had to do something to counterbalance Russian initiatives. This project [Turkish-Iranian agreement] will strengthen our hand. It indicates that Russia is not our only gas supplier.”⁵⁷⁹ Karaduman maintained that Turkey’s energy contracts with Iran are the main incentive to cut down our dependency to foreign energy resources. Therefore he argues, Turkey pays no attention to Western warnings to cut down bilateral trade relations with Iran.⁵⁸⁰ Arif Keskin, senior Iran analyst at the International Relations and Strategic Research Center, noted that Russia’s increasing control of natural gas pipelines has been shifting the regional distribution of power in favor of the former

⁵⁷⁵ Maria Beat, “Russia travels south”, *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, October 1, 2007.

⁵⁷⁶ Ilyas Kamalov, “Rusya’nin Yeni Enerji Politikaları”, The Eurasian Strategic Research Center, August 1, 2008.

⁵⁷⁷ Maria Beat, “Russia travels south”, *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, October 1, 2007.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Seda Bastug, “Türkiye İran’la Anlasti Dogalgaz Koprusu Oldu”, *Yenisafak Newspaper*, July 15, 2007.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

superpower.⁵⁸¹ For him, in addition to abundant domestic production, the transit fees on the Caspian energy pipelines have been empowering the Russian energy empire. According to Keskin, Turkey's energy partnership with Iran has been formulated not only to reduce dependency on Russia but also to undercut the Russian preponderance over the transportation of Caspian energy resources.⁵⁸²

5.3. Supply disruptions in Iraq

During my field research, many Turkish elites and analysts argued that the Iraq War has changed the dynamics of regional energy security. Iraq had been a major energy supplier of Turkey since the early 1980s. After American interventions in 1991 and 2003, however, Turkish-Iraqi energy trade came to a halt because of the embargos, sanctions and destruction of oil transportation facilities. More recently, the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the ongoing insurgency have destroyed the Turkish-Iraqi pipelines and downgraded Iraq's reliability as an energy partner. In this context, a growing array of analysts believe that supply disruptions in Iraq paved the way for enhanced energy partnership with Iran due to cost effectiveness and security of energy transportation.

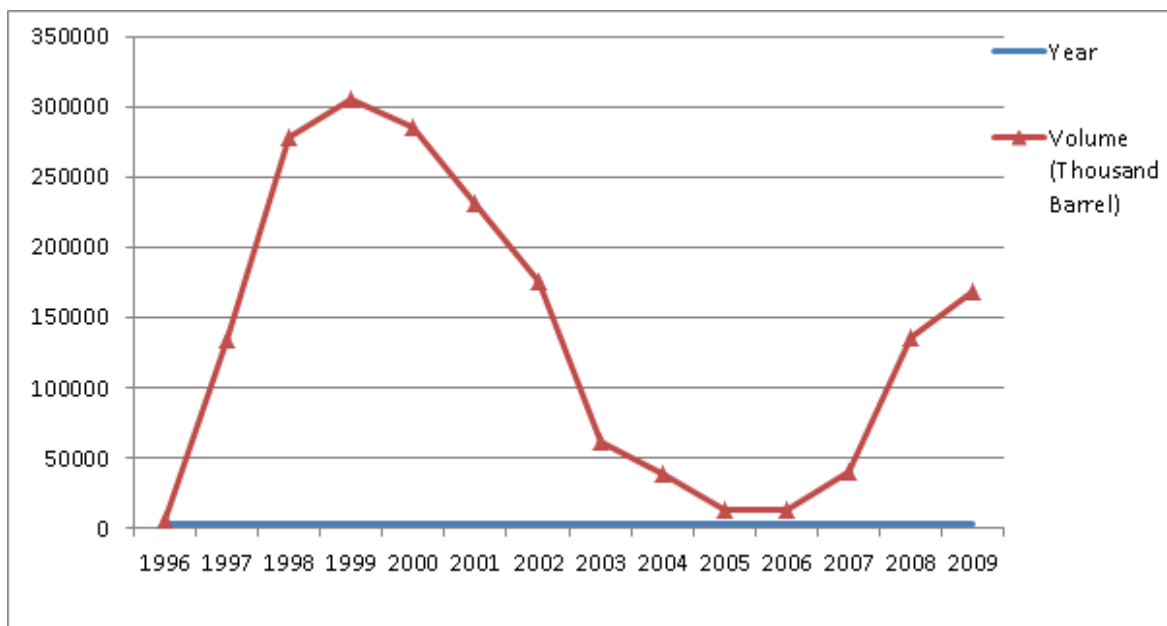
Iraq was a major energy supplier of Turkey until the Gulf War (1991) and the two neighbors were enjoying a rapidly growing economic interdependence. Iraq's proximity to Turkey and existing pipelines reduced the cost of energy transportation. However, the positive trade relationship was reversed after Saddam Hussein cut down the oil supply to punish Turkey for assisting the coalition forces. The Turkish Ministry of Finance estimated that the cost of the

⁵⁸¹ Authors interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁵⁸² *ibid*

post Gulf War economic embargo against Iraq exceeded \$100 billion for Turkey.⁵⁸³ After five years of mutual distress, the governments of Turkey and Iraq signed an agreement to restore the energy trade, but the bilateral trade volume has never recovered to the level before the Gulf War. On the other hand, major supply disruptions occurred after the U.S. attack against Iraq in 2003. As seen in figure 5.7, Turkey's oil imports from Iraq waned after the U.S. intervention and the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipelines became almost inactive by 2007 due to prolonged insurgency and terrorism.

Figure 5.7: Oil imports from Iraq through pipelines (in 1000 tons) ⁵⁸⁴



Source: Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS) annual statistics, 2009

The U.S occupation of Iraq dramatically changed the roles for the conventional energy actors in the region. The central government's control on legal/illegal oil trade loosened in the

⁵⁸³ Authors interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁵⁸⁴ Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporation. "Statistics of Crude oil Imports" retrieved from <http://www.botas.gov.tr/faliyetler/hampetrol.asp> , July 13, 2007

post intervention period. Insurgents, tribal leaders and transnational criminal networks began to pose greater threats to the regional pipeline networks.⁵⁸⁵ Subsequent to de-nationalization of Iraqi oil and return to the U.S. dollar standard, most of the Iraqis including terrorists and insurgents, believe that U.S. intervention in Iraq was another “imperialist oil grab”.⁵⁸⁶ According to the radicalized elements, “usurpation” of the energy reserves by foreign companies provides justification for drilling of the pipelines and blowing up the petroleum facilities by the insurgents.⁵⁸⁷ There appears to be two different types of insurgent behaviors against the oil facilities. While the first type of insurgent takes advantage of oil smuggling to finance their battle against the occupation forces, the second type of insurgents works for destruction of Iraqi pipelines and refineries to stop “ransacking” of Iraqi Oil.⁵⁸⁸

Many Iraqi analysts and government officials indicated that the Iraqi insurgency is funded by oil smuggling, mainly to Turkey. Bilal Wahab, an Iraqi energy analyst, argues that the Iraqi insurgency is financed by oil smuggling in cooperation with transnational criminal networks.⁵⁸⁹ The former Iraqi Oil Minister Bahr al-Ulum commented that “oil and fuel smuggling networks have grown into a dangerous mafia threatening the lives of those in charge of fighting corruption”.⁵⁹⁰ According to Ali Allawi, Iraq’s former Minister of finance, “40 to 50 percent of all oil-smuggling profits in the country are diverted away from the government. By

⁵⁸⁵ Office of Inspector general/Oil Ministry of Iraq “Smuggling Crude Oil and Oil Products: Second Transparency Report” Available at from <http://www.iraqrevenuewatch.org/reports/052206.pdf>. on June 10, 2007.

⁵⁸⁶ Michael Renner, “Post-Saddam Iraq: linchpin of a new oil order”, Foreign Policy in Focus, January 1, 2003

⁵⁸⁷ Bilal A. Wahab “How Iraqi Oil Greases Violence” Middleast Quarterly, Fall 2006 Volume III: Number .

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ellen, Knickmeyer, "Graft Alleged in Oil Protection Effort," Washiangton Post, February 5, 2006, p. A17; Robert F. Worth and James Glanz, "Oil Graft Fuels the Insurgency, Iraq and U.S. Say," New York Times, February 5, 2006.

infiltrating senior management positions... and threatening truck drivers, insurgents have been able to tap into pipelines, empty trucks, and sell the oil or gas themselves.”⁵⁹¹

On the other hand, fundamentalist and terrorist groups, including al-Qaida, destroy energy facilities to prevent the “usurpation” of Iraqi oil by the foreign companies.⁵⁹² According to Robert Mullen, insurgents carried out over 400 attacks against oil facilities in Iraq. Among those, 398 attacks were carried out against pipelines, 36 against oil wells, 18 against tanker trucks and 4 against storage tanks.⁵⁹³ *Hurriyet Newspaper* (March 7, 2007), reported that 86 Turkish oil truck drivers have been killed in Northern Iraq by terrorists between 2003 and 2007.⁵⁹⁴ The central government of Iraq could not provide physical security for Iraq’s energy infrastructure. The Iraqi military forces and law enforcement agencies remains underequipped, poorly trained, corrupt and low of morale.⁵⁹⁵ Even so, they are somewhat ostracized for collaborating with the occupation forces. They have no real control on Iraqi society let alone the insurgents.⁵⁹⁶ Philip Shiskin of *Wall Street Journal* reported that drilling of oil pipelines substantially increased after the U.S. intervention, and even the Iraqi soldiers steal crude oil from the long ranging pipeline between Turkey and Iraq. Shiskin maintained that:

In the second half of the last year [2006], one stretch of pipelines connecting Kirkuk with the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan the main outlet for Iraq’s northern oil exports pumped oil only for 43 days . The rest of the time the pipes sat idle, leaking crude through dozens of holes drilled along their 200-mile run through the Iraqi desert. One

⁵⁹¹ Pratap Chatterjee “Gasoline Crisis in Iraq” February 8, 2007, retrieved from <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=13249> [accessed July 20, 2007].

⁵⁹² Anthony H. Cordessman “The Iraq War and Lessons for Counterinsurgency” Center for Strategic and International Studies. Washington DC, 2006

⁵⁹³ Robert K. Mullen, “The Energy Incident Data Base”, February, 2006

⁵⁹⁴ *Hurriyet Dailly Newspaper*. “Irak’ta 4 Türk şoförü daha öldürüldü” (March 25, 2007). Retrieved from http://www.hurriyetusa.com/haber/haber_detay.asp?id=4942, [accessed March 25, 2007]

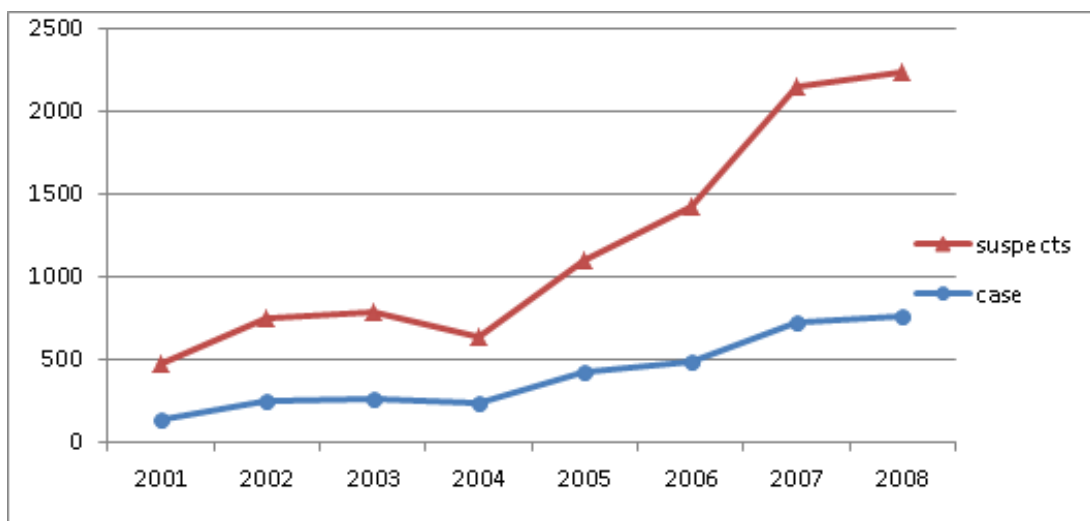
⁵⁹⁵ Bilal A. Wahab “How Iraqi Oil Greases Violence” *Middleast Quarterly*, Fall 2006 Volume III: Number

⁵⁹⁶ J. Robinson West “Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Gulf” eds in Jan H. Kalicki & David L. Goldwyn “Energy and Security: Toward ad new foreign policy strategy” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005

pipeline has been broken into 39 times so far this year.... The Iraqi government decided to integrate the tribal guards into the regular army...Several soldiers have been arrested stealing crude. In mid-April, an American patrol has caught an out-of uniform soldier planting a roadside bomb near the Cherry Hump.⁵⁹⁷

After the U.S. occupation of Iraq, oil smuggling between Iraq and Turkey increased dramatically (see figure 5.8). The scope of the oil smuggling was summarized in the National Action Plan against Oil Smuggling: 7,814,000 tons of oil was smuggled into Turkey in 2005 and 2006 and the aggregate amount of tax evasion was around \$11 billion.⁵⁹⁸

Figure 5.8: Oil smuggling cases between Iraq and Turkey (2001-2008)



Source: Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM), Annual Report, 2009

As seen in figure 5.8, the Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM) reports an 87 percent increase in the number of offenders involved in oil smuggling in Turkey

⁵⁹⁷ Philip Shiskin "Pipeline thefts cripple Iraqi oil production" Wall Street Journal, May 27, 2007.

⁵⁹⁸ Fatih Ugur "Kacak Yakita Deposuz Takip" Aksiyon Weekly Magazine. Number 596, May 8, 2006

between 2002 and 2008.⁵⁹⁹ According to the same KOM report, oil smuggling cases between Iraq and Turkey increased 98 percent within the same period.⁶⁰⁰ The Parliamentary Research Report on Oil Smuggling indicates that nearly 195 million liters of illicit oil have been seized by the national law enforcement agencies between 1995 and 2005.⁶⁰¹ However, the experts believe that the seized amount constitute only a small percentage of what has actually been smuggled.⁶⁰²

The Turkish Parliamentary Commission Report on Oil Smuggling notes that major supply disruptions in Iraq enhanced Turkish efforts to seek alternative energy suppliers.⁶⁰³ In this context, energy officials exploited sustainable alternatives and Iran became the primary oil supplier for Turkey. Energy supply from Iran has two major comparative advantages over the Iraqi energy supply. First, Iran is a relatively stable country with sophisticated energy and security institutions. There is no significant opportunity for energy supply disruption due to insurgency, civil war or terrorist attack. Second, Iranian energy resources are controlled by a single authority. The Turkish government has to negotiate with only one authority. Conversely, Iraqi hydrocarbons are controlled by many entities such as the Central Government, Kurdish regional authorities, Occupation Forces, multinational energy companies, tribal leaders and the insurgents. The most irritating development for the Turkish government was the Kurdish attempt to export oil in 2007, independently of the Iraqi central government.⁶⁰⁴ The Turkish government refused to negotiate with the Kurdish groups (the KDP and the PUK) for oil. They are not

⁵⁹⁹ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM) Annual Report 2006. KOM Headquarters. Ankara Turkey. 2006. p.94

⁶⁰⁰ Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM) Annual Report 2006. KOM Headquarters. Ankara Turkey. 2006.

⁶⁰¹ Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi TBMM (Turkish Grand Assembly) "Meclis Akaryakit Kacakçılığı Araştırma Raporu = Parliamentary Research Report on Oil Smuggling" Donem:2, Yasama Yılı: 3, S. Sayısı 978, Ankara 2005

⁶⁰² Author's interview with a security official (X-18). On December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁶⁰³ Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi TBMM (Turkish Grand Assembly) "Meclis Akaryakit Kacakçılığı Araştırma Raporu = Parliamentary Research Report on Oil Smuggling" Donem:2, Yasama Yılı: 3, S. Sayısı 978, Ankara 2005

⁶⁰⁴ J. Robinson West "Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the Gulf" eds in Jan H. Kalicki & David L. Goldwyn "Energy and Security: Toward a new foreign policy strategy" Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005

recognized as actors in bilateral negotiations on energy contracts. The Kurdish groups are unlikely to export regional petroleum independently since Iran, Syria, Turkey and Iraqi Arabs all oppose that initiative. Thus, smuggling remains the main option for Kurdish groups to benefit from the regional oil.

5.5. Strategic gains and the Nabucco project

Turkey is located adjacent to the countries that possess approximately 72 percent of the world's proven gas reserves and 73 percent of oil reserves.⁶⁰⁵ It lies at the shortest distance between the Caspian and Middle Eastern Energy producers and the European Union which is the world's largest energy importer. Turkey's geographic location provides substantial advantages in overland pipeline transportation of hydrocarbon resources, particularly natural gas. Even though oil is a more fungible product and can be transported by sea, regional pipelines from landlocked destinations provide considerable advantages in transportation of petroleum. In particular, the pipelines from Azerbaijan and Iraq function as a gateway that makes landlocked regional resources available to the global markets. Turkish foreign policy makers and analysts perceive the interregional energy pipelines as a strategic tool to gain leverage in international politics.

5.5.1. Aspiration to be an interregional energy hub

A large majority of my interviewees indicated that the 2008 energy agreement with Iran would facilitate Turkey's goal to be an interregional energy hub, as it provides access to Central Asian, Caspian and European energy markets. There are four existing pipeline projects that contribute to

⁶⁰⁵ John Roberts, "The Turkish Gate: Energy Transit and Security Issues", Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 3, Number 4

Turkey's strategic aim to be an energy hub. These projects also allow implementation of a multi-sourcing program to avoid major supply disruptions. First, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) project connects the Shah Deniz energy fields of Azerbaijan to Turkey's Mediterranean Ceyhan Port. BTC is the second longest pipeline in the world that has a one million barrel transfer capacity per day.⁶⁰⁶ Second, Blue Stream Project Connects Russia's Izobilnoye gas plant to Ankara with a 1213 km pipeline, that carries 16 billion cubic meters per annum.⁶⁰⁷ Third, the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline connects Iraqi oil fields to Yumurtalik facilities on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey. Fourth, the Iran-Turkey pipeline connects Iranian gas fields in Tabriz to Turkish consumers in Ankara. This pipeline ranges over 2577 kilometers and meets nearly 20 percent of Turkey's domestic gas demand.⁶⁰⁸ The new agreement in 2008 extends the natural gas flow for 25 years.

Many energy officials and analysts argued that Turkey is determined to make strategic investments into transit energy pipelines that connect the Middle East, Caspian Region and Europe. Indeed Turkey is dedicated to be an interregional energy hub that will interlink the consumers and producers throughout much of the region. According to this view, being an energy hub will boost Turkey's strategic value for both the West and the East. Prime Minister Erdogan emphasized that "Turkey is a natural bridge between the energy rich Caspian-Middle Eastern producers and energy hungry markets of Europe. We have operationalized the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipelines. We have accomplished Turkey-Iran, Blue Stream and Baku-Tibilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipelines. Our ongoing projects indicate the

⁶⁰⁶ Necdet Pamir, "Kafkas ve Hazar Havzasindaki Ulkelerin Enerji Kaynaklarinin Turkiye'nin Enerji Guvenligine Etkileri" Avsam Yayinlari. Available at <http://www.asam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.asp?ID=914&kat1=11&kat2=> [accessed March 25, 2009].

⁶⁰⁷ Offshore Technology, "Blue Stream Gas Pipeline, Russia/Turkey", available at http://www.offshore-technology.com/projects/blue_stream/, [accessed June 10, 2010].

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

strategic importance of Turkey for European energy security”.⁶⁰⁹ Former Energy Minister Guler noted that, a main pillar of Turkey’s energy policy is “to make sure that the oil and gas resources of the region are transferred to the European markets via this country”.⁶¹⁰ As Hakki Akil, Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, put it, Turkey aspires to be the “fourth main artery” of European energy supply security through implementing a series of projects such as Nabucco and Shah Deniz.⁶¹¹ Arif Keskin, a senior Iran analyst at TURKSAM, asserted that, “After the full implementation of the Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyhan project, Turkey is more actively seeking to be an energy terminal. Turkish Energy authorities seek to control the flow of gas and oil from the Middle East and Caucasus to the European markets.”⁶¹² Jeroen Vander Veer, the Chairman of Shell executive committee noted that “There were no pipelines over Turkey 10 years before. In 30 years, Turkey will look like a spaghetti dish and covered with interwoven pipeline networks.”⁶¹³

According to my interviewees, Turkey confronts three major challenges in its bid to become an energy hub. First, Arif Keskin Asserted that Russia is not interested in supporting the pipelines through Turkey.⁶¹⁴ Indeed, Russians have been attempting to undermine the emergence of alternative pipeline ranges. The South Stream project with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is a clear indicator of Gazprom’s efforts to preserve Russia’s pipeline monopoly. Second, Bayram Sinkaya reported that the Europeans hope to use Turkey’s pipelines for gas transportation and

⁶⁰⁹ Erhan Seven, “21. Yuzyilin Projesi Nabucco’da tarihi Imza”, *Yenisafak Newspaper*, July 14, 2009

⁶¹⁰ John Roberts, “The Turkish Gate: Energy Transit and Security Issues”, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Volume 3, Number 4, p.19.

⁶¹¹ Hakki Akil’s speech at the “Caspian and Black Sea Gas Conference 2004”, February 27, 2004.

⁶¹² Authors interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶¹³ Jeroen Vander Veer’s speech available at *Hurriyet Newspaper*, November 14, 2008.

⁶¹⁴ Authors interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

oppose Turkey's arbitrage on Middle Eastern and Caspian gas.⁶¹⁵ They oppose Turkey's bid for being an energy hub that provides extra manipulative power. Third, there is an increasing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) transportation from the Middle East to Europe, which undercuts the importance of pipelines. This indicates that Turkey's energy partnership with Iran and Azerbaijan may not be sufficient to gain significant strategic leverage.

