

UNITED STATES – TURKEY – IRAN

STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR THE COMING DECADE

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September 2011



Final Report of the Institute of Politics
National Security Policy Group



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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY GROUP

The Institute of Politics is a non-profit organization located in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. It is a living memorial President John F. Kennedy, and its mission is to unite and engage students, particularly undergraduates, with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs. Led by a Director, Senior Advisory Board, Student Advisory Committee, and staff, the Institute provides wide-ranging opportunities for both Harvard students and the general public.

The National Security Policy Group is part of the Institute of Politics' Policy Program, an initiative designed to help students express their views and make recommendations on complex and pressing policy issues such as healthcare and education. The National Security group was created in 2010 by Jean-Philippe Gauthier, a Harvard undergraduate, in order to deal with issues relating to national security and foreign affairs. This report is the result of a year-long intensive effort by a team of ten undergraduates and is the first report published by the National Security Policy Group.

The Institute of Politics does not endorse specific policy positions; accordingly, all views expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the authors.

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For the past year, a team of interdisciplinary undergraduates have worked to analyze the current relationships between the United States, Turkey and Iran and issue policy recommendations based on these findings. Turkey is a country that does not seem to be getting the attention it deserves in policy circles and academia, despite recent efforts by organizations such as CSIS to outline the importance Turkey has for U.S. strategic interests. As such, the National Security Policy Group thought it appropriate that Turkey be the subject of its first comprehensive policy report. The students gathered information from scholarly and news articles, as well as through interviews with leading academic experts and Turkish diplomats. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure meetings with American diplomats or Iranian ones.

The first person who deserves our thanks is John P. White, Robert and Renée Belfer Lecturer at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, for helping us narrow down our topic and brainstorm possible subtopic ideas. Without him, this report would never have come to life. We would also like to thank Matthew Bunn, Associate Professor of Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government and Co-Principal Investigator, Project on Managing the Atom, Graham T. Allison, director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, and Joseph S. Nye Jr., Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor and former Dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, for their initial input and suggestions. They greatly helped us set the agenda and make sure we included the most important topics of U.S.-Turkey-Iran relations.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkey has been a key ally of the United States for over fifty years and remains so today. Sharing borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria and having access to the Mediterranean and Black Seas, Turkey is geographically well-positioned to play an important role in both Middle Eastern politics. It is the bridge between Europe and Asia, but also the link between the Western world and the Islamic world. It has good relations with many of its neighbors, a strong economy and a modern military.

Turkey and the United States share similar strategic interests such as ensuring stability in the Middle East, creating a prosperous and secure Iraq, countering terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, achieving regional security in Afghanistan, maintaining strong economies, safeguarding the flow of oil and natural gas and promoting democracy and tolerance. But in recent years, Turkey and the United States have grown apart over disputes regarding Israel's stance on the Palestinian issue and Iran's nuclear program.

Turkey is also more independent in the conduct of its foreign policy, becoming increasingly assertive in the Middle East, strengthening its commercial ties with many of its neighbors, and establishing good relations with Iran and Syria, initiatives that have led some American and Israeli officials to believe that Turkey was drifting away from the West. However, the United States can use Turkey's good relations with Iran and Syria to foster a collaborative environment in the Middle East, resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear program and promote stability throughout the region.

Suggestions to Move Forward:

- The United States must reenergize U.S.-Turkey relations; if it does not, it runs the risk of potentially losing one of its greatest Middle Eastern allies. It can do so by:
 - Creating a positive agenda for strategic cooperation between itself in Turkey that revolves around the stabilization of Iraq, the elimination of the PKK, the promotion of Turkey's E.U. membership, peace in the Middle East, and the expansion of Turkey's role as an energy hub,
 - Leveraging its relations with European states to promote Turkey's accession to the European Union,
 - Allowing Turkey to take on greater responsibilities within NATO,
 - Expanding business and educational ties between the United States and Turkey as this would create an atmosphere more conducive to long-term cooperation,
 - Recognizing Turkey's outstanding contribution to the war in Afghanistan,
 - Helping Turkey increase the capacity of its pipelines by promoting foreign and American investments in the Turkish oil transportation market,
 - Mediating the dispute that plagues Turkish-Israeli relations and restoring good relations between the two states, and

- Strengthening the real-time intelligence-sharing agreement reached with Turkey in 2007 in order to make the sharing of information regarding the PKK more rapid and effective.
- The United States should cooperate with Turkey to achieve a stable and secure Iraq:
 - Both parties should exert influence, as necessary, to protect the political voice of each of the Iraq political pluralities—the Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds. This is essential; if one of the political pluralities becomes omitted from the political process, a civil war could ensue.
 - The United States should seek to mediate disputes regarding the management of shared oil and water resources between Iraq and Turkey and promote greater economic ties between the two countries.
- The United States can improve its relations with Iran by:
 - Opening up lines of communications with the Islamic Republic. Clearly, the current isolationist policy has not worked. In order to resolve the problems plaguing the Middle East, the United States must first be able to negotiate with the countries that are the sources of these problems, and
 - Finding interests that are common to itself, Turkey and Iran, such as a stable Iraq, a peaceful Middle East and the neutralization of the PKK, and working towards achieving those goals in unison. Establishing such strategic cooperation will require confidence-building measures between the United States and Iran, a strong political will on the part of the three governments and compromises from all sides.
- It remains a firm goal of the United States that Iran should not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons. However, the current foreign policy approach has proved unable to ensure the success of this objective. The United States should attempt to leverage Turkey's good relations with Iran in order to move forward on the issue. In exchange for concessions on the part of the Iranian government, the United States could:
 - Use Turkey as a mediator and neutral party in its negotiations with the Islamic Republic,
 - Encourage Turkey to invite Iran to more meetings that pertain to Afghanistan and allow Iran to be more involved in the resolution of the Afghan war,
 - Help Iran and Turkey build short pipelines that would allow Iranian oil to reach European markets,
 - Support the Nabucco project and exert its influence to allow Iran to send its natural gas through the pipeline all the way to Europe, and
 - Agree to a pact that would be based on the 2010 Tehran Declaration and the October 2009 U.S. proposal.
- The ultimate goal of such measures would be to have Iran and its Supreme Leader agree to sign a solemn international agreement stating that Iran will never acquire nuclear weapons and declaring that if Iran violated the agreement, China, Russia and the United States would launch devastating strikes against it.

Literature Review

Experts are at odds over which policy to pursue towards Turkey. Some, such as Stephen Cook, believe that Turkey is a “frenemy” of the United States in the Middle East because while both countries share similar interests, they seek to take different roads to get to the same destination. The rise of the AKP, a party that is seen as having Islamic roots, has also led some of these experts to fear that Turkey will strengthen its ties with the Muslim world at the expense of its relations with the West.

But other foreign policy analysts, such as Stephen Kinzer, stress that the U.S. will alienate countries such as Turkey if it continues to pursue what he views as a Cold War-era foreign policy that is no longer relevant to modern problems and regional dynamics. He proposes the adoption of a more conciliatory foreign policy towards both Turkey and Iran, treating Turkey as the trustable ally it always was and Iran as a country that feels threatened by both Israel and the United States. By adopting a less threatening stance, the United States will convey the message that it does not have aggressive intentions towards Iran and will then be able to negotiate with Iran while using Turkey as an intermediary.

Despite the differences of opinion over the reasons behind Turkey’s recent conduct, many scholars agree that the United States should strengthen its business, economic and military ties with Turkey. Indeed, encouraging business ties, conducting educational and cultural exchanges, and creating other bonds between the two countries beyond the foreign policy arena would create an atmosphere more conducive to long-term cooperation.

United States-Turkey Relations

Relations between the United States and the entity now known as Turkey started at the turn of the twentieth century, at a time when the Ottoman Empire was very weak. Americans and Europeans started asking for “capitulations” that would allow U.S. and European citizens to live in the Ottoman Empire but only be subject to the laws of their native countries. The Ottoman Empire and the United States were on opposite sides during the First World War, but from 1927 onwards, the Republic of Turkey, the successor to the Ottoman Empire and a democratic, secular state, and the United States generally had good relations with one another.

After the end of the Second World War, the United States gave Turkey over \$100 million dollars in aid, which allowed the country to industrialize and modernize its military. A few years later, in 1952, Turkey joined NATO. During the Cold War, Turkey was allied with the United States, allowing it to use the Incirlik Air Base and station long-range ballistic missiles in the country. After the demise of the Soviet Union, Turkey continued to be an important partner for the United States, supporting it throughout the 1990s in conflicts such as the First Gulf War.

Strategic Objectives of the United States, Turkey and Iran

The United States

The United States' approach to foreign policy is still greatly defined by the experiences the U.S. had during the Cold War and by the fact that it is the sole superpower on the planet. As such, the country's primary strategic objective is to avoid the formation of an alliance of states that could challenge its power and threaten U.S. interests across the globe. In the Middle Eastern theatre, the United States' main goals are: safeguarding its access to cheap oil, stabilizing Iraq, eliminating terrorism and keeping Israel secure.

The United States is the country that consumes the largest quantities of oil and natural gas per year and, despite being among the world's largest producers of both commodities, has to import most of the oil and natural gas it consumes. Since the Middle East contains about 60% of the world's oil reserves and the U.S. imports around 13% of its oil from the area, it is a highly strategic region of the world for the United States and its energy security. Iraq is also a vital component of the U.S.' Middle Eastern foreign policy because of its value as a possible Middle Eastern ally, its potential to become a terrorist haven if left unchecked and its vast oil reserves. The elimination of terrorism also represents a key goal for the United States due to the threat this phenomenon poses to U.S. interests worldwide, especially in light of the 9/11 attacks. Finally, the United States seeks to protect Israel because it is the only functioning democracy in the Middle East, it is religiously significant to some Americans, and it has an important strategic value.

Turkey

Since the rise of the AKP to power, Turkey has pursued a more assertive foreign policy and seeks to become a major player in the international arena. In order to achieve this goal, it wants to create a regional sphere of influence, resolve the question of the Kurds and become a significant energy hub. Due to its geographic location, Turkey has the ability to create a sphere of influence stretching from northern Africa to the Black and Caspian Seas. By establishing such a network of partners and allies, it will gain influence in the international arena and be able to achieve its other priorities. This is part of the rationale behind Ahmet Davutoğlu's policy of "zero problems with our neighbors." In addition, Turkey wants to resolve the Kurdish issue and stop PKK attacks on its territory. The fight against the PKK has been a constant preoccupation of the Turkish government and it has consumed a lot of resources and manpower. Turkey must resolve this issue to be able to fully assert its influence over neighboring countries such as Iraq. Finally, Turkey aims to become a Middle Eastern energy hub that will link the Western demand for oil and natural gas to the Eastern supply of these commodities. Accomplishing this would increase Turkey's influence in the region and would make it a key ally for both the West and its neighbors.

Iran

Iran also pursues an assertive foreign policy in the Middle East as it seeks to become the dominant player of that region. Under the leadership of Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran has adopted a more confrontational policy towards the West, pursuing its nuclear program despite strong opposition from the United Nations Security Council. Iran adopted such a foreign policy because it seeks to achieve regional preeminence. It is not an expansionist power in a territorial sense, but it does wish to influence policy-making in neighboring countries. Iran also seeks to become the leader of the Muslim world and prove the superiority of Shia Islam over Sunni Islam. Indeed, Iran and Saudi Arabia are waging a covert war in countries like Bahrain to decide who will lead the Muslim *umma*, or community.

Turkish-Israeli Relations

Turkey and Israel share ancient historical and cultural ties with one another since the Ottoman Empire accepted the Jews who fled European persecutions over five hundred years ago. Both countries share an attachment to Western values, and this led them to have what some would call “covert” ties during the Cold War. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, Turkey and Israel began a thriving partnership. Both felt threatened by Iran and Syria, sought increased Israeli-Palestinian cooperation and wanted to improve their military capabilities through technological innovations. Israel sold modern military equipment to Turkey through lucrative arms deals. The two countries also signed a free trade agreement and increased their exports to one another.

The New Millennium

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the relations between Israel and Turkey have soured. Turkey heavily criticized Israel for its military operations in Gaza, especially the 2008 Operation *Cast Lead*. The plight of the Palestinians has always attracted the attention of the Turks, who believe that the resolution of this conflict would greatly help stabilize the Middle East. Turkey denounced Israel’s operation as inhumane, and a clash between the Israeli President and the Turkish Prime Minister ensued. The assault on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla further worsened the relations between the two countries as nine Turkish citizens were killed by the IDF when it assaulted the *Mavi Marmara*. Turkey cancelled its joint military exercises with Israel and withdrew its ambassador from the country in response to this incident.

Implications for the United States

The deterioration of Israeli-Turkish relations is a significant problem for the United States. Turkey and Israel are two of the U.S.’ most important allies in the Middle East, and a widening gap between them could force the United States to choose between Turkey and Israel. Israel does not want to apologize for the flotilla raid and this refusal angers Turkey. In order to avoid Turkey-Israel relations from worsening further, the United States has taken steps to defuse the

conflict and restore friendship between the two parties. The problems between Turkey and Israel go deeper than the flotilla incident though. Indeed, Israeli officials are worried by Turkey's closer ties with Syria and especially Iran, considering Ahmadinejad often vowed to destroy Israel. The United States must step up its regional efforts if it does not want to lose at least one of its key allies in the Middle East.

Understanding Iraq-Turkey Relations

The relations between Turkey and Iraq were characterized by ups and downs throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Between 1932 and 1958, Turkey and Iraq cooperated closely with one another, but between 1958 and 1990, Iraqi-Turkish relations became more complex as both countries' foreign policies significantly changed. Iraqi-Turkish relations during that period were largely marked by petrol and water-related interactions between the two states. Turkey and Iraq had a harmonious relationship with regards to the oil trade, but the two countries had significant conflicts over the management of shared water resources. The Iraq-Iran War (1980-88) was a period of renewed positive relations between Iraq and Turkey. By 1980, Iraq and Turkey shared certain key political structures and interests. Furthermore, while Turkey was officially neutral during the war, it tacitly adopted a pro-Iraq stance and gave it financial support.

However, the good relations between Turkey and Iraq came to an end after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the following Gulf War. Turkey was a member of NATO and thus allowed the coalition forces to use its airbases to launch aerial assaults against Iraq. The establishment of the PKK in northern Iraq during those years also complicated Turkish-Iraqi relations. After the end of the war though, Iraq and Turkey both sought to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdistan and cooperated to destroy the PKK. Turkey refused to participate in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and has entertained good relations with the Iraqi government since.

A Unified Iraq

In the interest of eradicating the PKK, Turkey has made it an expressed goal to ensure that Iraq remains a single, sovereign state. Since Iraq is highly factionalized and the groups vying for power have not yet been able to determine which faction is the strongest, it is possible that a civil war will erupt when the United States withdraws from the country. A weak Iraqi government and the rise of ethnically-based regional powers would also substantially increase this possibility. If distinct ethnocentric, authoritarian states developed in a disintegrated Iraq, both Turkey's fight against the PKK and its ability to manage the sharing of natural resources with Iraq would be significantly hindered. The PKK would stand to gain access to new base locations, supply sources, and transport lines, making Turkey's job of destroying the organization more difficult. Consequently, it is in Turkey's best interest to maintain good relations with the Iraqi government and to help the country secure and develop itself.

The 2003 War and Its Aftermath

Turkey's refusal to participate in the 2003 Iraq War angered the United States. Turkey did not join the coalition because it sought to maintain good relations with Iraq and because it might have incurred much of the backlash that was directed at the U.S. in subsequent years. The United States was confident that Turkey would agree to participate in the operation though, and its refusal to do so threatened to delay the invasion of Iraq. This was the first time since the Second World War that Turkey had refused to help the United States in times of need. In retaliation, the United States refused to give Turkey the authorization to operate against the PKK in northern Iraq. It was not until 2007 that the U.S. began to cooperate with Turkey and allowed it to launch operations in northern Iraq.

In order to effectively fight the PKK, Turkey developed a cooperative relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Realizing that the U.S. would eventually withdraw from Iraq, the KRG understood that it would need significant political backing to maintain leverage with the government put into place by the Americans. As a key political player in the region, Turkey was an ideal candidate to provide such political support. On the other hand, Turkey needed the KRG to help it separate the PKK terrorists from the general Kurdish population and isolate them from popular support. This rapprochement was met with some resistance in Turkey, and as a result, Turkey adopted a dual track policy towards the KRG, combining military pressure with economic and political incentives to convince it to support Turkish efforts against the PKK. This policy requires some cunning political maneuvering though, as Turkey must make sure not to give too much support to either party as this would alienate the other. For Turkey, the key is to acknowledge the autonomy of Iraq's central government while respecting the KRG's significant political influence in northern Iraq, particularly over the Kurds.

Turkey and NATO

The United States helped Turkey following the end of the Second World War by giving it over \$100 million in aid. This aid allowed Turkey to modernize its military and in 1952, it was able to join NATO. Turkey was an important component of the U.S.' strategy to contain communism since it had access to the Black Sea and was positioned on the southern extremity of the Soviet Empire. It could thus be used to block the Soviet Union from reaching the Mediterranean Sea and to launch airstrikes on Soviet territory. Turkey benefitted from this relationship because it gained a highly trained and well-equipped military as well as better infrastructure. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, Turkey was involved in several NATO operations to secure the Balkans, such as those in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Involvement in Afghanistan

Turkey is also a member of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. It plays an important role in the coalition because it has deployed over 1,700 troops to the country, provided security for some Provincial Reconstruction Teams, and has a historical relationship with Afghanistan that is very useful diplomatically. Furthermore, due to Turkey's

history of combating the PKK in the mountains of southern Turkey, the Turkish military has experience fighting unconventional wars in a mountainous theatre such as Afghanistan.

Turkey has a vested interest in seeing NATO succeed in Afghanistan because it is part of the organization and because Turkey seeks to cultivate stronger commercial and military ties with Afghanistan. Indeed, since Turkey is a member of NATO, the organization's success or failure reflects directly upon Turkey. In addition, Turkey wishes Afghanistan to become one of its commercial partners, but for this to happen, Afghanistan must be a stable and strong country. Overall, one can see that Turkey is still a strong supporter of NATO and remains committed to the organization.

However, Turkey is now more selective in choosing which NATO policies to endorse because of its closer relations with other Middle Eastern states. Turkey has built good relations with many of its neighbors, including Iran, Syria and the Gulf States. These relationships have been very valuable for Turkey because they allow it to exercise more influence over the region. They have also proved to be quite lucrative since Turkey has been able to strike many commercial deals with those countries. As a result, Turkey is less willing to support operations and policies that would be disadvantageous to its neighbors.

This policy change helps explain why Turkey was hesitant to support the proposed NATO missile shield, a missile defense system that would protect Europe and the United States from ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East. Iran strongly opposes the project because it would reduce the leverage it would receive from its acquisition of nuclear weapons. Since Turkey values its relations with Iran, it refused to allow the missile defense stations to be placed on its territory if they were specifically put in place to counter an Iranian threat. NATO agreed not to name any specific countries, and Turkey accepted the plan.

Turkey has also influenced the conduct of the intervention in Libya to make the intervention more acceptable to its Middle Eastern neighbors. Once the aerial bombardment started, Turkey asserted that the countries supporting the intervention were doing so solely for economic reasons and requested NATO take sole command of the intervention on behalf of the United Nations. Its demands were met and the command of aerial operations against Libya was transferred from the United States to NATO.

