

USAWC STRATEGIC RESEARCH PROJECT

**A TRUE TEST OF FAITH IN  
THE COMMON DEFENSE: U. S. POLICIES TOWARD TURKEY**

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## ABSTRACT

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The United States has long maintained several core (though competing) interests in the Middle East, including the stability of world oil markets and uninterrupted flow of petroleum from the region, the manifest importance of Israeli security, and support for moderate Arab regimes. Given several speeches, public remarks, testimony before Congress and contributions to the media by this administration, this paper will further examine the security issues in the Middle East and the genesis of current U.S. policy toward Turkey. Examples of why current US policies are not truly effective will also be examined with recommendations offered as to short and long-term solutions.



## A TRUE TEST OF FAITH IN THE COMMON DEFENSE: U. S. POLICIES TOWARD TURKEY

"[Turkey] has always been important for its geography - here at the meeting place of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Now Turkey has assumed even greater historical importance, because of your character as a nation. Turkey is a strong, secular democracy, a majority Muslim society, and a close ally of free nations.... Your success is vital to a future of progress and peace in Europe and in the broader Middle East - and the Republic of Turkey can depend on the support and friendship of the United States." – President George W. Bush<sup>1</sup>

At a time when the world is asking whether the religions can get along, there is no clearer example of the possibilities the future holds than the relationships that currently exist between the United States and Turkey. <sup>2</sup> Though this paper is not a religious exposition, it will examine United States security policies toward Turkey, stepping through the National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, the European Command regional assessment, and the nuances U.S. policy plays at the heart of the relationships between these nations.

The United States has long maintained several core (though competing) interests in the Middle East, including the stability of world oil markets and uninterrupted flow of petroleum from the region, the manifest importance of Israeli security, and support for moderate Arab regimes.<sup>3</sup> Given several speeches, public remarks, testimony before Congress and contributions to the media by this administration, this paper will further examine the security issues in the Middle East and the genesis of current U.S. policies towards Turkey. Examples of why current US policies are not truly effective will also be examined with recommendations offered as to short and long-term solutions.

### Background

Good morning. Today, I can report to you that we are making good progress in advancing the cause of freedom, defeating the forces of terror...As I speak, Laura is in the Middle East to help advance the freedom agenda; and her message is a powerful one -- that by working together for liberty, we will create a future of peace and opportunity for women and men worldwide.

- President George W. Bush <sup>4</sup>

President George W. Bush, in his May 21, 2005 radio announcement to the American people, emphasized the continued importance of the Middle East and its relevance to current American security. <sup>5</sup> Consisting of lands that stretch from the Mahgreb to the waters of the Persian Gulf, Morocco to Afghanistan, the Middle East region encompasses enormous wealth and tragic poverty, political tyranny and religious extremism, strong security partners and

ruthless terrorist networks, and perhaps represents the greatest and most immediate threat to American security.<sup>6</sup> The Middle East is an economically diverse region that includes both the oil-rich economies in the Gulf and countries that are resource-scarce in relation to population, such as Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen.<sup>7</sup>

The region's economic fortunes over much of the past quarter century have been heavily influenced by two factors – the price of oil and the legacy of economic policies and structures that had emphasized a leading role for the state.<sup>8</sup> The region continues to face important economic and social challenges, the most significant of which is unemployment, with a conservative estimate of over 15 percent of the workforce being unemployed.<sup>9</sup> This environment, where there has been little movement toward genuine democracy or economic liberalization over the last two decades, has become a breeding ground for anti-American sentiment and represents the most likely locale for an intersection of virulent technologies, terrorist groups, and enabling states and organizations.<sup>10</sup> As such, the Bush administration has taken a decisive change in its development of the latest (September 2002) National Security Strategy (NSS), taking a more pre-emptive role against terrorism.