5.5.2. The Nabucco project and access to European markets

There are consistent institutional expectations that European energy demand will increase significantly over the next two decades. According to the International Energy Agency, European gas demand will increase 1.6 percent per year between 2010 and 2030.⁶¹⁶ Many experts and institutions estimate that EU's natural gas imports will increase dramatically as continental gas production is expected to follow a sharp decline. Currently Norway produces 25 percent of the Europe's natural gas but this production is anticipated to fall to 17 percent.⁶¹⁷ The EU's over-dependency on Russia is becoming an ever greater concern for European foreign policy makers. It is expected that the dependency will double in the next two decades. These facts have been voiced by Reinhard Mitschek, Managing Director of the Nabucco Project in the following way: "In the Next 10-15 years, our gas consumption will increase from 500 bcm to 700 bcm...At the same time European Production will go down from 200 bcm to 100 bcm. So that leaves room for 600 bcm of gas imports compared to 300 bcm now. That means doubling of

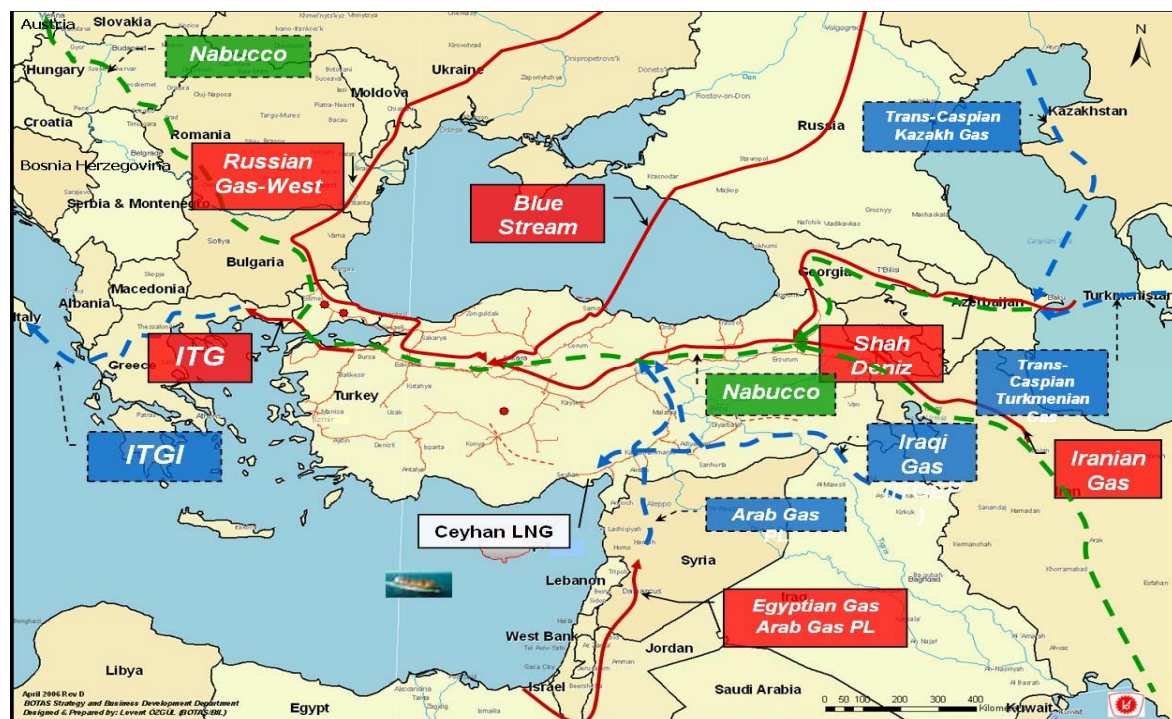
⁶¹⁵ Authors interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

⁶¹⁶ Presentation by Fatih Birol, Chief Economist for the International Energy Agency, to the seminar on Natural Gas in Southeast Europe: Investment, Transit and Trade, in Istanbul, May 5-6, 2004

⁶¹⁷ John Roberts, "The Turkish Gate: Energy Transit and Security Issues", Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 3, Number 4

the gas imports, therefore a huge necessity of transportation capacity.”⁶¹⁸ For Mitschshek, the EU has been increasingly concerned about dependency on Russia since the Putin Administration cut off gas supply to Ukraine in 2006.⁶¹⁹ The supply disruptions in Ukraine led to a fall of pressure in the rest of Europe that put European consumers into a panicky mood about the future of energy security. Accordingly, supply diversification has become ever more important for European customers.

Figure 5.9: Nabucco project and other pipelines through Turkey



Source: Petroleum Pipeline Corporation Website, www.botas.gov.tr, June 25, 2010

The Nabucco pipeline is the flagship project of the European supply diversification policy. At this junction, Turkish-European energy interests converge. As seen in Figure 5.9., The

⁶¹⁸ Nuber 5

⁶¹⁹ ibid

Nabucco pipeline extends from eastern Turkey to the heart of Europe. It bypasses Russia that has been the dominant gas supplier of both Turkey and Europe. The project applies a multi-sourcing strategy to avoid supply disruptions and ensure abundant flow of gas. Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are expected to supply natural gas for the project, which is estimated to be completed by 2013. The Nabucco pipeline extends 3,300 kilometers from Eastern Turkey to Europe over Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria. Its annual transportation capacity is around 31 million cubic meters.⁶²⁰ The major stakeholder companies are Turkish BOTAS, Hungarian MOL, Bulgarian EAP, Austrian OMV-OGB, German RWE and Romanian Transgaz.⁶²¹

Turkey's role as an alternative energy gateway to Europe is becoming increasingly more important, as the Europeans lay more emphasis on a multi-sourcing strategy. Many elites conceive the project as a critical opportunity to promote Turkey's strategic gains and economic integration with Europe. For them, existing pipeline projects such as the Blue Stream, the Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), and the Greece- Italy Interconnector have already boosted Turkey's role for European Energy Security. The Nabucco project will further enhance Turkey's role in European Energy supply. Arif Keskin noted that "The Nabucco project is an important phase on Turkey's strategy to be an interregional energy hub. Turkey economically benefits from the embittered relations between the Iranians and the West. Turkish companies are flooding into the Iranian market as they face minor competition from the Western corporations."⁶²²

⁶²⁰ Nabucco Official Web Page, available at http://www.nabucco-pipeline.com/portal/page/portal/en/Home/the_project, [accessed May 20, 2010].

⁶²¹ Katinka Barysch, "Should the Nabucco Pipeline Project be shelved?", Centre for European Policy Reform, Transatlantic academy, May 5, 2010.

⁶²² Authors interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

One major goal of Turkey's energy policy makers is to extend the pipelines to Southern Europe, mainly towards Greece and Italy. A pipeline though Turkey is expected to be more cost competitive with the Russian pipelines. Following this logic, BOTAS, a leading Turkish state energy company, made an agreement with Greek DEPA Company in December 2003.⁶²³ The agreement proposed construction of a 36 inch joint pipeline under the Aegean Sea. Annual gas transportation through this pipeline is expected to be around three billion cubic meters. There are ongoing efforts to extend this pipeline 280 kilometers towards the Italian port of Otranto. In his speech at the Caspian and Black Sea Gas Conference, Hasan Akil, a Director General at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, noted that the Turkey-Greece-Italy Interconnector project will be a significant step in Turkey's energy strategy of becoming an interregional energy hub.⁶²⁴ Loyale De Placia, the former Vice President of European Commission, expressed his gratitude and noted that the project "will not only bolster peace and stability in the region but also it will make it possible to supply new gas resources from the Caspian basin and Iran to the internal gas market of the enlarged European Union and to the Balkans, thus improving security of the supply for all stakeholders concerned with this infrastructure."⁶²⁵

One major argument is that the Nabucco project will help Turkey's further integration into the European Union and may lead to certain concessions in the accession process. Many analysts anticipate that convergence of European and Turkish energy interests will help eliminate trade barriers. Prime Minister Erdogan's assessment was quite positive "I hope that this project [Nabucco] will open a new page in Turkey's relations with the EU as we are going along the

⁶²³ John Roberts, "The Turkish Gate: Energy Transit and Security Issues", Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 3, Number 4

⁶²⁴ Hakki Akil's speech at the "Caspian and Black Sea Gas Conference 2004", February 27, 2004.

⁶²⁵ Loyola Palacio, "Greece- Turkey Gas Agreement", IP/04/71, Brussels, 20 January, 2004.

accession process.”⁶²⁶ President Gul also noted that this project will strengthen Turkish-European strategic ties since the interests converge on the energy supply.⁶²⁷ However, my investigations revealed that this was not the major factor that motivated the Turkish government. The Turkish government is more interested in economic/strategic gains in Nabucco Project rather than the accession benefits. Indeed, a significant majority of the Turkish elites has become increasingly resentful towards EU accession policies. Many of them are convinced that the EU will never grant full accession to Turkey. Thus, Turkey is a major contributor to the Nabucco project but there is no apparent expectation of membership concession from the European Union. Moreover, many of the European energy officials reiterate that energy partnership with Turkey does not necessarily mean eliminating barriers for Turkey’s accession into the Union.⁶²⁸ They oppose Turkey’s use of strategic location to get concessions on the accession process.

Despite the commitment of Turkish government officials, full implementation of the Nabucco project rests on a complex assortment of factors. One major question is integration of Iran into the project. One group argues that Iran should take part in the project because it is the only stable supplier of gas and has the second largest reserves in the world. In this view, the project will not be viable without Iran’s participation. Bayram Sinkaya described the situation in this way “We are developing the Nabucco project in collaboration with our European colleagues. We have signed gas agreements with Greece, Italy and Austria. How can we supply gas without having gas reserves? The answer is easy. We will get it from Iran.”⁶²⁹ Another interviewee Huseyin Bagci claimed that, “Both Iran and Iraq are important for the Nabucco project. It seems

⁶²⁶ *Zaman Newspaper*, “Imzalar Ankara’da atildi: Nabucco ruya degil gercek”, July 14, 2009.

⁶²⁷ *ibid*

⁶²⁸ Katinka Barysch, “Turkey’s role in European Energy Security”, Centre for European Essays, London, 2007

⁶²⁹ Authors interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

that we will use both states for our further energy projects”.⁶³⁰ Another group argues that the project should bypass Iran and supply gas from other sources such as Azerbaijan, Iraq, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Washington opposes the project because it integrates Iran as a principal gas supplier. However, particularly after the U.S. occupation of Iraq, even the analysts in the latter group changed their preferences and embraced Iran as an energy supplier despite strong opposition of the United States.

Another discussion is whether the Nabucco Project will be worth more than the €5 billion investment. Some analysts argue that the cost of the project will outweigh the benefits as there is no anticipation of large supply from the Caspian providers. Others argue that the project will not only help supply diversification but will also reduce the price of gas. Therefore, the benefits will prevail over the costs. John Roberts, an energy specialist at Platts, argued that “If Nabucco prompted Russia to drop its prices by as little as €1 per thousand cubic meters, then even if not a single cubic meter of gas ever flowed through Nabucco, it would provide a good return for €5 billion investment”.⁶³¹

Despite these various discussions concerning viability, the Nabucco Project Agreement was signed on July 14, 2009, by the prime ministers of Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Turkey and the President of the EU Commission.⁶³² At the inauguration speech, Prime Minister Erdogan stated that “Thanks to this project, a long term cooperative platform has been initiated among the energy suppliers, transit countries and the consumers. Turkey strongly supports the Nabucco project that this developed to meet energy demands of both Turkey and Europe. We

⁶³⁰ Authors interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bagci is a prominent Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU).

⁶³¹ Katinka Barysch, “Turkey’s role in European Energy Security”, Centre for European Essays, London, 2007.

⁶³² Zaman Newspaper, “Imzalar Ankara’da atildi: Nabucco ruya degil gercek”, July 14, 2009.

wish that this pipeline will not remain as an energy project but it will facilitate a dialog between the East and the West.”⁶³³ Taner Yildiz, Minister of Energy, noted that “Nabucco is not just an energy project between Turkey and the European Union. This project indicates that we can promote our strategic partnership”.⁶³⁴ Yildiz maintained that the Turkish-Iranian agreement in 2008 will be an important step in the fulfillment of the Nabucco project. He added that “Turkey’s natural gas extraction from South Pars field will exceed 35 billion cubic meters. Thanks to this agreement we will be able to transfer 31 billion cubic meters to Europe annually after 2018.”⁶³⁵

5.5.3. Access to Caspian and Central Asian suppliers

The Nabucco project and Turkish-Iranian energy agreements have deepened Turkey’s energy relationship with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Azerbaijan will be a major supplier to the Nabucco project. Turkey and Azerbaijan signed an agreement in May 2010 to link the Shah Deniz gas field with the Nabucco pipeline. Azerbaijan will not only be a supplier to Nabucco, but it will also function as a transit destination for the Kazakh and Turkmen gas through the Trans-Caspian Pipeline. Mete Goknel, a former Director General of the Turkish Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, noted that “Azeris promised to provide 8-12 billion cubic meters of gas. The Nabucco project will not be viable without the Azerbaijani resources. We have to include Iraqi, Iranian and Turkmen gas as well.”⁶³⁶

⁶³³ Zaman Newspaper, “Imzalar Ankara’da atildi: Nabucco ruya degil gercek”, July 14, 2009.

⁶³⁴ Erhan Seven, “21. Yuzyilin Projesi Nabucco’da tarihi Imza”, Yenisafak Newspaper, July 14, 2009.

⁶³⁵ Zaman Newspaper, “Turkiye Gaz Buldu, Nabucco bir adim onde”, October 30, 2009.

⁶³⁶ Enerji Vadisi, “BOTAS Eski Genel Muduru Goknel: Nabucco, Irak ve Iran Gazina Muhtac”, June 11, 2010.

Two other potential suppliers are Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan which are determined to reduce dependency on Russian pipeline networks in transportation of national resources to Europe. Under the existing circumstances, Gazprom's twofold profits irritate the Kazakh and Turkmen producers. The Central Asian leaders have become more reluctant to remain dependent on Russia and committed to diversification of transportation networks. Turkmenistan President Berdimuhamedov noted that "We have excessive gas. We are ready to sell this to available customers. This will help operationalization of the Nabucco Project".⁶³⁷ Energy Minister Taner Yildiz, highlighted that "We want to transfer Turkmen gas to Europe through Turkey. I have discussed this issue with the Turkmen president. We have a 16 billion cubic meters gas contract with the Turkmen, but it has not yet been enacted. We are continuing our efforts to facilitate this project. This agreement [with Iran] will be an important step in the project".⁶³⁸ The former Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler asserted that "We are going to bring Turkmen gas over Iran and Caspian Sea. This gas will be exported to Europe through the Nabucco pipeline."⁶³⁹

Reinhard Mitschek, Managing Director of Nabucco suggested that "One of the unique selling points of the project is the multi-sourcing approach. So we expect gas from Azerbaijan, from Turkmenistan, from Iraq, from Egypt, from Russia. Therefore we are not dependent on one of those sources because we expect a whole portfolio of gas supply sources. That is very attractive for the gas buyers in Europe."⁶⁴⁰ The Turkish-Iranian gas agreement in 2008 allows transportation of Turkmen gas through Iranian territories. There is a need for a trans-Caspian pipeline to connect Kazakh resources with the rest of project. This pipeline will shorten the distance of pipelines, both from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

⁶³⁷ Anadolu News Agency, "Turkmenistan: Nabucco Icin Gaz Veririz", July 11, 2009.

⁶³⁸ Haber Takip, "Turkiye Rusya'dan al yada ode de oteleme isteyecek", January 12, 2010.

⁶³⁹ Nethabercilik, "Guler: Yunanistan'a gaz vermeye basliyoruz", November 6, 2008.

⁶⁴⁰ Eurasianet, "Energy: Nabucco Chief Eyes Iranian, Russian Gas Despite U.S. objections", June 22, 2008, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp062308a.shtml> [accessed June 10, 2010].

5.5.4. The role of Turkey's energy agreements with Iran

Energy agreements with Iran serve Turkey's strategic energy interests in several respects. First, Iran will be the principal supplier of the Nabucco project at least in the short run. The pipelines through Iraq, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will not be functional in the short run. According to many energy analysts, Iranian gas makes the Nabucco project viable despite strong opposition from Washington.⁶⁴¹ Second, energy agreements with Iran facilitate Turkey's access to Central Asian resources. The former Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler, who signed the agreements, noted that "Iranians will give us access to Turkmenistan and we provide them access for Europe."⁶⁴² Tehran used to stand against Trans-Caspian project and transit of Turkmen pipelines through Iranian territories to prevent Turkey's direct access to Northern Caspian resources. The agreement in 2008, however, indicated a profound shift in Iran's energy stance. This agreement proposes construction of an approximately 2000 km pipeline from Turkmenistan to Turkey overland through Iran. Third, access to Turkmen and Kazakh natural gas would cut down the price of natural gas and increase the bargaining powers of both Turkey and the European Union. Fourth, this agreement facilitates Turkey-Greece and Turkey-Italy interlocutors, which are two components of the Nabucco project. It is anticipated that this will make substantial contribution to Turkey's further integration into the European markets.

Both Turkish and Iranian elites highlighted that this multifaceted energy agreement serves the interests of Turkey, Europe and Iran. For them, the agreement not only reduces European/Turkish dependency on Russia, but it undercuts Russian monopoly over energy

⁶⁴¹ See, Katinka Barysch, "Should the Nabucco Pipeline Project be shelved?" Centre for European Policy Reform, Transatlantic academy, May 5, 2010.

⁶⁴² 8Sutun, "Bakan Guler: Nukleere mecburuz", November 4, 2009.

transportation networks. President Gul noted that, “We have been working for a long time for this agreement. Prime Minister talked this issue during his last visit to Tehran. There is nothing secret. There is a need for this agreement to facilitate the Nabucco project”⁶⁴³ Saltuk Duzyol, the Deputy Director of BOTAS, noted that Turkish-Iranian agreement has profound implications for Turkey’s energy policy and overturns the conventional patterns of strategic energy partnerships.⁶⁴⁴ Duzyol maintained that “Iran is the most viable alternative to Russia. Our agreement proposes transportation of Iranian gas to Europe. Turkey will obtain a great role in European energy markets”.⁶⁴⁵ Mete Goknel, a former Director General of BOTAS, highlighted that “Iran has the third largest oil reserves and second largest natural gas reserves. We cannot turn our back to Iran.”⁶⁴⁶ Ambassador Faruk Laloglu argued that, “This agreement facilitates implementation of the Nabucco project. It was not possible to fulfill our commitment in Nabucco without the gas deal with Iran. Moreover, this agreement integrates the Turkmen gas into the Nabucco project”.⁶⁴⁷ Saltuk Duzyol, the Director General of Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, noted that “We look at this issue from supply diversification perspective. This project contributes both to European and Turkish supply security. I don’t think the Americans will oppose it.”⁶⁴⁸

Iranian elites gave parallel statements. Reza Kassaizadah Mahabadi, Iran’s deputy Oil Minister, noted that “We aim at penetrating the European Markets via Turkey. 1860 km pipeline with a 110 million cubic meter capacity, stretching from the Persian Gulf to Turkey, will be constructed. We estimate that the pipeline will require an investment of \$8 billion. Once the pipeline is connected to Nabucco via Turkey, natural gas sales in Europe are likely to be

⁶⁴³ Hurriyet Newspaper, “Iran Gazi Tartismasi Sertlesiyor”, September 8, 2009.

⁶⁴⁴ Huseyin OZAY, “Enerjide Dengeler Degisecek”, Aksam Newspaper, July 17, 2007.

⁶⁴⁵ Huseyin OZAY, “Enerjide Dengeler Degisecek”, Aksam Newspaper, July 17, 2007.

⁶⁴⁶ Enerji Vadisi, “BOTAS Eski Genel Muduru Goknel: Nabucco, Irak ve Iran Gazina Muhtac”, June 11, 2010

⁶⁴⁷ Authors interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Minister.

⁶⁴⁸ Firat Gazel, “ABD’ye ragmen Iranla Enerji Ortakligi”, www.gundem.info, July 4, 2007.

affected.”⁶⁴⁹ Ali Nurani, Iran’s Trade attaché to Ankara, concluded that “This agreement not only serves the interests of Iran and Turkey but it provides major benefits to the European customers.”⁶⁵⁰

5.6. Cost effectiveness and security of pipelines through Iran

Throughout the field research, I have discovered that the Turkish energy policy makers are also concerned about the security and cost efficiency of the pipelines. Some of the elites/analysts I interviewed reported that hydrocarbon pipelines from Iran are more cost effective than alternative pipelines from Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iraq and Russia. The experts also argued that pipelines between Iran and Turkey are less prone to physical supply disruptions due to natural disasters and terror attacks.

According to my interviewees, the Iran-Turkey pipeline is relatively cost effective for three reasons. First, Iran is a neighbor of Turkey and pipelines directly enter into the Turkish homeland without paying any transit fees to third parties.⁶⁵¹ When Turkey purchases hydrocarbons from non-neighbor parties (i.e. Azerbaijan, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Qatar Saudi Arabia and Turkmenistan), BOTAS pays substantial amounts of transit fees to transit countries. Second, pipelines from the non-neighbor resources need investments into longer pipelines that would be vulnerable to supply disruptions in the volatile Middle East.⁶⁵² Moreover, each transit country will gain political leverage due to Turkey’s dependency on their transportation facilities. Third, pipelines from Russia go under deep waters. The costs of

⁶⁴⁹ Turkish Daily News, June 19, 2008.

⁶⁵⁰ Hurriyet Newspaper, “Iran Gazi Tartismasi Sertlesiyor”, September 8, 2009.

⁶⁵¹ Authors interview with an Energy Official, (X-26), January 13, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁶⁵² Authors interview with an Energy Analyst, (X-29), January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

replacement and recovery are very high in comparison with the land pipelines.⁶⁵³ Pipelines through Iran, however, never undergo water. It is easy to install the pipes and fix the disruptions. Recovery of regular pipeline pressure is less time consuming and less expensive.

Some of the interviewees asserted that another advantage of the Iranian pipelines is their physical security and reduced vulnerability to terror attacks. Turkish Iraqi pipelines have been cut off hundreds of times as a result of terrorist attacks.⁶⁵⁴ The pipelines through Azerbaijan and Georgia have always been under the threat of war and Russian occupation. Potential pipelines from Egypt and Saudi Arabia have to cross the entire Middle East and will be more exposed to terror attacks and wars. Iran pays utmost importance to security of energy facilities because energy export is vital for survival of the regime. Turkey experienced only minor supply disruptions from Iran due to terrorist attacks. Iran has eliminated the PKK/PJAK camps in its territory and fights actively against the remnants of these terror networks. Therefore, the PKK is less likely to blow up the Turkish-Iranian pipeline, while it frequently attacks the Turkish-Iraqi pipeline. Even though the U.S. or Israel may attack Iran within the immediate future, Turkish energy experts anticipates no major disruptions of hydrocarbon flows. Therefore, Turkish elites are less concerned about physical supply disruptions along the Iranian pipelines.

5.7. Containment of Iran contradicts with Turkey's national interests

Various U.S. officials including the former President George Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Ambassador Ross Wilson, demanded that the Erdogan Administration to stop further energy deals with the Iranian government. The American government was concerned

⁶⁵³ ibid

⁶⁵⁴ Philip Shiskin "Pipeline thefts cripple Iraqi oil production" Wall Street Journal, May 27, 2007.

that Turkey's energy deals would undermine economic containment of an emerging nuclear "rogue state". The Erdogan Administration, however, signed two memoranda of understanding in 2007 and 2008 that consolidated Turkey's energy partnership with Iran. The rapid increase in the volume of energy purchases is a good indication in this regard. Throughout my field research, I found that Turkey's unwillingness to endorse American containment is driven by the leadership's sense of the national interests and lack of trust in American policies. Turkish government officials believe that Turkey's compliance with the U.S. demand will undermine Turkey's economic, security and strategic interests. In this context, Turkish interests converge with Iranian interests and diverge with the policies of Washington. Moreover, Turkish government officials have become increasingly irritated with the U.S. policy of intervening in bilateral relations with Iran.

The Turkish government devotes considerable energy to regional economic integration. It attempts to eliminate investment barriers and increase the interregional trade among the Caspian and Middle Eastern markets. In this context, Iran became a major trade partner of Turkey between 2002 and 2010. To put it another way, the economic interdependence between Iran and Turkey gained greater momentum throughout the Erdogan Administration. The Turkish Institute for Statistics reported that the overall trade volume between Iran and Turkey increased 730 percent over the last decade.⁶⁵⁵ In 2008, Iran became the 7th largest import partner and 19th largest export partner of Turkey.⁶⁵⁶ At several platforms, Prime Minister Erdogan and Iranian President Ahmadinejad expressed their commitments to enhance bilateral cooperation on energy, security, transportation and industry. During President Ahmadinejad's 2008 visit to Turkey, both

⁶⁵⁵ Turkish Institute for Statistics, "Foreign Trade Statistics" Available at http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=12&ust_id=4, October 7, 2008.

⁶⁵⁶ *ibid*

parties declared that they had reached a consensus to increase the bilateral trade to \$30 billion.