Iran sees Turkey's increasing influence within NATO as an opening that it can use to advance its own goals. If Turkey significantly improves its relations with Turkey but manages to maintain a strong role within NATO at the same time, Iran will have a powerful ally amongst its enemies. However, NATO and the United States can also capitalize on Turkey's good relations with Iran to find a diplomatic solution to the problem of Iran's nuclear program. The United States must strive to utilize Turkey's relations with Iran in order to advance its national interests and stabilize the Middle East through diplomatic means while remaining cognizant that Iran might seek to influence NATO policies through Turkey.

The Iranian Republic

Iran was officially unified in 625 BC under the Persian Achaemenid Empire. The Turkish Safavid dynasty officially converted Iran to Twelver Shi'ite Islam in 1502. The Safavids ruled until 1722, when they were ousted by another Turkish tribe, the Qajar, who ruled from 1794 to 1925. During this time period, Iran lost almost half of its territory to England and Russia. Reza Khan overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1925, established a military dictatorship and became known as the Shah, or king of kings. He renamed Persia Iran, modernized the country and created a secular government. In 1941, the Shah was forced to abdicate and his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, took power. In 1953, the CIA and M16 successfully deposed the Iranian Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, who had sought to nationalize Iranian oil. The Shah then became even more autocratic and used his secret police to crush all opposition. He was overthrown in 1979 and the country became an Islamic Republic ruled by Ayatollah Khomeini and governed by a Guardianship of the Jurist, *velayat-e faqih*.

The Islamic Revolution also led to the U.S. Embassy crisis, during which 52 U.S. Embassy personnel were held hostages for over a year by Iranian students. A year later, the Iran-Iraq war started, and the United States threw its support behind Iraq. Khomeini died in 1989 and was succeeded by Khatami. During the 1990s, Iran adopted a pro-business policy of rebuilding the economy without making any drastic breaks from the ideology of the revolution. Mohammad Khatami was elected President from 1997 to 2005 and promoted freedom of expression, tolerance and good relations with other states.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a conservative populist, replaced Khatami in 2005 as President of Iran. He pursued a much harder line than his predecessor, enforcing dress codes and the persecution of minorities. He also refused to stop Iran's nuclear program and threatened the United States and other Western countries. He was reelected in 2009.

Organization of the State

Iran is composed of connected, but very competitive, formal and informal political power structures. The formal structures are composed of state institutions and include religious supervisory bodies, the republican institutions, and religious foundations. The informal structures are different political factions in the political elite that do not align with state institutions but in fact cut across them. The formal structure of the government tends to be ignored or bypassed in favor of the informal structure that is based on personal networks and power relations. This phenomenon leads to a very weak institutional government and encourages strong personal networks.

Iran is a theocratic republic with a legal system based on Sharia law. It is a hybrid system of elected and appointed institutions, and the power relations between the different political leaders and institutions are a product of a conglomerate of constitutions. The executive branch consists of the Supreme Leader (Head of State), the President (Head of Government), the Council of Ministers, the Assembly of Experts, the Expediency Council, and Council of Guardians. The legislative branch consists of the Majlis, and the judicial branch consists of the Supreme

Judiciary. Of those, only the President, the Parliament and the Assembly of Experts are elected by the people.

The President is responsible for economic and socio-cultural policy, but not foreign policy as he has no control over the armed forces. The Parliament has 290 members and is elected by popular vote, but all candidates must be approved by the unelected 12-member Guardian Council, as does any legislation it passes. It is weak compared to the presidency and the Guardian Council, but its political importance has greatly increased in past years. The new Majlis is dominated by the United Principalist Front, and its main rivals are the conservative bloc, the Inclusive Front, and the reformist bloc, the Mosharekat.

The Assembly of Experts is a religious supervisory body. It appoints the Supreme Leader, monitors his performance and removes him if he is deemed incapable of fulfilling his duties. Only clerics can join the assembly, and candidates for election are chosen by the Guardian Council. The power of the Assembly of Experts is steadily declining.

The Supreme Leader is positioned as the top leader of Iran's political power structure. He is chosen by the Assembly of Experts. Tensions between the Supreme Leader and the President are inevitable, and they sometimes cause political instability.

The Judiciary plays a vital role in preserving Iran's Islamic system: it ensures that Islamic laws are enforced and defines the legal policy. The Supreme Leader appoints the Head of the Judiciary for five-year terms. While Iran does have the traditional criminal and civil courts, it also has separate Islamic revolutionary courts that can try people on charges of being un-Islamic.

The Expediency Council is the advisory body for the Supreme Leader with ultimate arbitrage power on disputes over legislation between Parliament and the Guardian Council.

The Guardian Council is a religious supervisory body. It is the most influential body in Iran, and is currently controlled by conservatives. It consists of six theologians appointed by the Supreme Leader and six jurists nominated by the Head of the Judiciary. All 12 members have to be approved by Parliament.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was created to enforce Ayatollah Khomeini's concept of an Islamic state ruled by a guardianship of the jurist. It is a key institution in Iran due to its role as guardians of the revolution, and many of the senior officers in the IRGC have close personal and family ties to key members of the Iranian political elite. The Guards function as the primary internal and external security force of the regime. It is in charge of executing Iran's asymmetric warfare strategy in the event of a U.S. or Israeli attack, and controls the Qods Force. The IRGC's power is dependent upon the continued support of both Ayatollah Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad.

Internal Politics

Political parties are illegal, but there are three main factional coalitions within the Iranian system: the conservatives, the reformists, and the pragmatists. These three coalitions are considered very fluid, and members can easily change cluster allegiance depending on the issue.

The conservative, or *jihadi*, coalition revolves around Ayatollah Khamenei and Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kanim, the current Chairman of the Assembly of Experts. It promotes a

patriarchal Islamic government, a traditional lifestyle, self-sufficiency and cultural purity. Its constituents include the majority of the rural population, the IRGC, and certain radical clerical figures.

The reformist, or *itjhadī*, coalition is led by Mehdi Karroubi and Mohammad Khatami, the former President. It believes in pluralism and a democratic Islamic political system, and promotes civil society, greater freedoms and more interaction with the outside world. However, the reformist coalition is divided into several smaller groups.

The centrist, or pragmatist, coalition is mainly run by Rafsanjani, a former President. Its two main parties are the Executives of Construction Party and the Justice and Development Party. It argues for an increase in technical and financial cooperation with the West but has little interest in the actual democratization of politics. It derives most of its support from the business community, students, and the urban middle class.

Foreign Policy

During the first ten years that followed the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini's policies could be summarized by two main ideological principles: push Iran away from U.S. and Western influence and encourage the Iranian people to spread the Islamic Revolution. From 1989 to 2005, a more pragmatic approach dominated Iranian foreign policy, as the country focused on reintegrating itself in the world economy, improving its relations with other states and suspended its nuclear program. However, since Ahmadinejad came into power in 2005, Iranian foreign policy has shifted towards a more hostile attitude, especially towards the West and Israel.

Iran has good relations with Syria, and in recent years both countries have worked to enhance their economic and financial cooperation. Both oppose the West and are ruled by authoritarian regimes. In addition, Syria's current ruling family is Shiite. The Iranian-Syrian alliance also grew out of having common enemies, such as Saddam Hussein, the United States and Israel, while also having common friends such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Iran's relations with Iraq tend to be more hostile and competitive, as Iraq attempted to invade Iran in 1980, an act that led to a bloody eight year war. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, the two countries are on much better terms than they were during the 1980s. Iran seeks to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq in order to expand its influence over the country. It has similar goals with regards to Afghanistan, hoping to create a sphere of influence in the country and push it away from the United States. Iran has developed the capability to strike back against U.S. troops in Afghanistan should its nuclear sites be attacked by supplying the Taliban and other Afghan factions with weapons and improvised explosive devices.

Iran and Pakistan have developed a deep economic and political relationship despite the Pakistani-U.S. alliance. They cooperate on a number of trade issues, and since 2005, Islamabad has been turning to Tehran to supply Pakistan's growing energy needs. Due to these good relations, Pakistan has defended Iran's right to nuclear energy.

Iran has strained relations with the Gulf States because they do not strongly support Iran's nuclear program. However, most of these states have independent commercial ties with Iran,

and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has recently begun negotiating a free trade agreement with Iran.

The Turkey-Iranian relationship has swung in and out of harmony and has been defined by mutual suspicion and competition. Even though Turkey and Iran were close allies during the monarchy of the Shah, relations soured after the 1979 Revolution. Iran saw Turkey as a close ally of the United States and therefore turned hostile towards it while Turkey saw Iran a threat to regional peace and stability. Turkey and Iran also have different worldviews, seeing as how one is an Islamist autocratic regime while the other is a secular, democratically elected one. Since the accession of the Justice and Development Party to power and its policy of zero problems with our neighbors, Iranian-Turkish relations have improved, and both countries have gradually strengthened their financial ties. In addition, they have agreed to work together to fight the PKK and PJAK. Turkey also supported Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Iran and Israel were allies during the time of the Shah, but the relationship quickly turned sour following the Islamic Revolution. The current Iranian government refuses to recognize the state of Israel and Ahmadinejad denied the existence of the Holocaust. Israel is seen as the little Satan, and Iran is a strong support of both Hezbollah and Hamas. Relations between Iran and Israel are extremely tense due to Iran's nuclear program, and a military confrontation in the near future is not to be excluded from the realm of possibilities.

The United States and Iran were allies during the Shah's reign, but this all changed following the Islamic Revolution. The United States supported Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, and tensions escalated during the 1990s after the U.S. refused to allow oil pipelines to pass through Iran. In the following years, the United States continued to impose sanctions on Iran and pursued a containment policy towards the Iranian regime. It refused to support the 2010 Tehran Declaration, opting to impose additional sanctions on Iran instead. Despite Obama's willingness to engage with Iran, the road to a successful resolution of the Iranian issue will still be a long and complicated one filled with internal political struggles and mutual hostility.

Nuclear Issues in the Middle East

Turkey seeks to play an increasingly important role in Middle Eastern affairs and diplomacy. In May 2010, Turkey and Iran sought to strike a deal with Iran regarding its nuclear program. This proposal, called the Tehran Declaration, had Iran send 1,200 kg of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey for light level processing while the United States, Russia, France and the IAEA would provide Iran with 120 kg of 20% enriched nuclear fuel, in addition to fuel rods, for the Tehran Research Reactor within a year. The United States refused to support the deal and imposed a new round of sanctions on Iran one day after the Tehran Declaration was agreed upon by Turkey, Brazil and Iran, an act that humiliated both Turkish and Brazilian diplomats. The United States rejected this declaration because it did not want Turkey and Brazil to have such diplomatic power over Western countries, it did not trust Iran, and President Obama had already committed to pursuing the sanctions route.

Since 2010, Turkey seeks to create a nuclear-free Middle East. This objective may potentially strain Turkey's relations with Israel even more, and this is a possibility that the United States

must be weary of. Furthermore, Turkey has been getting closer to Iran in recent years since this relationship brings Ankara several economic benefits, while Iran views Turkey as a voice it can use within the international community. Turkey can potentially leverage its historic relationship with Israel and its newfound relationship with Iran to advance the goal of a nuclear-free Middle East, but this road is filled with uncertainties and dangers, such as the complete alienation of Israel.

The West originally supported Iran's nuclear program when it was ruled by the Shah, but they fully withdrew their support after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. A few years later, Iran restarted its program with the help of Pakistan, China and Russia, among others. If Iran were to succeed, an arms race may erupt in the Middle East. Other states might feel threaten and expand their own military presence in order to restore the strategic balance of the region. Iran may alienate Turkey, who would be faced with a tremendous amount of pressure from both Iran and the United States to choose a side. Even as of now, some officials within Western states feel that they are losing Turkey, and this fear might encourage countries such as Israel and the United States to use force against Iran. It also means that any action taken by Turkey will come under more scrutiny from the part of American officials than it would have in the past.

Oil Politics in the Middle East

Following the end of the Second World War, the United States started intervening in Middle Eastern oil politics because it needed oil to keep its economy and military strong. By controlling oil in the Middle East, the United States was also preventing the Soviet Union from having access to cheap oil, a key strategic victory. The 1953 coup against Mohammad Mosaddegh and the United States' support of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War illustrate the importance the United States accorded to controlling oil resources.

Turkey has the potential to play an important role in Middle Eastern oil politics. Despite the fact that Turkey is only a small producer of oil and natural gas, it is strategically well-positioned to act as an energy hub linking the oil-producing countries of the Middle East to the European oil markets. This role has influenced its relations with other Middle Eastern countries, such as with Iran. Indeed, in recent years, Turkey and Iran's economic relationship has improved, particularly through the trading of oil. Iran, Turkey and other European countries such as Germany have been discussing constructing an oil pipeline, the Nabucco pipeline, which would deliver Iranian oil to Italy through Turkey. If this project was to move forward, Iran would gain access to European oil markets while Turkey would more firmly assert its position as the main energy transit hub of the Middle Eastern region.

Overall, the United States supports Turkey's desire to be an energy hub in the Middle East. It has voiced its support for the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline and the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, both of which pass through Turkey. Indeed, the United States views Turkey as an important link in the East-West Southern Energy corridor. The acceptance of Turkey's role as an energy hub by the international community and investors is dependent on an increase in Turkey's reliability as a transporter of energy though. Turkey must increase its upstream capacity, help secure the region and increase the capacity of its pipelines. This would make

foreign investors more confident in Turkey's ability to be a reliable energy hub. Since 2009, the United States and Turkey have been working together to achieve these goals, but more remains to be done. If Turkey was to become successful in its bid to become an energy hub, Central Asian oil would reach European markets, and Turkey's political power would increase. Europe would also have greater energy security, and the United States would have a powerful ally that can exercise some control over oil flows.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Catherine Brown

Today, the Middle East is a highly strategic region of the world for the United States due to its great concentration of oil and possible threats to U.S. national security. In the coming years, as the region likely becomes even more central to U.S. interests due to rising oil prices and a changing strategic environment, the importance of U.S.-Turkey relations will become more pronounced. The relationship between the United States and Turkey has been complicated in the past, but it is also a vital component of the United States' Middle Eastern foreign policy. In recent years, many experts have written on U.S.-Turkey relations and the direction they hope to see these relations move towards.

The geopolitical situation of Turkey alone greatly helps explain the country's importance to the United States. Turkey shares borders with Iran, Iraq, and Syria, is a Muslim state governed by a secular, democratic government, and has many goals that are aligned with those of the United States, such as a stable Middle East, the eradication of terrorist groups and safeguarding the flow of oil. Furthermore, due in part to Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's policy of "zero problems with our neighbors" and to the government's focus on increasing regional trade, Turkey currently has relatively good relations with several other Middle Eastern countries, including Iran. Its situation therefore makes it the ideal intermediary between the West and the rest of the Middle East. For example, in 2007, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, R. Nicholas Burns, highlighted some of the factors that made Turkey such a valuable U.S. ally during a speech to the Atlantic Council: it is influential in the Balkans, the Black Sea the Caucuses, and the greater Middle East, a "vitaly important arc of countries where so much of our foreign policy attention now lies."¹ Turkey also shares interests with the United States in critical issues such as energy, regional security in Afghanistan, and fighting terrorism in the region.² Furthermore, the two countries share common values of democracy and tolerance. As such, it is in the United States' best interest to cooperate with Turkey in order to advance U.S. interests in the Middle East.

While Turkey and the United States have been allies for decades, foreign policy analysts and politicians are still debating how strong the ties between the two countries should be. In recent years, the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey became more strained due to a series of disagreements over foreign policy issues. Some individuals, such as Stephen Cook, a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council of Foreign Relations, have even gone as far as to call Turkey a "frenemy"³ of the United States, meaning that it is simultaneously both an ally and a rival of the U.S. in the region. Cook agrees that, in the abstract, many of the U.S. and Turkey's

¹ Nicolas R. Burns, "The Future of the U.S.-Turkey Relationship" (speech given at the Atlantic Council of the United States, Washington D.C., September 13, 2009).

² Ibid.

³ Steven A. Cook, "How Do You Say 'Frenemy' in Turkish," *Foreign Policy*, June 1, 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/01/how_do_you_say_frenemy_in_Turkish.

goals do align; both desire “peace between Israel and the Palestinians, a stable, unified Iraq, an Iran without nuclear weapons, stability in Afghanistan and a Western-oriented Syria.”⁴ However, he argues that the details that come to play when considering policies to achieve those goals undermine the “model partnership” between the U.S. and Turkey because both countries seek to use different roads to get to the same destination.⁵

One point of contention between Turkey and the U.S. concerns Israel. Both states desire peace between Israel and Palestine, but while Turkey has recently strengthened its support for the Palestinian cause, the U.S. has continued to lend support to Israel despite frictions between Obama and Netanyahu. For example, after Israeli attempts to block Turkish ships from breaking the blockade of Gaza resulted in the deaths of nine activists, Turkey was very angry at Israel for killing some of its citizens, as Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s reference to the event as “murder conducted by a state” illustrates.⁶ The U.S., while vocally condemning the loss of life that resulted from the incident, vetoed an international investigation of the event, a move that irritated Turkey.⁷ On the other hand, while the U.S. and Israel complain that Syria has been aiding Hezbollah by supplying the organization with weapons and training, Turkey has so far remained quiet on the matter.⁸ Conflict on Israel’s northern border seems likely, but, as Cook writes, while “Washington will no doubt endorse Israel’s right to self-defense... Ankara will not.”⁹ In fact, Turkey has demanded that Israel take steps to ease the blockade of Gaza and has even shown thinly veiled support for Hamas.¹⁰ These events proved to be a wake-up call for those in the United States who believed that Turkey’s foreign policy could be decided in the corridors of the White House and Capitol Hill.

Yet, disagreement over policy towards Israel is only one blemish in U.S.-Turkey relations. In fact, debates over relations with Iran create perhaps the greatest amount of discord between the two states. One of the major points of contention between the United States and Iran concerns nuclear weapons. The U.S. maintains a firm stance against any further development of Iran’s nuclear program and enforces strict United Nations sanctions in order to deter Iran from advancing its nuclear ambitions. Conversely, Turkey’s approach to the Iranian issue revolves more around compromise. In May, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Brazilian President Lula da Silva enacted a deal with Tehran in which Iran would trade 1,200 kilograms of its low capacity uranium with Turkey in exchange for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor.¹¹ Afterwards, Turkey voted against a United Nations Security Council appeal to impose further sanctions on Iran. These instances represent a shift in the relationship between Turkey and the United States, as well as a changing dynamic in foreign relations. No longer is Turkey primarily concerned solely

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Cook, “How Do You Say Frenemy in Turkish.”

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chris McGreal, “Israel should lead investigation into attack on Gaza flotilla, says US,” *The Guardian*, 1 June, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/01/israel-investigation-attack-gaza-flotilla-us>.

⁸ Cook, “How Do You Say Frenemy in Turkish.”

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Iran to ship uranium to Turkey in nuclear swap,” *Haaretz*, May 16, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/iran-to-ship-uranium-to-turkey-in-nuclear-swap-1.290682>.

with assisting in the goals of its powerful ally. It has now emerged as a major regional power and has assumed the role of a mediator in the Middle East. Stephen Kinzer, former *New York Times* foreign correspondent and author of the book *Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future*, argues in his book that the United States must make a fundamental shift in its way of conducting foreign policy due to these changes.

