

## THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY: A Post-September 11 Model of Sustained Engagement

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Türkiye:  
11 Eylül Sonrası Sürdürülen Mücadele Modeli

Annie PFORZHEIMER \*

### Abstract

*The U.S. and Turkey have enjoyed an active, strong and diversified strategic partnership for over fifty years. From Korea to Kosovo, and now to Kabul, the U.S. and Turkey have stood side-by-side to fight the evils of terrorism. Security cooperation has long been conducted within the NATO forum, as well as key operations such as Operation Desert Storm and Operation Northern Watch in Iraq. Turkey and the U.S. have worked together to secure regional peace on the diplomatic front as well. Last year's Mitchell Commission, with the participation of former Turkish President Demirel, served to highlight the importance of Turkey's actions in this region. Our economic ties grew strong over the past decade, although much more can be done to develop them further; and our two nations have always counted on a deep friendship based on mutual respect.*

*In security, in regional cooperation and on economic issues, September 11 has deepened US-Turkey ties. The events of September 11 and Turkey's overwhelmingly supportive response have left a lasting impression on Americans. We have deepened and diversified a partnership in which U.S. interests in Turkey coincide with Turkish aspirations in areas of security, economic prosperity, political stability and reform.*

*Key Words: Terrorism, security cooperation, reform*

### Özet

*ABD ve Türkiye elli yılı aşkın bir süredir aktif, güçlü ve çeşitlendirilmiş bir stratejik ortaklık yürütmektedir. Kore'den Kosova'ya ve şimdi de Kabil'de ABD ve Türkiye, terörizm belasıyla savaşmak için hep omuz omuzaydılar. Güvenlik işbirliği çok uzun yıllardır hem NATO çerçevesinde, hem de Irak'taki Çöl Fırtınası ve Kuzey'den Keşif Gücü gibi harekâtlar aracılığıyla yürütüldü. Türkiye ve ABD aynı zamanda diplomatik alanda da bölgesel barışın sağlanmasında birlikte çalıştılar. Eski Cumhurbaşkanı Süleyman Demirel'in de içinde bulunduğu geçen yıl toplanan Mitchell Komisyonu bu bölgede Türkiye'nin eylemlerinin önemini vurgulamaya da yaradı. Son on yılda ekonomik bağlarımız güçlendi ancak daha da geliştirmek için yapılabilecek daha çok şey var. Her iki ulus da karşılıklı saygıya dayalı derin dostluğa hep güvenmişlerdir.*

*Güvenlik, bölgesel işbirliği ve ekonomik konularda 11 Eylül Türk-Amerikan bağlarını daha da derinleştirdi. 11 Eylül olayları ve Türkiye'nin bu olaylar üzerine bize verdiği büyük destek, Amerikalılar üzerinde kalıcı bir izlenim bıraktı. Ortaklığımızı derinleştirdik ve çeşitlendirdik, ki bu ortaklık içinde, güvenlik, ekonomik kalkınma, siyasi istikrar ve reform konularında Türkiye'nin emelleri ABD'nin Türkiye'deki çıkarları ile örtüşmekte.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: Terörizm, güvenlik işbirliği, reform*

\* Embassy of The United States of America

### **Fighting together against terrorism...**

President Bush has underscored the importance of eliminating the threat of international terrorism. The United Nations, with an historic Security Council resolution, has made dealing with international terrorism the top priority for the world community, and NATO declared that the September 11 attack was an attack on all Alliance members. The United States could have no better friend and ally than Turkey in this fight. Turkey's rapid and unqualified support for the international coalition against terrorism was no surprise. For 17 years, Turkey fought an anti-terror campaign against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and other deadly groups such as DHKP-C. The U.S. and Turkey have worked to include key Turkish terrorist organizations on internationally-recognized lists of terrorists. We are now working together to ensure that KADEK, the successor organization to the PKK, is treated worldwide as the terrorist organization that it is.

Uprooting and destroying international terror networks will require strong action by the international community through a multi-faceted coalition. We must achieve a global consensus that the deliberate targeting of innocent victims for political purposes is a crime against all humankind, no matter what the motive happens to be. There will be three key objectives in this international effort. First, the coalition must strengthen and maintain global political will for the long haul. Second, the international community must commit the military, intelligence, economic, and law enforcement resources necessary for victory. Third, we must convince people outside our borders, especially those in the region, that this is a fight to bring them a better future, not a war against Islam. Turkey has, and will continue to play an important role in each of these areas.