Prime Minister Erdogan noted that:

Turkish and Iranian merchants have become like relatives and brothers of each other over the centuries. Turkish and Iranian investors share the same economic concerns and future prospects. The upward spiral in bilateral trade is quite natural. We are really pleased with the rise of bilateral trade over \$10 billion. Initially we planned to increase it to \$20 billion but commercial representatives suggested to increase it \$30 billion. I believe that we will be ready for this. We as politicians will eliminate the barriers, the investors will do their part. When we attain trade volume of \$30 billion Turkey and Iran will be in very advanced situation.”⁶⁵⁷

Many Turkish elites asserted that the energy agreements with Iran promote Turkey’s national interests and regional economic integration. As Murat Mercan, the Chairman of Parliament’s Foreign Relations Committee, put it, the Erdogan Administration thinks that economic integration is the principle solution to regional conflicts.⁶⁵⁸ Turkish elites perceive the U.S. led sanctions as a major roadblock to regional economic integration. According to Murat Mercan, the American proposal to restrict bilateral trade with Iran undermines Turkey’s economic, strategic and security interests.⁶⁵⁹ For Mercan, Turkey’s participation in the economic containment against Iran not only terminates bilateral trade with Iran but also with the Central Asian Republics, because Iran controls the transit routes. The U.S. offers no major compensation for contributing to the containment of Iran. Therefore, the Erdogan Administration is determined to defend its interests even if it contravenes the interests of Washington and Jerusalem.⁶⁶⁰ Prime

⁶⁵⁷ Star Newspaper, “Basbakan Erdogan’dan Iranda Ekonomik Mesajlar”, October 27, 2009

⁶⁵⁸ Author’s interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliament’s Foreign Relations Committee.

⁶⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁶⁰ Author’s interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

Minister Erdogan asserted that “The United States is our strategic partner. However, neither the Americans nor the Israelis have the resources to meet Turkey’s energy demands”⁶⁶¹ In another speech, Erdogan noted that “Iran has made an attractive offer. They offered to render extraction of natural gas in three fields without a competitive contracting process. We are pursuing national interests. Russians are running similar projects. We do not seek permission of Americans to promote our national interests... The U.S. should revise that approach.”⁶⁶² Minister of Energy Taner Yildiz noted that “Iran has substantial energy reserves. Turkey is determined to take advantage of its geographic location. We give utmost importance to improving energy cooperation with our neighbors. We have taken important decisions through our negotiations with the Iran officials”.⁶⁶³ Turkish-Iranian energy deal is highly supported by the leaders of major state energy corporations and institutions. There is a convergence between the statements of the political actors and the institutional leaders, who also lay emphasis on the economic and strategic value of the energy partnership with Iran. Saltuk Duzyol, the Director General of BOTAS noted that, “We cannot disregard Iran for political reasons. We need Iran for energy and trade. According to our agreement 30 billion cubic meters of Iranian gas will be transferred to Europe over Turkey. Turkey will get three gas fields in the South Pars region that has an annual production capacity of 20.4 billion cubic meters. Iran is crucial for the Nabucco project we have to take advantage of it”.⁶⁶⁴

The energy agreement with Turkey has numerous advantages for the Iranian government. Some interviewees argued that the interests of Turkey and Iran have been converging in the new

⁶⁶¹ South European Times, “Turkiye Iran dogalgazinin guvenilirligini tartisiyor, January 09, 2008

⁶⁶² Anatolia News Agency, “Iran’dan cazip teklif var”, July 17, 2007.

⁶⁶³ Energy Minister Taner Yildiz’s statement in Iran on October 29, 2009, available at www.haber7.com, [accessed October 29, 2009].

⁶⁶⁴ Stargazete, “Iran gazindan donus yok imzalar ekimde atiliyor”, September 28, 2007.

energy security landscape. According to Arif Keskin, Tehran makes nearly \$10 billion from energy sales to Turkey and this makes a significant contribution to the revival of the Iranian economy and survival of the regime. Keskin noted that the energy partnership with Turkey is the most prestigious project accomplished by the Iranian government.⁶⁶⁵ Second, the energy partnership with Turkey lays the ground for Iran's access to vast European markets. It helps to loosen the Western economic containment and facilitates Iran's integration into the international economy. As interviewee Arif Keskin put it, Iranian leaders want to make sure that at least Turkey remains neutral if more severe economic sanctions are imposed on Iran. They perceive the gas agreements as an instrument of political leverage to shape Turkey's position on the nuclear debate.⁶⁶⁶ Third, this agreement facilitates the flow of Turkmen gas overland through Iranian territories. Iran will make more profits from transfer of Turkmen gas. It will further integrate Iran into the central Asian markets. Fourth, economic revival helps to preserve the political stability and strengthens the post revolutionary regime.

One major advantage of the agreement is the concession to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation's (TPAO) to extract natural gas in the South Pars field of Iran. As, Taner Yildiz, Minister of Energy, put it "We will have the right to market at least 50 percent of the gas that we extract from the South Pars fields. This is an important privilege and concession. We think we can extract around 35 cubic million meters of gas per annum."⁶⁶⁷ This indicates that the TPAO will be in the field and supervise pumping of natural gas. Some analysts argued that this will reduce supply disruptions in the winter, because the Turkish engineers will supervise the

⁶⁶⁵ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁶⁶ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁶⁷ Energy Minister Taner Yildiz's statement during his visit to Tehran on October 28, 2009

extraction and pumping process. According to Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, Iran/Middle East analyst at International Strategic Research Organization, “The energy agreements allow the TPAO’s gas extraction in three fields without any contract. This agreement also allows the TPAO to supervise the gas pumping process in Iran. Therefore, the Iranians may not put forward unsubstantiated pretexts to cut down our gas in the middle of the winter. TPOA can directly respond to technical problems in gas extraction fields”.⁶⁶⁸

The predominant majority of the Turkish elites became immediately offended when foreigners ask about the U.S. concerns about the current energy partnership between Iran and Turkey. Turkish elites lay special emphasis on Turkish sovereignty and independent pursuit of self interests. Turkey’s past image as the “spearhead” of Western neo-colonialism has become an increasingly irritating image among both the elites and Turkish citizenry. During Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s visit to Turkey in August 2008, President Gul responded indignantly to a question about the U.S. concern with the energy deal. Gul asserted that “Expansion of relations on a regional level seems quite natural for Turkey, and it is not important what other states think of it. Turkey cares for its own interests. Turkey will establish good ties with its neighbors with the aim of stability and security in the region...We are an independent country. Here we look for our national interests...We have to make investment for [energy] supply security of Turkey.”⁶⁶⁹ On his visit to the European Political Center at Brussels, Erdogan responded angrily to the Western demands to back down economic relations with Iran. He noted that “We will never cut down our relations with Iran. No one can define our policy. Turkey is not a tribal state. Turkey is a powerful country that has a great history. Therefore, we decide our destiny, we take our

⁶⁶⁸ Author's interview with Arzu Celalifer Ekinici, on January 14, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ekinici. Chair of Iran Studies at the International Strategic Research Center (USAK).

⁶⁶⁹ John C.K. Daly, “Analysis: Turkish Iranian Energy Ties”, *Russo Dailly*, August 21, 2008

decisions. No one can determine to whom we will talk and who we will not”⁶⁷⁰ Erdogan maintained that, “Iran is our neighbor and our bilateral trade exceeds \$10 billion. We buy 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Iran. We have profound economic and strategic relations with Iran. Therefore, those who want us to cut down economic relations with Iran should first evaluate the situation thoroughly... We will never succumb to their demands to cut economic ties with Iran.”⁶⁷¹ Hilmi Guler, the former Minister of Energy, strongly criticized the U.S. Ambassador Ross Wilson’s comments on Turkish-Iranian contracts. He noted that “national interests come first for us. We are a strong nation that has its own codes of conducts... We will continue to develop our ties with the neighbors. I, as a minister of Turkish state, have to work in accordance with national interests.”⁶⁷²

Another source of resentment has been directed towards American economic sanctions. During the interviews, many of the officials and analysts reported that the American government has never kept its promises during the previous containment programs such as the Iran Libya Sanctions Act and the embargo against Iraqi government after the Gulf War. One reason for Turkey’s non-participation in containment against Iran is the belief that the U.S. will not reimburse Turkey’s losses if Ankara abolishes energy and trade relations with Iran. One interviewee Bayram Sinkaya explicated that “Americans did not keep their promises after the Gulf War. We lost over a hundred billion dollars during the embargo against Iraq. Now they tell us not to make investments in Iran over \$20 million. They propose sanctions against companies that exceed this level. This is an unacceptable demand.”⁶⁷³ Celalettin Yavuz, a former military

⁶⁷⁰ Statements of Prime Minister Erdogan in Brussels at European Political Center, January 1, 2009.

⁶⁷¹ Statements of Prime Minister Erdogan in Brussels at European Political Center, January 1, 2009.

⁶⁷² Aktifhaber, “Hilmi Guler ABD’ye Cok Tepkili”, June 17, 2008

⁶⁷³ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

officer and strategist at TURKSAM, noted that “Every American intervention had dramatic impacts on regional economy. They destroyed Iraq which was our major energy supplier and trade partner. All countries could develop by means of regional trade. Americans themselves established NAFTA with Canada and Mexico. Why we couldn’t do it? We couldn’t do it because of U.S led wars and embargos.”⁶⁷⁴ One retired diplomat maintained that, “The Americans say that we should not sign these energy contracts. But they don’t show us how to diversify energy suppliers. At many times they told us to reduce dependency on Russia and do not buy Iranian gas. Where should we go? We cannot supply hydrocarbons from the aliens. Iran is the most viable alternative to reduce dependency on Russia.”⁶⁷⁵

One concern of Turkish foreign policy makers is preventing further alienation of Iran in the international system. For many elites, economic sanctions will further isolate Iran from the West and strengthen the hardliner fundamentalists in the Iranian regime. Turkish elites believe that Iran’s economic integration into the West will eliminate radicalism and promote democracy over the long term.⁶⁷⁶ Contrary to the Americans, Turkish government officials want to integrate Iran into the international community. They think that an interconnected Iran will be less dangerous and radical and that advanced market integration will gradually erode radical superstructures in Iran. In this context, the gas agreement will be quite instrumental to integrate Iran into the international community.

⁶⁷⁴ Author’s interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁷⁵ Author’s interview with a retired diplomat (X-23), on December 18, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁶⁷⁶ Author’s interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry

5.8. Critics of Turkish-Iranian energy partnership

The Erdogan administration's energy partnership with Iran attracted five major criticisms from opponent elites and analysts. One major criticism from the pro-Western elites⁶⁷⁷ is that the growing energy partnership with Iran undermines Turkey's strategic commitments to its Western allies, particularly to the United States. Turkey's energy deal and trade partnership contradicts with the Western containment strategy. For many analysts, this will provoke some kind of retaliation from Washington and Jerusalem, Turkey's long-term military allies. This pay back may be in the form of excluding Turkey from future regional initiatives of the U.S. and Israel. Erdal Saglam, a columnist at the Hurriyet Newspaper, argued that Iran is using Turkey to undermine international economic sanctions.⁶⁷⁸ Saglam asserted that there is a coincidence between the international pressures and Iran's willingness to collaborate with Turkey on energy and security issues. Saglam called the Turkish government to be more vigilant against the exploitation of bilateral relations by Iran in an extremely critical time.

A counter argument by the proponents of energy partnership with Iran is that in several respects this partnership also serves U.S. interests. First, they claimed that the agreements help Iran's economic integration into the global economy. This will undermine the power of hardliners in the Iranian regime and promote moderate political views.⁶⁷⁹ Second, they argued that the agreement undercuts the monopoly of the Russian Gazprom and provides an opportunity to the Central Asian gas producers to access to global markets through alternative routes. This

⁶⁷⁷ There are still many pro-Western elites in Turkey, who argue that Turkey should preserve its strategic ties with the United States and NATO. It is hard to classify these elites into a single party or institution. They exist in the military, security institutions, diplomatic spheres, Republican Peoples Party and even the Justice and Development Party.

⁶⁷⁸ Erdal Saglam, "Turkiye-Iran Ekonomik Yakinasmasi ve ekonomik ayagi", Hurriyet Newspaper, October 19, 2009.

⁶⁷⁹ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

will cut down Russia's power projection in the region. Third, they claim that Iran's energy partnership with Turkey may complicate Tehran's security partnership with Russia that has been the principal promoter of the Iranian nuclear program.⁶⁸⁰ Once Iran actively engages in alternative energy pipeline project that cuts down Gazprom's monopoly, the Russian government may become less willing to assist Iran's nuclear power project.

A second major criticism is projected towards Iran's large scale contracts and its inability to fulfill its commitments to Turkey and other customers. According to this critical view, Turkey should not rely on Iran as a major energy supplier, because Iran has made so many energy agreements in order to undermine Western economic containment that it will eventually fail to fulfill its supply commitments. According to Energy Analyst Faruk Demir, "It is true that Iran has the second largest gas reserves. But they lack substantial production capacity. They themselves are dependent on Turkmen gas to fulfill their commitments to us. Therefore, Iran is not a major alternative to Russia"⁶⁸¹ According to Arif Keskin, "Iran is has made 15 large contracts with all sorts of countries including China, India and Pakistan. I don't think they will be able to comply with their commitments to us. Iranians are signing these contracts to discourage their neighbors from participating into international sanctions against Iran."⁶⁸² Some Turkish energy analysts indicated that Iran will have to channel a large volume of natural gas to recover the aging oil wells.⁶⁸³ For instance, energy specialist Tufan Erdogan noted that "Iran spends a large portion of the resources for recovery and domestic consumption, therefore it is

⁶⁸⁰ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁸¹ South European Times, "Turkiye Iran dogalgazinin guvenilirligini tartisiyor, January 09, 2008.

⁶⁸² Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁸³ The experts asserted that Iran will have to use large volumes of natural gas to restore the oil supply in aging oil wells.

unlikely to meet its commitments towards Turkey and other customers”.⁶⁸⁴ According to Erdogan, Iran’s pumping capacity is also undermined by the new LNG project that supply natural gas to far away markets such as China.

The third major criticism of the energy experts is periodic disruptions of supply in winter, when natural gas is needed most. For instance, a major supply disruption took place in January 2008 when Turkey was experiencing very cold weather conditions. Iranians argued that the supply disruption was sparked by the cold weather and interruption of gas flow from Turkmenistan. Turkey lacks substantial storage capacity and supply disruptions from Iran directly undercut industrial production, residential heating and electric generation.⁶⁸⁵ Lack of excessive natural gas storage also emerged as a problem. Turkey’s existing contracts with Iran are “buy or pay” type agreements. Thus, if Turkey or the European customers fail to absorb the supply, Turkey has to pay for the natural gas that has never been received. As Yavuz Sir put it, the disruption incidents and “buy or pay” agreements raise questions about the reliability of Iran as an energy partner.⁶⁸⁶

The fourth major criticism focused on the growing imbalance of trade between Iran and Turkey, particularly since 2002. Some interviewees contended that Turkish-Iranian energy partnership develops at the expense of Turkish exports is not an overall benefit. Arif Keskin noted that, “Today Turkey and Iran have over \$10 billion bilateral trade. Energy trade constitutes the bulk of this figure. Iran is the one that really benefits from this partnership. Turkey’s investments in Iran are just around \$1 billion. What I mean is there is a great disproportion. Ankara is really bothered with this asymmetry. There are certain legislative barriers against the

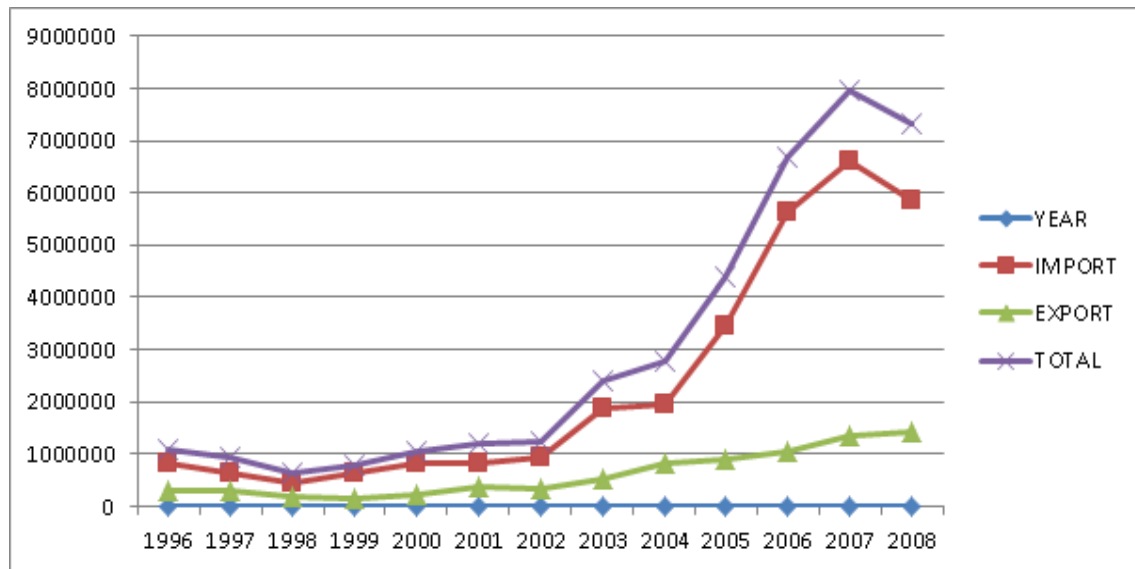
⁶⁸⁴ Tufan Erdogan, “Iran ile yapılan son gaz anlasmasi uzerine notlar”, EM Enerji, Sayi 3, September 2007, p.88

⁶⁸⁵ Author’s interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bagci is a prominent Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU).

⁶⁸⁶ Yavuz Sir, “Katar’da Cikan bir Yazı”, October 18, 2007, available at http://www.globalstrateji.org/TUR/Icerik_Detay.ASP?Icerik=1217, [accessed May 13, 2010]

entry of Turkish companies into Iranian markets.”⁶⁸⁷ The growing imbalance of trade can be clearly seen at figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10: Turkish Iranian, exports, imports and overall trade volume (1996-2007)



Source: Turkish Institute for Statistics, Dis Ticaret Istatistikleri, Ankara, 2008

Some key government officials and analysts I interviewed noted that Iran poses certain trade barriers. As Prime Minister Erdogan highlighted, “Iran continues to impose high tariffs on foreign products. Customs taxes are very high, sometimes goes up to 30-40 percent. Imposing high tariffs is not a pleasant policy when we try to increase bilateral trade. Our ministers will sit together and find a solution to this.”⁶⁸⁸ One major barrier to bilateral trade was Iran’s constitutional restrictions on privatization. Several Turkish companies’ contracts have been turned down by the Iranian government with various pretexts. For instance, Iran cancelled Tepe Akfen Construction (TAV) investments in airports and Turkcell investments into telecommunication because of their alleged connections with Israel.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁷ Author’s interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁸⁸ Star Newspaper, “Basbakan Erdogan’dan Iranda Ekonomik Mesajlar”, October 27, 2009.

⁶⁸⁹ Author’s interview with a security official (X.31), January 6, 2010, Ankara/Turkey.

The fifth major criticism is directed towards Iran's overpricing and arbitrage of central Asian natural gas. Some experts argued that Iran purchases Turkmen gas at a very low price and sell it to BOTAS after tripling the price. They asserted that Iranians offered much lower prices to its consumers in the East (i.e. Pakistan, India and China). Energy specialist Tufan Erdogan, noted that "Iran has signed a contract with India and Pakistan for 25 years. They will build a pipeline for \$3 billion. What will be the price? Their price is \$145-150 per 1000 cubic meters. Iranians are more lenient towards the Buddhist Indians than Turkish "Muslim" brothers."⁶⁹⁰ This view was endorsed by interviewee Arif Keskin who noted that "Iran sells us the Turkmen gas after tripling the price. They promised to sell the gas to India and Pakistan 30 percent cheaper than Turkey."⁶⁹¹ According to the current terms of the agreement, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation will extract gas and sell it to Iranian state energy company. Then it will "buy it back" after the Iranians make reasonable rate of profit. This conditionality dramatically reduces the profit range for the Turkish companies.

Another group of critics argued that the Turkey-Iranian energy partnership might provoke a response from the Russian government. They claimed that Russia might choose not to provide excess energy when Turkey needs extra natural gas in the winter. For instance, Gokhan Yardim, the former director of BOTAS, asserted that "We have to preserve our ties with Russia, because there are upper and lower limits of the contract. They may choose not to meet our excessive demands. We have to preserve good ties with Iran too. We have experienced many supply disruptions in Iran."⁶⁹²

⁶⁹⁰ Tufan Erdogan, "Iran ile yapılan son gaz anlasmasi uzerine notlar", EM Enerji, Sayi 3, September 2007, p.88

⁶⁹¹ Author's interview with Arif Keskin on December 12, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Keskin is a Senior Iran/Middle East Analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

⁶⁹² Zaman Newspaper, "Iran Anlasmasi Rusya'yi Kizdirdi: Bu kis fazla Gaz yok", August 4, 2007.

5.9. Conclusion of the Chapter

Turkey and Iran developed an energy partnership between 2003 and 2010. The Erdogan Administration signed an energy agreement with the Ahmadinejad administration in 2008 that proposes not only the supply of natural gas but also a strategic partnership on energy security. The new energy partnership signified a turning point in regional energy security for three reasons. First, Iran allows Turkey to construct a direct pipeline from Turkmenistan. This will allow Turkey to establish itself as an energy hub in spite of its lack of indigenous energy resources. Second, Turkey's energy partnership with Iran breaks down the traditional checker board alliance system in the Caucasus.⁶⁹³ Third, Iran integrates into the European Nabucco Project that helps Tehran to break the yoke of intensifying economic containment. Turkey's deepening energy ties irritate policy makers in Washington who are determined to prevent nuclearization of a rogue regime. My field research indicated that the Turkey's energy agreements with Iran and noncompliance with the U.S. demands is driven by several factors.

First, rapid industrialization and urbanization progressively increased the demand for natural gas and oil. Throughout the 1990s, Turkey's demand for natural gas increased over 300 percent and Turkish energy authorities sought to meet the domestic demand from the cheapest and nearest sources available. In this context, Russia and Iraq emerged as the predominant supplier both for natural gas and oil. By the early 2000s, however, Turkey's dependency on Russia had reached alarming rates. In line with the over-dependency, vulnerability to supply disruptions increased as the Blue Stream Pipeline crossed under deep water in the Black Sea. Concomitantly, Turkish electric generation is over 60 percent dependent on imported natural gas.

⁶⁹³ Checherds board alliance system appeared in the Caucaus after the end of Cold War. The Alliance between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia was countered by the alliance of Russia, Iran and Armenia.

Thus, over-dependency on Russian hydrocarbons creates a double vulnerability. The Turkish energy partnership with Iran is partially forged to reduce vulnerability to major supply disruptions in Russia.

Second, the Gulf War (1991) and the U.S. occupation of Iraq (2003) created major supply disruptions in Iraq, which had been a main energy supplier for Turkey. Oil pumping ceased intermittently after the U.S. attack against Iraq in 2003. The pipelines and energy infrastructures were destroyed by the ongoing war, insurgency and terrorism. Iraq's Petroleum Ministry reported over 400 terrorist/insurgency attacks on the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik Pipelines. Once the legal flow of oil came to a halt, oil smuggling proliferated between Iraq and Turkey. The Turkish Ministry of Energy and Energy Markets Regulatory Authority reported record levels of increase in the dimension of black energy markets in Turkey. Frequent supply disruptions downgraded Iraq's reliability and Iran emerged as a more dependable energy supplier.

Third, the Erdogan Administration is dedicated to take the opportunity of Turkey's geographic location to promote Turkey's strategic interests. As Turkey provides the shortest line between the Caspian-Middle Eastern energy suppliers and European consumers, the AKP government seeks to make Turkey an interregional strategic energy hub. Europe's growing dependency on Russia and its search for alternative supplies creates an opportunity to make use of Turkish territories as an alternative pipeline route. Russia's initiation of the South Stream Project alarmed Turkish and European energy officials. Consequently,, the European Union and Turkey launched the Nabucco Project to diversify energy suppliers and reduce dependency on Russia. The pipelines through Turkey are the shortest, safest and most cost effective routes for the Iranian gas in accessing Europe. The Erdogan Administration's recent energy partnership

with Iran not only helps to diversify supply but it facilitates the Nabucco project and serves Turkey's strategic intent to be an interregional energy hub. Moreover, it provides access to Central Asian gas reserves that constitutes an important component of the multi-sourcing strategy of the Nabucco project.