Kinzer argues that if the United States continues along its current foreign policy path, it risks isolating Iran and Turkey, two out of three Middle Eastern countries with a long history of democracy, and ignoring an important political trend – the rise of “middle powers.”¹² He also states that the United States is clinging to days during which it could easily act unilaterally rather than looking to the future and pursuing a more nuanced foreign policy.¹³ He argues that Turkey's decision to make the fuel exchange illustrates the rise of “middle powers” and Turkey's importance as a peacekeeper in the region.¹⁴ In his opinion, Turkey's foreign policy is the one of the future, one that is aimed at developing regional stability through compromise and cooperation.¹⁵ The United States is pursuing a Cold War-era foreign policy in the Middle East that is no longer relevant to modern problems and regional dynamics.¹⁶ In Kinzer's view, Turkey should not be labeled a “frenemy” of the United States since many of the two countries' foreign policy goals remain aligned. Turkey does not disagree with the U.S. goal of promoting stability in the Middle East, but it is rather offering advice on how to get there.

Kinzer's foreign policy solution is a ratcheting-down of rhetoric on the part of the United States in favor of a more conciliatory and compromising attitude. He argues that the U.S. needs to find suitable allies in the Middle East, defining “suitable allies” as countries whose strategic goals are aligned with and whose societies are similar to the United States. Turkey and Iran are the only two countries in the Middle East that fit both criteria. In a sense, Kinzer favors a “security dilemma” assessment of the tensions in the region. In other words, he argues that tensions between the United States and Middle Eastern countries arise out of each country's national security concerns and not out of conflicting national interests. For example, according to his view, Iran's intent of developing a nuclear program is not aggressive. Yet, the United States, because it feels threatened by the development of nuclear weapons in Iran, is taking a “deterrence model” approach to the conflict. This would be an appropriate course of action if Iran's intentions were aggressive. Yet, if they are rooted in Iran's own national security or economic concerns, the U.S. policy will only prove to increase tensions because Iran will feel more and more threatened. Indeed, aggressive rhetoric by the U.S. will only make Iran more nervous and more anxious to militarize, thereby protecting itself. Therefore, Kinzer's solution is one of conciliatory policies and rhetoric on the part of the U.S. meant to reassure Iran of the U.S.' non-aggressive intentions.

¹² Stephen Kinzer, “American and the rise of middle powers,” *The Guardian*, 11 January, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/jan/10/usa-usforeignpolicy>.

¹³ Stephen Kinzer, interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now!*, real video stream, 14 June, 2010, http://www.democracynow.org/2010/6/14/steven_kinzer_reset_iran_turkey_and.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Based on the current U.S. foreign policy towards Turkey and Iran, the attitude of decision-makers in Washington is not in line with Kinzer's stance. Instead, the policy follows the deterrence model that Kinzer labels as an obsolete remnant of the Cold War era. However, Kinzer's solution does require a big gamble because if he has misjudged Iran's intentions, then conciliatory policies and signs of weakness would only make the situation worse, as Chamberlain's appeasement policy has shown. In that case, responding strongly to Turkey's compromising policies with Iran and taking a hard-line stance when it comes to nuclear sanctions would be an appropriate course. With these thoughts in mind, it is easy to see how the deterrence model gains its appeal – better to be cautious and take a hard-line stance than risk the emergence of a new nuclear power hostile to the United States. However, the nuclear sanctions approach of the past few years has not produced much in the way of results. Perhaps now is the time to consider an alternate perspective and strategy.

In an interview with Amy Goodman, news correspondent with *Democracy Now!*, about his book, Stephen Kinzer expressed his foreign policy views clearly and concisely:

The world needs a big security concession from Iran. The world also needs security concessions from Israel. But countries only make security concessions when they feel safe. Therefore, it should be in the interest of the United States and all who want to stabilize that region to try to make those two countries feel *safe*. How are we going to do that? I really think that with Iran the possibility does exist for a very new and very different kind of relationship...what we should do...is to say to Iran what we said to the Chinese: "We have a lot of problems and complaints about what you do. We know there are things we do that you don't like. So let's make a list of all these things and then let's talk about all of them.' ... It's about trying to create a new environment, a new atmosphere, a new architecture in that region, in which all the countries would feel they have a stake.¹⁷

According to Kinzer, the solution to U.S. foreign policy issues with Iran is turning a tense relationship into a partnership. Right now, Turkey is in the prime position to serve as an intermediary between the United States and Iran through the reconciliation process. It seems that it has already stepped into the role of negotiator in the Middle East. It is up to the United States to welcome the opportunity and to accept Turkey's assistance in the transformation of its own relationship with Iran.

Kinzer's assessment provides general insights into a positive future relationship between the United States, Turkey and Iran. Other scholars agree that the United States should take a more open and conciliatory stance toward its relationship with Middle Eastern countries, particularly Turkey. Burns argued for an expansion in the types of ties between the two nations. Not only does he argue that the United States should strive to revitalize its political relationship with Turkey, but he contends that those bonds can be strengthened by forming ties within the

¹⁷ Stephen Kinzer, interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now!*, real video stream, 14 June, 2010, http://www.democracynow.org/2010/6/14/steven_kinzer_reset_iran_turkey_and.

private sector.¹⁸ Business ties, educational and cultural exchanges, and other bonds between the countries beyond the foreign policy arena would create an atmosphere more conducive to long-term cooperation.

The question of the future of United States foreign policy toward Turkey and Iran is a complicated one. Although there are many similarities in the values and strategic interests of the U.S. and Turkey, there are also important differences in the ways that the two country approach common issues. Between the U.S. and Iran, there is deep distrust and friction. However, many of the most prominent experts today argue that the relationship between the three countries does not have to be one of such tension. Most notably, Stephen Kinzer argued in his recent book *Reset* that the United States could find valuable allies in Turkey and even Iran, provided that it takes a less abrasive foreign policy stance. Turkey is ideally placed and willing to facilitate reconciliation between the United States and Iran. If the U.S. embraces this opportunity, then perhaps the countries can achieve a peaceful resolution and increase stability in the Middle East. Turkey has historically been a friend to the United States. Now, Turkey is quickly becoming a regional power with its own foreign policy interests independent of its relationship with the United States. Rather than feeling threatened by the shifting relationship, the U.S. should embrace the opportunity to ally itself with a rising “middle power.” It is time to at least consider other options in the ways the United States conduct its foreign policy in the Middle East. This report is the result of these considerations.

¹⁸ Burns, “The Future of the U.S.-Turkey Relationship.”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS

William Dean

Turkey's relations with the West date back to the times of the Ottoman Empire: as the strength of the Empire waned toward the end of 19th century, European powers began to vie for stakes in the far-reaching trade networks that the Turks had controlled for centuries. Thus began what some have called the "systematic exploitation" of the Eastern power, a theme that has percolated Turkey-U.S. relations for the duration of the relationship's existence. Forcing their way into the country by way of the "capitulations," the Europeans and Americans thereby demanded certain immunities for their citizens who spent time abroad in the Ottoman lands. Westerners could live in the Empire, pursue trade and make a living, but still live under their native lands' laws. They were not subject to taxes or the laws of the Ottomans.¹⁹ The unhappy memories of the capitulations and other abuses have lurked in the background of the stage that has been U.S.-Turkey relations in the modern era.²⁰ Interactions between the two nations can be divided in three major eras: World War I through to the 1940s, World War II through the Cold War, and the 21st century. Relations started out relatively badly, with the two nations finding themselves on opposing sides in the First World War. From there through much of the rest of the 1900s, relations were friendly between the two states. Recently, however, U.S.-Turkey relations have started to take a turn for the worse due to American foreign policy decisions that displeased the Turkish governments in the late 20th century.

The Ottomans entered World War I on the side of the Germans, but never formally declared war on the United States. Germany pressed the Ottomans to sever all diplomatic ties with the Americans, but U.S. forces were not involved in the conquering of the Ottomans.²¹ After the war, the Turkish Republic was formally recognized by the international community in 1923 by the Treaty of Lausanne. After a brief war for independence from the victors of WWI, the Turks, led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, established a secular state. Abolishing the Caliphate, an old remnant of the Ottoman Empire, the new leadership created a democratic Republic of Turkey, headed by its first president, Ataturk. While then U.S. president Wilson did not support the Ataturk movement, he was also against the partition of the old Ottoman Empire by the victorious allies.²² U.S.-Turkey ties were not formally reestablished after the creation of Turkey because Britain was highly active in the region and the U.S. feared that such ties could be seen as an offense by the British. Throughout the war, the U.S. Navy maintained a commissioned yacht in Turkish waters, and through this foothold Washington conducted indirect diplomacy, through various intermediaries, with Ankara.²³ In 1927, four years after the new state's

¹⁹ Richard C. Company Jr., *Turkey and the United States: The Arms Embargo Period 1974-1980* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Henry P. Beers, "United States Naval Detachment in Turkish Waters, 1919-24," *Military Affairs* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1943): 209-220.

²² Company, "Turkey and the United States."

²³ Beers, "United States Naval Detachment."

formation, each nation recognized the other in peaceful terms, diplomatic ties were reinstated, and economic ties soon followed.

Ataturk established a new Turkic state, founded on six central principles: democracy, nationalism, the power of the people, and an end to all things Ottoman — including the social and governmental structure — secularism, and a mixed economy.²⁴ As mentioned above, the U.S. denied support to the Ataturk movement, which quickly found a possible supporter in the recently formed Soviet Union. Over the next few years, Turkey looked to establish a relationship with its new northern neighbor. The two nations formed a series of low impact agreements concerning the territories between their borders, especially Armenian lands.²⁵ While Ataturk recognized and accepted help from the communist nation, he was quick to realize that the two nations' national interests did not overlap. Not at all interested in forming a socialist satellite state, Ataturk was forced to make a decision that went directly against much of what he had worked for. Indeed, by moving away from the Ottoman Empire, he had hoped to eliminate the ever-present Western influence in Anatolia, but under the circumstances, he was forced to choose what was, in his mind, the lesser of two evils: accepting aid from United States.

Relations continued as such, and the U.S. gradually expanded its influence in Turkey. The two nations' friendship warmed and, beginning with WWII, aid from the U.S. to Turkey was forthcoming in the form of a moderate lend-lease exchange. Turkey remained neutral in the war and it continued to receive aid from the U.S. As the war ended, Great Britain found itself involved in both Greek and Turkish democratic movements aimed at subduing communist fervor. However, in February 1947, due to domestic pressures, the British Ambassador's office in Washington informed the Truman administration that their state would no longer be capable of supporting their mid-eastern allies. Washington realized that if Greece stopped receiving aid, the rebellious communist party would probably take control of the government. This would leave Turkey as the only Western ally in the Middle East, and without British funding to maintain the outsized Turkish army, the Soviet Union could possibly expand its borders further south.²⁶

Washington was swift to act. Two months after the dialogue with Great Britain, Truman signed a bill allotting funds to be sent immediately to Turkey, saying it was an "important step in the building of peace."²⁷ Within months of the initiation of this project, the U.S. began stationing personnel within Turkish borders.²⁸ For many Turks, this move was rank with the ugly memory of the Ottoman Empire's capitulations, as the West again pushed its way into their state.²⁹ As the Truman Doctrine was released and the United States took a hard stance against communism, Turkey quickly became one of the West's strongest allies against the spread of the Soviet Union. In 1952, Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, shortly after its original formation. More U.S. troops were then sent to Turkey, and the military alliance began in

²⁴ Company, "Turkey and the United States."

²⁵ Beers, "United States Naval Detachment."

²⁶ Joseph C. Satterthwaite, "The Truman Doctrine: Turkey." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 401 (1972): 74-84.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Company, "Turkey and the United States."

earnest. By 1958 the “Joint United States Military Mission for Aid to Turkey” (JUSMMAT) was established, and during a thirty year span the United States funneled \$3 billion into Turkey’s military and economic apparatus.³⁰ During the 1950s and 1960s, long-range ballistic missiles, such as the “Jupiter” missiles, were stationed at various sites throughout the Turkish peninsula, serving as the West’s first line of defense against an unstable Soviet Union. These positions would become a factor in the diffusion of the highly explosive Cuban missile crisis in October of 1962.

The 1960s were also a decade of difficulty and strained relations between the U.S. and Turkey. As the conflict on the island of Cyprus between Greek, Turkic, and British populations escalated, the U.S. suddenly found itself mediating a conflict between three of its close allies. Across the island, Greek “freedom” fighters fought for *enosis*, a joining with the Greek mainland.³¹ Nationalist factions on the island began to tear it apart, giving rise to the threat of a communist overthrow. While the British were initially in charge of the island, the U.S. swiftly stepped in, as it had done in Greece and Turkey, to ensure peace between the NATO allies and the establishment of a democratic government. Unable to choose a side in the conflict, the U.S., under President Johnson, engaged in rather forceful diplomacy with the Turkish leadership. President Johnson sent then Turkish President Ismet Inonu a letter encouraging him to settle the Cyprus problem; the subtext of the letter, however, was an implicit threat of not supplying NATO assistance in the event of a Soviet invasion.³² Inonu was compelled to remind Johnson of NATO’s member state’s obligation, under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, to assist a fellow member in the event of an attack.^{33, 34} This small sparring match, while in the larger picture of the Cyprus issue not very important, proved to be a souring point in U.S.-Turkey relations. According to some, the Turks began to doubt the friendship of the U.S, and moved to patch ties with the USSR to the north.³⁵

The 1970s and 1980s saw a continuation of the status quo between Turkey and the U.S., with little changing until the fall of the Soviet Union. As the U.S.S.R. collapsed, the world became mostly unipolar since the U.S. was the only superpower left. As Asia and the Middle East were coming into their own, both Iran and Turkey stood by, ready to compete for influence in the Middle East.³⁶ Since then, the international arena has arguably shifted toward a more multipolar structure. Nonetheless, Turkey finds itself in the same position as always – the crucial bridge between Europe and Asia, West and East. Turkey now seeks to take advantage of this unique geographical location and has decided to become more assertive in its foreign relations, as exhibited in recent U.N. Security Council votes, where Turkey voted against sanctions for Iran

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ T.W. Adams, “The American Concern in Cyprus,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science* 401 (1972): 95-104.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April, 1949, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

³⁵ Adams, “The American Concern in Cyprus.”

³⁶ Graham E. Fuller, “The Emergence of Central Asia,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 78 (Spring 1990): 49, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148628>

despite U.S. pressure.³⁷ Some suggest that Turkey has moved past the nuclear issue with Iran, accepting what they see as the fact that Iran will acquire nuclear arms. It is possible that not wishing to antagonize an unstable nation, which may soon be nuclear, Turkey has begun to edge away from siding with the economic sanctions pushed by the West.³⁸

³⁷ Michael Crowley, "White Hot Bosphorus," *New Republic* 241, no. 6 (2010): 6-10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE UNITED STATES, IRAN AND TURKEY

Andrew Seo

The United States, Turkey, and Iran are principal players in a global arena that is currently undergoing a fundamental shift in power—whereby the West’s clout is waning as countries in the Near and Far East are growing in prominence. All three are slowly adjusting to their newly defined roles in this different environment. For that reason, the three countries are conscious of present conditions while keeping a keen eye on the future since the accomplishment of their long-term goals is at stake. But to understand the foreign policy of a country, one must first know what its long-term objectives are.

The United States

In foreign affairs and geopolitics, two powers reigned supreme in the decades following the Second World War: the Soviet Union and the United States. When the former collapsed, the latter became the world’s only superpower, and this situation is unlikely to change in the twenty-first century. Indeed, its “inherent power ... coupled with its geographic position makes the United States the pivotal actor of the twenty-first century.”³⁹ George Friedman, author of *The Next 100 Years* and CEO of STRATFOR, believes that the country’s primary strategic goal is to prevent the creation of an effective coalition of hostile states that would counter-balance U.S. power and threaten U.S. interests across the globe.⁴⁰ Indeed, while the United States has a plethora of economic and political objectives, none is more important than maintaining its global stature by warding off potential challengers.

In the Middle Eastern theatre, the United States’ main goals are the safeguarding of its access to cheap oil, the stabilization of Iraq and the elimination of terrorism. These three objectives are crucial in the country’s overarching goal of preserving its safety, well-being and prosperity. Because this report focuses on the relations between the United States, Turkey and Iran, the strategic goals mentioned in the following sections are often specific to the Middle Eastern region.

Access to oil and gas

The United States finds itself in a precarious position because its high consumption of oil and natural gas forces it to constantly import both of these commodities from abroad. Despite being the third largest oil producer and fourth largest gas producer in the world, the United States continually seeks to secure access to these resources from foreign suppliers because it consumes 23.3% of daily global oil consumption and a 20.5% for gas.⁴¹ The Middle East is a

³⁹ George Friedman, *The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ U.S Energy Information Administration, “Renewable and Alternative Fuels,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, August 2010, <http://www.eia.gov/cneaf/solar.renewables/page/trends/table1.html>.

highly strategic region for the United States because it holds 59.9% of world oil reserves and over 41% of world natural gas reserves.⁴² Out of the five countries with the greatest proven oil reserves, four of them are located in the Middle East, according to data compiled by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).⁴³

It is clear that U.S. policy-makers have these facts and figures in mind as they decide how to conduct U.S. foreign policy. The country with the greatest amount of oil reserves is Saudi Arabia, and it is no coincidence that in October of 2010, the State Department announced to Congress that an arms deal had been negotiated with Saudi Arabia—the largest in American history. Pursuant to the arrangement, Saudi Arabia will purchase \$60.5 billion worth of helicopters, bunker-busting bombs, and attack aircrafts.⁴⁴

Iraq occupies the second position on the EIA list of countries with the greatest oil reserves, and one can see that the U.S. has airbases in the country. It is likely that one of the reasons the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 was the country's vast oil reserves.⁴⁵ Now that the U.S. has a strong military presence in the country, it will surely ensure that all natural resources agreements struck between American companies and the Iraqi government have favorable terms for U.S. businesses. Furthermore, while the U.S. announced its withdrawal from Iraq, it maintains an important military presence in the rest of the region. Ranging from armed troops in Kuwait, a country with the fifth largest oil reserves in the world, to Aegis cruisers in the Persian Gulf, the United States military has flexed its muscles in the Middle East and is making this fact clear to all. It would seem that the United States seeks to maintain this high visibility in the Middle East for at least the near future.

A Stable Iraq

After fighting for more than seven years in Iraq, the United States has announced on August 31st, 2010, that it would end its combat operations in the country.⁴⁶ This announcement came during a time of political tumult, as Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki was embroiled in a crisis that had begun in March of 2010. This crisis stemmed from the contested parliamentary elections, which pitted Maliki's governing party against opposition leader Ayad Allawi's party. As described by Steven Lee Myers of the *New York Times*:

⁴² Dr. Lenore Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy: Turkey, the U.S., and the Middle East" (seminar presentation, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, November 4, 2010).

⁴³ U.S Energy Information Administration. "International Petroleum (Oil) Reserves and Resources." <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/international/oilreserves.html>.

⁴⁴ Joshua Teitelbaum, "Arms for the King and His Family: The U.S. Arms Sale to Saudi Arabia," *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 10, no. 11 (4 November 2010), http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=1&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=376&PID=0&IID=5177&TTL=Arms_for_the_King_and_His_Family:_The_U.S._Arms_Sale_to_Saudi_Arabia.

⁴⁵ Steven Mufson, "A Crude Case for War?" *Washington Post*, March 16, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/14/AR2008031403677.html>.

⁴⁶ "President Obama's Address on Iraq," *New York Times*, August 31, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/01/world/01obama-text.html?pagewanted=all&ref=world>.