Opening of airspace and facilities, strong support in NATO and other international bodies, and close consultations on how to work with the Afghan opposition were vital elements of Turkey's support. Its highly professional military, both bilaterally and through NATO, provides us with crucial logistical support. Insights and input from Turkish leaders, diplomats, and soldiers help to shape our approach to a region—Central and South Asia—where U.S. involvement is, by historical standards, relatively recent. Turkey will assume command of the security assistance force in Kabul and is helping to train the new Afghan national army and even Afghan diplomats. We appreciate their leadership.

### **Working for regional stability...**

Turkey is the Muslim world's leading secular democracy and the only NATO ally with a predominantly Muslim population. The U.S. applauds the Istanbul "meeting of civilizations" last February. Under Turkey's leadership, the EU and

the OIC met for the first time in history. This gathering provided an opportunity for the advocates of civility and dialog in both east and west to speak out against those who advocate prejudice and terror.

Security cooperation has been the hallmark of U.S. policy toward Turkey since the USS Missouri sailed into Istanbul's harbor in 1946 and the announcement of the Truman doctrine the following year. Turks and Americans fought together in Korea, and NATO membership kept Turkey firmly in the West throughout the Cold War. Military and economic assistance buttressed a key ally that held NATO's southern flank despite the turmoil of the 1970s, and the arms embargo following Turkey's action in Cyprus. The end of the Cold War brought new security challenges to the relationship. Throughout the 1990s, Turkey's participation in the Gulf War, UN operations in Somalia, and NATO operations in the Balkans showed that it shared broad security concerns with the United States. These actions, in fact, enhanced Turkey's role in transatlantic security. For Americans, it moved from a bulwark against Soviet expansion to a stabilizing force in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

Regional diplomatic issues have taken center stage in the U.S.-Turkish dialog. The Middle East provides one example. Turkey has developed a strong relationship with Israel, yet maintains solid ties with the Palestinians and with Arab governments. Beginning with the Oslo peace process, the U.S. and Turkey have remained in close contact about efforts to achieve a lasting peace. Turkish insights and participation—based on a long history and privileged status with the parties—complement and inform U.S. efforts. Former Turkish President Suleyman Demirel was one of five members of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee chaired by former Senator George Mitchell. The “Mitchell Plan” is the world's guide for achieving a just settlement to the Middle East conflict. Turkish support is vital to these efforts.

### **Helping Turkey's economy..**

September 11 hit Turkey's economy just as it was beginning to show signs of recovery. The United States encouraged international financial institutions to help support a strengthened reform program. Our aim here, in harmony with the aspirations of the Turkish people, is to help move Turkey from Recovery to Growth to Competitiveness. Sustained growth will require foreign investment. For U.S. investors, in the electrical energy, telecommunications, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and beverages sectors, important issues await effective government action. We are certain these issues will be resolved once they are addressed because we want American investors to regard Turkey with confidence.

Since September 11, the U.S. and Turkey have strengthened and diversified

our economic ties. We encouraged international lending. Economic reform is the only bridge from Turkey's old economy to the new one, from inflation, debt and poverty, to hope, growth and prosperity. The Turkish people, especially young people, tell us that they want this bridge completed. These young patriots, men and women in homes, in schools and universities, in large and small businesses around this country, want to reach that opposite shore, to have a new beginning, with sustained steady growth. Turkey's courage, Turkey's leadership will take them there. Reorganizing the banking sector, privatizing, streamlining the public sector, and fighting corruption are difficult tasks, but Turkey's young people and their future require such determination.

Last January, in Washington, President Bush and Prime Minister Ecevit agreed to put economic ties on a wholly new level. As Turkey moves from recovery to growth, the U.S. – Turkish economic relationship must move from loans to trade. In February, we convened the U.S.-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission. We made a concrete proposal to establish Qualifying Industrial Zones. These will enable Turkish firms to export certain materials from designated zones duty free to the United States. Once approved, Turkey will be only the third country in the world to enjoy this opportunity. This measure will promote three-way Israeli-Turkish-US trade and investment, which will be an important complement to our strategic ties. We are now talking with members of the Turkish business community seeking these proposals for Qualifying Industrialized Zones. We are moving ahead as rapidly as possible; Turkey's contribution will make this project a success.