Fourth, cost efficiency and the security of the Iranian pipelines was another factor that laid the grounds for Turkish-Iranian energy partnership. Iran is a neighbor of Turkey and pipelines directly enter into the Turkish homeland without paying any transit fees to third parties. In contrast to the Russian Blue Stream line, pipelines from Iran never go under deep waters. It is easy to install the pipelines and fix the disruptions. Recovery of regular pipeline pressure takes much less time and it is less expensive. Another advantage of Iranian pipelines is relatively higher security against terrorist/insurgency attacks. Turkish elites are less concerned about physical supply disruptions along the Iranian pipelines. Even though the U.S. or Israel may attack Iran within the immediate future, Turkish energy experts anticipates no major disruptions of hydrocarbon flows.

Fifth, a major question was why Turkey disregards American demands to stop further energy/economic partnership with Iran. My field research indicated that Turkey's practical national interests outweigh the strategic commitments to its military allies, the United States and Israel. The Turkish government seeks regional economic integration and perceives American embargos as the principal roadblock on this goal. Turkey's participation in the U.S. led embargo will not only undercut bilateral trade with Iran but it will restrict Turkey's access to Central Asian Markets. Another reason for Turkey's resistance to join the containment of Iran is the belief that the U.S. will not reimburse Turkey's losses if Turkey ends the energy and trade

relations with Iran. Turkish elites lay special emphasis on sovereignty and independent pursuit of self interests. Turkey's past image as the "spearhead" of Western neo-colonialism has become an increasingly irritating image among the Turkish citizenry and elites.

Even though there is a broad consensus among the key actors, Erdogan administration's energy partnership with Iran provoked five major criticisms among analysts. Some critics argued that the energy agreements undermine Turkey's strategic commitments to traditional allies and facilitate nuclearization of a neighbor. A second criticism is directed towards Iran's capacity to fulfill energy commitments to both Turkey and Europe. The critics argue that Iran is over-contracted and Iranian resources may fall short of meeting energy demands of all customers. Third criticism is directed towards supply disruptions in winter that undermined Iran's reliability as an energy supplier. Fourth, criticism is raised at growing asymmetry of trade. The critics argued that the recent energy agreements exacerbate the imbalances of trade between Iran and Turkey. Fifth, some critics argue that Turkish-Iranian energy agreements may propel a payback by the Russian Gazprom that has been Turkey's principal energy supplier.

CHAPTER 6

DOES SECURITY RAPPROCHEMENT WITH IRAN MEAN REALIGNMENT OF TURKEY?

Turkish-Iranian security rapprochement has become a subject of intense debate among the analysts who are concerned that Turkey may shift the course of foreign policy from the West towards the Muslim East. According to the critics, Turkey's three tiered security partnership with Iran contradicts its commitments to strategic allies. These pro-Western analysts claim that the AKP has a "hidden" agenda of an Islamic Union. They argue that AKP government's détente with Iran and the Arab World coincides with deterioration of relations with Israel and the United States. The previous three chapters explained the underlying reasons of Turkish-Iranian rapprochement on counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security. This chapter investigates whether the Erdogan Administration's three tiered security partnership with Iran indicates Turkey's realignment in the international system. Second, it seeks to answer whether the rapprochement policy is driven by Islamic identity/aspirations or practical national interests. Third, it explains why the Turkish government has become less committed to its Western partners. Ultimately, it explains why Iran cannot be an alternative to Turkey's security relations with the West.

My field research explored four major facts that explain the changes not only in Turkey's Iran policy but also the general course of foreign policy. First, Turkey is not realigning from the

West towards the East, but is diversifying its relations in line with its leaders' views of national interests. In other words, Turkish elites see the new posture as expansion of Turkey's foreign relations towards the East while preserving its Western orientation. The new policy is not just supported by the Islamists, but by nationalists, neo-Marxists and liberals who support development of alternative foreign relations. However, there is strong opposition to an overall realignment towards Iran. The Kemalists and the Islamists oppose a strategic alliance with Iran at the expense of Turkey's relations with the West. Second, contrary to the projections of Western analysts, the Turkish-Iranian detente is not driven by Islamic identity or aspirations. Instead, the actions of Turkish foreign policy makers are based on their rational calculations of security interests. Identity is a source of conflict in bilateral relations rather than a catalyst for détente. Third, even though Turkey does not seek realignment, foreign policy makers have become less enthusiastic about fulfilling national commitments to traditional Western allies. Fourth, despite the ongoing resentment towards the West, most Turkish foreign policy elites believe that Iran cannot be an alternative to Turkey's relations with West. Turkish security institutions preserve well established ties with their Western counterparts and do not see relations with the Iranian institutions as a replacement.

6.1. Not realignment but diversification of relations

Analyses of the statements of the government executives indicate that the Erdogan Administration does not seek realignment in the international system but diversification of relations and reducing dependency on the West. According to Burhanettin Duran, the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) foreign policy posture can be formulated in four pillars: i) pursuit of practical national interests rather than the images that are favorable in the West, ii) better relations with the neighbors and resolution of regional conflicts, iii) diversification of foreign

relations rather than remaining exclusively focused on the West, and iv) proactivism in diplomacy rather than reactive passivity.⁶⁹⁴ These principles have been inspired by foreign minister Davutoglu's strategic depth doctrine that is designed to elevate Turkey to a dominant regional power within the surrounding regions.⁶⁹⁵ The doctrine asserts that Turkey should deploy proactive diplomacy rather than a static posture to attain the status of global power.

My field research indicated that there are two major camps in the AKP government in practice of foreign policy. The first camp is composed of Omer Celik (MP), Cuneyt Zapsu (MP, Chief Advisor to Erdogan), Saban Disli (Former Deputy Chairman of the AKP) and Egemen Bagis (Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator since 2009), who are in favor of Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy and preservation of strategic partnership with the United States. The second camp is composed of Abdullah Gul (former Former Foreign Minister and President since 2007), Ahmet Davutoglu (Foreign Minister), Hilmi Guler (Former Energy Minister), Taner Yildiz (Energy Minister) and Murat Mercan (Chairman of Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Relations) who are strong advocates of diversification of foreign policy. Prime Minister Erdogan is the overarching mediator between these two camps, but as time progressed he became more sympathetic towards the posture of the second group and the diversification of foreign relations. Turkey's growing partnership with Iran is advocated by the second camp as it sought to diversify energy suppliers, trade relations and practical security partnerships. The second camp has climbed up to the highest ladders in the governmental sphere while the first camp remained at relatively inferior positions. Both groups, however, seek to restore positive relations with the Obama Administration despite several crises with the Bush Administration.

⁶⁹⁴ Burhanettin Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy", Hakan Yavuz (eds), *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2006.

⁶⁹⁵ Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Turkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Kure Yayinlari, Ankara, 2001, see also Ahmet Davutoglu, "Turkiye Merkez Ulke Olmalı", *Radikal Newspaper*, February 26, 2004.

6.1.1. Denial of realignment

Qualitative content analysis of leader statements indicated that almost none of the political actors perceive the three tiered security partnership with Iran as foreign policy realignment. Key political actors, Prime Minister Erdogan, President Abdullah Gul (former Foreign Minister), Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu asserted that Turkey is not moving away from the Western orientation and there is no deep structural change in Turkey's international alignment. In his speech at Trabzon province, Prime Minister Erdogan called the realignment allegations "an insidious black propaganda" and added that "Yesterday there were newspaper headlines arguing that Turkey is moving away from the West. The Israeli press and the international press that are under the control of Israelis tell the same thing. Who are you serving? We will not succumb to this black propaganda. We are not doubtful about our intentions."⁶⁹⁶ Foreign Minister Davutoglu, the architect of Turkey's new foreign policy outlook, severely criticized the realignment allegations and asserted that "The arguments on structural realignment are not objective but malicious... We have to adopt the new conjuncture... We have done extensive reforms demanded by the EU over the past six years that other governments could not achieve in four decades... The realignment arguments are not based on a single empirical indicator."⁶⁹⁷ During his speech at Mayflower Hotel, Washington, Davutoglu criticized the allegations about realignment and noted that "If they are claiming that we are realigning, they should present evidence that Turkish foreign policy makers are not fulfilling their responsibilities towards the EU and NATO."⁶⁹⁸ Similarly President Abdullah Gul rejected the claims about realignment and stated that:

⁶⁹⁶ Erdal Sen, "Eksen Kaymasi Soylemleri Sinsi ve kara bir propaganda", Zaman Newspaper, June 13, 2010.

⁶⁹⁷ Haber7, "Davutoglu Eksen tartismasina sert cikti", December 9, 2009

⁶⁹⁸ Ahmet Davutoglu, Press speech, "Asil Eksen Degistiren Avrupa", December 9, 2009

I'm consistently telling this in my speeches over the past several days. The realignment arguments are raised in wrong venues. Look at Britain. Look at Spain. Look at France. They have good relations with multifarious countries throughout the world. None talks about their realignment. None says that the British, Europeans and Spanish governments have lost their orientation...The allegations of realignment based on Turkey's developing relations with the Muslim countries are driven either by ignorance or maliciousness.⁶⁹⁹

The predominant majority of the elites and analysts that I interviewed also indicated that Turkey's growing partnership with Iran does not mean a strategic realignment but it is "normalization" and expansion of the axis towards the East. For them, the neglect of the relations with the East for the sake of consolidating pro-Western course was the primary foreign policy failure of the previous governments. Many of them asserted that Turkey's undeveloped relations with the East have to be revitalized to promote national interests. According to their view, even though there are some program changes, it does not indicate realignment of Turkey in the international system. Turkey's *realpolitik* necessitates enhanced relations particularly with energy rich neighbors at the East, the North and South simultaneously. Murat Mercan, the Chairman of the Turkish Parliament's Foreign Relations committee, asserted that, "Turkey is not realigning. Turkey is normalizing. We have unchangeable paradigms such as pro-Western trajectory of foreign policy. Our destination is European Union. But the world is changing and we are adjusting ourselves towards the new paradigms. We have to exploit the opportunities in other regions as well".⁷⁰⁰ Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, who served in Foreign Minister's Advisory Board, clarified that "Turkey is not realigning. It is normalizing its posture in international

⁶⁹⁹ Cumhuriyet Newspaper, "Gul'den eksen tartismalarina yanit", June 14, 2010.

⁷⁰⁰ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

politics. We are adjusting our alignment towards Ankara not towards Tehran.”⁷⁰¹ According to Huseyin Bagci, “there is no realignment. Turkey is preserving its Western direction. I mean Turkey has well established ties with the West. We are just normalizing our relations with the East. But this does not take at the expense of our Western alignment...Turkey’s relation to the West is like a catholic marriage. Even though we can find some mistresses we cannot divorce from the West.”⁷⁰² Similarly Burak Ozugergin, the spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry responded to a question about realignment as following, “Turkey is not realigning but we are expanding our relations. Turkey has a well established pro-Western course. Those who argue that we are changing the course of foreign policy still have a Cold War mindset”.⁷⁰³

6.1.2. Strategic depth doctrine and diversification of relations

The AKP’s new foreign policy is based on Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s “Strategic Depth” doctrine, which he developed as a professor of international relations. Davutoglu is one of the few figures who found an opportunity to apply his thoughts/doctrine to foreign policy practice (similar to Henry Kissinger). According to the “Strategic Depth” doctrine, Turkey had placed too much emphasis on the relations with the West, but neglected the East, the North and the South. Unidirectional foreign policy has been undermining Turkey’s national interests and power projection capability. Davutoglu propounds that Turkey should develop economic, political and security partnerships with these neglected regions, particularly with the former Ottoman

⁷⁰¹ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry.

⁷⁰² Author's interview with Huseyin Bagci on December 28, 2008. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Bagci is a prominent Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International relations at Middle Eastern Technical University (METU).

⁷⁰³ Stargazete, “İliskilerimiz Genisliyor Asla Yon Degistirmiyor”, October 29, 2009.

territories.⁷⁰⁴ This approach is named “neo-Ottomanism” by many Turkish foreign policy analysts, but Davutoglu rejects using this title. His doctrine embraces Turkey’s historical and Islamic heritage to promote Turkey’s “soft power” throughout the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia. It promotes the sense of grandeur and self confidence in Turkey’s interaction with the states in these regions, as Turkey aspires to be a core state.

Statements of the key foreign policy makers and analysts indicate that Turkey’s growing partnership with Iran is a component of the Erdogan Administration’s efforts to diversify Turkish foreign policy. According to Foreign Minister Davutoglu, “Turkey is European. Turkey is Asian. We are African, we are Middle Eastern and we are Mediterranean. We have diversified relations with all these regions. We will be involved in all the incentives about these regions... If the Iran conflict affects us we have a right to speak... We will not support the decisions that others take by excluding us from the negotiation table.”⁷⁰⁵ In another speech Davutoglu maintained that “We are devoting attention to Iran’s integration into the international system. Turkey has good relations with Iran and the United States simultaneously.”⁷⁰⁶ Ambassador Laloglu stated that “We are diversifying our foreign policy and developing our relations with Russia, Iran, Europe and the Middle East. We are not just looking toward the West but all other directions. This is quite normal. We are advancing our relations toward all directions. We are not just developing good relations with Iran.”⁷⁰⁷ According to Ihsan Bal, security analyst at International Strategic Research Organization, “Turkey is not realigning towards the Muslim World. It has very advanced relations with Christian Georgia and Serbia ...Our presence in the Middle East,

⁷⁰⁴ Omer Taspinar, “Turkey’s Middle East Policies: Between neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism”, Carnegie Middle East Center, Number 10, September 2008.

⁷⁰⁵ Haberler.com, “Masaya Ilisen degil, masayi kuran olacagiz”, May 21, 2010.

⁷⁰⁶ Haberciyizbiz, “Turkiye-Iran Yakinlasmasi”, December 9, 2009.

⁷⁰⁷ Author’s interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Laloglu currently serves in advisory board of Foreign Ministry.

Caucasus, Balkans and Africa has consolidated. This means we are remembering the East that we disregarded for a long time.”⁷⁰⁸

Another common argument among the elites is that Turkey is not just developing economic and security partnerships with Iran or the Muslim World, but with a diverse set of nations that includes Christian and Socialist states. Since the Erdogan Administration assumed power in 2002, Turkey has developed advanced relations with Christian states such as Brazil, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Russia and Serbia. In particular, the Erdogan Administration’s intergovernmental relations with Russia are more fully developed than relations with the Iran. Russia continued to be the largest energy and trade partner of Turkey in 2010. During President Medvedev’s visit to Ankara on May 2010, Turkey and Russia signed 17 strategic agreements that include reciprocal abolition of visa requirements, construction of a joint nuclear power plant in Turkey, increasing cooperation in counternarcotics, and removing barriers for transportation.⁷⁰⁹ Turkish President Gul emphasized that “Our friendship relations scaled up to the highest level of strategic partnership”.⁷¹⁰ Russian President Medvedev responded that “Our relations [with Turkey] radically changed over the past few years. It became multidimensional and strategic. Abolishment of visas is a historic incident”.⁷¹¹ President Medvedev maintained that “Our agreements indicate a giant leap in bilateral relations. These created historic opportunities... There are great opportunities in textile, electricity and food industry in addition to Energy partnership. Abolishment of visas will stir up reciprocal tourism. We have to use our own national currencies in bilateral trade. We have to establish a joint bank.”⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁸ Ihsan Bal, “Türkiye Eksen Degistirmiyor eksenini genisletiyor”, Star Newspaper, December 9, 2009.

⁷⁰⁹ Beyaz Gazete, “Vizeler Kaldirildi, Nukleer Santral Anlasmasi tamam: Rusya ile tarihi acilim”, May 13, 2010.

⁷¹⁰ *ibid*

⁷¹¹ *ibid*

⁷¹² *ibid*

6.1.3. Turkey as a core state of an integrated region

Many foreign policy makers and analysts argued that Turkey's rapprochement with Iran is just a component of a reformulated Turkish grand strategy that seeks regional integration. The Erdogan Administration attempts to make Turkey a core state in the region. According to the foreign policy elites, this will be a milestone in Turkey's quest for regaining "global power" status after two centuries. Prime Minister Erdogan articulated that "Turkey cannot remain at the periphery of this region. We are a core state. Turkey can no longer be defined as a regional power. We are progressively becoming a global power. We have to revise our strategic vision taking into account the new realities of the world."⁷¹³

Indeed, the "strategic depth", the "zero problem"⁷¹⁴ and the "win-win" approaches of Foreign Minister Davutoglu are partially designed to promote regional integration under Turkey's leadership. Foreign Minister Davutoglu asserted that, "We have embraced a proactive, systematic and holistic approach [in foreign relations]. Our foreign policy is centered at Ankara [Not East or the West]. Our perspective is 360 degrees."⁷¹⁵ The "holist approach" seeks elimination of barriers for movement of people and capital. In line with this strategy, the Turkish government abolished visa requirements with 62 countries that include Iran.⁷¹⁶ Foreign Minister Davutoglu stated that "We have taken all the responsibility as a core state. It is important that we resolve all the problems with Turkey's neighbors. We have to increase human mobility through

⁷¹³ Ozlem Tur, "Turkiye ve Orta Dogu: Gerilimden Isbirligine", Zeynep Dagi (eds), *Ak Partili Yillar: Dogudan Batiya Dis Politika*, Orion Press, Ankara, 2006. P.157.

⁷¹⁴ This doctrine was developed by Davutoglu when he was the National Security Advisor. The doctrine suggests that Turkey should resolve all the conflicts with its neighbors to promote regional integration.

⁷¹⁵ Foreign Minister Davutoglu, "Exsenimiz Ankara yorungemiz 360°", *Yenisafak Newspaper*, January 1, 2010.

⁷¹⁶ Kanal D Haber, "Sirbistan ile Vize Kalkti: Turkiye'ye vize uygulamayan ulke sayisi 62'ye yukseldi", July 12, 2010

economic and cultural partnership. Turkey should produce a foreign policy that takes into account the values of the neighborhood.”⁷¹⁷ In another speech Davutoglu maintained that:

We are fulfilling one of our dreams. A traveler from Istanbul will freely move to Damascus, Amman and Beirut. Similarly, another traveler from Beirut can travel to Aleppo, and then to Urfa, and return back to his home at the end of the day. Another tourist from Aleppo should enter the EU through Turkey without any restrictions. We are going to fulfill this aim whatever it costs. This regional integration will expand once other friendly countries such as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt join. This will harmonize the people of the region.”⁷¹⁸

The Erdogan Administration perceives military conflicts as a primary roadblock for regional integration. Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s “zero problems” strategy has been instrumental in eliminating the conflicts not only with Iran but also with Syria, Armenia, Russia and Greece. As interviewee Bulent Aras put it, Turkish government aims at “de-securitizing” intergovernmental relations with the neighbors, including Iran.⁷¹⁹ For him, Turkey seeks to resolve regional conflicts depending on her increasing soft power. Turkey’s diplomatic overtures to prevent a potential American or Israeli attack against Iran are crafted to preserve a stable environment that functions as a fertile ground for regional integration. In this context, Turkish government elites see American interventions in the region as the principal barrier for economic and political integration. Many other interviewees asserted that the Erdogan Administration is dedicated to stand against Western “neo-colonial” ventures that stir up ethno-sectarian

⁷¹⁷ Ozlem Tur, “Turkiye ve Orta Dogu: Gerilimden Isbirligine”, Zeynep Dagi (eds), *Ak Partili Yillar: Dogudan Batiya Dis Politika*, Orion Press, Ankara, 2006. P.158.

⁷¹⁸ Aktifhaber, “3 Ulke ile Serbest Dolasim”, October 6, 2010.

⁷¹⁹ Author’s interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Aras is the Director of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV).

conflicts.⁷²⁰ According to vast majority of foreign policy elites and analysts, the War in Iraq was just another neo-imperial initiative to colonize energy resources of the region. Many elites stated that Turkey opposes the return of colonialism in the region since it is perceived as the root cause of poverty, ethnic conflicts and religious fundamentalism. Many Turkish elites perceive the war plans against Iran as another attempt to regain control of Persian hydrocarbons under the pretext of preventing nuclear proliferation.⁷²¹ In their perspective, a return of colonialism would undermine Turkey's regional integration strategy.

6.2. Power shifts in domestic politics and emergence of strong support for foreign policy diversification

Even though this dissertation focused on the security aspects of foreign policy change, my field research indicated that four major changes in domestic politics facilitated the shift of state's security posture and diversification of foreign policy: i) the AKP's ascendance to power as a single party government shift of power in state machinery, ii) rise of alternative elites and decline of the Kemalist paradigm, iii) dramatic shift in the threat perceptions of governing elites and citizenry and iv) strong domestic support for foreign policy diversification. Chapter 3 presented the underlying reasons of the shift of threat perceptions among both the ruling elites and the citizenry. This chapter discusses the impact of other three factors on foreign policy change and Turkish Iranian détente during the Erdogan Administration.

⁷²⁰ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

⁷²¹ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

6. 2.1. Rise of the AKP and shift of power in state machinery

Many of the institutionalist literature claimed that the ongoing foreign policy change has been driven by the power shift from the ultra secularist military to the pan-Islamist politicians.⁷²²

Traditionally, the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) had been dominating the foreign and security policy making process in the National Security Council (MGK). A growing array of institutionalists claimed that the balance of power within Turkey's foreign policy machinery fundamentally changed throughout the EU accession reforms. Aydinli, Ozcan and Akyuz highlighted that there has been a constant transition of power from the military to the civilians in the post-Helsinki process as the EU strongly recommended demilitarization of Turkish politics.⁷²³

My investigations revealed that there is a profound power shift in domestic politics, but EU accession reforms do not account for all the changes. Several other developments curtailed the power of pro-status quo military leaders and strengthened the hands of the government in several ways. First, amendments at the article 118 of the Turkish Constitution increased the number of civilian members at the MGK meetings and the civilian wing gained numerical superiority. Second, Turkey has elected civilian presidents since 1989.⁷²⁴ Thus, the military wing lost the most important seat in the MGK meetings.⁷²⁵ Third, in parallel with the Sixth Harmonization Package of the EU, the Erdogan Administration enacted the Law on the MGK and the MGK Secretariat in 2003, which enabled appointment of civilian secretary generals to

⁷²² Metin Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish military and democracy", *South European Society and Politics*, 10(1), 33-44, 2005

⁷²³ Ersel Aydinli; Nihat Ali Ozcan, & Dogan Akyaz, "Turkish Military's March toward Europe", *Foreign Affairs*, 85(1), 77-90, 2006

⁷²⁴ Before 1989, 6 out of 7 presidents had come from military background.

⁷²⁵ Especially after 2007, civilian wing has been enjoying unprecedented domination at the MGK meetings. The government is strongly supported by the president Gul who had been Prime Ministers deputy before assuming his current position.

the National Security Council. Most importantly, the law curtailed the powers of the MGK and downgraded it into an advisory/consultation board. Thus, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister became the most important actors in practice of foreign affairs. Fourth, military domination in the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) gradually eroded after the 1992, as President Ozal sought to demilitarize the organization. This policy has been embraced by the consecutive presidents, and all of the recent Directors of MIT are appointed among the civilian officials. Therefore, it became highly improbable that the military wing dominate the decision making process in the MGK meetings especially during single party governments.