The party led by Mr. Maliki won 89 seats, trailing the 91 gained by a party led by Mr. Allawi. Mr. Allawi and Mr. Maliki are both Shiites, but Mr. Allawi is a secular figure who drew votes from the country's Sunni minority. After months of stalemate, an agreement was reached in November that gave Mr. Allawi's bloc the position of speaker of the Parliament as well as leadership of a newly created committee overseeing national security. The creation of the committee was a compromise pushed by the Obama administration to ensure the participation of Sunnis, Iraq's former rulers, who have been underrepresented in the Iraqi government since the American invasion.⁴⁷

As Myers describes, the Obama administration played an active role in defusing the situation and hashing out a compromise. The year 2010 represented a critical junction for Iraq because the country could have splintered into a state of disarray as a result of the electoral conflict and the planned U.S. withdrawal. However, this collapse has not occurred so far as President Obama worked to ensure that there would be stability, or at least a semblance of it, despite the fact that the U.S. was preparing to withdraw its 50,000 troops from the country over the following twelve months. At present, the military personnel still deployed in Iraq serve either as advisors to the Iraqi military, security personnel for U.S. installations or force protection troops. Complete withdrawal of U.S. forces is scheduled to be accomplished by December 31st, 2011, but it is possible that the U.S. mandate might extend beyond this date.⁴⁸

The United States has a strategic interest in keeping Iraq a sovereign and free country because of its value as a possible Middle Eastern ally, its potential to become a terrorist haven if left unchecked and its vast oil reserves. Current U.S. objectives remain to train Iraqi soldiers in tactics and weapons proficiency. Furthermore, American specialists are to assist in counterterrorism operations. Diplomatically, the U.S. must still toil to maintain the peace between the Iraqi army and Kurdish pesh merga. Finally, Iraq must deal with Al Qaeda and Iranian-backed militias. The U.S. will help Iraq become more secure by deploying approximately 7,000 private security guards who are to defend compounds and ward off enemy attacks.⁴⁹ These private guards have been hired by the State Department, reflecting the country's shift from military-led operations to civilian-backed actions.⁵⁰ In all, the United States is prepared to continue non-combat operations in Iraq in order to ensure a prosperous future for the country since it is vital geopolitically.

⁴⁷ Steven Lee Meyers, "Iraq," *New York Times*, 29 August, 2011, <http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/index.html?scp=5&sq=united%20states%20iraq&st=cse>.

⁴⁸ Amanda Terkel, "Iraq Withdrawal Date For U.S. Troops May Be Pushed Back Beyond 2011," *Huffington Post*, May 11, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/11/iraq-withdrawal-2011-delay_n_860188.html.

⁴⁹ Michael Gordon, "Civilians to Take U.S. Lead as Military Leaves Iraq," *New York Times*, August 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/19/world/middleeast/19withdrawal.html>.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Eliminating Terrorism

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States made fighting and eliminating terrorism its principal foreign policy objective. Even in the wake of Osama bin Laden's death, the U.S. and its allies have much work left to complete before this mission is accomplished.⁵¹ The consequences of Al-Qaeda's leader's death are still uncertain, and there is no clear consensus among experts what these consequences will be. Indeed, experts are predicting everything from the group's inevitable demise⁵² to a resurgence of terrorism inspired by bin Laden's death.⁵³ Nonetheless, while the precise reaction to bin Laden's death remains to be seen, terrorism will continue to be a threat to U.S. interests across the globe in the near future, and the United States will continue to devote significant resources to counter this phenomenon.

Outside of al Qaeda, the United States faces challenges on the terrorism front from states like Iran and Syria in addition to organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah. Indeed, while the U.S. believes that Iran and Syria sponsor terrorism, some of its allies, such as Turkey, do not believe so. A similar situation has ensued with Hamas and Hezbollah.⁵⁴ Reconciling these differences is something that the United States and its allies will have to prioritize in order to move forward on this issue and eliminate the problem of terrorism.

Ensuring the Security of Israel

Israel is one of the United States' staunchest and most faithful allies in the Middle East. Relations between the two countries date back to the end of the Second World War, when the United States strongly supported the creation of Israel. Sixty years later, the partnership between the two states remains strong despite a few clashes between Obama and Netanyahu.

The United States has supplied its ally with a considerable amount of foreign aid over the years because it understands the precarious situation Israel finds itself in. In fact, according to the Congressional Research Service, "Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II".⁵⁵ From 1976-2004, Israel was the largest annual recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, having since been supplanted by Iraq. Since 1985, the United States has provided nearly \$3 billion in grants annually to Israel."⁵⁶

⁵¹ Alissa J. Rubin, "Afghans Fear West May See Death as the End," *New York Times*, May 2, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/03/world/asia/03afghanistan.html>.

⁵² Dan Murphy, "Bin Laden's death puts exclamation point on Al Qaeda's demise," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 May, 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0503/Bin-Laden-s-death-puts-exclamation-point-on-Al-Qaeda-s-demise>.

⁵³ Margaret Coker and Keith Johnson, "As al Qaeda Adapts Its Tactics, Threat From Splinter Groups Persists," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 May, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703703304576299041912668436.html>.

⁵⁴ Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy."

⁵⁵ Jeremy Sharp, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," Report no. RL 33222, (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, September 16, 2010), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

A considerable portion of these funds is used for Foreign Military Financing (FMF), giving Israel an opportunity to bolster its defenses against its adversaries in the area. In August 2007, the Bush Administration pledged an increase in FMF by \$6 billion over the span of a decade, while the Obama Administration recently requested \$3 billion in FMF for FY 2011. The State Department requested additional funding under the pretenses that it “will help ensure that Israel maintains its qualitative military edge over potential threats, and prevent a shift in the security balance of the region. U.S. assistance is also aimed at ensuring for Israel the security it requires to make concessions necessary for comprehensive regional peace.”⁵⁷ The United States is keen on not only protecting its ally, but also the region’s security.

Turkey

Turkey is the successor to the once powerful Ottoman Empire, and thus has the notions of empire and greatness embedded in the country’s collective memory. With a sphere of influence that encompassed much of the region, the Ottoman Empire is in a way a precursor to the future Turkey, since many experts expect the country to be a major power later in the century as it develops and matures. Hady Amr, Director of the Brookings Doha Center, called Turkey one of several “emerging powers” in recent memory.⁵⁸ For Turkey to become such a major player in the international area, it will have to create a regional sphere of influence, resolve the question of the Kurds and become a significant energy hub.

A Regional Sphere of Influence

Much of Turkey’s aura—and future success—comes from its geography. Situated near Europe, the Middle East, and Russia, Turkey’s location serves as a launching pad from which it can exert influence on the entire region. As Friedman writes:

Turkey is not isolated and tied down; it has multiple directions in which it can move. And, most important, it does not represent a challenge to American interests and is therefore not constantly confronted with an American threat. This means it does not have to devote resources to blocking the United States. With its economy surging, it will likely soon reemerge in its old role, as the dominant force in the region.⁵⁹

Friedman explains that the United States and Turkey will not necessarily have conflicting interests, or at least that concerted efforts will not be taken by one party to safeguard against the other due to the physical distance that separates them. Ultimately, he foresees Turkey’s sphere of influence in 2050 as encompassing northern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Hady Amr, “Iran’s Nuclear Deal and the New Global Power Brokers,” Brookings Doha Center, May 21, 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0521_nuclear_iran_amr.aspx.

⁵⁹ Friedman, *100 Years*, 81.

countries surrounding the Black and Caspian seas.⁶⁰ Establishing and maintaining such a sphere of influence will be one of the chief long-term strategic goals of Turkey.

The Kurdish Issue and Ending PKK Terrorism

The United States and its leading allies in the Iraq War are not the only countries with a vested interest in Iraq's future. Turkey, for one, "has strong commercial and diplomatic interests" in Iraq.⁶¹ One of the interests involves the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Turkey must find a way to stop the terrorist attacks of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) while establishing good relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In the past, Turkey encountered many difficulties in trying to answer this question. At the moment, it is attempting to resolve the situation by playing a more proactive role in the area's stabilization.

The modern saga of the Kurdish issue commenced when the nationalist challenge began gaining momentum shortly after the end of the first Gulf War. According to Meliha Benli Altunışık of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, "the developments in Iraq after the war posed further security challenges for Turkey as they were articulated with the rise of the Kurdish nationalist challenge to the state."⁶² Furthermore, "[t]he emergence of northern Iraq as an area out of the control of central government and the consolidation of Kurdish rule there under US protection was seen as a threat to Turkey's interests."⁶³ Devising a solution to properly address this concern is one of the primary aims of Turkey.

Zero Problems with its Neighbors and Preeminence in Energy

Turkey's current Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, is a proponent of expanding Turkey's role in the international arena. His ambitions are wide ranging and comprehensive and include the establishment of friendly ties with many other countries. Sorting through these relationships with countries like Syria and Iran and strengthening them will be a principal priority of Turkey's in the next few decades, as well as achieving primacy in energy.

Turkey's current strategy for reaching global preeminence is to avoid having any problems or confrontations with its neighbors. For instance, it has agreed to cooperate on issues concerning energy with Iran, much to the chagrin of the United States.⁶⁴ One of other main sources of contention between the U.S. and Turkey is the Nabucco Pipeline. While the U.S. supports the pipeline itself, as its intended use is to wean Europe's dependence on Russian gas in favor of Caspian and Middle Eastern gas, it opposes the use of Iranian gas in the said pipeline. Other suppliers would include Iraq, Egypt, Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Turkmenistan.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid, 203.

⁶¹ "The Davutoglu effect," *The Economist*, October 21, 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/17276420>.

⁶² Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkey's Changing Middle East Policy," *Research Unit on International Security and Cooperation*, no. 23 (May 2010): 150.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Turkish PM says wants Nabucco to transport Iran gas," *Reuters*, July 13, 2009,

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2009/07/13/energy-nabucco-iran-idUKLD60806920090713?sp=true>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Meanwhile, Turkey sees the pipeline as an opportunity to solidify relations with Iran while improving its standing in the global community. Furthermore, in 2009, Turkey's Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan explicitly stated that he wanted to see Iranian gas transported in the pipeline: "We desire Iranian gas to be included in Nabucco when conditions allow."⁶⁶ The agreement is beneficial to Iran as it would enable it to make healthy profits. From Turkey's standpoint, incorporating Iranian gas would increase the pipeline's supply and gratify their neighbors to the east. Iran would be seen as a trusted partner that Turkey can lean on, regardless of U.S. approval. However, from the United States' perspective, the simple fact that Iran will earn revenue from this endeavor is enough for the United States to oppose it. Gaining additional revenue and forming stronger ties with the European states that plan to use this gas would be obvious gains for Iran, but this would undermine U.S. influence. It will be interesting to monitor how this situation plays out, as final preparations for the pipeline will be made this year, in 2011.

The Nabucco Pipeline is not the only common ground that Turkey and Iran have reached. As it stands, the Tabriz-Ankara natural gas pipeline has already been built. Furthermore, the two countries agreed in August 2007 to jointly pursue an electricity plan that is set to produce 6,000 megawatts.⁶⁷ With both these arrangements, Turkey is avoiding confrontation with its neighbor while establishing itself as an energy hub.

Turkey is also strengthening its ties with Syria. Indeed, it has signed 51 agreements with that country since December 2009, one of which waived a visa requirement for citizens of one country to visit the other.⁶⁸ In April 2009, the two countries even conducted a joint military exercise.⁶⁹ Bilal Y. Saab of the Brookings Institution wrote that the exercise had "important political ramifications for Syria, Turkey and the region."⁷⁰ He also stated:

For Syria, the military exercise with Turkey allows it to send a political message to Washington and make Israel nervous. For Turkey, the military exercise with Syria helps it better protect its borders and develop more positive relations with its Arab-Muslim neighbours. Turkish-Syrian relations have come a long way since 1998, but they still fall short of a strategic alliance, which requires parallel political visions for, and positioning in, the Middle East.

Maintaining such relations, particularly militarily, comes at the clear cost of affronting Washington. Thus, such moves show that Turkey's resolve in this matter is firm, and that it is willing to test its relationship with the United States in order to establish strong ones with its neighbors. In sum, it has made it clear that its priority is to become a hub for energy and have good relations with its neighbors.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ John C.K. Daly, "Iran and Turkey Cooperate on Electricity," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 67 (9 April, 2008), http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=33535.

⁶⁸ Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy."

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Bilal Y. Saab, "Syria and Turkey Deepen Bilateral Relations," Brookings Institution, 6 May, 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/0506_syria_turkey_saab.aspx.

Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran, famously dubbed one of President George W. Bush's "Axis of Evil," ushered itself into the modern era in very democratic and mass-driven terms with the 1979 Iranian Revolution. But such a people's revolution now seems like such a far cry in the theocratic republic. Instead, Iran finds itself surrounded by neighboring countries that are undergoing political shifts, just like Iran did some two decades ago. This time, as other countries destabilize and rulers fall, Iran and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are standing firm, along with the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei.

The Brookings Institute stated even prior to the Arab Spring that Iran was set on a quest for regional preeminence. Now, with the destabilization of many of its neighbors in the region, Iran finds itself in a prime position to do so as it gains strength through this power vacuum. Brookings wrote: "Iran has been at the forefront of U.S. national security concerns for the past thirty years. Yet, for the past three decades the United States has had limited contact with Iran's leaders and has found it difficult to grasp the opaque workings of the regime."⁷¹ The think tank goes on to more comprehensively explain and clarify the country's goal, as it is unconventional when it comes to what one would expect from a regional power. Iran is not interested in invading its neighbors and expanding from a territorial standpoint. Instead, it seeks to play a role in policy-making, especially in relation to the West and how the Middle East at large deals with countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Iran's goal is to shift the power dynamic and the 20th century paradigm of global politics by leveraging its natural resources cache, pursuing its nuclear ambitions, and expanding its influence on the world stage. The Brookings Institute states:

Iran is not an expansionist power in the traditional sense; Tehran does not seek to eradicate borders or annex territory. Rather, Iran has an almost instinctive need to assert its sway that is born of a fundamental opportunism and manifests itself through efforts to maximize its levers and exploit its adversaries' vulnerabilities. This relates to the insecurity and distrust that is deeply engrained within the political culture and the strategic framework of the Islamic Republic.⁷²

As the Institute elaborates, this motive is a direct result of the country's history and the way that the past is deeply entrenched in the mind of Iranian citizens and their leaders. It will be important to follow this development, along with U.S.-Turkey, Turkey-Iran and U.S.-Iran relations. Indeed, the way in which these countries continue to hone relations with one another will serve as an important bellwether for the 21st century.

⁷¹ Brookings Institute, "Iran's Quest for Regional Preeminence: Implications for Middle East Security" (conference, Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., July 14-15, 2009), http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2009/0714_iran/0714_iran_proceedings.pdf.

⁷² Ibid.

Becoming the Leader of the Muslim Ummah

Iran is also intent on becoming the leader of the Muslim *Ummah*, or “community.” Iran wants to unite the Muslim community under its ideas to form *Ummah Wahida*, or the “One Community.” According to a forum held by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the area is beginning to see a shift in the balance of power between the Shi’a and Sunni sects.⁷³ Professor Yitzhak Nakash of Brandeis University, who spoke at the event, said, “Although the success of the Iranian revolution may have initially encouraged Shi’a political activism, the overthrow of Saddam and the popular rise of Hezbollah have created a new window of opportunity for Arab Shi’a to obtain political representation proportional to their populations.”⁷⁴ Dr. Nakash sees an opportunity for Shi’a Islam to grow, and Iran, as the largest Shi’a country, will play a tremendous role in this expansion.

However, Dr. Nakash warns that Iran and Saudi Arabia are at odds over the issue, as the latter is the dominant Sunni power in the region. As the two countries jockey for position, the situation in the Middle East could deteriorate if the conflict between the two states becomes too severe. Dr. Nakash recommends that, “To mitigate the growing tension between these groups the main centers of Sunni and Shi’a power will have to work together to bring stability to the region.” He also believes that the United States will have a role in this power struggle as the broker between Iran and Saudi Arabia.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Iran will be working to maximize its stature as the leader of Shi’a Islam and, perhaps, Islam as a whole.

⁷³ Center for Strategic and International Studies, “Congressional Forum on Islam with Yitzhak Nakash,” (forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., January 22, 2007), <http://csis.org/event/congressional-forum-islam-yitzhak-nakash>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

TURKEY-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Jean-Philippe Gauthier and Tyrell M. Walker

To see Turkey's importance in the world, one need not look farther than on a globe. Turkey's geographic importance gives it much potential since it is situated between Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It became the country known now as Turkey after Mustafa Kemal founded the Republic of Turkey as a secular nation in 1923, shortly after the fall of the Ottoman Turks.⁷⁶ This drive for a secular country has been critical to its Middle Eastern identity since the region contains strong Islamic powers, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, that influence regional diplomatic and social relations. Mustafa Kemal sought to modernize and industrialize Turkey by imitating the Western model of development, and this fostered strong ties between Turkey and Western countries because Turkish officials and businessmen met with their Western counterparts to benefit from their expertise and experience. As Professor Efraim Inbar of Bar-Ilan University writes, Israel was central to Turkey's connection to the Western world since it had such close relations with the United States, a country that Turkey sought to get closer to.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, while Turkey and Israel were allies, a strong partnership between these two states on a government to government level arose only after the Cold War had ended, and their companionship truly began to blossom in the 1990s. Therefore, many experts focus on the 1990s as a starting point for official Israeli-Turkish companionship despite the fact that the cultural bond between the two states developed far earlier.⁷⁸ Recently, however, the relationship between Turkey and Israel became tenuous due to diverging opinions on issues such as the Gaza Flotilla and the Iranian nuclear program.

A historic tie between the Ottoman Turks and the Jews has existed for many centuries. This can best be expressed by Israeli President Ezer Weizman's 1994 statement that "Israel will never forget that Jews were accepted in the Ottoman Empire when they were expelled from various European countries 500 years ago."⁷⁹ Two years earlier, Israel, Turkey and the United States had celebrated Ottoman culture and the Turkish-Ottoman legacy. One can see that Israel has not forgotten the welcome Ottomans gave Jews, and this historical heritage can be used by the U.S. to foster collaboration between the two states. Both Israel and Turkey share, as Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli described in their book *Turkey at a Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies in the Greater Middle East*, a "common sense of otherness" that is based on their similar attachment

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Studies, *Background Note: Turkey*, May 13, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm>.

⁷⁷ Efraim Inbar, "Israeli-Turkish Tensions and Beyond," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2010): 27-35.

⁷⁸ Serhat Erkmen, "Why Is There Tension in Relations Between Israel and Turkey?" *Today's Zaman*, November 27, 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-195715-why-is-there-tension-in-relations-between-israel-and-turkey.html>.

⁷⁹ Dietrich Jung and Wolfgang Piccoli, *Turkey at the Crossroads: Ottoman Legacies and the Greater Middle East* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 153-154.

to Western values.⁸⁰ However, until the 1990s, this cultural brotherhood did not hold them together, and it took the political overtures of the 1990s to bring them closer to one another.⁸¹

The 1990s are seen as the beginning of a close bond between Israel and Turkey. While both countries had working together for many years, they came together to support each other's needs. When Turkey realized that the U.S. would not provide it with the weapon systems it wanted, Turkey began to strengthen its relationship with Israel by establishing an embassy there.⁸² In these early years of collaboration, Turkey and Israel had common interests: they both felt threatened by Iran and Syria, sought increased Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, desired the elimination of the PKK and wanted to improve their military capabilities through technological innovations.⁸³ One must see however that the improving Israeli-Palestinian relations were critical to these golden years of cooperation between Israel and Turkey. Indeed, one of Turkey's main goals is the implementation of a two-state solution that would resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁸⁴, and this has remained unchanged since the early 1990s.

The United States has long supported a strong relationship between Turkey and Israel. In a 2002 bill, the members of the House of Representatives formally congratulated both Israel and Turkey for their blossoming bilateral relationship, citing the economic, cultural, social and military benefits of strong U.S.-Turkey-Israel cooperation.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the House of Representatives also praised Turkey for being the first Muslim country to recognize Israel.⁸⁶ As Westernized nations in a strong Islamic world, both countries looked to each other for mutual support.