#### U.S. Security Issues in the Middle East

Past U.S. NSS, with respect to the Middle East, were notable for several features, including the “dual containment” of Iraq and Iran through conventional deterrence, a long-standing policy to ensure the safe flow of oil from the Gulf, a strong commitment to the security of Israel, and attempts at promoting peace in the Middle East. This traditional agenda had general bipartisan appeal and support, but the case for a more powerful set of policy objectives had been building for years. The shock of September 11, 2001 served as the catalyst for embracing a much more activist, even revolutionary, agenda for the region. While there are some clear areas of continuity, the new approach--when viewed in its entirety--represents both a substantial departure from previous efforts and a fundamental increase in American concern and commitment to the Middle East.<sup>11</sup>

While the outcome of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM has eliminated certain dangers, such as possible eventual development of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and Iraqi aggression against neighboring countries, new types of threats may emerge from Iraq. For example, the lack of strong central authority and problems associated with Iraqi reconstruction may provide opportunities for transnational fundamentalist networks or Iraqi opposition groups to engage in terror activities directed at the United States and its interests in the region. With regard to Iran, the concerns that dominated U.S. policy toward that country in the 1980s and 1990s largely

endure — the support for terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with the latter issue posing an immediate and profound threat to regional stability.<sup>12</sup> These issues, combined with potentially troublesome states such as Syria and the continuing problem of Al Qaeda, ensure that the Middle East will be the focal point of U.S. foreign and defense policy for the foreseeable future.<sup>13</sup>

The U. S. commitment to Israel has remained in the forefront of U.S. NSS and the Middle East. Since the June 1967 Six Day War and the potential stand-off between the Cold War powers, the Arab-Israeli conflict has continued to present a fault line for Middle East stability.<sup>14</sup> U.S. support to Israel remains a national interest, though the relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union has changed from one of Cold War to cooperation. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict persists as a Middle East flash point. According to President George W. Bush, “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is critical because of the toll of human suffering, because of America’s close relationship with the state of Israel and key Arab states, and because of that region’s importance to other global priorities of the United States.”<sup>15</sup>

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States, the administration of President George W. Bush determined that preventative action was required to combat emerging terrorism.<sup>16</sup> Al Qaeda and its networks in the Middle East became the targets of this new strategic thinking. Additional Middle East concerns were expressed during his meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan. President George W. Bush stated that, “one of the most important foreign policy initiatives of my administration — and I know the Prime Minister shares the same desire — is to work with the Palestinians so they can have their own state, their own democracy, living side-by-side in peace with Israel.”<sup>17</sup>

#### National Security Strategy: Fusing Thought Into Action

Fusing thought with action is the inherent role of the development of the National Military Strategy (NMS) and the Regional Commander’s Assessment.<sup>18</sup> In the 2002 NSS, President Bush ultimately identifies his policy aim to make the world “not just safer but better,” with the clear goals of “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity,” providing a broad strategic context for employing U.S. military capabilities in concert with other instruments of national power.<sup>19</sup> The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff uses the NMS to provide further strategic direction to the Joint Force, giving the strategic direction the Armed Forces of the United States should follow to support the NSS. The NMS provides focus for military actions by defining a set of interrelated military objectives and joint

operating concepts from which the Service Chiefs and combatant commanders identify desired capabilities and against which Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff assesses risk.<sup>20</sup>

The supporting military objectives of the 2004 NMS include protect the United States against external attacks and aggression; prevent conflict and surprise attack; and prevail against adversaries.<sup>21</sup> These objectives help define attributes and capabilities that the Joint Force requires. These attributes and capabilities are important in determining the required size and design of the Armed Forces. This military strategy emphasizes that to achieve its objectives in an uncertain and complex environment such as the War on Terrorism requires a capabilities-based approach to force design and planning that focuses less on specific adversary or where a conflict might occur and more on how an adversary might fight. The force must be sized to defend the U.S. homeland while continuing to operate in and from four forward regions. These forward regions must deter aggression and coercion and set conditions for future operations, retaining the capability to swiftly defeat adversaries and win decisively.<sup>22</sup> The combatant commanders must consider the effect of their current posture and operate within a baseline security posture that includes the War on Terror.<sup>23</sup>

The Middle East spans two regional commands, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and U.S. European Command (EUCOM). Security issues in the Middle East can be fused into action in part by U.S. policies toward Turkey and Israel and the efforts taken by Commander, EUCOM, whose area of responsibility encompasses both countries. In his 1 Mar 2005 statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General James Jones identified "EUCOM's greatest contribution to security and stability lies as much in preventing conflict as it does in prevailing on the battlefield. This is accomplished through influence, forward presence and engaged leadership."<sup>24</sup> EUCOM uses its cooperative security relationships with Turkey and Israel as a means for enhancing these foreign partners, also expanding cohesion within interagency teams and assisting the U.S. with leveraging the full spectrum of diplomatic, economic, and military options to advance US policy objectives.<sup>25</sup> "Most importantly, Theater Security Cooperation efforts support the long-term strategic objectives of the Global War on Terrorism by building understanding and consensus on the terrorist threat; laying foundations for future "coalitions of the willing;" and extending our country's security perimeter."<sup>26</sup>