One of the most important developments is the emergence of the AKP as a single party government after the 2002 elections. The AKP won 365 seats out of 550 in the Turkish parliament. This number was sufficient to appoint all key officials including the President, Chairman of the Parliament and all ministers. The AKP became increasingly powerful as they held the majority in the Council of Ministers and the National Security Council. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdogan, the AKP elites began to dominate the decision making process in the state's foreign policy machinery. Unlike the coalition governments, the AKP acts as a bloc in the National Security Council meetings that have a defining impact on the outcome. Statements of the interviewees indicated that the AKP leaders have the upper hand in their interactions with the security bureaucracy and did not succumb to bureaucratic politics.⁷²⁶ The AKP's position was further strengthened after the election of Abdullah Gul as the President of Turkey, who chairs the National Security Council Meetings.

However, my interviewees argued that power interactions in domestic politics were not significant determinants of the shift in Turkey's Iran policy. An important interviewee Murat Mercan asserted that "We are mostly in consensus on our policy towards Iran. The shift of power

⁷²⁶ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

in the MGK did not really affect the decision making process.”⁷²⁷ Some key interviewees asserted that the military officials do not oppose development of practical security relations with Iran, because they are highly disappointed with the American conducts after the occupation of Iraq. Serdar Erdurmaz, intimated that the U.S. occupation of Iraq was a turning point for the threat perceptions of Turkish military and other members of the National Security Council.⁷²⁸ Erdurmaz noted that “Since then [2003] the military has been supportive of the Erdogan Administration’s efforts to forge a closer security partnership with the Iranian government, because the military leaders are highly disappointed with the American posture in Iraq.”⁷²⁹ Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, who served in the Advisory board of Foreign Ministry, noted that “The soldiers do not oppose improvement of bilateral relations with Iran, because they think that Iran has become a quite instrumental partner in counterterrorism strategy.”⁷³⁰ Tuncer Kilinc, the former Secretary General of the Turkish National Security Council, proposed that Turkey should forge closer security relations with Iran and Russia to stand against regional security threats.⁷³¹ In a similar fashion, more and more military officials began to appreciate the value of regional security partnerships.

6.2.2. Rise of the new elites and decline of traditional elites

The second major development is the concomitant rise of alternative elites in the sociopolitical domain. For many analysts, the shift in Turkish foreign policy is grounded on the rise of “new elites” and concomitant transformation of the domestic political and bureaucratic landscape. For

⁷²⁷ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

⁷²⁸ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁷²⁹ *ibid*

⁷³⁰ Author's interview with Ambassador Faruk Laloglu, on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey.

⁷³¹ Tuncer Kilinc, “Türkiye’nin Etrafında Barış Kuşağı Nasıl Oluşturulur?”, March 7, 2002, retrieved from <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=24202&l=1>, February 20, 2009

them, the rise of the new elites is the real revolution in Turkish politics rather than the apparent shift in foreign policy. Until the early 2000s, pro-Western secularism and Kemalism have been the dominant paradigms in the Turkish governmental system. Turkey's post-Ottoman foreign policy was crafted by ultra-secularist elites, who aspired to transform a Muslim nation into a modern Western republic. Key government organizations such as the Foreign Ministry, Judiciary and Armed Forces have been champions of the pro-Western course of foreign policy. The ruling elite named themselves the "White Turks" and others the "Black Turks" to illustrate the intersubjective power relations.⁷³² Sociologist Serif Mardin applied the center-periphery analysis to illustrate the interaction between the elites and Turkish citizenry. In his model, the periphery represented the Anatolian mass society that had no substantial control over the foreign policy making process. The "core" represented the educated and politicized secularist elites that controlled the decision making process not only in foreign policy but also in domestic politics. As Hakan Yavuz put it, the "White Turks" controlled the key bureaucratic positions in the Military, Judicial System, Education Boards and Foreign Ministry.⁷³³ Yavuz notes that the "Black Turks", mainly the conservative nationalists and Islamists, were excluded from upper echelons of key governmental institutions. There had been a screening process to prevent the Islamists, Marxists and conservative nationalists from climbing up to higher ladders in the bureaucracy. According to the Kemalist elites, Turkey was bound to the West not only in military respects but also in the political, economic and ideological dimensions. As Robert Olson put it, even though Turkey's "obsessive" pro-Western posture contradicted with national interests in some circumstances, the former elites did not deviate from this course of foreign

⁷³² This differentiation is not based on skin color, but access to power and social status was the determinant on this issues.

⁷³³ Hakan Yavuz, "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere", *Journal of International Affairs* 54, Fall 2000, pp. 21-42

policy.⁷³⁴ According to Hakan Yavuz, “foreign relations filtered down from the secular elite’s self ascribed European Identity, which in turn was the basis of framing Turkish national interests.”⁷³⁵

On the flipside, they kept intergovernmental relations with the Muslim countries, particularly with post revolutionary Iran, on a low profile for two reasons. One was related to the external image of the country. Turkish foreign policy makers aspired to promote Turkey’s image as a modern Western nation and avoided foreign policy conduct that would undermine this image. The other aspect was related to domestic image. The ruling secularist elites wanted to suppress alternative paradigms such as Islam, communism and liberalism to avoid a counterrevolution. In many respects, a unidirectional pro-Western foreign policy was the purview of elites out of touch with their society. For many foreign policy analysts, Turkey’s unidirectional pro-Western foreign policy was an abnormal phenomenon. For instance, Nasuh Uslu argued that Turkey’s neglect of the East was an elite-driven approach and unconditional support to Western initiatives, particularly the wars against the Muslim countries, has been highly unpopular within Turkish society.⁷³⁶ Uslu asserted that the vast majority of the Turks were against supporting the United States in the Gulf War. Similarly, the vast majority of the Turkish community is against the Iraq War and the embargo against Iran. According to the majority of analysts that I interviewed, the diversification of foreign policy, growing interaction with Iran, and development of better relations with the East mean normalization of Turkey’s alignment. This phenomenon is also recognized by foreign specialists on Turkey. According to Graham Fuller, “Turkey’s former foreign policy was quite unnatural. Turkey cut down its

⁷³⁴ Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1974-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, CA, 2004.

⁷³⁵ Hakan M. Yavuz, “Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Identity debate”, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, (Autumn 1997), p.23

⁷³⁶ Author’s interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey.

relations with the Asian and Middle Eastern countries...After the collapse of the Soviet Union, security threats waned down. Thus, Turkey could interact with the Caucasus, Iranians, Middle Easterners and Arabs. We have been observing normalization of Turkey's alignment."⁷³⁷

The elitist posture however, began to dissipate in the 1980s as Turkey experienced a surge of "counter elites" against the hegemony of traditional secular elites in governmental domain. After the 2002 elections, the new elite took over the highest political positions and began to clash with the "old elites" that had been indifferent to social demands. According to my interviewees, the new elite have several characteristics. First, Suleyman Ozeren Argued that the new elites are in close touch with the realities and demands of the grassroots citizenry.⁷³⁸ Prime Minister Erdogan noted that "We came to power as an alternative to the elitist politics that showed no interest in the concerns of the citizenry. We are with the subjugated people."⁷³⁹ Second, they are sensitive to cultural values and religious freedoms but strongly oppose religious extremism. As President Abdullah Gul put it, the new elites want to "prove that a Muslim society is capable of changing and renovating itself, attaining contemporary standards, while preserving its values, tradition and identity".⁷⁴⁰ Third, they seek national interests in foreign policy rather than striving to promote images that are only favorable in the West.⁷⁴¹ Fourth, According to Nasuh Uslu, the new elite embraces diversification of foreign relations and exploitation of the

⁷³⁷ Interview with Graham Fuller, by Ebru Dogan, A Turkish Correspondent of BBC, November 12, 2009.

⁷³⁸ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

⁷³⁹ Prime Minister Erdogan, "Turkiye Eksen Degistirmede Degistirmiyor", Anadolu News Agency, November 8, 2009.

⁷⁴⁰ Burhanettin Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy", Hakan Yavuz (eds), *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2006, p.288

⁷⁴¹ Author's interview with Cuneyt Gurer on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Gurer is an Intelligence Specialist at the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM), Superintendent at the General Directorate of Security.

opportunities at the East, the South and the North.⁷⁴² Fifth, Cuneyt Gurer argued that the new elites are determined to stand against Western initiatives that are against Turkey's national interests but they are ready to cooperate with the West when the joint initiatives serve mutual interests.⁷⁴³ One of my interviewees Suleyman Ozeren, asserted that:

There is a center-periphery battle in domestic politics and foreign policy. The elite minority was out of touch with the realities of the Turkish people. Turkey's relentless pro-Western foreign policy was never popular. A new group of elites has emerged at the periphery. The elites are seeking to balance Turkey's foreign policy posture. The former elites were giving up national interests for the sake of integration into the West. The new elites think that Turkey's national interests come first. They are ready to implement alternative foreign policy initiatives such as the energy deals with Iran and enhanced trade partnership with Russia.⁷⁴⁴

The body politic of Turkey underwent profound changes after the concomitant rise of political Islam and nationalism that undermined the legitimacy of the previously uncontested political paradigm. The new elites, either Islamist, liberal or nationalist, began to question the premises of pro-Western foreign policy. The new elites have been quite supportive of foreign policy diversification and the three-tiered security partnership with Iran. They no longer want to be a "subcontractor of Washington" and assert that Turkey has been promoted from a peripheral actor to a core state in international politics.⁷⁴⁵ According to these elites, Turkey's power projection will remain limited as long as it is seen as the spearhead of "Western neo-

⁷⁴² Author's interview with Nasuh Uslu on January 1, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Uslu is a Foreign Policy Analyst and Professor of International Relations at Kirikkale University.

⁷⁴³ Author's interview with Cuneyt Gurer on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Gurer is an Intelligence Specialist at the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM), Superintendent at the General Directorate of Security

⁷⁴⁴ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

⁷⁴⁵ *ibid*

colonialism”. In line with the resurgence of nationalist and Islamist sentiments, Turkish society became very sensitive to foreign concessions, and maintenance of national sovereignty and national dignity. As Bulent Aras put it, the impression of pro-American (*Amerikanci*) and “westoxicated” foreign policy has become a highly unpopular image in Turkish politics.⁷⁴⁶ Especially “the new elites” are determined to use the alternative opportunities in security and trade realms. They seek cooperation with the Iranian government in counterterrorism, nuclear security and energy security to promote national interests and preserve regional stability.

6.5.3. Emergence of strong domestic support for foreign policy diversification

During the field research, I observed that individuals from almost all walks of Turkish society support diversification of foreign relations. Apart from the elite/expert interviews, I have talked to hundreds of Turkish citizens since 2008 to understand their perceptions on the Erdogan Administration’s Iran policy. There is broad support among Turkish citizenry for diversification of foreign policy. In general, the vast majority of the people support forging of practical security partnerships with Iran, particularly in the post Iraq War security landscape. However, even the Islamists reject Turkey’s strategic alliance with Iran at the expense of the relations with the West. Quite interestingly, in Turkey mainstream Islamist scholars were more critical of Iran than secular politicians.

Turkey’s diversification of foreign relations is supported by the other political parties such as the Republican People’s Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Virtue Party (FP) and Great Union Party (BBP). As my interviewee Kaan Dilek put it, “secularists don’t really think differently from the AKP administration. They also want diversification of foreign

⁷⁴⁶ Bulent Aras, “Turkish foreign policy towards Iran: Ideology and foreign policy in flux”, *Journal of Third World Studies*, Spring 2001.

relations. This tendency has become clearer after the Iraq War.”⁷⁴⁷ This indicates that there is a broad consensus among the Turkish elites and the society about the necessity of diversification. General Tuncer Kilinc, former Secretary General of the National Security Council highlighted that “Given its location there are competing pressures on Turkey. Western partners want to see Turkey on their side against Iran but Turkey’s position requires maintaining ties with the Iranian government... In other words, Turkey cannot afford following a unidimensional pro-Western foreign policy given its economic and geographic ties.”⁷⁴⁸ Gulsun Bilgehan Toker, the deputy Chairman of the CHP argued that, “Turkey is a deep rooted country. We cannot change the course of foreign policy even if the AKP rules the political domain. We can also make some adjustments in line with national interests... Turkey should develop good relations with both sides. Turkey will be a model for the Middle East as a member of the European Union.”⁷⁴⁹ Mustafa Kibaroglu, a Turkish non-proliferation and disarmament expert, argued that “Iran is now seen as the closest ally among almost all walks of Turkish community including the secular ultra-nationalists (ulusalci) because of their resistance to American domination in the region”.⁷⁵⁰ Kemal Kirisci, a Turkish foreign policy analyst, asserted that “The AKP’s foreign policy attracted vast popular support because they are doing what the Turkish citizenry wants. Under the current conjunction there can be no other foreign policy.”⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁷ Author’s interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Dilek is an Iran specialist at Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE).

⁷⁴⁸ Ali Ozsoz, “Ulusal Givenlik Stratejimiz Olacak mi?”, July 26, 2004, available at <http://www.turksolu.org/61/ozsoy61.htm>, [accessed July 2, 2010].

⁷⁴⁹ Haberturk, “Turkiye’de eksen kaymasi yok: CHP’liler tartismaya katildi”, June 23, 2006.

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.163.

⁷⁵¹ Interview with Professor Kemal Kirisci, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009

6.3. Not Islamic Identity but national interests

One major question before the field research was whether the Islamic identity or aspirations of the Erdogan Administration played any role in the Turkish-Iranian detente. A principal criticism against the AKP's Iran policy was that the Islamic sentiments were drawing the Erdogan and Ahmadinejad administrations closer. According to the critics, the AKP was disguising its true Islamic aspirations and engaging into hypocrisy (*Takiyye*) to disguise its real intentions. During the field research, I sought to shed light on the question of the role of identity on Turkey's Iran policy. It is true that many key actors in the upper echelons of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came out of the ashes of the Welfare (RP) and Virtue (FP) parties that had been abolished by the Constitutional Court due to their Islamic pedigrees. However, during interviews and content analysis, it was surprising that almost all the political elites and analysts rejected the role of Islamic Identity in Turkish-Iranian détente. Indeed, many analysts argued that identity is a source of conflict in bilateral relations rather than being a catalyst for intergovernmental dealings. Almost all the elites and analysts gave convincing rational statements that the progress in bilateral relations is driven by mutual interests. None of the elites or analysts that I interviewed used Islamic justifications to explain Turkish-Iranian détente.

Prime Minister Erdogan, Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc, and President Abdullah Gul, were three important figures in the Welfare Party and gave pro-Islamist statements during their membership in the Welfare Party before 1997. It is also a generally known fact that many key political figures are practicing devoted Muslims. However, after the 2002 election victory, Prime Minister Erdogan and other key members of the AKP reiterated that the new government would not follow Islamist domestic and foreign policies. Instead, they asserted that the AKP government would seek pragmatic goals, further integration with the European Union and would

remain committed to democracy, secularism and liberalism. Indeed, the AKP is not entirely composed of the Islamists, but is an ad hoc collation of a wide range of liberals, nationalists, Islamists and democrat elites that stood against state corruption, nepotism and incompetence of coalition governments.

Between December 2002 and July 2010, the AKP Government enacted 283 laws.⁷⁵² In addition to legislative reforms, the AKP changed several articles of the Turkish constitution in 2010. None of the enacted laws or the constitutional changes has Islamic connotations. The overwhelming majority of the new laws were enacted for legislative harmonization with Europe and promoting a liberal democratic system. Indeed, the AKP is criticized by hardcore Islamists and nationalists for not adhering to women's rights to wear headscarf in public offices and schools.⁷⁵³

In the foreign policy domain, despite growing resentment towards the West, the key political actors of the AKP made it clear that Turkey would preserve its pro-Western course. Contrary to the Erbakan Administration, the AKP elites asserted that the ultimate destination for Turkey is European Union, not Iran or Islamic union. Prime Minister Erdogan explicated that "our party clearly refuses to be a party that imposes an ideology on the nation and will not denigrate religious values by exploiting them in politics".⁷⁵⁴ The AKP distanced itself from the pro-Islamic discourse to embrace a broader array of voters. Unlike his predecessor Erbakan, Prime Minister Erdogan avoided over criticism of the United States and European Union. In many venues he argued that Turkey represents the best synthesis of modernity, liberal democracy and Islam that can be a bridge between the Muslim World and the West.

⁷⁵² Turkish Parliaments website, available at http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/kanunlar_gd.sorgu_baslangic, [accessed July 5, 20

⁷⁵³ Contrary to Iran, headscarves are forbidden in Turkish universities and governmental institutions.

⁷⁵⁴ Sultan Tepe, "The Meaning of Conservative Democratic Identity", Hakan Yavuz (eds), *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2006, p.54

Instead of totally rejecting a pro-Western foreign policy, the AKP government seeks to remain in the Western alliance, but developing practical partnerships with other countries on the basis of practical interests. In his speech at SETA Washington DC, Erdogan noted that “We neither seek a neo-Ottomanist foreign policy nor realignment. These claims intended to overshadow our government. We still keep the Western orientation but we are developing our relations with neighbors. We cannot lose the East, we cannot lose the North and we cannot lose the South. We are capable of viewing the world through 360 degrees.”⁷⁵⁵ Erdogan’s following statements exemplify the rejection of sheer Islamism in party politics:

My political views have been in a state of constant evolution. Naturally, I have been profoundly influenced by those that preceded me...In some Western newspapers and publications; my party is described as an “Islamic party” or as “Muslim Democrat”. These characterizations are not correct. This is not because we are not Muslim or democrat, but because we believe that they need to be considered in two different contexts...Turkey wishes to take its “political Magna Carta”, which rests on a synthesis between its Muslim identity and modern values, much further by becoming an active leader of the system of modern values, and thus to provide the world with a new renaissance perspective which can be a new source of inspiration.⁷⁵⁶

The political leaders are aware of the fact that identity-based rapprochement with Iran could undermine Turkey’s image not only in the West but also in the Sunni World. Turkey’s political and religious elites have been careful not to make any religion based interaction with Iran particularly in the post 28 *Subat* period.⁷⁵⁷ In many of their statements Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu elucidated that the AKP strongly rejects foreign policy

⁷⁵⁵ Prime Minister Erdogan, “Turkiye, 360 derece ile tum dunyaya bakabilecek guctedir”, Prime Minister’s Speech at SETA Washington DC, December 7, 2009

⁷⁵⁶ Yalcin Akdogan, “A pro-Islamic Party? Promises and Limits”, Hakan Yavuz (eds), *The Emergence of a New Turkey*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2006, p.119

⁷⁵⁷ 28 Subat is the post-Modern secularist coup that was crafted against pro-Islamist Welfare Party in 1997. The coup restored the secularist credentials in domestic politics and foreign policy.

based on ethnic or religious identity. Foreign Minister Davutoglu charged that “those who argue that our policy is driven by Islamist sentiments are ignorant about Turkey’s geography. You can have a reliable argument if we are just developing good relations with Iran and Syria. However, if we are developing good relations with all the neighbors regardless of their ethnic and religious identity, then none can criticize us.”⁷⁵⁸ Key foreign policy makers maintain that Turkey will follow its national interests rather than ideological aspirations. In bilateral relations with Iran, Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu always laid emphasis on mutual interests but never made references to Islamic sentiments. According to Erdogan, “Iran always held a very strategic location in the region with its dynamism and human capital. Our partnership will make substantial contributions to regional and global security. We have to see the full side of the glass. I hope our friendship lasts for long years...It is very hard to win friendships but it is easy to win enemies.”⁷⁵⁹ After his visit to Tehran, Erdogan stated that that

We have conducted very fruitful negotiations with the Iranians. We are giving utmost importance to our relations with Iran in all issues. Our relations continue to develop on the principles of good neighborhood and noninterference into domestic politics. We are acting in coordination with the Iranian government on many political and economic initiatives. We had a strategy when we took over the government. We would improve our relations with our neighbors. Over the past seven years we are determinately moving in this direction...Turkey and Iran are two important players in regional politics. We can do many things for regional peace. We should not be the crux of problems but initiator of solutions.⁷⁶⁰

Almost all of the analysts that I interviewed also rejected the role of Islam in Turkish-Iranian détente. None of them reverted to Islamic verses or statements of religious authorities to

⁷⁵⁸ Haber7, “Davutoglu Eksen tartismasina sert cikti”, December 9, 2009

⁷⁵⁹ Prime Minister Erdogan, “Komsularinla Dost Ol”, Yeniasafak Newspaper, October 28, 2009.

⁷⁶⁰ Prime Minister Erdogan, Press Speech in Tehran, October 28, 2009, available at <http://yeniasafak.com.tr/politika/default.aspx?t=28.10.2009> [accessed February 23, 2010]

explain the security partnership between Iran and Turkey. All of the interviewees gave rational statements to explain the shift of Turkey's Iran policy. According to Cuneys Gurer, "Islamic identity is not a primary determinant of Turkish Iranian relations. It is of secondary importance. The primary issue is national interests. Islamic identity, however, helps eliminating the mistrust among foreign policy makers."⁷⁶¹ According to another foreign policy analyst Mehmet Sahin, "A religious party does not necessarily pursue an Islamic foreign policy. We had two moderate Islamist governments before; Menderes and Ozal Administrations. Both governments sought to establish deeper ties with the West rather than realigning towards the Muslim World. In the early years, the AKP exerted relentless efforts in support of the EU accession process."⁷⁶² Bayram Sinkaya emphasized that, "We cannot say that Islamic identity played a key role in the Erdogan administration's détente with Iran. Erdogan puts emphasis on trade, regional integration, political stability, human rights, and regional development. Erdogan proclaims that they are not Islamist. Erdogan does not like the fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. Iran's hardliner Islamism has no appeal for him."⁷⁶³

Some analysts also rejected the argument that post-revolutionary Iran is pursuing an Islamist foreign policy. Proponents of this view argued that, Iran developed partnerships with Russia and Armenia (Christian states) against Turkey and Azerbaijan (Muslim States) in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Iran supported communist PKK against Muslim Turkey. According to them, Iranian foreign policy is not driven by Islamist sentiments, but President Ahmadinejad, increasingly use Islamic rhetoric in foreign policy to attract the support of mass

⁷⁶¹ Author's interview with Cuneys Gurer on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Gurer is an Intelligence Specialist at the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM), Superintendent at the General Directorate of Security.

⁷⁶² Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University.

⁷⁶³ Author's interview with Bayram Sinkaya on January 8, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Mr. Sinkaya is a Middle east Specialist at the Middle East Strategic Research Organization (ORSAM). He also teaches at the Middle East Technical University (METU).

societies in the Muslim World. These analysts believe that the Iranians are not motivated by Islamic sentiments during the ongoing détente with Turkey, but are merely pursuing national interests. They seek to loosen the Western containment through energy, trade and security partnership with Turkey. For instance, Mehmet Sahin asserted that:

Iranians are not necessarily pursuing an Islamic foreign policy. Their Islamic rhetoric is just a tool to gain strategic advantage within the Muslim World. How do we understand it? First, they [Iranian government] have been supporting the Christian Armenia against Muslim Azerbaijan. Second, they have been collaborating with the Russians in Central Asia. This cooperation takes place against Turkish or American influence. Iran has never criticized Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia but they have been criticizing Turkey's initiatives. Third, instead of Pakistan, Iranians are collaborating with the Russians on nuclear enrichment. Ultimately, Iranians were providing intelligence to the Americans against a Muslim Taliban. Iran has more advanced security cooperation with Russia than Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we cannot claim that Iranian foreign policy is utterly driven by Islamic sentiments.⁷⁶⁴

Contrary to the conventional wisdom, Turkish elites see Islamic identity as a source of conflict with the Iranians, because Iran and Ottoman Turkey had been the champions of two competing paradigms in Islamic philosophy. While Ottoman Sultan became the caliphate and the protector of the Sunnis in 1517, the Saffavid dynasty and successive Persian rulers assumed the patronage of the Shiites.⁷⁶⁵ According to Kaan Dilek, as both powers aspired to attain predominance in the Muslim World conflict became unavoidable. Dilek asserted that “Persians have always remained hostile towards the Ottomans for two reasons. First, the Ottomans defeated them in the Battle of Caldiran... Second, Ottomans became the leader of the

⁷⁶⁴ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University.