Turkey and Israel have had close economic ties with each other since their strategic cooperation began. When it became clear that the U.S. would not support Turkey's need for military weapons and equipment, Turkey turned to Israel for its military needs. Hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of defense contracts have been signed in the last twenty years, as well as \$700 million to modernize Turkey's F-4 phantoms and \$688 million to upgrade its M-60 tanks and other weapon systems.⁸⁷ Apart from these defense agreements, the Israel-Turkey free trade agreement signed in 1996 resulted in an 800 percent increase in non-defense related trade between the two countries by 2001, and more than \$1 billion worth of total trade by 2000.⁸⁸ Both countries thus became each other's top Middle Eastern export market. Even with

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Inbar, "Israeli-Turkish Tensions."

⁸³ Erkmen, "Why Is There Tension?"

⁸⁴ Dr. Lenore Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy: Turkey, the U.S., and the Middle East" (seminar presentation, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, November 4, 2010).

⁸⁵ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Commending the Republic of Turkey and the State of Israel for the continued strengthening of their political, economic, cultural, and strategic partnership and for their actions in support of the war on terrorism (H.CON.RES.327)*, (Washington D.C.: Committee on International Relations, 2002).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Inbar, "Israeli-Turkish Tensions."

⁸⁸ U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Commending the Republic of Turkey (H.CON.RES.327)*.

mounting political differences between Israel and Turkey, neither country desires to cancel any of their lucrative trade agreements with each other, of which the civilian component alone represented \$3 billion in 2009.⁸⁹ Therefore, while tensions are mounting between the two states, both Turkey and Israel see the benefits in continuing their military and non-military trade. However, there are signs that strained diplomatic relations are affecting business to business trade in a negative way, as some businesses have slowed in recent months due to a decreasing number of Turkish tourists in Israel and vice versa.⁹⁰

Since the beginning of the early 2000s, the relationship between Israel and Turkey has gotten tenser. Indeed, in 2004, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan called the Israeli policy in Gaza “state-sponsored terrorism”, which prompted a negative reaction from Israel.⁹¹ In December 2008, Israel initiated a high-intensity military operation, Operation *Cast Lead*, in Gaza. This act once again drew heavy criticism from the Turkish government. In fact, the government broke off some of its diplomatic ties with Israel and civilians held large demonstrations in the streets to support the Palestinians.⁹² A few weeks later, Erdoğan and Shimon Peres, the President of Israel, clashed over Israeli military operations in Gaza at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos. Erdoğan stormed out of the room vowing never to return and said that Israel was killing people when the moderator did not allow him to respond to Peres’ comments about the necessity of Israeli operations in Gaza.⁹³

On 30 May 2010, Israel launched an assault against the “Gaza Freedom Flotilla”, a convoy of six ships carrying 663 people.^{94, 95} 9 Turkish citizens were killed when the IDF assaulted the *Mavi Marmara*, a vessel that was part of the flotilla, in international waters.⁹⁶ This sparked a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Israel, which prompted Turkey to withdraw its ambassador from Israel and cancel planned joint military exercises.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Erdoğan called the Israeli assault “inhumane state terrorism” while Foreign Minister Davutoğlu said that it was “a black day in the history of humanity” and requested an international investigation into the Israeli operation.⁹⁸ As one can see from the powerful rhetoric employed by the Turks, this incident caused a significant cooling of Israeli-Turkish relations and remains to this day a sour point for

⁸⁹ Dina Craft, “Despite Raid, Mostly Business as Usual for Israel and Turkey,” *New York Times*, July 2, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/03/world/middleeast/03israel.html>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Brock Dahal and Danielle Slutzku, “Timeline of Turkish-Israeli Relations, 1949-2006,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/documents/44edf1a5d337f.pdf>.

⁹² Sarah Rainsford, “Turkey Rallies to Gaza’s Plight,” *BBC News*, 16 January, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7831496.stm.

⁹³ Katrin Bennhold, “Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel,” *New York Times*, January 29, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html>.

⁹⁴ Tia Goldenberg, “Pro-Palestinian Aid Flotilla Sets Sail for Gaza,” *Sign On San Diego*, 30 May, 2010, <http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2010/may/30/pro-palestinian-aid-flotilla-sets-sail-for-gaza/>.

⁹⁵ Ian Black and Haroon Siddique, “The Gaza Freedom Flotilla,” *The Guardian*, 31 May, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/31/q-a-gaza-freedom-flotilla>.

⁹⁶ Black and Siddique, “The Gaza Freedom Flotilla.”

⁹⁷ Megan K. Stack, “Israel flotilla raid deals a blow to ties with Turkey,” *Los Angeles Times*, 31 May, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/31/world/la-fg-turkey-israel-20100601>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

the Turkish people. In July 2011, a second Gaza flotilla composed of ten vessels sought to leave from Greece and break the Israeli blockade. The Greek authorities ordered the ships to stay docked and stopped two ships that attempted to sneak out of the ports.⁹⁹ However, one ship, the Dignity al-Karama, managed to leave Greece and is on its way to Gaza.¹⁰⁰ Israel boarded the ship without incident and led it to the port of Ashdod, where the passengers were taken into custody for questioning.¹⁰¹

For the United States, a deteriorating relationship between Israel and Turkey, two of its main Middle Eastern allies, is a big problem. Recent events demonstrate that Turkish-Israeli relations are worsening, at least on a governmental level, and that the U.S. is scrambling to restore this relationship to past levels.¹⁰² Turkish officials stated that they welcomed this opportunity if Israel apologized for the deaths of the 9 activists who were killed during the flotilla raid.¹⁰³ Israel refuses to do so because it views its raid as legitimate and declared that the casualties resulted from operational mistakes, not from an illegitimate operation.¹⁰⁴ However, in June, Benjamin Netanyahu sent a letter to Erdoğan congratulating him on his victory in the general elections and expressing his hopes that relations between Turkey and Israel could return back to normal.¹⁰⁵ There are also reports that the U.S. is pressuring both parties to engage in talks in order to stop their relations from waning further. Nonetheless, despite the diplomatic gestures, the relations between the two states still remain tense compared to how they were a few years ago.

One must acknowledge as well that the flotilla incident is simply the top of the iceberg and that the problems between Israel and Turkey run deeper. Turkey's policy of "zero problems with our neighbors" and its improving relations with Iran cause a lot of concern among Israeli officials since Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President, has repeatedly vowed to destroy Israel. As such, Israelis are worried because they see that Turkey is slowly shifting away from Israel and moving towards Iran. Some would say that Turkey's relations with Iran can be an opportunity for the United States and Israel to use Turkey as an intermediary to resolve their issues with the Islamic Republic, a role that Turkey has been willing to play in past years.¹⁰⁶ Others would argue that

⁹⁹ Christopher Torchia, "Greece bars boats leaving Greek ports for Gaza," *Seattle Times*, 1 July, 2011, http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2015481671_apgazafлотilla.html?syndication=rss.

¹⁰⁰ Ian Deitch, "Spokeswoman: protest ship to reach Gaza soon," *Sacramento Bee*, 17 July, 2011, <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/07/17/3775125/spokeswoman-protest-ship-to-reach.html>.

¹⁰¹ Brigadier General Yoav Mordechai, "Israel Navy Boards Boat Attempting to Break Maritime Security Blockade," Israeli Defense Forces, 19 July, 2011, <http://idfspokesperson.com/2011/07/19/israel-navy-boards-boat-attempting-to-break-maritime-security-blockade/>.

¹⁰² Barak Ravid, "U.S. scrambling to prevent Israel-Turkey ties from getting worse," *Haaretz*, 19 July, 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/u-s-scrambling-to-prevent-israel-turkey-ties-from-worsening-1.373943>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Flower, "Israel makes moves to improve relations with Turkey," *CNN*, 22 June, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-22/world/israel.turkey.relations_1_gaza-bound-flotilla-flotilla-incident-recep-tayyip-erdogan?_s=PM:WORLD.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Kinzer, interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now!*, real video stream, 14 June, 2010, http://www.democracynow.org/2010/6/14/steven_kinzer_reset_iran_turkey_and.

Turkey's stronger relations with Iran are the result of a regional power shift illustrated by Iran's successes in the Palestinian territories with Hamas, in Lebanon with Hezbollah and in Bahrain with its Qud Forces.¹⁰⁷ As such, the United States must step up its regional efforts if it does not wish to see Turkey switch to the Iranian side. In any case, the widening gap between Turkey and Israel poses a strategic challenge to U.S. diplomats and foreign policymakers that must be closed if the United States wishes to consolidate its influence in the region.

In conclusion, the ties between the Jews and the Turks date back to the times of the Ottoman Empire since the Ottomans were the ones who welcomed the Jewish people in their lands when the Jews fled European persecution. From the establishment of Israel in 1948 to the 1990s, Turkey and Israel had informal ties based on cultural and business relations. But from the 1990s onwards, a more formal government-to-government partnership emerged in response to overtures on the part of both administrations. Until the accession of the AK Party to power in 2002, cooperation flourished and both states greatly strengthened their military and economic ties. However, the accession of an Islamic party to power did cause concern among Israelis, and the party's strong support of Palestinians led to tensions between the two countries. Recently, the Turkish opposition to the Israeli operation in Gaza, the tough rhetoric at Davos and the flotilla incident illustrate that Israeli-Turkish relations are getting colder.

The deteriorating relationship between Israel and Turkey is an important strategic problem for the United States since both of these states are two of its major allies in the region. Indeed, a rift between them could undermine U.S. influence in the area. As such, the United States has two options: it could use Turkey as a mediator and leverage Turkey's newfound influence vis-à-vis Iran to pressure the Islamic Republic into serious negotiations about its nuclear program. In such a scenario, it would be normal for Turkey to have ties with Iran. The Israelis would be cynical at first, but if this approach produces results and promotes regional stability by resolving the nuclear issue, the ties between Turkey and Israel would improve because the Iranian issue would no longer divide both states. On the other hand, the United States can attempt to pressure Turkey into distancing itself from Iran while pressuring Israel to apologize regarding the flotilla incident. Such an approach is likely to generate considerable resistance from both governments since no one likes to be told what to do, but it would resolve some of the underlying problems in Turkish-Israeli relations. Whatever option U.S. policymakers choose, it is imperative that they bridge the gap between Turkey and Israel.

¹⁰⁷ Boaz Ganor, "Flotilla of World Hypocrisy," *Rhapsody*, no.12 (July-September 2010): 18-19.

UNDERSTANDING IRAQ-TURKEY RELATIONS

Alex Velez-Green

Iraq and Turkey both became sovereign nations out of the Ottoman Empire following World War 1. The 1920 League of Nations Mandate¹⁰⁸ gave control of the Iraqi province to the British. At this point, although Iraq was considered an “independent territory,” the British were *de facto* in charge of designing Iraqi foreign policy. Actual Iraqi autonomy was not achieved until 1932. The Republic of Turkey was formed out of the Ottoman Empire by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, although the Republic’s government had effectively begun operating in 1920.

Between 1932 and 1958, Turkey and Iraq cooperated closely with one another. This period commenced with Iraq’s arrival at full independence and closed with Iraq’s July 14th Republican Revolution. This revolution took the form of a coup d’état that overthrew the Hashemite monarchy established in 1932. This monarchy had been strongly supported by the British, and the revolutionaries feared that the government was, in fact, still a pawn of the Europeans despite the long time that had elapsed since Iraq’s accession to independence. Two regional pacts highlight the cooperation between Iraq and Turkey during this period: the 1937 Saadabad Pact and the 1955 Baghdad Pact. The Saadabad Pact was a non-aggression pact signed by Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. The Baghdad Pact, which would later become the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), was the result of an alliance between Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. The United States (U.S.) joined this alliance in 1958. The authors of the pact inspired themselves from the 1949 NATO agreement, but the Baghdad Pact has been named one of the least successful Cold War-era alliances.¹⁰⁹

Between 1958 and 1990, Iraqi-Turkish relations became more complex as both countries’ foreign policies significantly changed. In 1960, Turkey underwent a coup d’état. The army gained control of the government, prepared and ratified a new, more democratic constitution, and reestablished a democratic state in Turkey. During this time period, Turkish foreign policy shifted from a pro-Western stance to one that took more into consideration the views of its neighboring Middle Eastern countries.¹¹⁰

Iraqi-Turkish relations during this period were largely marked by petrol and water-related interactions between the two states. With reference to the petrol trade, the aforementioned shift in Turkey’s foreign policy boded well for the country during the 1973 OPEC oil crisis since OPEC nations, including Iraq, declared that Turkey’s petroleum supply would not be limited. Another positive result of Turkey’s new Middle Eastern foreign policy was a 1973 agreement between Turkey and Iraq to collaborate on a petroleum-pipeline project. This pipeline, which

¹⁰⁸ The League of Nations Mandate is defined as [“a legal status for certain territories transferred from the control of one country to another following World War I, or the legal instruments that contained the internationally agreed-upon terms for administering the territory on behalf of the League.”

¹⁰⁹ Kevin W. Martin, “Baghdad Pact,” in Ruud van Dijk et al., *Encyclopedia of the Cold War*. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 57.

¹¹⁰ B. Oran, *Türk Dis Politikasi*, 13th ed. (Istanbul: İletisim Y.,2008): 785-786.

ran from Kirkuk in Iraq to Yumurtalik in Turkey, would eventually supply two-thirds of Turkey's oil demand.

In stark contrast to the harmonious relationship that Turkey and Iraq had with regards to the oil trade, the two countries had significant conflicts over the management of shared water resources. In the 1960s, Turkey implemented the Southeastern Anatolia (GAP) Project, a public-works initiative whose aim was the harvesting of water from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers through the construction of 22 dams. This initiative was launched for irrigation and hydroelectric purposes, but Iraq perceived it as a threat to its own water supply. This began a contention between the two countries that continues today. Indeed, no permanent solution has been reached between Turkey and Iraq on the management of shared water resources and negotiations are still underway.

The Iraq-Iran War (1980-88) was a period of renewed positive relations between Iraq and Turkey. By 1980, Iraq and Turkey shared certain key political structures and interests. At this point in their political development, both states' governments were military-backed and endorsed secularist and anti-radical domestic policies. In addition, both had achieved stable borders and had interests in fostering closer relations with the West. Iraq needed Western support in its war against Iran and Turkey needed Western support for its bid to enter the European Union (EU). During the Iraq-Iran War, Turkey remained an officially neutral party. However, as a close regional ally of the U.S. and a member in NATO, the state tacitly adopted the pro-Iraq stance assumed by the West. In keeping with this stance, Turkey purchased petroleum from Iraq with hard currency while giving Iraq the means to purchase Turkish goods using Turkish-loaned credit, thus effectively providing Iraq with financial support during the war.¹¹¹

Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait ruined over 40 years of positive relations between Turkey and Iraq. As a member of the United Nations (U.N.), Turkey had the responsibility of supporting U.S. and U.N. actions against Iraq. To that end, it allowed U.N. troops to use its air bases to launch aerial assaults on Iraqi troops and installations. Following the Safwan ceasefire agreement of February 1991, the Kurds in northern Iraq began an uprising.¹¹² This revolt was quickly suppressed by the Iraqi Republican Guards, but many Kurds fled towards the Iraq-Turkey border, an area that they considered relatively safe. The 1991 U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 formally identified the region of Iraq that was north of the 36th parallel as a "safe zone."¹¹³ Since it became primarily occupied by Kurds following the suppression of their uprising, this region became a base of operations for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish terrorist group that seeks to force the Turkish government into allowing the creation of an independent Kurdistan.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ G. Inanc, *Türk Diplomasisinde Irak: 1978-1997* (Istanbul: Kultur Y., 2008): 57-59.

¹¹² C. Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 3rd ed. (London: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 246.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 248.

¹¹⁴ Tuncay Durna and Suleyman Hancerli, "Implementing Democratic Policing in the PKK Terrorism Torn Areas of Turkey", in *Understanding and Responding to the Terrorism Phenomenon*, ed. Ozgur Nikbay and Suleyman Hancerli (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2007): 328.

From the end of the Gulf War until the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraqi-Turkish relations were defined by the two states' cooperation in militarily confronting the PKK in northern Iraq. Turkey's primary interest during this period was to thwart the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. In order to do so, it had to ensure the political integrity of Iraq by preventing it from being divided into autonomous, ethnically-dominated districts.

From 2003 onwards, Iraqi-Turkish relations have largely been defined by Turkey's interest in combating the PKK by defending the political integrity of Iraq. At the commencement of the U.S.'s invasion of Iraq, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) voted against Turkey joining the U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq.¹¹⁵ It is possible that this move was a statement against the U.S.'s unilateral actions in the Middle East. Turkey's refusal to join the coalition also speaks to the country's continued interest in preserving a cooperative relationship with Iraq because this connection is crucial to its efforts against the PKK. Additionally, in 2008, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a trip to Baghdad. He was the first Turkish head of government to visit Iraq in 18 years.¹¹⁶ The aim of this visit was to strengthen the ties between the two countries in the aftermath of a series of PKK-initiated attacks into Turkey.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, both Iraqi and Turkish officials have engaged in mutually supportive rhetoric. In April 2009, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan stated, "we defend the establishment of an Iraqi state on the basis of Iraq nationality. Common ground is being an Iraqi national. If you set up a Kurdish state, then others will try to set up a Shia state and others an Arab state. There, you divide Iraq into three. This can lead Iraq into a civil war."¹¹⁸ A civil war in Iraq would have significant negative repercussions for Turkey, who would lack a valuable ally in the fight against the PKK. In May 2009, several high-ranking Iraqi officials explicitly stated their opposition to PKK action against Turkey, and promised cooperation and support for Turkey's military action against the PKK.¹¹⁹¹²⁰

On issues not directly related to the PKK, Iraq and Turkey have recently shown additional significant signs of cooperation. On May 1, 2009, Iraqi Mahdi Army leader Muqtada al-Sadr met with the Turkish President Abdullah Gül and the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to discuss Turkey's role in stabilizing the Middle East.¹²¹ Then, on May 8, 2009, after some mixed messages, both Turkey and Iraqi oil officials announced that "the Iraqi Oil Ministry would be

¹¹⁵ James E. Kapsis, "The Failure of U.S.-Turkish Pre-War Negotiations: An Overconfident United States, Political Mismanagement, and a Conflicted Military," *Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal* 10, no. 3 (September 2006), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2006/issue3/jv10no3a3.html>.

¹¹⁶ Gareth Jenkins, "Erdoğan Pays First Official Visit To Iraq," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 132 (11 July, 2008), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=33795](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=33795).

¹¹⁷ Waleed Ibrahim and Peter Graff, "Jordan's Abdullah first Arab leader to visit Iraq," *Reuters*, 12 August, 2008, <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-34953820080811>.

¹¹⁸ "PM Erdoğan says Turkey defends formation of Iraqi state on basis of Iraq nationality," *Today's Zaman*, 3 April, 2009, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=171383>.

¹¹⁹ "Maliki convinced Iraq, Turkey will find ways to eliminate PKK". *Today's Zaman*, 18 May, 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=175616.

¹²⁰ Alihan Hasanoğlu, "Barzani: Problems with Turkey overcome," *Today's Zaman*, 27 May, 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=176463.

¹²¹ Servet Yanatma and Süleyman Kurt, "Iraq's Sadr meets Erdoğan," *Today's Zaman*, 2 May, 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=174120&bolum=100.

exporting crude [oil] extracted from some oil fields in Kurdistan.”¹²² This agreement to export oil to Turkey was a strong indication of Iraq’s interest in maintaining a positive relationship with that country.