#### Implementing Policy

"For the sake of our long-term security, all free nations must stand with the forces of democracy and justice that have begun to transform the Middle East."- President G.W. Bush<sup>27</sup>

The current Bush Administration uses its aim of making the world “not just safer but better,” to justify its policy. The path to progress towards a better world is identified in the 2002 NSS as, “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity.”<sup>28</sup> The Middle East has proven to be the one of most difficult of regions for achieving progress, because of its immense cost (both financially and politically) and the risks of increased anti-Americanism and regional instability, yet continued engagement in Turkey and Israel remains crucial with respect to eliminating threats to the US national interests.<sup>29</sup>

Turkey represents a great indicator as to the U.S. successes and failures in implementing its policies in the Middle East, since it is the only modern secular democracy in the Islamic world and represents the potential for the merging democratic and Muslim values.<sup>30</sup> Previous U.S. administrations have generally followed policies that appreciate Turkey’s strategic importance (sea lines of communication from the Mediterranean to the Caspian) and NATO alliance; encourage its democratic, secular character; seek improvements in human rights practices; and support its economic reforms.<sup>31</sup> Turkey’s willingness to support operations in Afghanistan and its continued role in peacekeeping operations significant to U.S. policy, have kept its security relations a high priority for the U.S.<sup>32</sup> How did the U.S.-Turkey relationship develop and how do we implement policy with Turkey?

#### US Policies Towards Turkey: History and Issues

##### Evolution of Relations

The United States and Turkey have shared a long history of friendly relations. U.S.-Turkish friendship dates to the late 18th century and was officially sealed by a treaty in 1830. The present close relationship began with the agreement of July 12, 1947, which implemented the Truman Doctrine.<sup>33</sup> Turkey and the U.S. have since advanced from a decidedly one-sided relationship based upon Turkey’s dependence on the U.S. for economic and military assistance, a need to deny Soviet expansion, to a more multidimensional relationship geared towards a mutual need for democracy in the Middle East.

President Harry S. Truman states specifically that the primary objectives of U.S. foreign policy post World War II was, “the creation of conditions in which we and other nations will be able to work out a way of life free from coercion.” George Kennan, a member of the State Department policy planning staff in 1946, argued that communist influence should be contained within existing territorial limits, either by armed intervention or, more often, by economic and technical assistance. This became the drumbeat for the U.S. foreign policy of the time. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson pointed out to congressional delegates that “the West had to

keep Greece and Turkey out of Soviet hands- or be prepared to accept the subsequent loss of the strategic bases, lines of communication and resources of the Middle East.”<sup>34</sup> With respect to Turkey, the U. S. engaged in financial assistance geared towards “effecting that modernization necessary for the maintenance of its [Turkey] national integrity.”<sup>35</sup> President Truman emphasized that Turkey’s national integrity was essential to the preservation of order in the Middle East and “are of importance to the security of the United States and all freedom-loving peoples.”<sup>36</sup> Military assistance was garnered under Public Law 75, 80<sup>th</sup> Congress, known as the Greek-Turkish Assistance Act of 1948. By September 30, 1948, over \$117M was allocated from the Department of the Army, Federal Works Agency, Department of the Navy, and Department of State for “without American aid, the crushing burden of Turkish defense expenditures would have produced greater and greater economic dislocations, which would have made it more difficult for Turkey to continue to resist Communist pressures.”<sup>37</sup>

Additional U.S. aid to Turkey came in the form of the Marshall Aid Plan or European Recovery Program. Promoted by George C. Marshall, Secretary of State under the Truman Administration, the Marshall Plan dedicated \$137M in economic support between 1948 and 1952. “Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.”<sup>38</sup> By the late 1940s, Turkey’s political-economical situation was characterized by the high pressure of a single-party regime with significant political restrictions. The state and society suffered significantly economically following World War II, leaving Turkey prone to communist insurgencies and vulnerable to communist ideology, had no aid been available. Turkey was also faced by the external pressures of communism when in 1945; the Soviet Union gave notice of its intention to claim the eastern provinces of Turkey as well as control of passage through the Bosphorus Straits by establishing a base there.<sup>39</sup> The United States and Turkey shared a mutual national security threat in the form of communist expansion, however the relationship was heavily one-sided with significant Turkish dependency on the United States.