⁷⁶⁵ Author's interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Dilek is an Iran specialist at Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE).

predominant Sunni majority, whereas the Iranians could only project power over the Shiite minority.”⁷⁶⁶ He maintained that “In many circumstances we have seen that the Iranians allied with the Christians to break down the Ottoman predominance in the Muslim World.”⁷⁶⁷ Another foreign policy analyst argued that, “Iranians don’t really like rise of skilled Islamist leaders in other countries. Resurgence of Islam in Turkey irritated the Iranian Ayatollahs, because this will undermine Iran’s leadership claims in the Muslim world. You will not see Palestinians with Ahmadinejad posters but we have been seeing Erdogan posters in the hands of Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian and even Egyptian groups.”⁷⁶⁸ Mehmet Sahin asserted that “We cannot explain the ongoing bilateral rapprochement on the grounds of convergence of religious identities. We have principally different religious understanding. Turkish religious leaders never admired the Iranian Ayatollah. I think it was in 1993, Fethullah Gulen told that if the road to heaven goes through Iran, he would find another route to bypass it.”⁷⁶⁹ Moreover, Turkey’s mainstream Islamist scholars perceive Iran as a problematic figure in the Muslim World. According to the Islamists, Iran’s hardliner fundamentalist approach is tarnishing the image of Islam throughout the world.

6.4. Turkey became less enthusiastic to fulfill commitments to Western Allies

Previous Turkish governments had been involved into many U.S. led initiatives (i.e. Korean War, Gulf War and Embargo against Iraq) in order to strengthen strategic ties with the West. In many of these initiatives, such as the embargo against Iraq after the Gulf War, Turkey made

⁷⁶⁶ibid

⁷⁶⁷ibid.

⁷⁶⁸ ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University.

significant contributions despite the conflict with Turkey's national interests. As Celalettin Yavuz put it, the West promised to recompense Turkey's losses but these promises were never kept.⁷⁷⁰ My field research indicated that even though Turkey does not seek a structural change, foreign policy makers are becoming less willing to fulfill commitments towards the western allies for several reasons. First, there is a profound resentment toward the United States mainly because of its conduct after the occupation of Iraq. Second, the Turkish government became less enthusiastic for EU accession reforms due to double standards and lack of trust to European officials. Third, NATO's reluctance to deploy forces to help Turkey undermined the organization's importance for Turkey. Moreover, NATO has become impractical in dealing with terrorism and ethnic separatism that became the principal concerns of the Turkish National Security Council. Fourth, Turkish society became increasingly opposed to unidirectional pro-Western foreign policy that contradicts with national interests.

6.4.1. Resentments towards the United States and NATO

As discussed in chapter three, many of the officials and elites that I interviewed argued that the shift of Turkey's security policy is driven by fundamental changes after the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003. In the new security landscape, the U.S. intervention emerged as the principal destabilizer in the region and undermined the regional status quo. It stirred up ethno-sectarian violence and Kurdish micronationalist independence movements. It unleashed the age old ethnic battle between the Kurds and the Arabs, Turks/Turkmens, and the Iranians. Turkish elites have been quite irritated with American conduct in the post-Iraq occupation period. The major source

⁷⁷⁰ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

of resentment against the United States is the American support for the Kurdish revivalism. The U.S. intervention in Iraq was a great disappointment for pro-Western Turkish elites that became increasingly critical of the American unilateralism. Predominant majority of the elites, analysts and citizens believe that the United States has a “secret agenda” of creating an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq. According to many reliable public surveys (i.e. USAK survey on public perceptions on foreign policy) the U.S. became the “principle foreign threat” against the national security of Turkey in the eyes of the Turkish citizenry after 2003. Islamists, socialists and conservative nationalists in Turkey believe that American interventions in the region serve the interests of mainly four groups: petroleum companies, weapon producers, Israel, and the Neocons.⁷⁷¹ Almost none of the elites and analysts that I interviewed believed in White House’s claims that the U.S. intervenes to build democracy and prevent nuclear proliferation in hostile regimes. According to Islamist foreign policy analyst Alptekin Dursunoglu, “Jewish lobbies want to reshape the Middle East in line with Israeli foreign policy and security interests. Their interests converge with the Neocons and petroleum companies who want to re-colonize the regional resources”.⁷⁷² In this context, both the Islamists and nationalists perceive Iran as an ally against Anglo-American “neo-imperialist interventions”.⁷⁷³ According to Sedat Laciner, “American aggressive policies in the Middle East draw the countries of the region closer. Even the countries that had perennial conflicts got together to stand against negative consequences of American interventions. The growing partnership among Iran, Syria and Turkey is an exemplar of this phenomenon.”⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷¹ I learned this fact through reading commentaries in nationalist, Marxist and Islamist internet blogs.

⁷⁷² Alptekin Dursunoglu, “Tartisma: Emperyalist Kusatma Karsisinda Iran ve Gelecegi”, *Kudus*, Sayi 2, Summer 2003. P.195

⁷⁷³ *ibid*

⁷⁷⁴ Interview with Sedat Laciner by Serpil Acikalin, “Turkiye’nin ortadogu Yaklasimi”, International Strategic Research Organization, December 16, 2009.

One major cause of the resentment was the Bush Administration's way of depicting Muslims in the post 9/11 period. The Judeo-Christian crusading rhetoric of the Neocons' in the Bush administration irritated both the Islamists and nationalists in Turkey.⁷⁷⁵ Association of Islam with terrorism created a strong backlash in Turkish society. Even the secular individuals responded with anger against the frequent use of "Islamic terrorism" by American officials. Suleyman Ozeren, Director of UTSAM argued that "Bush's statements were really arrogant. He told that 'either you are with us or you are with the terrorists'. This is a very dangerous statement. His crusade rhetoric during the War in Iraq infuriated both Turkish foreign policy elites and the society. These kinds of statements have been fueling anti-Americanism in Turkey."⁷⁷⁶ Another interviewee Celalettin Yavuz, noted that

After the 9/11, the Muslim states began to contemplate their situation more thoroughly [about the Islam and world affairs]. The Americans and the Europeans were seen as a stigmatizing the Muslims as if they were all terrorists. The ban for minarets and cartoon crisis [in Denmark] aggravated the Muslim communities. Moreover, Bush's use of "crusade" to describe the Iraq war further alienated the Muslims. We might have a weak memory but we are not stupid. Muslim countries understood that they should jointly respond against the Neocon campaign to depict the Muslims as terrorists. They felt that they should come together.⁷⁷⁷

Similarly Turkish elites became increasingly critical of NATO after the Cold War. During the field research, Turkish analysts and officials presented four major criticisms of NATO. First, NATO was reluctant to respond to Turkey's demands during the Cyprus War and

⁷⁷⁵ I learned this fact through reading commentaries in nationalist, and Islamist internet blogs.

⁷⁷⁶ Author's interview with Suleyman Ozeren on December 16, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Ozeren is a former high ranking security official and current director of International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM).

⁷⁷⁷ Author's interview with Celalettin Yavuz on December 22, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Yavuz is a former high ranking military official, who is currently a senior security analyst at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

the Gulf War. Celalettin Yavuz, a retired military officer, charged that whenever Turkey really needed the assistance of its strategic allies, NATO members dragged their feet.⁷⁷⁸ Mustafa Kibaroglu, a non-proliferation and disarmament expert, argued that “many foreign policy elites think that NATO does not fulfill its commitments to Turkey. In 1991, President Ozal demanded a NATO defense shield against a potential encroachment by Saddam. He got the answer very late. They sent a few outdated and underpowered systems. Some of them could never return to Europe because they broke down.”⁷⁷⁹

The second major criticism is that NATO is unable to respond to terrorism and ethnic separatism, which became the foremost national security problems for the Turkish government. Murat Mercan, the Director of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee, asserted that “Cold War security paradigms are over. There are new security paradigms. We are not dealing with superpowers, we are not dealing with other state level threats either. We are dealing with micronationalist movements and terrorism. You cannot resolve the new problems with Cold War alliances. We need new practical partnerships. Our relations with Iran are based on this paradigm.”⁷⁸⁰ According to Bulent Aras, “The post Cold War security environment entails regional partnerships to cope with contemporary security conflicts. It is quite natural that we are cooperating with Iran to respond to mutual security threats such as terrorism and sectarian violence.”⁷⁸¹ According to Kaan Dilek, “The ongoing détente is driven by the shifts in regional and global environments. After the end of Cold War, despite the fact that NATO has preserved

⁷⁷⁸ *ibid*

⁷⁷⁹ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009. P.165.

⁷⁸⁰ Author's interview with Murat Mercan on January 4, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Mercan is the The Chairman of Turkish Parliaments Foreign Relations Committee.

⁷⁸¹ Author's interview with Bulent Aras on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Aras is the Director of the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV).

its strategic value, it became an impractical framework to deal with the regional security challenges. We now need practical partners who share similar threat perceptions.”⁷⁸²

The third criticism is that NATO functions as a tool of the United States to preserve its global hegemony. As Mustafa Kibaroglu put it, “Many people in Turkey’s governmental sphere think that NATO is an institution that is established to protect American hegemony. For many military officials and bureaucrats NATO has lost its meaning. This view is not just driven by Islamic sentiments but also by nationalist credentials.”⁷⁸³ Fourth criticism came from the Islamist elites who argued that Islam has become the new target of NATO after the demise of communism. Necmettin Erbakan, former Prime Minister of Turkey (1996-97) argued that “After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO executives were ambivalent about abolishing the organization. Thatcher said that no security organization can live without an enemy. She said that the NATO needed an enemy to justify its existence. They implanted Islam as the new common enemy after the dissolution of the Soviets.”⁷⁸⁴ Erbakan criticized NATO for remaining silent against the genocides in Bosnia, Somalia, Azerbaijan and Chechnya. These four resentments reduced the Turkish elite’s commitment to fulfill its responsibilities to NATO.

6.4.2. Resentments towards EU

The resentments towards EU mostly result from “double standards” and “delaying tactics” during the accession process. In the immediate aftermath of the 2002 election victory, the AKP

⁷⁸² Author’s interview with Kaan Dilek, on January 15, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Dilek is an Iran specialist at Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE).

⁷⁸³ Interview with Mustafa Kibaroglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009. P.166.

⁷⁸⁴ Necmettin Erbakan’s preliminary statements on D-8 and Islamic Union, available at <http://www.milligorusforum.biz/erbakanin-kitap-ve-makaleleri/17123-d-8-islam-birligi-prof-dr-necmettin-erbakan-onsozu.html> , [accessed July 13, 2010]

government accelerated the EU accession reforms in economic, judicial, legislative and political realms. Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul (Became president in 2007) exerted relentless efforts to persuade the European leaders to support Turkish accession. Turkey became an official candidate after the Helsinki Accords in 1999, and accession negotiations began on October 3, 2005.⁷⁸⁵ Since then the AKP has been exerting relentless efforts to enact accession reforms. However, the EU's "double standards" and never-ending preconditions discouraged the Erdogan Administration from making further compromises. Statements of European leaders such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel indicated that European leaders are unwilling to see Turkey in European Union. By 2010, 18 out of 33 negotiation fields were suspended. France blocks the negotiations in four fields and Cyprus blocks 14 negotiation fields.⁷⁸⁶ The Erdogan Administration is dedicated not to make further concessions to resolve the deadlock in the accession negotiations. Prime Minister Erdogan criticized that "Turkey has waited 45 years at the European gates. We have accomplished the demanded reforms... Prolonged European hesitation is discrimination against Turkey".⁷⁸⁷ Serdar Erdurmaz stated that "The Europeans told us that you have no place in Europe. They said that our strategic mission was over once the USSR was dismantled. The West thought that they did not need us in NATO anymore. This created a shock in Turkish politics. Therefore, we began to seek alternative alignments quite normally."⁷⁸⁸ As Erdurmaz put it, public support for EU

⁷⁸⁵ Ali Resul Usul, "Helsinki'den Muzakerelere Türkiye-AB ilişkileri", Zeynep Dagi (eds), *Ak Partili Yillar: Dogudan Batiya Dis Politika*, Orion Press, Ankara, 2006.

⁷⁸⁶ Selcuk Gurtasli, "Türkiye'yi Kim Kaybetti", Zaman Newspaper, June 6, 2010.

⁷⁸⁷ Zeynep Dagi, "Ortadogu Perspektifinden Türkiye'nin Avrupa Entegrasyonu", Zeynep Dagi (eds), *Ak Partili Yillar: Dogudan Batiya Dis Politika*, Orion Press, Ankara, 2006, p.184

⁷⁸⁸ Author's interview with Serdar Erdurmaz on December 17, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Erdurmaz is a former Military Officer, Currently Chair of nonproliferation desk at International Relations and Strategic Research Center (TURKSAM).

membership was experiencing the lowest level in 2009 since Turkey's application for membership.⁷⁸⁹

Turkey's efforts to diversify foreign policy were precipitated when Turkish elites became convinced that the EU would not accept Turkey at least within the immediate future. When it became clearer that Turkey would not be accepted by the European Union, Turkish elites saw no point in making further commitments to the accession process. A growing array of elites believe that accession into European Union is unlikely for a Muslim Turkey. Put another way, many Turkish elites believe that the "Muslim Identity" is the principal reason of the EU's rejection of Turkish membership. The elites acknowledged that Turkey and Europe come from different cultures and civilizations that clashed for over a millennium. Even though the post-Ottoman elites sought to westernize the country, the deep cultural discord remains a principal source of divergence. In this context, rising nationalistic and pan-Islamist political views oppose supranational institutional limits on Turkish national sovereignty. As Mehmet Sahin put it, "EU's dragging of its feet on Turkish accession exacerbated the disappointment towards the West. The disappointment with the West compelled many pro-Western elites to support the AKP's diversification of foreign policy and rapprochement with Iran."⁷⁹⁰ Cuneyt Gurer, a Turkish EU expert, asserted that "divergent identity construction or the *Muslim identity* of Turkey has been the major point of reference for anti-Turkish camp in the EU enlargement policy".⁷⁹¹ Ziya Onis notes that the end of the strategic encounter with the communism threat and the emerging clash of civilization between Islam and the West made it difficult for Turkey to join

⁷⁸⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁹⁰ Author's interview with Mehmet Sahin on January 18, 2010. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Sahin is an Iran Specialist at the Gazi University.

⁷⁹¹ Author's interview with Cuneyt Gurer on December 24, 2009. Ankara/Turkey. Dr. Gurer is an Intelligence Specialist at the International Terrorism and Transnational Crime Research Center (UTSAM), Superintendent at the General Directorate of Security.

the Christian club.⁷⁹² Onis maintained that after nine decades of intensive interaction more Turkish elites believe that we are the “others” in Europe.

6.5. Iran cannot be an alternative to Turkey's security ties with the West

Despite the deepening resentments, Turkish foreign policy elites do not see Iran as an alternative to the West. They stress that Turkey will preserve the strategic alliance with the United States and NATO. Similarly, even though EU accession process came to a halt due to French and Cypriot vetoes, Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu asserted that the ultimate destination for Turkey is Europe, not Iran. Put another way, throughout the rapprochement process with Iran, Ankara is not significantly weakening its ties with Washington or Brussels. Foreign Minister Davutoglu frequently meets with American officials, mainly Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to discuss relevant matters about Iran's nuclear program. Turkish institutions continue to implement EU accession reforms ignoring the political gridlock in the accession process. Turkey's security institutions remains interconnected with their Western counterparts. Turkish elites believe that Iran is not an alternative to the West, and Turkey cannot afford dissociation from the West for several reasons.

Turkey's national defense strategy is highly integrated with the United States and NATO in three respects. First, by 2010, Turkish Ministry of Defense ran several modernization programs with the United States and Europe. These programs are indispensable for Turkey's military power projection in the future. Turkey remains partly dependent on American

⁷⁹² Ziya Onis, “Turkey In the Post-Cold War Era: In Search of Identity”, *Middle East Journal* 49, (Winter 1995),

conventional weapons for national defense. The majority of Turkish air force is composed of American made F-16 aircrafts. Omer Kurkcuoglu emphasized that “Our air force is predominantly dependent on the United States. We cannot forge a major air battle without a supply agreement with Washington”.⁷⁹³ Turkey participated in joint development of F-35 fighter that further integrated Turkey into Western defense initiatives. According to Faruk Sonmezoglu, “The United States continues to be the most important military partner of Turkey. Our military technologies and communication systems are integrated. We cannot break the ties with Washington”.⁷⁹⁴ Second, Turkey does not have its own nuclear deterrence capability and Ankara remains dependent on NATO’s nuclear shield. Third, Turkey’s national defense strategy has been integrated with NATO and the United States since 1952. Turkey continues to run joint military exercises with the United States and contributes to ISAF in Afghanistan.

Turkish security institutions are integrated with the American and European counterparts in terms of sharing intelligence and experience. Numerous Turkish military officers have been trained in various American institutions such as the Army War College, Naval Post Graduate School, and the U.S. Air Force Academy. Joint training programs helped the Turkish officers to gain Western standards in military practices. Similarly, many law enforcement and intelligence officers are trained in various American universities and institutions. By 2010, nearly 100 law enforcement executives pursue graduate education and attend special training programs in various American universities and law enforcement organizations. American trained officers serve as an insurance of preservation of security partnership between the United States and

⁷⁹³ Interview with Omer Kurkcuoglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewer’s book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.36.

⁷⁹⁴ Interview with Faruk Sonmezoglu, , by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewer’s book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.126.

Turkey. Turkey does not foresee having similar types of training partnerships with Iran or other Muslim countries. Most of the foreign training programs by Turkish security institutions target the officers of the Turkic nations and Partnership for Peace members.⁷⁹⁵

Even though the Turkish elites appreciate Iran's contributions in the fight against the PKK and PJAK, they do not see Iran as an alternative to Turkey's strategic security partnership with the West. Some interviewees noted that security cooperation between Iran and Turkey is not mature in several respects. First, Turkey's law enforcement, military and intelligence agencies are adapted to run joint operations with their Western counterparts. Turkish institutions are designed to function optimally in Western standards. One security official noted that "Even though we began to exchange intelligence extensively with Iran, this does not mean that we will run joint military practices as we have been doing with the Western institutions over the past six decades. We are gradually overcoming the trust problem, but there are other problems such as the language, divergences in operational codes of conduct and legislative disharmony."⁷⁹⁶ Second, Iran's image as fundamentalist Islamic regime remains a major handicap in developing a deep and abiding security alliance. The Turkish law enforcement, intelligence and military organizations refrain from publicizing their cooperation with Iranian institutions. One interviewee noted that "Iranian revolutionary guards are listed as a terrorist organization by the Bush Administration. Americans are our NATO ally. Our military institutions cannot run joint practices with an organization [Iranian revolutionary guards] that is perceived as a terrorist network by our strategic allies."⁷⁹⁷ Even though there is an ongoing partnership against the PKK/PJAK, the Turkish security institutions, particularly the Armed Forces, continue to oppose further joint military practices that would be perceived as a military realignment of Turkey.

⁷⁹⁵ I gave numerous lectures in these training programs.

⁷⁹⁶ Author's interview with a security official, (X-19), January 13, 2010, Ankara/Turkey

⁷⁹⁷ *ibid*

Given these conditions, Turkish elites believe that Turkey cannot abandon the strategic security partnerships with the United States and Western institutions. Tayyar Ari, a Turkish foreign policy analyst noted that “Today we can develop better relations with Iran. We can have good neighborhood relations. We can have much advanced economic relations. But I don’t think it is possible that we will forge military partnership neither with Russia nor Iran. They cannot be alternative to our strategic and military partnership with the West.”⁷⁹⁸ For Mumtaz Soysal, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, “The Turkish-U.S. partnership was based very much on strategic interests rather than a sharing of worldviews. Their political cultures have emerged from quite different histories, political philosophies, and social and institutional development. Their mutual strategic concerns overrode these differences.”⁷⁹⁹ Another foreign policy analyst Ramazan Gozen, asserted that “Under the current circumstances, Turkey is unlikely abolish its military alliance with the United States. The American presence in the region, existing military partnerships, multidimensional trade relations and alliance in international institutions makes the United States an indispensable ally for Turkey.”⁸⁰⁰ According to Beril Dedeoglu, a foreign policy analyst at Galatasaray University, “There is no alternative to Turkey’s pro-Western trajectory. Even those attempts to develop better relations with the Muslim World take place within Turkey’s pro-Western grand strategy”.⁸⁰¹ According to Faruk Sonmezoglu “The U.S. and NATO

⁷⁹⁸ Interview with Tayyar Ari, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.108.

⁷⁹⁹ Soysal, 2004, p. 39

⁸⁰⁰ Interview with Professor Kemal Kirisci, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewers book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009. P.274

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Beril Dedeoglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadır Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewer’s book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.71.

remains the principal allies of Turkey in military practices, technology, communication and equipment. Our system is integrated with the U.S. and NATO.”⁸⁰²

The key government officials including the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister reiterated Turkey’s commitments to retain the economic, political and security relations with the West. Even though the resentment peaked in the post 2003 period, the elites acknowledged that Turkey cannot afford dissociation from the West. Turkey has become one of the largest economies in the world and it is highly integrated with the European and American markets. Turkey remains a member of G-20, OECD and WTO that makes dissociation from the Western economies impossible. The Turkish government has acknowledged that economic prosperity rests on a thorough integration not only with the regional economies but also with the rest of the World. As Kasim Gulecyuz put it, “The AKP acknowledges that they live in a world where the leading Western powers –despite significant competition and conflicts among them– have established global economic, political and military supremacy are keen to impose their liberal democratic norms and values on other societies”.⁸⁰³

Despite rampant criticism of EU, Turkish political elites continue to argue that the final destination of Turkey should be Europe, not Mecca or Tehran. Contrary to the common perception in the West, the AKP is more lenient to the EU than the diehard Kemalists or Islamists. As Omer Kurkcuglu put it, “The Justice and Development Party has been more positive towards the EU than the Erbakan Administration. We cannot say that the AKP is turning

⁸⁰² Interview with Faruk Sonmezoglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewer’s book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara

⁸⁰³ Sencer Ayata, “Changes in domestic politics and foreign policy orientation of the AK Party”, in L. Martin & D. Keridis (Eds.), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*. Cambridge: MIT press. 2004. p.268

its back to Europe”.⁸⁰⁴ Unlike hardliners, moderate Islamist elites have become more supportive of the EU accession process for several reasons. First, the EU accession reforms restrain the power projection capability of the Turkish military over civilian politics. The Islamists have become proponents of the EU membership because they perceive the accession reforms as an invaluable opportunity to break the yoke of Kemalist elites. In the Turkish political realm, more democratization means more power for the Islamists. On the flipside, political instability and authoritarianism serves the interests of pro-status quo Kemalist elites. The Islamists refrain from putting much emphasis on the relations with Iran, because it stirs up Kemalist resistance against this initiative. Second, they believe that religious and political freedoms will be protected in the European Union. Abolishment of Islamist parties will be more difficult after implementation of the EU encouraged political reforms. Third, accession reforms will end minority rule in Turkey and manipulations of ultra-secularist elites will be delegitimized. On the flipside, ultra-secular Kemalists strongly reject the EU accession reforms on the grounds that the reforms undermine the power of ultra-secularist elites. As the Republican Party (CHP) seems unlikely to win elections in the foreseeable future, democratization means rendering of the control of the state to the new Islamist elites. Fourth, the Islamists see EU membership as the mean to stand against aggressive American interventionism in the region.⁸⁰⁵ Given the above mentioned justifications moderate Islamists have become supportive of the EU accession reforms. They refrain from overemphasizing the partnership with Iran as they anticipate strong opposition from the powerful Kemalist elites.