There are some recent initiatives with respect to U.S.-Turkish economic cooperation. In May, a senior U.S. trade official came to Turkey to explain how Turkey could take fuller advantage of duty free treatment offered under our Generalized System of Preferences program. Under this system Turkey can export more duty-free products to the United States. The same month, the U.S. sponsored a major regional tourism conference in Istanbul. There is great potential for increasing U.S. tourism in Turkey.

Work on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project continues. The events of September 11th underline the importance of safe, reliable, diversified energy supplies for the world's economies. We look forward to continued progress in this oil pipeline and in the Shah Deniz gas pipeline.

The most promising avenue for long-term enhanced economic cooperation is investment. Turkey has the potential to attract much more American investment if it continues its reform program and resolves the problems that have affected existing investors. We are doing everything possible to increase trade and investment, and we see a bright future ahead for commercial cooperation between our two countries.

The U.S. intends to remain fully engaged in Turkey's economic reform program. This means working closely with the IMF, the World Bank, the G-7, and the private sector to deliver the right kind of support on time, to boost confidence, and to encourage investment. Turks want a brighter future and will make sacrifices to achieve one. Turkey must avoid repeating mistakes such as high inflation and increasing debt. For the sake of its young generation, it has no other choice. Turkey must do more to make itself attractive to foreign investors. Economic reform is the first step – it puts Turkey on the same level as other markets – but then Turkey must aggressively compete for investment, export markets, and tourism.

### **Supporting political reforms...**

Turks deserve an open, democratic political system in which the rule of law is upheld and preserved. In a free and open society, law must be part of our intellectual conscience. Rule of Law means that international investors, ordinary citizens, political figures and every other element of society must know that they will be protected — and punished — equally by the law. Moreover, they need to know before they act whether their action is illegal. The same law must be applied to one and all — with no one held exempt, immune or above the law.

Turkey wants to open membership negotiations with the European Union as quickly as possible; adopting the needed democratic reform measures must therefore be an immediate priority. Turkey has begun that effort in earnest. A good example is the October 2001 passage of 34 constitutional amendments, the most sweeping political liberalization since 1982, and arguably since 1960. Stalled in 1999, the package took shape quietly in an inter-party parliamentary committee in 2001. Over the course of the summer, it moved on for broader debate, both in the public and within the government. The eventual amendments represented a strong, broad consensus with support from political parties, employers, unions, and civil society organizations. In February and March, two new legislative reform packages gave teeth to these amendments, while circulars and directives in various ministries have also ordered the implementation of reforms such as a shortened period of incommunicado detention. Courts are trying to reduce their backlogs and shorten trial periods; this is a crucial part of reform.

The human rights trend in Turkey over the last decade is encouraging to the West. Real change usually comes slowly. The constitutional amendments cap real, long-term progress in increasing freedom of expression, decreasing the use of torture, opening the political system, and encouraging civil society.

In the United States, police are the front line of stability and protection of order. At the same time, however, their role is also to safeguard individual rights

and freedoms. Prosecutors and police work more closely together in this regard. We suggest that Turkey's police might benefit from looking at the U.S. "community policing" model, as one way to address long-standing concerns about the treatment of citizens by law enforcement officials. Community policing principles include commitments to:

- ➔ Consider the individual citizen as the client of the police rather than the state;
- ➔ Honor human rights and human dignity of its members and the general population;
- ➔ Support the free exercise of available legal rights of all persons; and
- ➔ Encourage the fair and impartial enforcement of those laws within its purview;
- ➔ Maintain a focus on crime prevention as a means to foster public order, domestic tranquillity and an acceptable quality of life for all persons within the country;
- ➔ Where reasonably possible, enter into partnerships with community and other governmental organizations to identify and solve community problems which provide opportunities for criminal conduct;
- ➔ Approve and encourage the use of non-deadly physical force by its members only under carefully defined circumstances to further a legitimate and lawful, societal objective, and the use of deadly force by its members only to save the life of any person, including a member of the police, from a perceived threat of imminent death or serious injury, or under other circumstances articulated in a local, public law;
- ➔ Develop, maintain and operate under a code of conduct, rules, policies and procedures which provide reasonable guidance to police personnel in their behavior and the discharge of their assigned functions while holding them accountable for the manner in which they perform their duties;
- ➔ Readily accept and thoroughly investigate complaints of misconduct against police personnel; and
- ➔ Appropriately discipline police personnel who are fairly determined to have violated the established police code of conduct, rules, policies and/or procedures.