In 1950, the Turkish Democrat Party defeated the Republican Party in Turkey’s first free election and put into effect their policies of economic expansion through rapid mechanization and free enterprise.<sup>40</sup> With this small opening of Turkish political society came encouragement for private entrepreneurship and the elimination of the radical left. Following years of aid from the Marshall Plan, Turkey focused on its agricultural production, though its economic system was still largely based on importation and consumption instead of production. Turkey strengthened its alliance with the U.S. by supporting U.S. efforts during the Korean War (1950-

53) and joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952, establishing the basis for a Turkish-American defense relationship.<sup>41</sup> During the Cold War, Turkey continued to act as a buffer towards Soviet expansion and allowed the U.S. to build several bases on its soil and under various bilateral NATO agreements, allowed for the monitoring of the Soviet Union with signals, communications, and electronic intelligence. Over 30 installations including a total of approximately 5000 U.S. personnel were established and were collectively engaged in defense missions that ranged from basic logistics and supply operations to intelligence collection operations.<sup>42</sup> In 1969, a Defense Cooperation Agreement consolidated the various bilateral agreements between the U.S. and Turkey.<sup>43</sup>

By the 1970's, the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Turkey had become well-established, based upon a mutual national security interest in the common defense of each nation, that being the containment of Soviet expansion. The 1974 intervention of Turkey in Cyprus, however, foreshadowed a change in U.S. national interest, dealing less with the concerns of potential Soviet expansion. The Turkish prevention of the Greek attempt to unite the island with Greece, led President Johnson to write the Turkish Prime Minister, stating that the U.S. would not necessarily defend Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey used U.S. supplied equipment to intervene in Cyprus.<sup>44</sup> The letter was an indication that a new phase in U.S.- Turkey relations was to come. The U.S. arms embargo of Turkey and suspension of U.S. military aid lasted three years and the Turkish retaliation was to close all American military installations on its territory, resulting in the loss of early warning radar and intelligence directed towards the Soviet Union. As a means for reducing its reliance on the U.S., Turkey sought improved relations with the Soviet Union and its two main strategic priorities focused on diversifying its source of arms import and improving its development of a domestic arms industry.<sup>45</sup>

In 1980, the U.S. and Turkey signed a Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement to enhance economic, defense and related scientific and technological cooperation, preserving U.S. utilization of military facilities in Turkey.<sup>46</sup> With the end of the Cold War came potentially an end to the shared common strategic interests of the United States and Turkey, for the concern over Soviet expansion no longer existed. U.S. policy of the 1990's geared toward a new threat definition based upon proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, anti-American regimes in the Third World, drug traffickers, anti-democratic insurgents and terrorism. American-Turkish relations was referred to as "enhanced partnership," placing more emphasis on diplomatic and economic vice military cooperation, resulting in reduced military grants and funding. Former Congressman Edward Derwinski described the new policy when he stated, "we provide military

assistance to countries only when there is a common military purpose."<sup>47</sup> With Desert Storm, Turkey was able to reassert itself as militarily important to the U.S., joining the coalition to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Though Turkish opinion polls indicated that at times up to 88 percent of the Turkish population opposed support to the U.S.-led Gulf War coalition, Turkish leadership believed in the potential economic benefits as an outcome of the war. Turkey did, however, continue to pursue a multi-dimensional policy, concurrently seeking European Union membership. In 1999, President Clinton referred to the U.S.-Turkey relationship as a "strategic partnership."<sup>48</sup> As the new millennium approached, the U.S. viewed Turkey as a geographically significant ally, not as a buffer against Soviet expansion but for its proximity to rogue regimes. Turkey now represents a model for the U.S. 2002 NSS, showing the Islamic world the possibility of democracy in the Middle East, the potential for positive and peaceful Arab relations with Israel, and the need to work together against terrorism.<sup>49</sup> Even though the U.S. and Turkey share these common national interests (democracy in the Middle East, Arab-Israeli peace and a fight against terrorism), Turkey has become an independent actor.