⁸⁰⁴ Interview with Omer Kurkcuoglu, by Habibe Ozdal, Osman Bahadir Dincer and Mehmet Yegin. ISRO-USAK, 2009. This interview is available at the interviewer's book: *Mulakatlarlar Turk Dis Politikasi*, USAK Yayinlari, Ankara/ 2009, p.44.

⁸⁰⁵ Kazim Gulecyuz, *AB Surecinde Degisen Turkiye*, Yeni Asya Nesriyat, Istanbul, 2005

6.6. Conclusions of the Chapter

The Erdogan administration has forged a security partnership with Iran on counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation and energy security. This Turkish Iranian security partnership provoked major criticisms from the Western foreign policy analysts who claimed that Turkey is realigning from the West towards the Muslim East. The analysts and the politicians who put forward the realignment arguments mostly come from the pro-Western and pro-Israeli spheres, who also claim that the AKP has a “hidden” agenda of Islamic Union. They argued that the AKP government’s rapprochement with Iran and the Arab World coincides with its embitterment of relations with Israel and the United States. This chapter investigated whether the Erdogan Administration’s three tiered security partnership with Iran indicate Turkey’s realignment in the International system. Second, it sought to answer whether the rapprochement policy is driven by Islamic identity/aspirations or practical national interests. My field research indicated five major facts about Turkey’s alignment.

First, Turkish elites and analysts do not perceive the intergovernmental security partnership with Iran as an indicator of Turkey’s realignment from the West towards the Muslim World. Almost all of the political and bureaucratic elites flatly reject the realignment arguments. Instead, they perceive the new posture as diversification of Turkish foreign policy through developing relations with the neglected East, North and South. According to the key political elites, the realignment argument is “black propaganda” projected by “malicious” analysts. They perceive the new posture as the end of an unpopular unidirectional outlook and normalization of Turkey’s foreign policy. Neglect of the relations with Russia, Iran, the Caspian region and the Arab World contradicts the national interest of Turkey that aspires to regain a global power status. Diversification of foreign policy rests on Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s strategic depth

doctrine that lays special emphasis on promoting relations with the neglected states. It promotes the sense of grandeur and self confidence in Turkey's interaction with the Middle Eastern and Caspian countries, as Turkey aspires to be a core state or regional hegemon. Thus, from the broader perspective, Turkey's security partnership with Iran is not an indicator of realignment but it is an essential component of foreign policy diversification.

Second, contrary to the projections of Western analysts, Turkey's diversification of foreign relations and tactical security partnership with Iran is supported by the predominant majority of the Turkish citizenry. Even the Kemalists and diehard secular military leaders became supportive of diversification and forging of practical security relations with Iran in the post-Iraq War period. Turkey's diversification of foreign relations is supported by other parties such as the Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Virtue Party (FP) and Great Union Party (BBP). However, the real shift in Turkish foreign policy is propelled by the rise of "new elites" that came from the periphery of Turkish socioeconomic domain. Turkey's neglect of the East and the Muslim World was an approach of traditional elites, who paid little attention to the demands of the citizenry. After the 2002 elections, however, the new elite took over the highest political positions and began to clash with the old elites who were indifferent to public opinion on foreign policy. The new elite's foreign policy diversification is fulfillment of a long overdue public demand on foreign affairs. The new elites have been quite supportive of foreign policy diversification and the three-tiered security partnership with Iran. They no longer want to be a "subcontractor" of Washington and assert that Turkey has been promoted from a peripheral actor to a pivotal state in international politics. According to these elites, Turkey's power projection will remain limited as long as it is seen as the spearhead of "Western neo-colonialism".

Third, one major question before the field research was whether Islamic identity or aspirations of the Erdogan Administration played any role in Turkish-Iranian rapprochement. Statements of key governing elites and analysts indicate that Islamic identity has no significant role in the Turkish Iranian security rapprochement in the post-Iraq war landscape. The political leaders are aware of the fact that identity based rapprochement with Iran would undermine Turkey's image not only in the West but also in the Muslim Sunni World. Therefore, Turkey's political and religious elites have been quire reserved not to make any religion based interaction with Iran particularly in the post 28 Subat period. In many of his statements Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu elucidated that the AKP strongly rejects foreign policy based on ethnic or religious identity. Instead, mutual interests and threat perceptions have been drawing Ankara and Tehran closer. Resurgence of political Islam helped to overcome the negative image of Iranians as "fundamentalist evils". However, a radical Shiite Iran has never become a role model for the Turkish religious community which has a more benign and moderate view of Sunni Islam. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, my field research indicated that identity is a source of conflict in Turkish-Iranian relations rather than stimulator of rapprochement. Turkey's mainstream Islamist scholars perceive Iran as a problematic figure in the Muslim World. According to the Islamists, Iran's hardliner fundamentalist approach is undermining the image of Islam throughout the World.

Fourth, due to growing resentments towards the United States, NATO and EU, Turkish government elites became less committed to make further concessions to pro-Western foreign policy. Even though Turkey does not seek to realign, the ruling elites became less dedicated to fulfill the governmental commitments to Western powers and multilateral institutions. The resentment towards the U.S. is mainly because of U.S. attitudes and action in the post Iraq

occupation period. These include failure to cooperate against the PKK and support of Kurdish nationalism. The resentment towards the EU is a result of European double standards, hypocrisy and failure to comply with the accession promises. The resentment towards NATO is driven by its reluctance to mobilize forces and resources whenever Turkey needed. Many elites in Turkey began to question the value of NATO for Turkey's national security policy. NATO has been quite instrumental in responding strategic threats from the Soviet Union and its proxies, but the organization has been far less effective in responding non-state threats. The resentment towards EU is sparked by the European "double standards" and reluctance to support Turkey's accession despite its fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria. More and more Turkish elites believe that the main reason for denial of Turkish accession is its "Muslim identity" that contradicts the cultural heritage of a predominantly Christian community. This cumulative resentment is not only pushing forward the search for alternative practical relations, but it is undercutting Turkey's commitment to contribute to Western security initiatives.

Ultimately, despite the resentments towards the West, Turkish elites do not see Iran as an alternative to its strategic ties with the West. Turkey has deep rooted relations with Europe and the United States since the beginning of the Cold War. Rather than a strategic replacement, the AKP leaders view the relations with the East as a complement to their ties with the West. At this juncture the AKP is completely different from its predecessor Welfare Party that sought to abolish the strategic alignment with the West. Turkish security institutions are integrated with the Western security organizations. Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952. Moreover, Turkey has long been a member of multilateral economic institutions such as the OECD, G-20 and WTO that integrate Turkey with the Western economies. The Turkish economy is highly integrated with the European markets particularly after the Custom's Union Agreement in 1995.

Turkey's trade with Europe is much larger than the bilateral trade with Iran. Given these circumstances, most Turkish elites believe that Turkey cannot afford to break economic and strategic relations with the West. Contrary to the prevalent view in the West, many Turkish Islamists have become true adherents of the EU accession for two reasons. First, the accession reforms help in eliminating barriers to democracy in Turkey. More democracy means more power for the Islamists and nationalists. Second, they view the European Union as the principal resistance platform against American unilateralism and aggressive interventionism in the Middle East.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation investigated the underlying reasons for the Turkish-Iranian security rapprochement during the Erdogan Administration, and attempted to discover whether or not the ongoing détente with Iran indicated Turkey's realignment in the international system. Turkey's ongoing intensive security cooperation with Iran was selected as a case study for two reasons. First, the new posture of the Erdogan Administration demonstrates a profound shift in Turkish foreign policy and contradicts the traditional patterns of Cold War alliances. Second, this entente with Iran took place at a very sensitive time when Turkey's two allies, the United States and Israel, were ramping up efforts to prevent Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons capability.

To answer the research questions, the thesis adopted the security approach, which propounds that the major foreign policy changes are driven by the shifts in the balances of threat. This dissertation tested three assumptions in three policy fields: counterterrorism, nuclear security and energy security. It employed a rigorous qualitative analysis methodology to explore the perceptions of key decision makers on these security fields. Fundamental tenets of the security approach have been drawn from precepts of the realist paradigm in international politics that seeks the roots of foreign policy change at the shifting balances of threat. Contrary to the mainstream realist approaches, however, the security model used in this dissertation does not assume the state as a unitary actor. Instead, it drew elements of Graham Allison's analytic framework and proposes that security policy is the outcome of constant bargaining among the major government elites in the National Security Council.

This security model acknowledges that Turkey's security policy, relations with Iran and alignment in the international system are not unilaterally determined by the chief executive. Instead, as in most democratic countries, policy is shaped by constant pulling and hauling among various actors. Since the 2002 elections, Prime Minister Erdogan has been the most important actor in Turkey's foreign policy decision making process. The Prime Minister is assisted by key members and other governmental leaders in the practice of foreign affairs. In fulfillment of this task, the Prime Minister's outstanding deputies have been three consecutive foreign ministers; Abdullah Gul, Ali Babacan and Ahmet Davutoglu. Among them, Ahmet Davutoglu laid out the grounds of Turkey's new foreign policy when he was National Security Advisor between 2003 and 2009. Davutoglu became foreign Minister in 2009 and played a leading role in construction and implementation of foreign affairs. The former Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul (2003-2007) became the Turkish President in 2007. Two consecutive energy ministers, Hilmi Guler (2002-2009) and Taner Yildiz (2009-) played defining role in energy security partnership with Iran as they commanded the operations of state energy companies and institutions such as the General Directorate of Petroleum Affairs (PIGM), the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS), and the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO). The Prime Minister is also assisted by the National Intelligence Agency (MIT), Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and General Directorate of Security (EGM) in security related issues. These agencies provide necessary information/intelligence to the Prime Minister, President and the National Security Council. These key actors reconciled their differences and reached a consensus on foreign policy diversification, forging practical and mutually beneficial security relations with Iran.

7.1. Generalizing the empirical findings on security approach

The Turkish Iranian détente is a multi faceted phenomenon that rests on diverse factors in each policy domain. No single internal or external factor thoroughly explains the concerns of policy makers in shifting Turkey's security relations with Iran. As explicated in the analytic models of Rosati, Gustavsson and Clunan, the cumulative impact of various internal and external factors laid out the grounds for the change of foreign policy. Analysis of the phenomenon was complicated, because the policy makers had divergent calculations in dealing counterterrorism, nuclear security and energy security policies. Various intervening internal and external factors increased the complexity of the decision making process.

In general, statements of the policy makers and analysts indicated that Turkey's growing security partnership with Iran does not indicate a shift in alignment from the West to the Muslim World. Turkish elites and analysts do not perceive the security partnership with Iran as an indicator of Turkey's realignment in the international system. They argued that Turkey's security partnership with Iran is driven by practical regional considerations in all three policy domains rather than macro level alignment concerns or Islamic aspirations. Even though many key actors in the Justice and Development Party identify with religious social networks, their statements indicate that the Erdogan Administration does not seek to align itself with the Muslim World at the expense of the existing pro-Western orientation. Throughout the interviewing process, almost all political and bureaucratic elites unequivocally rejected the claims that Turkey is realigning. Instead, they perceived the new posture as diversification of Turkish foreign policy through developing relations with the neglected East, North and South. According to key political elites, the realignment argument is "black propaganda" that is projected by "malicious" analysts. They perceive the new posture as ending of an unpopular unidirectional outlook and normalization of

Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey's rapprochement with Iran is an integral part of the *Strategic Depth* doctrine of Foreign Minister Davutoglu that seeks to expand Turkey's relations with the East in line with national interests. In so doing, the Erdogan Administration not only addresses practical security interests but it also attempts to regain a strengthened and more influential position in the Middle East.

7.1.1. Underlying reasons for counterterrorism partnership

According to the security approach, foreign policy restructuring is fundamentally driven by the leader's shifting threat perceptions. From this perspective, traditional forms of strategic alliances become obsolete and the states develop practical coalitions against elusive terror organizations that can penetrate any society and strike from any direction. My investigations revealed that this security approach has been a useful framework in understanding the foreign policy changes in Turkey. The empirical research confirmed that resurgence of PKK terrorism after the U.S. occupation of Iraq laid out the grounds for Turkey's growing counterterrorism partnership with Iran. Regional threat perceptions of Ankara and Tehran converged as both wanted to preserve the regional status quo and territorial integrity. The Erdogan and Ahmadinejad administrations began to see each other as allies in reconstructing the post-Iraq war landscape of the Middle East. However, the shift in the balance of threat does not provide a complete explanation of counterterrorism partnership between Ankara and Tehran. Various other internal and external factors played significant roles in the shift of Turkish security policy.

In the external domain, disappointment with Turkey's traditional allies, particularly the United States, spurred the incentives to craft alternative practical partnerships with the countries that are exposed to Kurdish separatism. Even though American officials gave alluring promises,

the PKK camps in Northern Iraq were not eliminated. Much of the American intelligence feedback was out of date and inaccurate. Moreover, existence of the U.S forces in northern Iraq inhibited Turkish incursions into the Iraqi territories. High ranking American officials, including former President George W. Bush objected to Turkish invasion of northern Iraq on the grounds that it would destabilize the only relatively stable part of that country. Various crises between Ankara and Washington undermined bilateral trust between the two Cold War allies. In particular, revelations of the U.S.-PJAK connection created strong resentment among Turkish security elites. In this context, the Iranian government launched a rigorous counterterrorism campaign against the mutual PKK/PJAK threat to win the hearts and minds of Turkish foreign policy elites. Apart from frequent attacks against the PKK compounds, Iranian security and intelligence institutions began to provide actionable intelligence to Turkish security institutions. Under these circumstances, Iran emerged as an ally of the Erdogan Administration against PKK terrorism and micronationalist Kurdish separatism that threatened the regional status quo. Iran's new policy was highly appreciated by almost all echelons of the Erdogan administration.

Internally, a broad consensus among Turkish foreign policy elites strengthened the hand of the Erdogan Administration in forging practical security relations with Iran. This consensus was mainly driven by the shift of threat perceptions after the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the Ergenekon investigations. Turkey's governing elites no longer anticipated a regime threat or support of terrorism from post-revolutionary Iranian governments. Statements of many intelligence officers and security analysts indicated that Iran's alleged connection with the Turkish Hezbollah was exaggerated. Concomitantly, public surveys showed that only one percent of the Turkish population perceived Iran as a significant threat. Instead, the U.S. and Israel became the most dangerous states in the eyes of the Turkish citizens. The shift in threat

perceptions gradually eroded the negative image of Iran among both the Turkish elite and the mass society. Accordingly, domestic opposition to relations with post-revolutionary Iran has been replaced by strong nationwide support particularly after the occupation of Iraq.

7.1.2. Explaining Turkey's attitude towards Iran's nuclear program

The security approach assumes that states will balance against the emergence of neighboring nuclear powers, because the spread of nuclear weapons radically shifts the balances of power/threat in the region. In conventional wisdom, the Erdogan Administration is expected to try to counteract Iran's attainment of nuclear weapons. However, the Prime Minister and many other foreign policy actors have proclaimed that Turkey will neither endorse economic containment nor military intervention. In the United Nations Security Council meetings Turkey consistently voted against the sanctions on Iran. Prime Minister Erdogan and other members of the cabinet supported Iran's efforts to develop nuclear energy. My field research revealed that Turkey's leniency towards the Iranian position stems from a variety of perceptions of policy makers that can be divided into three categories: i) perceptions of Iranian nuclear program, ii) perceptions of U.S. nuclear policy and the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and iii) perceptions of economic sanctions and military engagement.

In general, Turkish political elites believe that Iran has a right as a non-nuclear state party to the NPT to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. For them, the West unfairly puts pressure on Iran because there are over 400 nuclear reactors in the World, many of them operated by other non-nuclear state parties to the NPT. Author's interviews and content analysis indicated that the prevailing position of the Erdogan Administration is that Iran is enriching uranium not to develop nuclear weapons but to develop civilian nuclear energy. Key government authorities asserted that there is no evidence of diversion to weapons grade enrichment. Even if

Iran does develop nuclear weapons, Turkish elites believe that Tehran will not use them aggressively against Turkey or its allies. In their view, Turkey will not be the target of Iran because there is no ongoing or even recent conflict with the Iranians. In the eyes of the Turkish political elites and analysts, Iranians are just as rational and deterrable as the existing nuclear powers. Iran will never attack the U.S. preemptively because its leaders are fully aware of the asymmetry of destructive capability. Iran will not attack Israel preemptively either, because Israel has nuclear superiority, retaliatory strike capability and protection from the United States.

Throughout my field research, I observed thoroughgoing disrespect for the NPT regime and American non-proliferation policy. Turkish security analysts maintain that neither the United States nor Israel can present any convincing evidence that Iran is enriching uranium to weapons's grade levels. Turkish intelligence and security officials believe that American threat projections depend on "fabricated" intelligence that has not been confirmed by HUMINT. Turkey's Prime Minister and other key members of the AKP government believe that the West imposes a double standard in enforcement of the non-proliferation regime. They asserted that pro-Western regimes never experience sanctions, whereas the anti-Western regimes are selectively targeted by the existing nuclear powers. For them, the IAEA and the UN Security Council are heavily influenced by the United States and these institutions are unlikely to behave in a just manner. Prime Minister Erdogan argues that denuclearization should start with the existing nuclear powers that promised to disarm while enacting the NPT. For him, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council should take the lead in eliminating their nuclear arsenals instead of putting pressure on states that have no proven nuclear weapons capability.

Most Turkish elites believe that economic sanctions and military aggression against Iran are unlikely to compel the Iranians to surrender to Western demands. Author's interviews

revealed that Turkish foreign policy makers do not believe that economic sanctions against Iran will be effective. They believe that the Western efforts are futile and economic sanctions will not work against an energy rich country. This view consolidated as Turkey, China, India, and the major European countries signed bilateral energy and trade agreements with Iran. Turkish elites believe that a military campaign against Iran is unlikely to achieve the desired outcome because nuclear facilities are dispersed and buried underground. A total destruction of nuclear capability would require an invasion of Iran by land forces. Turkish security experts believe that a land war with Iran is unwinnable for both the United States and Israel. In the Turkish view, a potential war against Iran would undermine Turkey's national interests in several respects. First, it might destabilize the entire region and lead to dissolution of Iran along ethnic lines. Micronationalist movements may spill over and a separatist Kurdish campaign might undermine territorial integrity of Turkey. Second, war would almost certainly terminate Turkey's bilateral trade with Iran. Fourth, it would also likely to lead to major energy supply disruptions, which would drive up the price of oil and gas for an energy dependent country. Soaring energy prices would have negative consequences for national industry and commerce. Moreover, war would disrupt Turkey's access to Central Asian markets that are major consumers of Turkish products. Finally, an invasion of Iran would stir up anti-Americanism and Anti-Semitism among the Turkish community and the government would be hard pressed to preserve its ties with the West and Israel.

7.1.3. Explaining the energy security partnership

The core assumption of the energy security approach is that states seek alternative suppliers to reduce vulnerability to major supply disruptions, and the use of energy disruption as a coercive

instrument in foreign policy. Throughout the field research, statements by government elites and analysts supported this assumption of the energy security approach. By the early 2000s, Turkey's dependency on Russia reached alarming rates and vulnerability to supply disruptions increased as the Blue Stream Pipeline crossed under the Black Sea. Concomitantly, Turkish electric generation is over 60 percent dependent on imported natural gas which creates a double vulnerability. My investigations revealed that the Turkish energy partnership with Iran is partially forged to reduce vulnerability to major supply disruptions from Russia.

However, statements of government officials and analysts indicated that various other factors significantly influenced the construction of a bilateral energy partnership. First, the Gulf War (1991) and the U.S. occupation of Iraq (2003) caused major supply disruptions in Iraq that had been a main energy supplier to Turkey. Oil pumping ceased intermittently after the U.S. attack against Iraq in 2003. The pipelines and energy infrastructures were destroyed by the ongoing occupation, insurgency and related terrorism. Iraq's Petroleum Ministry reported over 400 terrorist/insurgency attacks on the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik Pipelines. Frequent supply disruptions downgraded Iraq's reliability and Iran emerged as a more dependable energy supplier. Second, cost efficiency and security of the Iranian pipelines were two other reasons that laid the grounds for the Turkish-Iranian energy partnership. Iran is a neighbor of Turkey and joint pipelines directly enter into Turkish homeland without paying any transit fees to third parties. In contrast to Russian Blue Stream line, pipelines from Iran never pass under deep waters. Thus, Turkish elites are less concerned about physical supply disruptions along the Iranian pipelines. Third, the Erdogan Administration's energy partnership with Iran facilitated the Nabucco project and serves Turkey's strategic interests as an interregional energy hub. Moreover, it provides access to

Central Asian gas reserves that constituted an important component of the multi-sourcing strategy of the Nabucco project.

My field research sought to clarify why Turkey disregards American demands to stop further energy/economic partnerships with Iran. I found that that Turkey's practical national interests outweigh the strategic commitments of its military allies, mainly the United States and Israel. The Turkish government seeks regional economic integration and perceives American embargos as the principal roadblock to this goal. Turkey's participation in the U.S. led embargo would not only undercut bilateral trade with Iran but it would also restrict Turkey's access to Central Asian markets. Moreover, Turkish elites do not believe that they would be reimbursed for economic losses that would certainly occur if they participated in the containment of Iran. Turkish elites laid special emphasis on sovereignty and independent pursuit of self interests. Turkey's past image as the "spearhead" of Western neo-colonialism has become an increasingly irritating image among the Turkish citizenry and elites. In this context, bandwagoning with the U.S. containment of Iran is perceived as a betrayal of sovereignty and national interests.

7.2. The role of domestic politics

According to the domestic politics approach, changes in the course of foreign policy are driven by domestic factors such as regime changes, realignment of constituencies, institutional restructuring and the rise of alternative political paradigms. Even though this dissertation focused on the security aspects of foreign policy change, my field research indicated that four major changes in domestic politics catalyzed the shift of state's security posture: i) the AKP's ascendance to power as a single party government, ii) rise of alternative elites and decline of the

Kemalist paradigm, iii) dramatic shift in the threat perceptions of governing elites and citizenry and iv) strong domestic support for foreign policy diversification.

One of the most important developments is the emergence of the AKP as a single party government after the 2002 elections. The President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and other key AKP administrators were devoted advocates of revision in security strategy and foreign policy diversification. This revisionist political wing became increasingly powerful as they held the majority in the Council of Ministers and the National Security Council. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdogan, the AKP elites began to dominate the decision making process in the state's foreign policy machinery. Unlike the coalition governments, the AKP acts as a bloc in the National Security Council meetings that have a defining impact on the outcome. Statements of the interviewees indicated that the AKP leaders have the upper hand in their interactions with the security bureaucracy and did not succumb to bureaucratic politics. The AKP's position was further strengthened after the election of Abdullah Gul as the President of Turkey, who chairs the National Security Council Meetings.

The second major development is the concomitant rise of alternative elites in the sociopolitical domain. For many analysts, the shift in Turkish foreign policy is grounded on the rise of "new elite" and simultaneous transformation of the political and bureaucratic landscape. After the 2002 elections, the new elite took over the highest political positions and began to clash with the "old elite" that was indifferent to social demands. The new elites were quite supportive of foreign policy diversification and the three-tiered security partnership with Iran. They no longer wanted to be a "subcontractor of Washington" and asserted that Turkey has been promoted from a peripheral actor to a core state in international politics. According to these elites, Turkey's power projection will remain limited as long as it is seen as the spearhead of

“Western neo-colonialism”. The impressions of pro-American (*Amerikanci*) and “westoxicated” foreign policy have become highly unpopular images among these elites, who are determined to exploit alternative opportunities in the security and trade realms. They have advocated for a security partnership with the Iranian government to promote national interests and preserve regional stability.