Negotiations have led to stronger cooperation between the two states on water-supply management problems. A 2008 drought in Iraq led to renewed Iraq-Turkey negotiations over trans-border river flow. The Iraqi complaint at the time, and consistently since then, was that the flow rate of the Euphrates River is severely limited by Turkish dams’ operations. Also in 2008, Turkey, Iraq and Syria agreed to restart the Joint Trilateral Committee, whose aim was to improve the countries’ ability to manage shared water resources. Following a May 12th, 2009, report that water levels in Iraq had fallen to dangerous levels, Iraqi and Turkish officials met in late May to once again discuss water-supply issues.¹²³ These negotiations were successful, and Turkey agreed to increase the amount of water supply it provides to Iraq. However, the ongoing debate between Israel and Turkey regarding Turkey’s Ilisu Dam, the largest hydroelectric dam on the Tigris River, reminds us that the two states have not yet fully resolved their disputes regarding water resource management.¹²⁴

How Would a Disintegrated Iraq Hurt Turkish Foreign Policy and Hinder Turkish Efforts against the PKK?

Iraq-Turkey relations today largely center upon Turkey’s ongoing war with the PKK. In the interest of eradicating the terrorist group, Turkey has made it an expressed goal to ensure that Iraq remains a single, sovereign state. If distinct ethnocentric, authoritarian states developed in a disintegrated Iraq, both Turkey’s fight against the PKK and its ability to manage the sharing of natural resources with Iraq would be significantly hindered. Indeed, if Iraq were to break down and split into small, sectarian communities, one could expect high intensity, long-lasting fighting between the groups over the control of territory and resources. Under these circumstances, it is conceivable that no single group could effectively bar the PKK from establishing temporary and permanent bases within its territory. Such a change would greatly reduce Turkey’s ability to interdict cross-border PKK raids into Turkey and would make the destruction of the group more difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, if the PKK expanded into other regions of Iraq, it would still have to launch attacks on Turkey via the northern Iraqi border. The only ways for the PKK to circumvent the Iraq-Turkey border would be to advance through Syria or Iran and neither of these options is feasible. Indeed, Turkey and Iran agree on the necessity to operate against terrorist organizations such as the PKK, and over the past decade, Iran has been fighting PJAK, a Kurdish terrorist organization similar to the PKK that operates in western Iran.¹²⁵ One could

¹²² “Iraq will export oil from Kurdish fields via Turkey,” *Today's Zaman*, 11 May, 2009,

http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=174933.

¹²³ Waleed Ibrahim and Aseel Kami, “Iraq parliament demands more water from neighbours,” *Reuters*, 12 May, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/05/12/idUSLC815551>.

¹²⁴ “Turkey to up Euphrates flow to Iraq,” *Agence France-Presse*, 19 September, 2009,

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5giDgd3ukLR8UcfziUQcNTokyM_tw.

¹²⁵ James Brandon, “Iran’s Kurdish Threat: PJAK,” *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 12 (15 June, 2006),

expect Syria to use military force to inhibit PKK movement through its territory as well because it is unlikely that Syria would be willing to jeopardize its improving relations with Turkey.

However, a disintegrated Iraq would enable the PKK to expand its command and control centers as well as its supply bases to the rest of the country instead of being limited to northern Iraq. If the PKK does establish bases in southern Iraq, Turkey will have a much harder time neutralizing the PKK. Indeed, the PKK would have an expanded network of supply lines, thus diminishing the disruption caused by the elimination of a PKK supply source by Turkish troops. Furthermore, Turkey's ability to conduct kinetic operations against the PKK would be significantly reduced because it would be harder for Turkey to operate in southern Iraq due to local resistance and sovereignty issues. After all, short cross-border attacks into Dahuk are easier to conduct than deep penetration operations in Anbar province, and it is very likely that Iraqis would oppose the presence of any Turkish troops in the southern provinces. Thus, in a disintegrated Iraq, the PKK stands to gain access to new base locations, supply sources, and transport lines, making Turkey's job of destroying the organization more difficult.

Sustained conflict between ethnically-based regional governments in a disintegrated Iraq would also result in the lack of a stable government with whom Turkey can negotiate oil contracts. Without a centralized Iraqi government, the two states could not organize such massive projects as the 2009 agreement to export crude oil from the fields in Kurdistan to Turkey. Furthermore, since Turkey controls much of Iraq's water supply, each region would have to negotiate water flow issues with the Turkish government. If the Turkish government decided not to acknowledge them, or did not negotiate to their liking, terrorist organizations would have new incentives to attack Turkey.

A weak Iraqi government and the rise of ethnically-based regional powers could lead to a civil war in Iraq. In his 2007 *Foreign Affairs* article, James Fearon contends that the level of sectarian violence then apparent in Iraq constituted a civil war.¹²⁶ Whether or not his conclusion is correct, his reasoning provides sound basis for the supposition that civil war in Iraq is a real possibility. In his article, Fearon reasons that in order to end a civil conflict through the creation of an effective power-sharing agreement, two conditions must be met: first, the engaged combatants cannot be highly factionalized; and second, that extended periods of fighting have shown the engaged sides that neither can realistically defeat the other. However, it seems that neither condition is met in the case of Iraq because the Shia and Sunnis are factionalized, and there has not yet been extended periods of fighting between the two groups.

Throughout the Muslim world, the Shia and Sunni sides are highly factionalized. These groups first became divided when, following the death of the Muslim prophet Muhammad in the year 632, conflict erupted over who should succeed him. Since then, the Shia and Sunnis have grown apart in their religious customs and traditions as well as in their religious beliefs, and these

[http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=805&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=181&no_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=805&tx_ttnews[backPid]=181&no_cache=1).

¹²⁶ James D. Fearon, "Iraq's Civil War," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no.2 (March-April 2007): 2-15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20032280>.

differences have further aggravated tensions between the two factions.¹²⁷ During the second half of the 20th century, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq further divided the groups by violently persecuted the Shia throughout his 24 year reign.^{128,129,130} Since America's removal of Hussein from power, the two groups have grown increasingly apart as they compete to gain political power. In addition to their quest to secure political influence in post-Hussein Iraq, the two groups seek to seize control of Iraq's oil resources.¹³¹ Because of these modern issues and traditional religious division between this Shia and Sunnis, Fearon's first condition for ending a civil war cannot currently be met in Iraq.

As it stands, Fearon's second condition cannot currently be fulfilled in Iraq either. Under Saddam Hussein's Sunni regime, the Shia were prevented from organizing a long-term military resistance to Sunni rule, so the Shia-Sunni conflict was fairly one-sided. Since Hussein's removal from power, sectarian violence between the Sunnis and Shia has erupted, only to be somewhat successfully suppressed by the American military and, more recently, by Iraqi security forces. Therefore, there has not yet been a sustained period of fighting between the Shia and Sunni factions, and each side remains convinced that it can defeat the other and assume political control in Iraq.

Overall, as Fearon discussed, the Shia and Sunni factions in Iraq are historically deeply divided and have not reached a stalemate through long-term fighting. Thus, it is possible that once U.S. troops leave Iraq, they will reengage in hostilities. This open conflict may not begin for several years following the official end of the U.S. occupation in Iraq. However, the possibility of civil war remains a real one, and it is a challenge that U.S. and Turkish policy-makers must both strive to overcome.

Conflict between the U.S. and Turkey over Turkish Military Action in Northern Iraq from 2003 to 2007

Turkey's interest in ensuring that Iraq remains a single, sovereign state is further evidenced by the Turkish Grand National Assembly's (TGNA) 2003 vote against a measure that would have allowed the U.S. to use Turkish bases as launching points for an invasion of northern Iraq. Currently, it is difficult to determine what influenced the TGNA to vote this way without accessing currently classified Turkish and U.S. government documents. However, one clearly valid reason may have been Turkey's desire to maintain good relations with the central Iraqi government; it

¹²⁷ Christopher M. Blanchard, "Islam: Sunnis and Shiites," Report no. RS21745 (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 28, 2009), <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RS21745.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch, "Whatever Happened To The Iraqi Kurds?" Human Rights Watch, 11 March, 1991, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1991/IRAQ913.htm#5>.

¹²⁹ Human Rights Watch, "Endless Torment: The 1991 Uprising in Iraq And Its Aftermath," Human Rights Watch, June 1992, <http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1992/Iraq926.htm>.

¹³⁰ "Saddam Hussein sentenced to death," *BBC News*, November 5, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6117910.stm.

¹³¹ Dr. Lenore Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy: Turkey, the U.S., and the Middle East" (seminar presentation, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, November 4, 2010).

could not be seen as a co-conqueror. By allowing the U.S. to launch offensives from Turkish bases into Iraq, Turkey might have incurred much of the backlash that was directed at the U.S. in the following years. This backlash was largely due to the civil turmoil that erupted between Shia and Sunni factions; victims of this unrest, and some observers, blamed the U.S. for inciting the violence and chaos.¹³²

Turkey realized that it would partly be blamed for the violence in Iraq and thus, that it would endanger its cooperative relationship with the Iraqi government. Therefore, by withholding assistance to the U.S. at the start of the war, Turkey sent the message that its first priority was engaging with the Iraqis, not with the Americans. This message became the groundwork for Iraqi-Turkish relations over the next decade since Iraqis would not see Turkey as an extension of the U.S., but rather as a separate entity whose interests were different from those of coalition members. Indeed, Turkey was willing to negotiate with Iraqis in terms of Turkish and Iraqi national interests, not the U.S.'s national interests.

The failed vote in the TGNA had three immediate results. Firstly, Recep Erdoğan, who would later become the Turkish Prime Minister, lost a great deal of credibility with the U.S., particularly with the American military leadership.¹³³ During the year preceding the vote, Erdoğan had been at the center of the negotiations and had offered guarantees to the U.S. that the TGNA would approve the plan. Secondly, the TGNA's failure to allow the U.S. to operate out of Turkey also delayed Pentagon plans for the invasion of Iraq. During the weeks prior to the vote, the U.S. had confidently scheduled the deployment of 62,000 troops from the 4th Infantry Division to Turkey and gathered ships full of supplies off Turkey's Mediterranean coast.¹³⁴ When the vote failed, the American military had to integrate the troops and supplies previously intended to pass through Turkey into newly reconfigured plans or even contingency plans. This was a logistical nightmare for the military and threatened to set the U.S. invasion of Iraq behind schedule.

Thirdly, in response to the TGNA's failure to support the U.S.'s invasion of Iraq, the U.S. denied Turkey access to northern Iraq to hunt the PKK, despite the fact that the PKK was designated by the U.S. as a foreign terrorist organization.¹³⁵ In a 2010 presentation at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University, Weatherhead Center Fellow Lenore G. Martin recapped the situation from before 2003 to 2007: before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Turkey was able to go into northern Iraq relatively easily and could hunt down PKK terrorists. But from 2003 to 2007, the U.S. was not cooperative and did not allow Turkey to go in.¹³⁶ It was not until 2007, when Turkish land operations in northern Iraq forced the U.S. to

¹³² In many ways, this reflects the situation that the U.S. found itself in Afghanistan during the 1980s. After supporting Afghani militias—who would later become the Taliban—in their fight to expel the Soviets, the U.S. left the country. In the following years, Afghanistan fell from the global eye and became defined by poverty and its extremely traditional Islamic government and society. The Taliban blamed the U.S. for leaving the country after the Soviets were pushed back; they felt that the Americans had left Afghanistan by the wayside after protecting America's immediate national interests.

¹³³ Kapsis, "The Failure of U.S.-Turkish Pre-War Negotiations."

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Role of Turkey in the Middle East," *Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània*, 2009: 210, <http://www.iemed.org/anuari/2009/aarticles/a210.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy".

confront the reality that the PKK's activities threatened future U.S.-Turkey relations and Iraq-Turkey relations, that the U.S. began to cooperate with Turkey. At this point, the U.S. began to provide the Turkish military with intelligence to support land and aerial military operations against the PKK.

Turkey's Growing Relationship with the Kurdish Regional Government

In 2007, Turkey restarted its land operations against the PKK in northern Iraq. Near the end of that year, the U.S. and Turkey reached a mutual understanding that the PKK presented a major challenge for U.S.-Turkey and Iraq-Turkey relations, and the U.S. agreed to aid Turkey fight the PKK by providing it with intelligence.¹³⁷ In 2008, Turkey also took substantial steps to cement Iraqi support for its war against the PKK. At the conclusion of Prime Minister Erdoğan's 2008 trip to Baghdad, Turkey and Iraq agreed to create the Higher Strategic Cooperation Council.¹³⁸ One of the council's announced goals was to "[support] the joint efforts of Iraq and Turkey to prevent the transit of terrorists and illegal arms to and from Iraq."¹³⁹ This statement did not overtly mention the PKK, but its reference to "terrorists and illicit arms" can be understood as including the Kurdish terrorist organization. With political and military support from both the U.S. and Iraq, Turkey renewed limited ground operations and began aerial operations against the PKK in 2008.

During this timeframe, Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) developed a cooperative relationship.¹⁴⁰ Realizing that the U.S. would eventually withdraw from Iraq, the KRG understood that it would need significant political backing to maintain leverage with the government put into place by the Americans.¹⁴¹ As a key political player in the region, Turkey was an ideal candidate to provide such political support. So in 2003, the KRG chose to end its cooperation with the PKK in order to take advantage of the political incentives associated with Turkey's support.

However, the growth of a cooperative relationship between Turkey and the KRG was met with significant resistance in Turkey. Many Turks, particularly members of the Turkish military and Republican People's Party (CHP), considered Kurdish nationalism an existential threat to Turkey's territorial integrity.¹⁴² They feared that official recognition of the KRG's sovereignty would encourage the Kurdish minority in Turkey to demand similar home-rule status.¹⁴³ These groups opposed any cooperative relationship with the KRG. Rather, they believed that isolating the KRG through military, political, and economic pressure would force it to aid Turkey combat the PKK. On the other hand, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Peace and

¹³⁷ Martin, "Recalibrating Turkish Foreign Policy".

¹³⁸ Altunışık, 211.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Gönül Tol, "Turkey's Dual Track Approach Toward The Kurdistan Regional Government," *Middle East Institute*, October 28, 2010: 1,

<http://www.mei.edu/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=56LLObvfTSM%3D&tabid=542>

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Tol, "Turkey's Dual Track Approach," 1.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Democracy Party (BDP) were convinced that providing the KRG with positive incentives to cooperate with Turkey on the PKK issue would be a better policy to pursue than a hardline approach. As such, in 2009, Turkey adopted a “dual track” policy towards the KRG, or a policy of using sticks and carrots at the same time.¹⁴⁴ This was a compromise which combined military pressure with economic and political incentives to convince the KRG to support Turkish efforts against the PKK.

One side of this approach involves Turkey’s military actions against the PKK. These military operations include aerial and ground strikes against PKK bases and operators in northern Iraq, the area over which the KRG has sovereignty.¹⁴⁵ By conducting sustained military operations against the PKK, Turkey is showing the PKK and the KRG that its first priority is to stop cross-border terrorist strikes into Turkey. It is sending the message that it will not shy away from applying, if necessary, strong military pressure in northern Iraq regardless of the KRG’s opinion on the matter.

The second part of Turkey’s dual track approach revolves around the expansion of economic and political relations between Turkey and the KRG.¹⁴⁶ By investing more heavily in northern Iraq and developing stronger economic ties with the KRG, Turkey aims to increase the organization’s economic dependence on Turkey, thereby gaining significant leverage over the land-locked mini-state. Also, by the end of 2010, the Turkish government engaged in discussions with high-ranked officials in the KRG.¹⁴⁷ These initiatives provide a counterbalance to the harsher military measures. By acknowledging the sovereignty of the KRG and actively engaging with it politically, Turkey conveys that it values the KRG’s cooperation in dealing with the PKK. Also, as the KRG understood in 2003, Turkey’s recognition of the KRG’s importance as a center of authority in northern Iraq grants the KRG political clout. Baghdad would have a difficult time removing the KRG from power because Turkey has recognized the KRG as a primary player in the northern region and the Iraqi central government is still being reformed.

The “dual track” policy requires that the Turkish government walk a fine line between favoring the KRG or the central government. Indeed, if Turkey begins to deal too exclusively with the central government of Iraq or with the KRG, it risks alienating one side. The loss of either the central government or the KRG’s support would be significantly detrimental to the Turkish efforts against the PKK, because both entities provide special assets – local knowledge, military expertise and resources – to Turkey. In addition, Turkey realizes that it must be careful not to worsen relations between the KRG and Baghdad because this would threaten Iraq’s territorial integrity. For these reasons, significant negative repercussions would likely occur if Turkey favored one side over the other. For example, to focus solely on negotiations with the KRG would indicate that Turkey does not believe in the ability to govern of the Iraqi central government; Turkey’s message would be that the KRG is the true master northern Iraq. This message would severely limit the Iraqi central government’s ability to negotiate with the KRG, an ethnocentric political entity, and even other ethnic power blocs should they arise, because it

¹⁴⁴ Tol, “Turkey’s Dual Track Approach,” 1.

¹⁴⁵ Altunışık, 210.

¹⁴⁶ Tol, “Turkey’s Dual Track Approach,” 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

would foster the perception that the KRG has more clout than Baghdad. In response to this, the Iraqi central government would likely limit its cooperation with Turkey in the northern region. This would represent a major obstacle to the Turkish government since it relies on the central government for political and military support.

On the other hand, if Turkey sides with the central government of Iraq on issues pertaining to the KRG and northern Iraq, then Turkey risks alienating the KRG. This would likely halt or even reverse the positive progress made between Turkey and the KRG since 2009. In particular, Turkish initiatives to increase their economic influence in northern Iraq would be met with more resistance from the KRG. For Turkey, the key is to acknowledge the autonomy of Iraq's central government while respecting the KRG's significant political influence in northern Iraq, particularly regarding the Kurds. After all, Turkish success in achieving its goal of defeating the PKK relies upon maintaining an even relationship with both parties.

TURKEY AND ITS RELATIONS WITH NATO

Tyler Keefe

During the Cold War, Turkey played a vital role in the NATO alliance by providing a defensive bastion on the southern border of the Soviet Empire as well as a potential launching point for airstrikes across the Iron Curtain. As the Cold War came to an end, the importance of Turkey to NATO and NATO to Turkey has not diminished. While Turkey seems to be improving its relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors, the United States must move to keep Turkey tied to the West through NATO and have Turkey increase its role within the organization. The U.S.-Turkey relationship began with the passing of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and Turkey's signing of the North Atlantic Treaty five years later. From that moment on, a long and profitable relationship between the United States and Turkey began, revolving around the military cooperation that unites both countries through NATO. During the past half-century, Turkey and the United States have shared experiences in the Cold War, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and NATO's recent intervention in Libya.

The United States and Turkey have shared a strong partnership within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1952, but their ties go back to the end of the Second World War. Indeed, before becoming an official member of NATO, Turkey received over \$100 million in aid from the United States. The Truman doctrine stated that the United States would provide Turkey and Greece with military and economic aid in order to prevent them from falling into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. The military aid included tanks, artillery, firearms, planes, ships, and training, while the economic aid focused on infrastructure development, trade deals, and the improvement of Turkey's industrial capacity.¹⁴⁸

On April 4th, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington D.C. This document created NATO, a collective security organization made up of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. The aid given by the U.S. to Turkey allowed the Turkish military to achieve the standards set forth by NATO, and on October 22nd, 1951, Turkey joined NATO alongside Greece by signing the Turkey-Greece Protocol and by having the United States as its sponsor.