Turkey continues to look for ways to maintain its national integrity, grappling with issues such as Turkish Cypriots (EU acceptance is contingent upon its resolution) and Iraqi Kurds, which threaten internal stability and identity. Though it continues to reap the benefit of U.S. military aid, Turkey is exploring diversified economic support, working towards improvement that will lead to its accession to the European Union, negotiating a gas-pipeline deal with Russia (Russia being Turkey's second largest trading partner with exchanges worth near \$10B)<sup>50</sup>, and warming relations with Syria and Iran, neighbors who share a common concern over the Iraqi Kurdish population. The financial assistance the U.S. provides to Turkey seems to be the mainstay of Turkish relations with the U.S. As previously suggested, U.S. support for Turkey's accession to the EU remains extremely important to Turkey, however, there are limits to how much money matters.<sup>51</sup>

#### Money Matters

As part of the continued cooperative effort to further Turkish economic and military self-reliance, the United States has, as of October 2004, loaned and granted Turkey more than \$4 billion in economic aid and more than \$14 billion in military assistance.<sup>52</sup> The United States is Turkey's third-largest export market. Even so, Turkey remains economically vulnerable, experiencing a decline in its economy in 2001 that was its worst in over half a century. Turkey's gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 7.4%, while inflation rose to 68.5%, and the Turkish currency, the lira, lost 60% of its value. GDP per capita dropped from about \$2,900 to \$2,100.<sup>53</sup>

Due to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in Afghanistan, Turkey was given a supplemental grant of \$20M in FY01 to be used in support of OEF.<sup>54</sup>

Historically, Turkey has been one of the largest recipients of the U.S. Security Assistance program, receiving over \$105M in Foreign Military Financing and \$14M in International Military Education and Training (IMET) between FY02-05. With the overall objectives of the IMET program being to further the goal of regional stability through defense cooperation between the United States and foreign countries and to increase the ability of foreign national military to absorb and maintain basic democratic values and protect internationally recognized human rights, it would appear that there has been a failure in policy with respect to Turkey.<sup>55</sup> For all of its investment, the US was handed a significant blow in 2003, when the Turkish Parliament voted to disallow the U.S. military to launch the invasion of Iraq from Turkish soil. The Bush administration offered an estimated \$6B in grants, \$20B in International Monetary Fund loans, but Turkey wanted close to \$50B in aid.<sup>56</sup> Though the subsequent Turkish Parliamentary vote was close, 264-251 in favor (with 267 being the required amount of votes), the defeat has ruptured U.S.-Turkey relations. Given the significant capital that had been spent to garner a relation that would allow the U.S. to operate in just such a situation and in the U.S. national interest, the Turkish declination of the U.S. request brings about the question of whether cultivating the relationship was worth it. Now that Turkey is an independent actor and a mature democracy, what impact is there on U.S. policies towards Turkey? Are continued relations with Turkey in the national interests of the U.S.?

#### Friend or Foe: Democracy, Anti-Americanism and Human Rights

To further exacerbate U.S. - Turkish relations issues, in November 2004, the chairman of the Turkish Parliamentary Human Rights Commission went a step farther and called U.S. activity in Iraq "genocide," increasing Turkish public disdain for the U.S. and fueling an anti-American movement.<sup>57</sup> Alternately, in recent decades, Turkey has had a problematic human rights record and contrary to the U.S.' stated policy of advocating human rights; the U.S. continues to push for Turkey's EU membership, though Turkey has yet to meet EU human rights standards.<sup>58</sup> The most recent U.S. State Department reports indicate several remaining problem areas. For example, four provinces, where many abuses occur, remain under state of emergency decrees which give authoritarian powers to governors, the reports describing extrajudicial killings (such as deaths due to excessive use of force and torture, widespread use of torture, and beatings).<sup>59</sup> The U.S. has appeared hypocritical in its cause towards human dignity and the promotion of democracy by not speaking out and has suffered yet again, loss of

credibility within the Middle East community. Continued economic instability, lack of Turkish support for US OIF objectives, and reports of human rights violations have been at significant cost to the U.S., not only financially but in the increased anti-American sentiment generated within the region. The Iraq War also heightened concerns in Turkey that its own Kurdish population would reinvigorate efforts for an independent homeland, adding a destabilizing influence to the region and again, increased distrust of U.S. and western intent. A growing anti-American sentiment given a new environment of growing terrorist threats and Islamic extremism, pits the U.S. and Turkish national interests against each other. As there appears to be a rift in U.S. and Turkey relations, with the threat of Soviet expansion no longer a common concern, what if anything is in the interest of the U.S. and Turkish common defense?