The third major development is the dramatic shift in domestic threat perceptions particularly after 2003. The Turks began to see Iran as an instrumental partner in energy, security and trade. Iran’s cooperative posture against the PKK has been quite influential in shifting the threat perceptions of both the Erdogan Administration and Turkish society. In the eyes of the Turkish elites, Iran’s acquittal from the patronage of Turkish Hezbollah and the end of efforts to export its fundamentalist regime also played significant roles in the shift of public threat perceptions. Bilateral relations with Iran have been re-legitimized as a result of shifting threat perceptions. The shift in threat perception catalyzed a reevaluation of the Turkish-Iranian relations and eroded the negative image of Iran among both Turkish elites and the larger society. On the flipside, Turkish elites and citizenry began to see the United States and Israel as principal threats to national and global security. They perceive the United States and Israel as much more aggressive actors than Iran.

Fourth, a strong support for foreign policy diversification emerged among the new elites. Turkey’s diversification of foreign relations is supported by the other political parties such as the Republican People’s Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP), Virtue Party (FP) and Great Union Party (BBP). Even the Kemalists and diehard secularists began to support foreign policy diversification in the face of rising resentment towards the United States, EU, and NATO. This tendency became increasingly clear after the Invasion of Iraq. In this context, Turkey’s growing

security partnership with Iran is also supported by the prevailing majority of the community as it is perceived as an instrumental component of foreign policy diversification.

7.3. The role of Islamic identity

According to the aspirational approach, the restructuring of foreign policy is impelled by the shifts in prevailing political identity and aspirations. States realign in the international system when prevailing political identities and aspirations are overthrown by revisionist images. One major question before the field research was whether the Islamic identity or aspirations of the Erdogan Administration played an important role in Turkish-Iranian détente. Statements of the key governing elites and analysts indicate that Islamic identity played a marginal and even insignificant role in Turkish Iranian security rapprochement in the post-Iraq war landscape. Turkey's political leaders were aware that identity based rapprochement with Iran would undermine Turkey's image not only in the West but also in the Sunni Muslim world. Therefore, Turkey's political and religious elites steered clear of any religion based interaction with Iran, particularly in the post 28 *Subat* period. In many statements Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu have made it clear that the AKP strongly rejects foreign policy based on ethnic or religious identity. Instead, mutual interests and joint threat perceptions have drawn Ankara and Tehran closer. Resurgence of political Islam helped to overcome the negative image of Iranians as "fundamentalist adversaries". However, a radical Shiite Iran has never become a role model for the Turkish religious community that practices a more benign and moderate form of Sunni Islam. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, my field research indicated that identity is a source of conflict in Turkish-Iranian relations rather than a catalyst of rapprochement. Turkey's mainstream Islamist scholars perceive Iran as a problematic figure in the Muslim world.

According to the Islamists, Iran's hardliner fundamentalist approach is undermining the image of Islam throughout the world.

7.4. Final remarks- looking for the future

Iran is the largest neighbor of Turkey that has abundant energy resources and market opportunities for Turkish entrepreneurs. Iran lies at a very strategic location and functions as gateway to the Central Asian Turkic republics. Turkey and Iran has convergent views on Kurdish separatism, nuclear security and energy security. Particularly after 2003, Turkey and the United States have contrasting interests in the Middle East. A concessive pro-American foreign policy has become highly unpopular among the Turkish electorate which strongly advocates foreign policy diversification. Under the existing circumstances, Turkey will continue to expand relations with Iran even when this conflicts with the American interests. However, Turkish government does not see Iran as an alternative to Turkey's strategic security partnership with the United States and NATO. This dissertation put forth the perceptions of Turkish elites and analysts on the three tiered security partnership with Iran. However, there is a need to investigate the following issues.

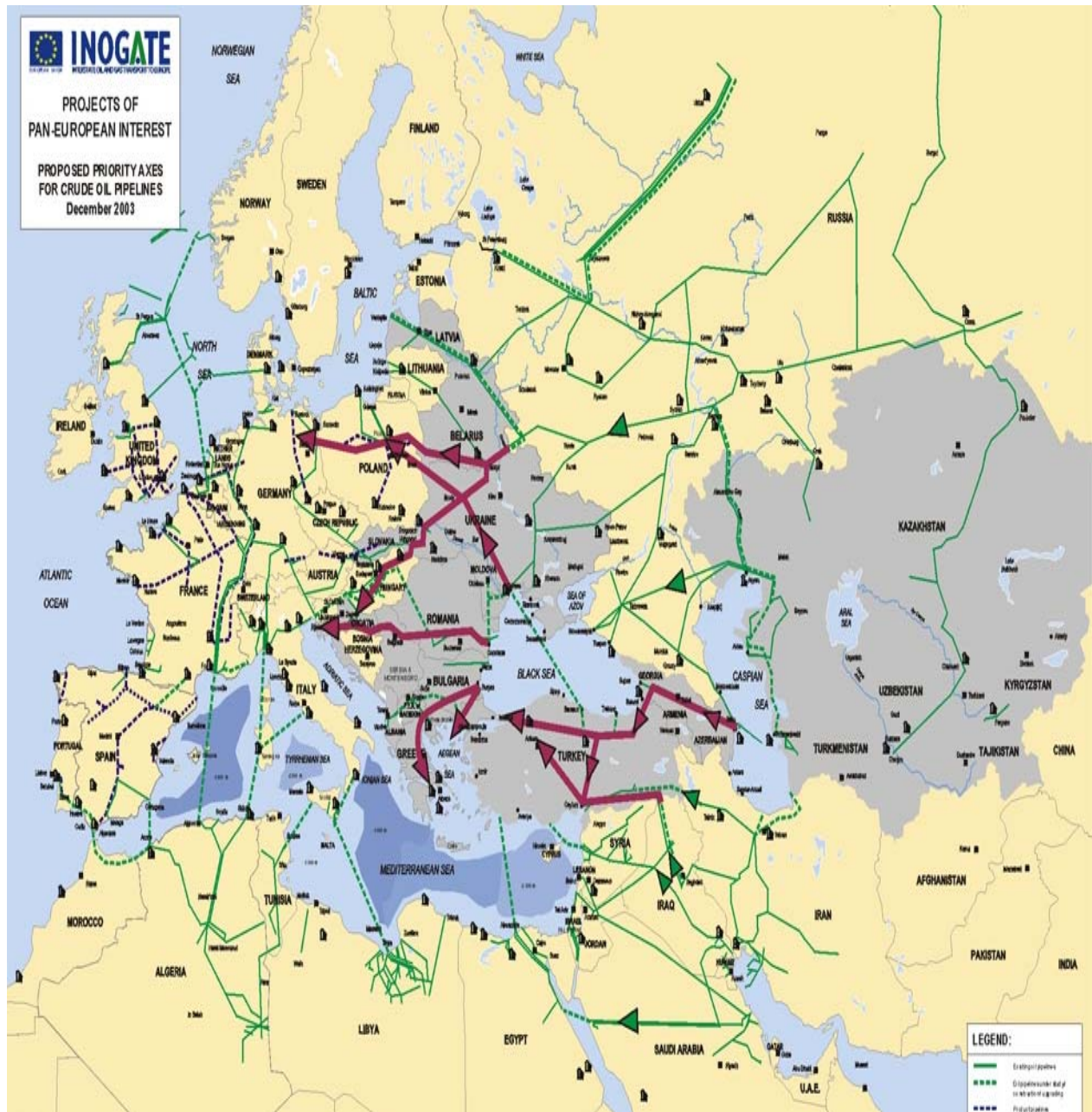
First, the dramatic shift in public threat perceptions has profound effects on the course of Turkish security policy. This dissertation briefly explained how Turkey began to view Iran as a benign state, while the United States and Israel appeared more dangerous in the eyes of the Turks. However, a full doctoral dissertation may be devoted to explain the remarkable shift in public threat perceptions and how it effects the decision making process among the foreign policy elites.

Second, my investigations revealed that the Turkish-Iranian security partnership is not mature at the institutional level. Put another way, Turkish security institutions could not yet

develop highly sophisticated institutional cooperative frameworks with their Iranian counterparts. Further research is needed to explicate the underlying reasons of institutional mismatch and how both governments could overcome existing barriers.

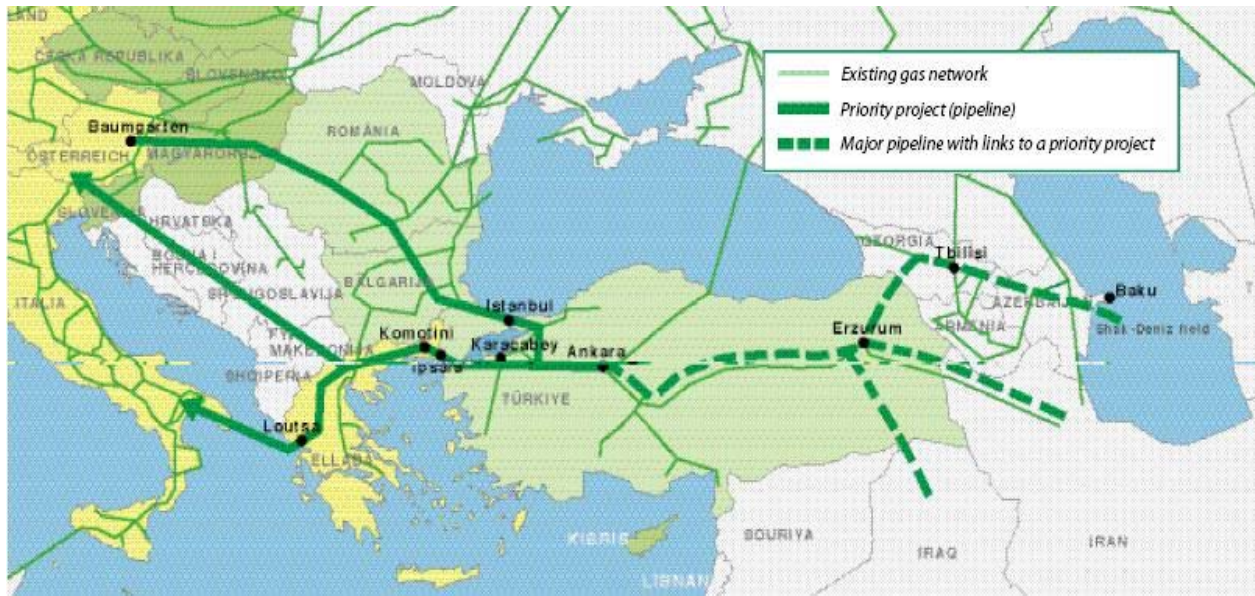
Third, during my field research, I observed that the Turkish-Iranian security partnership is not limited to counterterrorism, nuclear security and energy security. Some of the interviewees asserted that there is growing cooperation in counternarcotics. Indeed, cooperation against drug trafficking became an important component of bilateral security relations. Iran is an important transit destination of Afghan opiates on their route to European markets. Iran has appointed narcotic liaison officers to Turkey and relevant institutions have begun to exchange actionable intelligence and conduct joint operations. Upon Iranian requests, Turkish counternarcotics institutions have begun to act as mediators in rendering relevant counternarcotics intelligence to their Western counterparts. There is a need for further research to understand the underlying reasons for growing cooperation on counternarcotics. An entire doctoral dissertation could easily be devoted to investigate why Ankara and Tehran shifted from a non-cooperative stance to a cooperative posture against the trafficking of opiates over the Balkan route.

APPENDIX 1: Oil Pipeline Networks in Europe and the Middle East



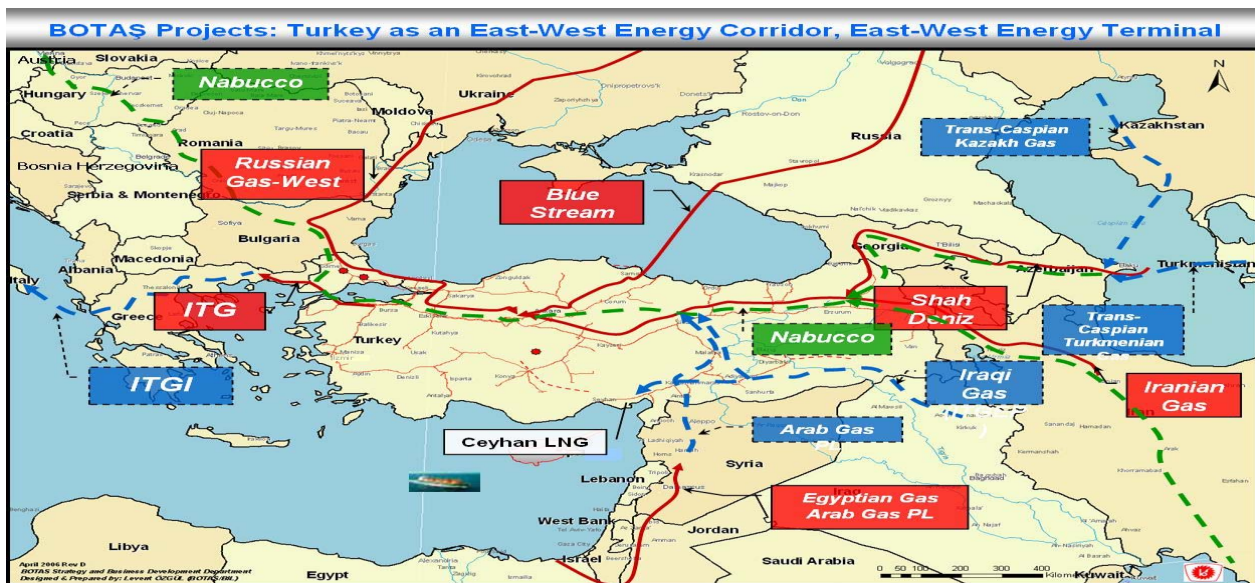
Source: <http://www.radio-utopie.de/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/eu-versorgungsnetz-von-ol-pipelines.jpg>

APPENDIX 2: Turkey's transit and domestic pipeline networks



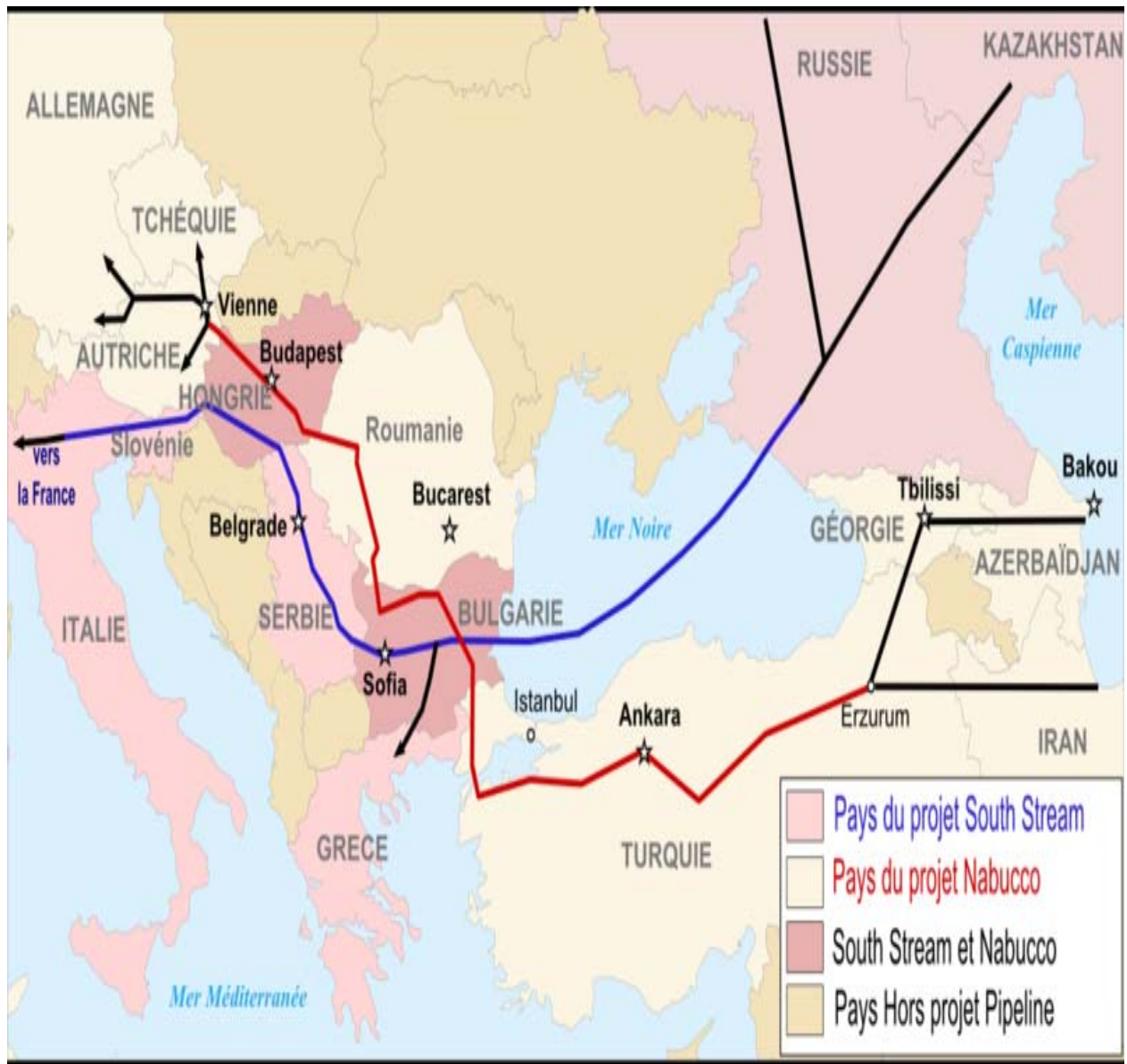
Source: <http://memrieconomicblog.org/bin/content.cgi?news=2114>

Botas Pipeline projects



Source: <http://www.botas.gov.tr/images/icerik/harita/BotasProject.jpg>

APPENDIX 3: Nabucco and South Stream pipelines



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Projet_Pipeline_South_stream_et_Nabucco.png

APPENDIX 4: Turkey's natural gas purchases 1987-2008

	RUSSIA	IRAN	RUSSIA BLUE ST	AZERBAIJAN	NIGERIA LNG	ALGERIA LNG	SPOT LNG	TOTAL
1987	433	-	-	-	-	-	-	433
1988	1.136	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.136
1989	2.986	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.986
1990	3.246	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.246
1991	4.031	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.031
1992	4.430	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.430
1993	4.952	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.952
1994	4.957	-	-	-	-	418	-	5.375
1995	5.560	-	-	-	-	1.058	240	6.859
1996	5.524	-	-	-	-	2.436	80	8.041
1997	6.574	-	-	-	-	3.300	-	9.874
1998	6.539	-	-	-	-	3.051	644	10.233
1999	8.693	-	-	-	77	3.256	332	12.358
2000	10.079	-	-	-	780	3.962	-	14.821
2001	10.931	115	-	-	1.337	3.985	-	16.368
2002	11.603	669	-	-	1.274	4.078	-	17.624
2003	11.422	3.520	1.252	-	1.126	3.867	-	21.188
2004	11.106	3.558	3.238	-	1.034	3.237	-	22.174
2005	12.857	4.322	4.969	-	1.030	3.851	-	27.028
2006	12.246	5.691	7.403	-	1.118	4.203	80	30.741
2007	13.799	6.158	9.346	1.279	1.420	4.277	170	36.450
2008	8.013	2.253	6.068	2.620	717	2.743	339	22.752

Source: <http://www.botas.gov.tr/>

APPENDIX 5: Turkey's energy profile after the Cold War

Petroleum (Thou. bar. per Day)	1991	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Oil Production	85.29	74.15	66.13	67.23	66.13	58.38	51.42	46.83	47.09	45.82	42.93	45.46	43.95	42.8
Crude Oil Production	88.34	76.24	67.47	67.6	65.26	59	52.68	48	46.67	45.17	42.42	43.67	42.16	41
Consumption	466	565	608.28	630.58	629.07	626.53	666.88	618.62	657.73	644.97	661.37	659.33	677.62	676.55
Net Exports/Imports(-)	-380.7	-490.9	-542.1	-563.3	-562.9	-568.1	-615.5	-571.8	-610.6	-599.2	-618.4	-613.9	-633.7	-633.8
Total Oil Exports to U.S.	NA	NA	1	1	2	2	4	4	13	11	5	21	13	13
Refinery Capacity	729	714	713	683	708	688	691	694	719	719	714	714	714	714
Proved Reserves	0.65	0.475	0.488	0.26	0.331	0.317	0.299	0.296	0.296	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Natural Gas (Billion Cubic Feet)	1991	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Production	7.2	7.1	6.4	8.9	20	25.8	22.6	11	13.3	19.8	24.3	31.7	32	NA
Consumption	149.6	181.9	248.2	346.1	365.5	442.4	523.9	563.1	621.1	748	792.6	966.7	1101.2	NA
Net Exports/Imports(-)	-142.5	-175	-243	-338.5	-349.4	-425.1	-507.8	-556.4	-604.2	-729.3	-767.5	-938.4	NA	NA
Proved Reserves	1150	608	371	312	309	331	314	310	310	300	300	300	300	300
Coal (Million Short Tons)	1991	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Production	50.8	53.5	60.7	66.1	74.3	73.9	69.7	68.5	59.5	53.5	51.1	64.3	71.5	NA
Consumption	63.5	60.5	67.3	80.1	86.3	83.7	88.8	80.3	73.2	71.1	71.4	85.1	86.3	NA
Net Exports/Imports(-) (Trillion Btu)	-159.9	-155.5	-157	-295.9	-310.5	-263.7	-368.9	-232.8	-328.3	-440.7	-444.2	-461.9	-348.9	NA
Electricity (Billion Kilowatthours)	1991	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Net Generation	57.8	71.1	82.9	99.1	106.5	111.2	119	116.6	123.3	133.9	144	154.2	167.6	NA
Net Consumption	50.5	60.5	68.4	82.7	88.7	91.7	98.6	97.4	102.5	110.4	120	129	NA	NA
Installed Capacity	16.3	18.7	20.9	21.3	21.9	23.4	26.1	27.3	28.3	31.8	35.6	36.8	NA	NA
Total Primary Energy (Quadrillion Btu)	1991	1993	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Production	0.9	1	1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	1.1	NA	NA
Consumption	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.9	3	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.7	NA	NA
Energy Intensity (Btu per (2000) U.S. Dollars)	5888.8	5799.5	6120.6	6247.6	6203.7	6316.5	6404.5	6334	6380.6	6359.2	6180.5	6125.5	NA	NA

Source: BP Statistical review

APPENDIX 6: Interview Questions

1. What kinds of experiences do you have in practice/analysis of Turkish energy or security policies?
2. What kinds of major changes do you observe in Turkey's energy and security policies during the Erdogan administration? Do you think Turkey has been realigning in the international system? If yes could you please explain why and how?
3. Do you think Turkey has been moving away from the US-Israel security axis? Why did Turkish governments give up bandwagoning American-Israeli containment of nuclear Iran?
4. Have you been involved in Turkish government's decision making process over energy and security partnerships with Iran? I would be very interested to hear your thoughts on this matter.
5. Who are the proponents of Turkey's growing security partnership with Iran and what are their main arguments?
6. Who are the opponents of Turkey's growing security partnership with Iran and what are their main arguments?
7. What are the underlying reasons of intergovernmental counterterrorism cooperation against the PKK and PJAK?
8. Why does the Erdogan Administration support Iran's nuclear energy program?
9. What are the underlying reasons of bilateral partnership on energy security?
10. To what extent cooperation with Iran on counterterrorism, nuclear program and energy security indicates realignment of Turkey?
11. How did the pan-Islamic aspirations of the Erdogan Administrations shape the rapprochement with the post revolutionary Iran?
12. How do you think the power shift in the National Security Council affect Turkey's intergovernmental relations with Iran?
13. How could the Erdogan administration overcome the resistance from the pro-status quo secularist elites and military leaders?
14. Do the decision makers face any pressure from the European or American officials on Turkey's intergovernmental relations with Iran?
15. Do you have any other comments on this issue?

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