The United States sponsored Turkey's accession to NATO because Turkey had access to the Black Sea and it was positioned on the southern extremity of the Soviet Empire. If Turkey had not joined NATO, it would have become a neutral nation in the conflict opposing the U.S. to the U.S.S.R. This would have left the Dardanelles wide open for Soviet submarines and military shipping as well as grant the Soviets access to the Mediterranean Sea, allowing them to threaten vital NATO installations in Egypt and on the southern coast of Europe.¹⁴⁹ In addition, Turkey's strategic location on the southern flank of Europe made it an optimal location for launching airstrikes into Soviet territory and guarding the vast oil resources of the Middle East.

¹⁴⁸ Melvyn P. Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952," *American Journal of History* 71, no.4 (March 1985): 807, <http://www.jstor.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/stable/1888505>.

¹⁴⁹ Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War," 823.

Therefore, Turkey played a vital role in both the defensive and offensive components of NATO's overall strategy.¹⁵⁰ In sum, since Turkey became a member of NATO, the Soviet Union was unable to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea, which prevented it from expanding its sphere of influence into much of southern Europe. Turkey was also a viable tool for NATO when it came to war strategy by providing both a strong defensive position in case the USSR initiated open conflict and an offensive base from which to launch strikes into Soviet territory. Turkey benefitted from this relationship because it gained a highly trained and well-equipped military as well as better infrastructure, both of which helped the country modernize.¹⁵¹

After the downfall of Soviet Union in the late eighties and early nineties, NATO was thought to be obsolete. However, it proved that it was still a valuable organization by providing regional security to Europe. Indeed, in the early nineties, the Balkan region of southeast Europe was thrown into turmoil by the breakup of Yugoslavia. Operation *Sharp Guard* (Jun.1993-Oct. 1996) became the first NATO operation to be conducted in response to the ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia. *Sharp Guard* included an arms embargo and economic sanctions against the former Yugoslavia. Both Turkey and the United States provided ships to enforce the arms embargo, with the U.S. providing a total of eleven, used in rotation, and the Turkish Navy providing a destroyer, the *TGC Kocatepe*. Other NATO members provided ships as well, and the blockade effectively prevented smugglers from delivering arms to the former Yugoslavia.¹⁵²

Following the blockade, NATO began Operation *Deliberate Force*, an air campaign designed to undermine the military capability of VRS (Army of the *Republika Srpska*) forces that breached U.N. designated safe areas in Bosnia during the Bosnian War. From August 1995 to September of that year, 18 Turkish planes flew 78 sorties against targets inside Bosnia. While the number of sorties may seem low compared to the 3515 flown by all NATO forces combined, it shows that Turkey had a vested effort in the success of the NATO mission. Indeed, Turkey does not have a large air force, yet still devoted 18 of its best planes and pilots to the mission.¹⁵³ Four years later, Turkey showed its devotion to NATO success in Operation *Allied Force*, during which its pilots accumulated over 30,000 hours of flying time preventing Serbian forces from continuing the massacre of ethnic Albanians in the region.¹⁵⁴

More recently, Turkey has devoted an infantry company to the 2001 NATO Operation *Essential Harvest* in Macedonia.¹⁵⁵ *Essential Harvest* was a mission to disarm ethnic groups and destroy their weapons in order to prevent violence from erupting in the Balkans. Turkey has such an interest in NATO's success because the organization's missions often help maintain or restore stability in countries near Turkey. For example, since the time of the Ottoman Empire,

¹⁵⁰ Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War," 824.

¹⁵¹ Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War," 816.

¹⁵² NATO, "NATO/WEU Operation Sharp Guard," NATO, 2 October, 1996, <http://www.nato.int/ifor/general/shrp-grd.htm>.

¹⁵³ NATO, "AFSOUTH Fact Sheets: Operation Deliberate Force," NATO, December 16, 2002, <http://www.afsouth.nato.int/factsheets/DeliberateForceFactSheet.htm>.

¹⁵⁴ NATO, "AFSOUTH Fact Sheets: Operation Allied Force," NATO, December 17, 2007, <http://www.afsouth.nato.int/archives/operations/detforce/force.htm#organization>.

¹⁵⁵ Allied Joint Force Command Naples, "Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Naples: Operation Essential Harvest," NATO, 2011, <http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/page7192527.aspx>.

the Balkan region has been a source of instability for Turkey, and NATO's interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo helped restore peace to the region. Turkish officials remember well that trouble in the Balkans contributed to the downfall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century. Thus, it is in Turkey's best interest to participate in NATO stability operations in the Balkans because NATO's successes often prevent conflict from spreading into Turkey itself.

However, Turkey's involvement in NATO stretches beyond the Balkans as Turkey is also deeply involved in the conflict in Afghanistan. Indeed, it plays a pivotal military role since it is a member of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and an important diplomatic one because of its historic relationship with Afghanistan.¹⁵⁶ That relationship dates back to when Mustafa Ataturk made Turkey assist in the training of the Afghan military and the construction of the Afghan state following the end of the First World War. Also, due to Turkey's history of combating the PKK in the mountains of southern Turkey, the Turkish military has experience fighting unconventional wars in a mountainous theatre such as Afghanistan.¹⁵⁷

As such, since the beginning of the conflict in Afghanistan, Turkey has made outstanding contributions to the NATO effort. It has contributed over 1700 troops to ISAF ranks and has commanded the force three times. In addition, Turkish forces have played key roles in providing security for the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Wardak Province and training for the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.¹⁵⁸

Turkey also plays a unique diplomatic role in the Afghan conflict due to its special relationship with Afghanistan. Indeed, since the two countries have a history that dates back to the early 20th century, Turkey sees itself as the one that can bring political stability to the region.¹⁵⁹ For example, in early 2010, Turkish President Gül hosted a tripartite summit involving Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan, to strengthen cooperation mechanisms between the three states.¹⁶⁰ Such efforts by Turkey are crucial if NATO hopes to improve its standing amongst the Afghan people and the Pakistani government.

Turkey has a vested interest in seeing NATO succeed in Afghanistan because it is part of the organization and because Turkey seeks to cultivate stronger commercial and military ties with Afghanistan. Firstly, Turkey is a member of NATO and as such, the organization's success or failure reflects directly upon Turkey. Secondly, Turkey wishes Afghanistan to become one of its commercial partners. Both have recently signed a memorandum of understanding on energy and mineral resources cooperation, a document that lays the foundations for energy and mining

¹⁵⁶ Cansu Arisoy, "Turkey Shoulders Afghanistan," Bilgesam, April 12, 2010, http://www.bilgesam.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=267:turkey-shoulders-afghanistan&catid=77:ortadogu-analizler&Itemid=147.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Turkish General Staff, "Turkish General Staff: ISAF Operation," Turkish General Staff, August 17, 2011, <http://www.tsk.tr/eng/uluslararasi/isaf.htm>.

¹⁵⁹ Lt. Gen Ethem Erdagi, "The ISAF Mission and Turkey's Role in Rebuilding the Afghan State," (speech, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington D.C., November 18, 2005), <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateCO5.php?CID=2403>.

¹⁶⁰ "Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan tripartite summit to begin on Monday," *Today's Zaman*, January 24, 2010, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=199501.

deals to be made between the two countries.¹⁶¹ Turkey is driven by a fast growing entrepreneurial class that would greatly benefit from mining deals allowing Turkish companies to mine Afghanistan's newfound mineral deposits. If NATO does not succeed in its mission, Turkish investors will refuse to invest in Afghanistan because the country will not be stable enough, and they will lose what could have been lucrative opportunities.

While Turkey has always been a major supporter of most NATO policies, it is now more selective in choosing which policies to endorse because of its closer relations with other Middle Eastern states. For example, Turkey's hesitance to support a NATO-wide missile defense system and to participate in the recent intervention in Libya demonstrates that Turkey would like to avoid damaging the relationships it has with its neighbors. Turkey has begun to express its dissatisfaction with some NATO actions in the Middle East, notably the installment of a missile shield in the region. In order to accomplish this plan, NATO would have to set up stations in strategic locations across Europe that would be able to detect, track, and destroy ballistic missiles launched at any NATO member. NATO views the missile shield as vital to the collective security of its members because some countries, such as North Korea and Iran, are attempting to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missile systems. Turkey plays a vital role in this plan because its location in the southeast extremity of Europe enables it to intercept ballistic missiles launched at Europe from the Middle East, including from Iran. Iran opposes the construction of such a missile shield because it would greatly reduce the leverage Iran would get from its acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Since Turkey values its relations with Iran, it refuses to allow missile defense systems to be placed on its territory if they are specifically put in place to counter an Iranian threat.¹⁶² However, after the late 2010 meeting in Lisbon, NATO member states decided that the missile defense system would not protect its users from specific states, but from all countries outside of NATO.¹⁶³ In light of this decision, Turkey accepted the plan. Turkey's earlier opposition to the missile shield illustrates the country's firm desire to maintain good relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors. This principle is in fact central to the AKP's foreign policy strategy. Turkey has been denied entrance into the European Union and must thus seek other alternatives to sustain its economic growth. Middle Eastern countries such as Iran represent one of the ways Turkey can maintain a strong economy. For example, if Turkey were to improve its relations with its neighbors, these neighbors would be more inclined to strike energy deals with Turkey, which would help it become an energy hub for Europe. Thus, one can see that Turkey has important commercial reasons for maintaining good relations with Middle Eastern states.

Turkey has also influenced the conduct of the intervention in Libya to make the intervention more acceptable to its Middle Eastern neighbors. Turkey originally opposed the intervention on

¹⁶¹ "Energy Ministers Sign MoU on Energy Cooperation and Mining," *Anadolu Agency*, February 17, 2011, <http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=69919>.

¹⁶² "Ankara wants to make sure that Nato's Europe-wide missile shield defence system is not a 'proxy' protection for Israel," *Al-Jazeera*, November 19, 2010, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2010/11/201011191655387515.html>.

¹⁶³ "Turkey's demands met as NATO agrees to build missile shield," *Dünya Times*, November 20, 2010, <http://www.dunyatimes.com/en/?p=7912>.

the grounds that it would lead to more bloodshed than was necessary. Instead, Turkey proposed the imposition of sanctions and a no-fly zone over Libya. France and other NATO members began an air campaign against pro-Qaddafi forces, and shortly after the United States sought to relinquish command of the operation. In light of these changes, Turkey began to speak out even more on the issue. It believed that the countries supporting the intervention were doing so solely for economic reasons.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, it demanded that NATO take sole command of the intervention on behalf of the United Nations. While this request increased tensions between Turkey and France, Turkey's stance showed that the country cared about its regional image, but also that its influence within NATO was growing stronger. Having been the second largest military force in NATO since it joined in 1952, it was only a matter of time before Turkey began to assert its authority within the alliance. Its demands were met and on March 27th, 2011, the command of aerial operations against Libya was transferred from the United States to NATO.¹⁶⁵

While Turkey is asserting its role as a key member of NATO, it simultaneously strives to improve its relations with other Middle Eastern countries such as Iran. Trade between Iran and Turkey has been on a steady rise with non-energy trade deficit rising to \$2 billion in 2008, and energy trade rising six-times to \$7.5 billion.¹⁶⁶ The commercial ties between Turkey and Iran are likely to keep growing as the two countries have signed a trade pact that has a potential worth of \$30 billion in a span of five years on February 6th, 2011.¹⁶⁷ In addition to improving its trade relations with Iran, Turkey has been getting closer to Syria, another enemy of NATO.¹⁶⁸ Turkey wants the Middle East to be stable and peaceful in order to reap the benefits of economic growth. Its relationship with Iran is mutually beneficial because Iran has plenty of oil while Turkey has the means to distribute that oil. Since Turkey has strong commercial ties with a lot of its neighbors, it needs to maintain good relationships with them. Until it is permitted to join the European Union, Turkey has to strengthen its commercial ties with the countries surrounding it. The EU is currently Turkey's leading trading partner. By becoming a member of the EU, Turkey would benefit from easier trade with the West and would become closer to its Western allies.¹⁶⁹ Joining the European Union would provide strong economic benefits to Turkey, including improving its buying power by switching from the Turkish Lira to the Euro. However, the main obstacles blocking Turkish accession is the situation in Cyprus and its past actions in the

¹⁶⁴ "Turkey warns against coalition 'hidden agenda'," *BBC News*, March, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-12833196>.

¹⁶⁵ Jim Garamone, "NATO Assumes Command of Libya Operations," *American Forces Press Service*, March 31, 2011, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=63384>.

¹⁶⁶ Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "Turkey-Iran Foreign Relations," *AEI Iran Tracker*, August 2, 2010, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/turkey-iran-foreign-relations>.

¹⁶⁷ "Reports: Iran, Turkey sign trade pact potentially worth \$30 billion," *CNN*, February 7, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-07/world/iran.turkey_1_trade-pact-minister-ali-akbar-salehi-turkey?_s=PM:WORLD.

¹⁶⁸ Robert F. Worth, "Relations With Turkey Kindle Hopes in Syria," *New York Times*, December 14, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/world/middleeast/15syria.html>.

¹⁶⁹ "Turkey and Europe," *Turkey's Evolving Dynamics*, p.19-36, March 2009, http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/090408_flanagan_turkeyreport_web.pdf.

Armenian Genocide.¹⁷⁰ Europeans seek to know if “Turkey [is] unwilling to come to terms with its past?”¹⁷¹ or if it will acknowledge its past mistakes and move forward. The United States needs to use its soft power through negotiations and economic influence to help Turkey overcome these obstacles and join the EU.

Iran sees Turkey’s increasing influence within NATO as an opening that it can use to advance its own goals. If Turkey significantly improves its relations with Turkey but manages to maintain a strong role within NATO at the same time, Iran will have a powerful ally amongst its enemies. It can thus attempt to influence NATO policy from within and, for example, make the organization more lenient in its enforcement of sanctions. In autumn of 2010, Iran sent a representative to attend a meeting of the U.S. and NATO-controlled International Contact Group on Afghanistan (ICGA).¹⁷² While the delegate did not participate in the discussions, he was able to sit in on the meetings. This enabled him to hear the strategies the U.S. and NATO have for Afghanistan and observe the way the ICGA functions. Of course, one must not jump to conclusions and assume that influencing NATO through Turkey is part of Iran’s “grand strategy”, but such a scenario is a possibility. On the other hand, the fact that an Iranian diplomat was able to attend meetings such as those of the ICGA demonstrates that future diplomatic engagement between Iran and NATO is possible.

In conclusion, Turkey fulfills a vital role within NATO and it is very important for the United States to keep the country as one of its allies. Turkey’s ties to the Afghan and Pakistani leadership, growing relations with Iran and newfound confidence on the international scene illustrate that Turkey is NATO’s gateway to the Middle East. The fact that Turkey can relate to both the Western and Muslim worlds makes it a valuable asset to the United States and NATO. Turkey places a lot of importance on its regional image and on its relations with its neighbors. As such, it is unlikely that the U.S. will be able to prevent it from strengthening its relations with Iran. Thus, the U.S. must strive to utilize Turkey’s relations with Iran in order to advance its national interests and stabilize the Middle East through diplomatic means while remaining cognizant that Iran might seek to influence NATO policies through Turkey.

170 “Turkey and Europe,” *Turkey’s Evolving Dynamics*, p.19-36, March 2009, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090408_flanagan_turkeyreport_web.pdf.

171 “Turkey and Europe,” *Turkey’s Evolving Dynamics*, p.19-36, March 2009, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090408_flanagan_turkeyreport_web.pdf.

172 Rod Nordland, “Iran Sends Delegate to International Meeting on Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/19/world/middleeast/19iran.html>.

IRAN: ITS HISTORY, GOVERNMENT AND FOREIGN POLICY

Colby Wilkason

While the name “Iran” has been used in the native language, Middle Persian, or Pahlavi, since the Sassanian era (around 200 CE), the state of Iran was known as Persia until 1935, when it became internationally known as Iran. In 1979, following the Iranian Revolution, Iran officially became the Islamic Republic of Iran, a theocratic republic. During the Iranian Revolution, conservative clerical forces instituted a theocratic system of government in which all political and religious authority resides in the hands of the Supreme Leader, a learned religious scholar. The constitution of the Islamic Republic enshrines the idea that the ruler of the state must be the person best qualified to interpret the Qur’an, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (Hadith) and of the First Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the traditional behavior of the early Muslim communities. Currently, the Supreme Leader is Ali Hoseini-Khamenei, a man who has been in power since 1989. Since 2005, the president of Iran is Mahmud Ahmadinejad and since 2009, the vice president is Mohomammad Rez Rahimi. This is known as the “guardianship of the jurisprudent” (*velayat-e faqih*), and is an extension of elements found in Shi’ite Islam. The main religion is Islam (98%), with 89% of Muslims to be Shi’ite, and 9% to be Sunni. The official language is Persian, but Armenian, Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, Azeri, Kurdish, Luri, Balochi, Galoki, Arabic, and Turkish are also spoken.¹⁷³

History

Iran was officially unified in 625 BC under the Persian Achaemenid Empire. After many different empires had ruled Persia, the Turkish Safavid dynasty officially converted Iran to Twelver Shi’ite Islam in 1502. They were also the first native dynasty since the Sassanid Empire to establish a unified Iranian state. Between 1587 and 1629, Safavid power was at its zenith, and this period was considered to be a golden age for Iranian art and culture. The empire included all of modern Iran in addition to the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, most of Iraq, Georgia and Afghanistan, as well as parts of Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey. The Safavid Empire was known as one of the Islamic “gunpowder empires,” along with the Ottoman Empire, which became its greatest opponent at the time. The Safavids ruled until 1722, when they were ousted by another Turkish tribe, the Qajar.¹⁷⁴

During the Qajar dynasty, who ruled from 1794 to 1925, Iran lost almost half of its territory to Imperial Russia and the British Empire, but it also managed not to be colonized, and successfully maintained sovereignty over the lands that remained under its control. The Qajars also implemented some modernizing reforms, such as establishing Iran’s first modern college

¹⁷³ CIA, “Iran,” The CIA World Factbook, May 26, 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>.

¹⁷⁴ “Iran History- Briefly Stated,” Sitara, December 8, 2008, <http://sitara.com/iran/history.html>.

system. In 1906, “Persia’s Constitutional Revolution” weakened the Qajar rule since it established the first parliament within the constitutional monarchy.¹⁷⁵

Reza Khan overthrew the Qajar dynasty in 1925, established a military dictatorship and became known as the Shah, or king of kings. He officially proclaimed that Persia should henceforth be known as Iran. Furthermore, Reza Shah initiated an industrialization program, built the Trans-Iranian Railway, established a national education system as well as the University of Tehran, and was the first to systematically dispatch Iranian students to Europe.¹⁷⁶ He also disarmed the tribes of Iran, required women to discard their veils, took control of the financial and communication systems of the country, and set to democratize the country as well as free it from foreign intervention.¹⁷⁷

In 1941, the Shah was forced to abdicate his office and his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, took power. In 1953, a successful British-led coup deposed the Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, who had nationalized Iranian oil, a move that greatly hurt British and American interests. From then on, Pahlavi became more autocratic. With the help of America, he rapidly modernized Iranian infrastructure and defended Western interests, but he simultaneously used the SAVAK, his secret police, to crush all forms of political opposition. In January of 1963, the Shah announced the “White Revolution,” which introduced a six point reform program (13 were added later) that called for land reform, the nationalization of forests, the sale of state-owned enterprises to private interests, electoral changes to enfranchise women and allow non-Muslims to hold office, profit-sharing measures for industrial workers, and the formation of a literacy corps. Imam Ayatollah Khomeini, the main religious leader of Iran at the time, publically denounced the government and the Shah because of this “White Revolution,” and was later arrested and imprisoned for eighteen months.