#### Future of U.S. Policies Toward Turkey: Faith in the Common Defense

As U.S. and Turkey relations have evolved away from a common defense concern against Soviet expansion, the U.S. must determine if and how relations with Turkey is specifically in its national interest and whether the same can be said for Turkey. The current U.S. policy relies heavily on military and financial aid to Turkey, which looks to decrease its reliance on the U.S., no longer fearing Soviet aggression or expansion and seeking acceptance into the European Union and improved relations with its neighbors for economic stability. The U.S. "carrot and stick" approach which depends on money and the military as the key to manipulating allies and implementing its foreign policy must develop new tools if it is to influence the Middle East and address new security concerns.<sup>60</sup> Turkey's denial of U.S. access for OIF is indicative of this change in environment and was seen in media coverage in Turkey where caricatures of Uncle Sam shoving dollar bills down the cleavage of a Turkish belly-dancer were used to depict the U.S. request, turning an ally into a potential enemy by alienating a public already suspicious of the West.<sup>61</sup> If fighting terrorism, advancing democracy, and stability in the Middle East in the form of resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict remain our top National Security concerns, are there any common Turkish concerns? This question should elicit an emphatic, Yes, of course.

Fighting terrorism could be considered one of Turkey's top concerns, when you look at its current interest in eradicating the Kurdish militant organization Kongra-Gel (also known as Kadek and formerly the Kurdistan Worker's Party- PKK). At present PKK, with its Marxist-Leninist ideology and violent methods, continues to be a menace detrimental to the promotion of democratic way of living in the region. It focuses operations primarily in Turkey, Iraq, Europe, and the Middle East and is considered to be about 5,000 members strong.<sup>62</sup> Currently located in northern Iraq, the PKK poses a threat to Turkey not only for its terrorist activities but also due

to its potential in defining an internationally accepted and independent “Kurdistan” state. Kurds from south-east Turkey, eastern Syria, northern Iraq, and western Iran could lay claim to an area that encompasses 6% of the world’s oil reserves.<sup>63</sup> A previous Turkish Kurd rebellion shattered Turkey’s economy and cost over 35,000 lives, including 5,000 soldiers.<sup>64</sup> Prime Minister Erdogan has indicated that Turkey’s patience was running out over U.S. reluctance to take military action against Turkish Kurds hiding in northern Iraq.<sup>65</sup>

The U.S. has had to come in direct conflict with Turkey, when it arrested eleven Turkish Special Forces soldiers operating in northern Iraq. As the U.S. tries to assist in the development of a self-governing Iraq, it has had to take a position against Turkish intervention, which it had once turned a blind eye towards in the past. The U.S. has also made covert contact with the PKK, in an attempt to disarm the group and steer it towards peace. It would appear that in preventing Turkey from moving against entrenched PKK elements in northern Iraq, the U.S. may be pushing Turkey closer to Iran and Syria.<sup>66</sup> This should not necessarily be feared, however, for it is in Turkey’s national interest to have relations and thereby influence with its neighbors.

The common ground for the U.S. and Turkey, however, is democracy. Democracy, doesn’t come in a day, but must be cultivated over time. Turkey has paved the way for the world by its ability to move forward as a secular democracy. Its willingness to find a peaceful relationship with Israel also provides faith that there can be a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Strengthening diplomatic ties with Turkey while recognizing it as an equal, with “a legitimate right and even duty to make democratic decisions such as choosing not to join the U.S. war effort against Iraq,” will assist Turkey in its internal metamorphosis as it exercises its democratic right to seek alliance with the European Union.<sup>67</sup> As it works to build a democratic framework for Iraq, the U.S. must utilize improved diplomatic efforts, relying less on its military might and more on its allies in the region to promote the interests of the Middle East.

Turkey and Israel represent the key allies in the Middle East, who want to see their neighbor democratize. As late as 5 March 2006, Israeli Ambassador to Turkey Pinhas Avivi said that “Turkey-Israel relations in every area will continue as planned in the past regardless of the visit of Hamas delegation (to Turkey).”<sup>68</sup> Israeli and Turkish officials say relations between the two countries are back on track following a strong disagreement over the recent visit to Ankara of a top-ranking Hamas leader, but repercussions from the trip are continuing to be felt both inside and outside Turkey.<sup>69</sup> Turkey and Israel continue to engage in bilateral natural power and water deals, strengthening their economic ties. The U.S. must work diplomatically to keep the relationship between Turkey and Israel viable. For now, Turkey displays a willingness

to “continue to have the same kind of solidarity...in Turkish-U.S. relations in the past, and in the future,” (as expressed by Prime Minister Erdogan) <sup>70</sup> making continued support to Turkey imperative in the U.S.’ effort to promote democracy in the Muslim culture.