### **Elements of a "strategic partnership"...**

Few issues in U.S. foreign policy do not impact our relations with Turkey. Recognizing the importance of this, the United States government began in November 1999 to give the relationship a new title: "strategic partnership" This phrase represented a broad, bipartisan recognition of the importance of Turkey to the United States. It also recognized that the United States has a significant stake

in Turkey's ability to integrate into the global economy, move closer to Europe, and stabilize a troubled region. This partnership includes a realistic vision of Turkey and its potential. Istanbul is Europe's largest city. Turkey's economy is a potential powerhouse on the edge of the Middle East, with a gross national product (GNP) half that of Russia. Turks, 60 percent of whom are under the age of 35, hunger for education, health care, economic prosperity, more respect for human rights, and a vibrant democracy. In a very real sense, the relationship matches American interests with Turkish aspirations.

Keeping the strategic partnership vital and helping Turks realize their aspirations require the United States' sustained engagement. Strategic partnership is not just a product of joint declarations and government-to-government agreements. It is no accident that non-official partnerships, whether in business or education, and increased contact between Turks and Americans have accompanied the growth of the relationship. Fifty years of academic exchanges have fostered the human infrastructure we need for increased communication. Americans and Turks who have studied or done research in the other's country make for informed citizens who can explain American and Turkish motivations to those who have doubts.

Maintaining a partnership requires Turkey and the United States to recognize challenges, talk about them, and place them in a proper context. Iraq is one example. Despite reports claiming that Turkey and the U.S. diverge on details of Iraq policy, Turks and Americans need to remember how much we both agree on basic issues. Saddam Hussein's regime threatens the people of Iraq and its neighbors, supports terrorism, and pursues chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Turkey and the U.S. both strongly support the territorial integrity of Iraq. Turks and Americans have worked successfully to contain Iraq's threat, most visibly in Operation Northern Watch, but less visibly in the UN and other fora. Continued close consultations and shared assessments of the dangers will help us to resolve such problems without threatening our mutual interests.

As strategic partners, we must address regional issues together. On Cyprus, the U.S. supports the UN Secretary General's good offices missions, which seeks a comprehensive bi-zonal, bi-communal settlement. The U.S. and others recognize full well that returning to the pre-1974 security situation, where the Turkish minority suffered greatly, is not an option. The United States supports the talks between the two sides and believes that it is possible to get a just and durable comprehensive settlement in a short period of time if the necessary political will is present to do it. The commitment of the actual parties is indispensable. The stakes are high, and leadership will be needed to reach a settlement.

The U.S. has long supported Turkey's EU candidacy. Turkey asked for increased European cooperation in combating terrorist groups targeting Turkey

and operating in Europe, and the EU recently complied. This new security environment should encourage greater dialogue between Europe and Turkey, cause all parties to recognize their common security interests, and increase trust by dealing with sensitive issues. Increased trust can and will strengthen key efforts, such as the EU's defense and security policy and common anti-terrorism measures. NATO and the EU must work hand in hand, not in competition, regarding European security. The new environment puts a premium on action over philosophical discussion.

### **Conclusion: sustained engagement...**

U.S. – Turkish friendship is long-standing, deep, and broad. It also fully supports Turkish aspirations. The bilateral relationship is strong because it operates on many levels of mutual interest. In addition to government-to-government links, there are academic dialogues on sensitive issues such as Armenia; business links; military trade; 11.000 young Turkish students currently studying in the United States; Turkish Parliament linkages with the U.S. Congress (where there is a “Turkey Caucus” on issues of urgent interest). We can even point to the beneficial effect of U.S. tourists coming to Turkey in record numbers and beginning to understand this country for the first time.

Turkey's success is vital to our hopes for prosperity and peace in this new and turbulent century, especially in light of the extraordinary events of September 11. Under its economic reform program, Turkey can be a model for other struggling emerging markets, proof that others can follow this same model and prosper in the globalized economy of the twenty-first century. Its political system, enhanced by recent constitutional amendments, is proof that a predominantly Muslim nation with the full range of traditional cultural values has a place at the table with the most developed and democratic states. Turkey's society will greatly benefit from continuing down the reform road it has chosen. Finally, Turkey must continue to play a major role if we are to achieve regional stability and a more peaceful world.