## Conclusion

### Summary

Since the time of Abraham, conflict has existed between the three religious cultures represented by the United States, Turkey, and Israel and today is no different. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism by virtue of their Abrahamic roots share many virtues in common and it is the U.S.’ policy to try to capitalize on some of these shared values with the aim of making the world “not just safer but better” in an effort to ensure U.S. security. Little progress in “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity,” however, indicate the U.S. policies have been somewhat ineffective.

Though millions of dollars in support has been given to both countries, they remain dependent on the U.S., either financially or militarily. Instead of improving security, Turkey declined its ally access in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, signifying a change in Turkey’s national security interests. Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations remain sluggish and the U.S. is now experiencing a rise in anti-Americanism throughout the Middle East. Though Turkey remains a U.S. partner in its War on Terrorism, and represents the ability of the Middle East to sustain democracy and western values, if the tide of anti-Americanism is not stemmed, the fledgling fires of democracy these countries represent will be snuffed out, to be replaced by a more dangerous environment to U.S. interests.

### Recommendations

Obviously, there are no easy or quick answers to the security issues in the Middle East, some issues having been around for thousands of years. In today’s environment, education, financial support that improves the economic welfare of the countries of the Middle East, and increased and focused international involvement may be the keys to seeing progress towards “Peace in the Middle East,” decreasing reliance on the military tool as the main source for change.

If democracy for all is truly the path towards making the world “not just safer but better,” with the clear goals of “political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity (as the current U.S. policy suggests),” then educating the general populace of the Middle East on the benefits of democracy is a must. For true democracy to

work, the individuals must understand that their one vote counts. The general populace has to want democracy.....enough even, to perhaps fight for it.

Education would have to take place on many fronts, to include within the school systems from elementary to college levels. Opportunities for open discussion and questioning about democracy within the Arab communities will lead to "enlightened" individuals potentially taking the concept of democracy, making it Arab, and planting this hybrid seed within communities to bear the fruit of a new Arab form of democracy. For any sort of democratic concept to survive in the Middle East, it must come from within the Middle East. It can not be dictated from the Western world. The U.S. must foster its current relationships within the Middle East. This would require heavy reliance on Turkey as an example to the Arab world. Continued support for Turkey's bid for European Union accession and cultivating a Turkey-Israeli relationship will educate the Middle East as to the benefits of peaceful relations. The U.S. must recognize Turkey as a democracy, capable disagreeing with the U.S. The U.S. must support foster and then support Turkish and other Middle Eastern efforts at change towards democratization and the U.S. must exude endless patience.

Education of the Arab world is not the only form of education required. The Western world would require additional education on the Middle East, as well. For a world wide form of democracy to work, an understanding, acceptance and slow melding of cultures will need to occur to further blend the seams of globalization and develop the means for better communication, trade and further refining international rules (not necessarily western rules) for democracy. This is a long term solution and would probably require generations to achieve, given that the Middle East is perhaps more varied than even the western cultures. The coming together of Middle East and West will take time, not to mention the time it would take the Middle Eastern countries to come together internally under an umbrella of democracy, though religion and education can be a common bond that hastens the transition. Lessons learned from American and European cultural responses (from resistance to Turkey's EU accession and internal strife as a result of clashes based upon religion and ethnicity) must be examined and discussed frankly and openly.

In the near term, the U.S. needs to fully examine the causes for the increased anti-Americanism in the Middle East and its true potential impact on national security. From outside appearances, it would seem that increased anti-Americanism would direct further aggression against the U.S. and its interest. If this movement is based on a poor and disgruntled population looking for a scapegoat for their woes, then besides education, support directed at improving economies might reduce and alternately work towards advancing the cause of

democracy. Less military funding and greater emphasis on economic support may pave the way for a burgeoning democracy.

Finally, democracy can not be identified as solely an American value. The international community must step forward and actively promote the cause. The international community must support the Middle East, not only economically and through education, but also through more active engagement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and building and supporting the fledgling democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. The small flames of Middle East democracy must be stoked and vigilantly watched to ensure that there will be true peace in the future. There must be faith in democracy as the common defense.

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