In 1979, an Islamic Revolution took place in Iran and the country became an Islamic Republic. The Shah fled the country after major demonstrations against him were held, and the Ayatollah returned from exile to take power. The Pahlavi Dynasty officially collapsed on February 11, and the country became an Islamic Republic on April 1 since Iranians adopted a theocratic constitution and named Khomeini as their Supreme Leader. During the revolution, U.S.-Iranian relations rapidly deteriorated, and on November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students seized 52 U.S. embassy personnel as hostages, accusing them of being CIA agents who were attempting to overthrow the Islamic government. They held these hostages for 444 days, but freed them in January of 1981 because the United States had signed the Algiers Declaration. By doing so, the U.S. agreed that it would stop intervening in Iranian internal affairs, liberate frozen Iranian assets and remove trade sanctions as long as the hostages were set free and Iranian debts to the U.S. were paid.

On September 22, 1980, Iraq invaded Iran and started the Iran-Iraq War. While the origins of the war are complex, one can identify some of its main causes. Saddam Hussein considered Iran

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Iran Chamber Society, “History of Iran,” Iran Chamber Society, June 6, 2011, http://www.iranchamber.com/history/reza_shah/reza_shah.php.

¹⁷⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica, “Iran,” Encyclopedia Britannica (2011), <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/293359/Iran>.

to be weaker after the Islamic Revolution, thus giving Iraq a window of opportunity to invade. Iraq also wanted to control the Persian Gulf, Khuzestan, an Iranian province, and the rich oil fields found in Iran. While the first two years of the war were fairly successful for Iraq, in 1982 Iranian forces pushed the Iraqi army back to the border, and Khomeini declared that he wanted to export the Islamic Revolution onto the Shi'ite Arabs living in Iraq. In 1988, Khomeini finally accepted a truce mediated by the United Nations, thus ending the Iran-Iraq War.

In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini died from a heart attack, and Ali Khamenei assumed the role of Supreme Leader. That same year, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was elected the fourth President of Iran. Rafsanjani helped push a pragmatic, pro-business policy of rebuilding and strengthening the economy without making any drastic breaks from the ideology of the revolution. Despite this "economy first" focus, Iran still suffered some serious economic blows: an accumulation of \$30 billion worth of foreign debt, mostly due to the fall of oil prices, the hyper-inflation of the Iranian Rial, American-imposed sanctions from 1995 onwards,¹⁷⁸ and an incredibly high unemployment rate of 30%. The strained economic situation of Iran was also due to the fact that in 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, around one million Kurds crossed the Iraqi border into Iran as refugees.

Rafsanjani served as President until 1997, when Mohammad Khatami replaced him. Khatami's two terms are sometimes called Iran's Reform Era. Indeed, he advocated freedom of expression, tolerance and civil society, constructive diplomatic relations with other states, including the European Union and Asian governments, and an economic policy that supported free markets and foreign investment. Unfortunately, many of Khatami's reforms were not quite successful.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president in 2005 as a conservative populist. He pursued a much harder line than Khatami, enforcing dress codes and the persecution of minorities. He also refused to stop the enrichment of uranium as demanded by the United Nations, and was blatantly racist and anti-Semitic, threatening the United States and other Western countries. Currently, President Obama is attempting to pursue a policy of "engagement" with Iran, but so far this policy has yielded very little results.¹⁷⁹ After the 2009 Iranian presidential elections, in which Ahmadinejad was again elected, the EU expressed concern over alleged irregularities during the vote. Protests in favor of Ahmadinejad's opponent, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, broke out in Tehran, and Ayatollah Khamenei urged the nation to unite behind Ahmadinejad.

Organization of the Iranian State

The internal politics of Iran are composed of connected, but also very competitive, formal and informal political power structures. The formal structures are composed of state institutions and their aligned institutions, including religious supervisory bodies, the republican institutions, and religious foundations. The informal structures are different political factions in the political elite

¹⁷⁸ The sanctions were imposed because the United States believed Iran supported terrorist groups and attempted to develop nuclear weapons.

¹⁷⁹ Ami Isseroff, "History of Modern Iran," MidEast Web, July 24, 2009, <http://www.mideastweb.org/iranhistory.htm>.

that do not align with state institutions, but in fact cut across them. Because there are no legal political parties, the informal power structure consists not only of those people who have power according to their position in the state institutions, but also of influential individuals outside those institutions. For the most part, the formal structure of the government is ignored or bypassed in favor of the informal structure based on personal networks and power relations, which creates a very weak institutional government with strong personal networks.¹⁸⁰

Even on a theoretical level, the politics of Iran are complicated. Iran is a theocratic republic with a legal system based on Sharia law. It is a hybrid system of elected and appointed institutions. The power relations between the different political leaders and institutions are a product of a conglomerate of constitutions: the *Velayat-e Faqih* system based on the 1979 Constitution (which led to a theocratic system), the legacy of the Constitutional Revolution in 1905 (which created republican institutions such as legislative, executive and judicial branches), and traditional social structures based on Bazaar networks (a term applied to Iran's heterogeneous commercial class located in historical urban centers).¹⁸¹ The executive branch consists of the Supreme Leader (Head of State), the President (Head of Government), the Council of Ministers, the Assembly of Experts, the Expediency Council, and Council of Guardians. The legislative branch consists of the Majlis, and the judicial branch consists of the Supreme Judiciary.

The most important institution to be elected is that of the office of the President. The constitution describes him as the second highest ranking government official, the first being the Supreme Leader. The President is elected every four years, and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. He is the head of the executive branch and is responsible for ensuring that the constitution is respected. In practice, his powers are limited by the clerics and conservatives in power, but mainly by the Supreme Leader. He is responsible for economic and socio-cultural policy, but not foreign policy, because he has no control over the armed forces. The president is allowed to appoint and dismiss ministers, control the Planning and Budget Organization, appoint the head of the Central Bank, and chair the National Security Council. The current president is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was re-elected in June 2009.

The Parliament, called *Majlis-e Shuray-e Islami* (National Assembly), has 290 members who are elected by popular vote every four years. However, all candidates for the Majlis must be approved by the unelected 12-member Guardian Council, as does any legislation passed by the Majlis. The Parliament has the power to introduce and pass laws, as well as to summon and impeach ministers and the president, and has a degree of accountability on the executive branch through its oversight of the budget, the confirmation or impeachment of ministers, and the release of formal questions the government is required to answer. The Majlis is weak compared to the presidency and the Guardian Council, but since the death of Khomeini, the parliament's political importance has greatly increased. It drafts legislation, ratifies treaties, approves states of emergency, loans and the annual budget, and removes the president and

¹⁸⁰ Eva Patricia Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran: a Study on the Iranian Political Elite from Khomeini to Ahmadinejad* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2009), 27-40.

¹⁸¹ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 40.

ministers from office.¹⁸² Currently, parliamentary factions are very loose. The new Majlis is dominated by the United Principalist Front, and its main rivals are the conservative bloc, the Inclusive Front, and the reformist bloc, the Mosharekat.¹⁸³

The Assembly of Experts is a religious supervisory body that consists of 86 clerics elected every eight years. The Assembly appoints the Supreme Leader and monitors his performance and removes him if he is deemed incapable of fulfilling his duties. It usually holds two sessions a year. Only clerics can join the assembly, and candidates for election are chosen by the Guardian Council. However, given the mounting power of anti-clerical radicals like Ahmadinejad and the Revolutionary Guard, the power of clergy is deteriorating. According to Mehdi Khalaji, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, “it is unlikely that clerics in the Assembly of Experts will even be able to play their traditional role of appointing or removing the supreme leader.”¹⁸⁴

Unelected institutions in Iranian politics include the Supreme Leader, the Armed Forces, the Head of Judiciary, the Expediency Council, and the Guardian Council. The Supreme Leader is based on the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini, outlined in the 1979 constitution, and is positioned as the top leader of Iran’s political power structure. The Supreme Leader is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, appoints the Head of the Judiciary and six members of the Guardian Council, commands all of the armed forces, including the regular armed forces and the Revolutionary Guard, leads Friday prayers, and is the head of the state-controlled media. He also has the most authority over how the country’s oil revenue is spent and how the country’s *bonyads*, charitable foundations with billions of dollars in assets, are managed. Overall, he has power over the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government, as well as the military and media. In theory, Iran’s constitution was supposed to combine theocracy and republicanism, but in practice, the opinion of the Supreme Leader and the Guardian Council wield far more weight than the opinion of the elected institutions. Nonetheless, tensions between the Supreme Leader and the President are inevitable, and they sometimes cause political instability.¹⁸⁵ Khamenei has not appointed an heir apparent for his position, and there are no evident successors. Thus, if he were to die suddenly, he would likely be replaced with a *shura* council. This could cause several problems within the Iranian political system as there would not be one clear leader of Iran, but rather a board of leaders that would have to agree on policy and religious matters.

The Judiciary plays a vital role in preserving Iran’s Islamic system: it ensures that Islamic laws are enforced and defines the legal policy. The Supreme Leader appoints the Head of the Judiciary for five-year terms. While Iran does have the traditional criminal and civil courts, it also has separate Islamic revolutionary courts that can try people on charges of being un-Islamic. The judiciary plays a key role in suppressing dissent and in “implementing politically-motivated

¹⁸² Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 36.

¹⁸³ “Iran: Political Structure,” *The Economist*, 22 July 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/14067915>.

¹⁸⁴ Mehdi Khalaji, “Politics and the Clergy,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/politics-and-clergy>.

¹⁸⁵ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 27.

prosecutions.”¹⁸⁶ It implements the Islamic penal code, which includes stoning, amputations, and flogging. Iran also has the largest number of executions of any country in the world proportional to the size of its population.

The Expediency Council is the advisory body for the Supreme Leader with ultimate arbitrage power on disputes over legislation between Parliament and the Guardian Council. The Expediency Council was established in 1988 to resolve legislative issues between the Majlis and the Council of Guardians, and in 2005, its powers were extended to be the supervisory authority over the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. It is composed of 31 members appointed by the Supreme Leader from among the Iranian political elite.

The Guardian Council is a religious supervisory body. It is the most influential body in Iran, and is currently controlled by conservatives. It consists of six theologians appointed by the Supreme Leader and six jurists nominated by the Head of the Judiciary. All 12 have to be approved by Parliament. The Guardian Council determines whether the laws passed by Parliament are compatible with the Sharia by interpreting the Constitution of Iran as well as the Qur’an, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and other Islamic works. Furthermore, it has to approve of the candidates who seek to be elected to the Assembly of Experts, the Parliament and the Presidency.

The Armed Forces are divided into three components: the Revolutionary Guard, the Basij Force, and the conventional military. The armed forces are under the rule of the Supreme Leader. After the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian political elite did not trust the regular army because it used to be loyal to the Shah. As such, it decided to create the Revolutionary Guards, a force of trusted soldiers used to suppress dissidents. In addition, the Supreme Leader created the Basij, a paramilitary volunteer militia composed of young people, to keep the flames of the revolution strong and crush any opposition to the regime.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was created after the 1979 Islamic Revolution to enforce Ayatollah Khomeini’s concept of an Islamic state ruled by a *velayat-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurist). Revolutionary Guards were also given the mandate to protect the new leaders and institutions, and to fight those opposing the revolution. Indeed, the IRGC is charged with protecting the revolution and its achievements. For example, in recent years, it has played a key role in “marginalizing reformist and pragmatic conservative factions seen to challenge [the revolution’s core] principles.”¹⁸⁷ It is a key institution in Iran due to its role as “guardians of the revolution,” and many of the senior officers in the IRGC have close personal and family ties to key members of the Iranian political elite.¹⁸⁸ These soldiers played a crucial role in crushing Khomeini’s opposition, but also in repelling Saddam’s 1980 invasion of Iran. Since then, the Guards function as the primary internal and external security force of the regime, governing the military on land, sea, and air, but they would also likely command the Iranian nuclear arsenal if it were created. Furthermore, the IRGC is in charge of executing Iran’s

¹⁸⁶ Hadi Ghaemi, “The Islamic Judiciary,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/islamic-judiciary>.

¹⁸⁷ Alireza Nader, “The Revolutionary Guards,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/revolutionary-guards>.

¹⁸⁸ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 48.

asymmetric warfare strategy in the event of a U.S. or Israeli attack. This includes the management of the Qods Force, a branch of the IRGC, which is, according to the U.S. State Department, “the regime’s primary mechanism for cultivating and supporting terrorists abroad.”¹⁸⁹ The Qods Force provides weapons, training, explosives and funding to Hamas, Hezbollah, Iraqi militants, and some Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁰ In the past decades, the IRGC has become a major economic and political actor, giving it an unprecedented amount of power. However, one must keep in mind that the IRGC’s power is dependent upon the continued support of both Ayatollah Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad.

The Basij Resistance Force is a volunteer paramilitary organization that operates under the IRGC. It is considered the most powerful militia in Iran. Because it is a volunteer organization, in 2009, Mahmoud Mousavi, IRGC Human Resources’ chief, claimed that the Basij had 11.2 million members.¹⁹¹ The Basij was established in 1979 by the Ayatollah as the “Army of the 20 million” to protect Iran against U.S. influence and against “domestic enemies.”¹⁹² It is an auxiliary force with many duties, including internal security, law enforcement, the organization of special religious or political events, and the policing of morals. Since the 2009 elections, Ayatollah Khamenei has mobilized the Basij to counter perceived threats to the regime. *Basijis* were used to counter anti-government protests, but they were often unable to suppress the demonstrations. Because they receive less training than other Iranian security forces, they often use brutal methods to disperse dissidents, and this generates more public anger than support for the regime.¹⁹³

Iran’s conventional army, navy, and air force have limited capabilities due to the predominance of the IRGC. It is extremely likely that they would be defeated by U.S. forces in conventional battles. The conventional forces still depend heavily on weapons acquired by the Shah, and most of the key equipment the military uses is either obsolete or comes from low quality imports. However, Iran is proficient at irregular warfare. It is a declared chemical weapon state, it may have a biological weapons program, and it allegedly has “acquired the technology and production capabilities necessary to obtain nuclear fission weapons within the next several years.”¹⁹⁴ Iran also acquired long-range missiles from North Korea and has developed its own liquid and solid-fueled missiles, which partly compensates for its weak air force. It has a total of 500,000 to 525,000 members in its armed forces if one includes those in the Revolutionary Guards. Iran’s annual defense budget is around \$10 billion, which excludes its spending on the defense industry, missile programs, the support of foreign non-state actors, the acquisition of nuclear capabilities, and intelligence operations. According to Anthony Cordesman, a member of

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Iran,” U.S. Department of State, February 17, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm>.

¹⁹⁰ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 37.

¹⁹¹ Ali Alfoneh, “The Basij Resistance Force,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/basij-resistance-force>.

¹⁹² Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 48.

¹⁹³ Ali Alfoneh, “The Basij Resistance Force,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/basij-resistance-force>.

¹⁹⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, “The Conventional Military,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/conventional-military>.

the Center for Strategic and International Studies, total Iranian defense spending is more likely to be around \$12-14 billion, or about 25-33% of the Saudi defense spending.¹⁹⁵

The Constitution of Iran illustrates the absolute importance of Islam even in its first sentence: “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran advances the cultural, social, political, and economic institutions of Iranian society based on Islamic principles and norms, which represent an honest aspiration of the Islamic Ummah.”¹⁹⁶ It establishes the Twelver Shi’ite Islam as Iran’s official religion. The basic jurisprudence of the Islamic Republic is *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence. It mainly addresses issues that fall into private law, but not public policy. This means the political elite in Iran usually has to invent many of Iran’s rules and regulations with reference to jurisprudence because *fiqh* does not actually address these issues. This leads to varied interpretations of the laws of Islam and thus, to dynamic political laws that are influenced by who is in power. For example, since the death of Khomeini, “the significance of the Islamic ideology has been constantly decreasing and the core element of Islamic ideology, the *velayat-e faqih* system, has become subject of debate.”¹⁹⁷ More importantly, this has prevented the development of a common, coherent ideology on which the Islamic Republic could be based.

Different factions within the Iranian system

There are three main factional coalitions within the Iranian system: the conservatives, the reformists, and the pragmatists. The conservative, or *jihadi*, coalition is also called the revolutionary cluster, and revolves around Ayatollah Khamenei and Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kanim, the current Chairman of the Assembly of Experts. The conservative coalition argues for “a patriarchal Islamic government, the consolidation of the revolution’s gains, the preservation of a traditional style of life, the promotion of self-sufficiency with no dependence on the outside world, and cultural purity.”¹⁹⁸ Its constituents include the majority of the rural population, the IRGC, and certain radical clerical figures.

The reformist, or *itjihadi*, coalition was formed in 1987 around Mehdi Karroubi, the Chairman for the National Trust Party, former Chairman of Parliament, and presidential candidate in 2005 and 2009, and Mohammad Khatami, the fifth President of Iran from 1997 to 2005 and currently one of the leaders of the Green Movement. The reformist coalition believes in pluralism and a democratic Islamic political system. They promote civil society, relaxation of political and social control, economic openness, cultural renaissance, and more interaction with the outside world. However, the reformist coalition is very divided, mainly between the Participation Front Party (*Jebhe-ye Mosharekat*), the Organization of Strivers of the Islamic Revolution (*Sazmane Mojahedine Enghelab Islami*), the Solidarity Party (*Hezbe Hambastegi*), and the Assembly of Assertive Clerics. The first includes the most liberal reformists and is led by the brother of Khatami. The second group is considered the most influential and disciplined party. The third

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ “The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Iran Chamber Society, <http://www.iranchamber.com/government/laws/constitution.php>.

¹⁹⁷ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Jerrold D. Green, *Understanding Iran* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2009), 25.

group is non-clerical and is directed by Ibrahim Asgharzadeh, one of the leaders in the 1979 American hostage crisis. The fourth group is the least progressive group and is led by Mohammad Mousavi Khomeiniha and Ayatollah Montazeri.¹⁹⁹

The centrist, or pragmatist, coalition is mainly run by Rafsanjani, a former President, through the Executives of Construction Party, which supports the reformist approach to culture, and the Justice and Development Party, which leans towards the conservative edge on cultural issues. It is inspired by the intellectual work of a number of economic academics and believes in economic modernization should originate from the upper classes of society and then trickle down to the lower classes. It argues for an increase in technical and financial cooperation with the West, including the U.S., but has little interest in the actual democratization of politics. The coalition derives most of its support from the business community, students, and the urban middle class.

These three coalitions are considered very fluid, and members can easily change cluster allegiance depending on the issue. The conservatives have upheld the ideological purity of Khomeini's legacy while still siding with pragmatists and reformists on some issues. The reformists have sought to popularize and pluralize the revolution's legacy and make it acceptable to the international community without losing its essence. Pragmatists tend to choose their camp according to the circumstances. Currently, the main controversy lies between the conservatives and pragmatists. "The struggle has always been at the forefront of Iran's political struggles and the Khatami Era was simply a 'respite' for the conservatives."²⁰⁰ The best example of this is the internal debate over the state's nuclear program. The conservatives want to wield nuclear power as a domestic weapon to subvert and outmaneuver their rivals, while the pragmatists feel this is unwise, especially those who think it is necessary to cooperate with the West.

While political parties are considered illegal, the reformist, pragmatist and conservative coalitions do appear in Iranian politics. The idea of a political party is a relatively new phenomenon in Iran, and most conservatives still prefer to work through political pressure groups rather than parties. According to the U.S. State Department, the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) was Iran's sole political party, but it was dissolved in 1987. Now, there are a variety of political groups divided along ethnic or ideological lines. Some act like professional political parties by recruiting members and recommending candidates for office.²⁰¹

However, these three political factions should not be seen as groups that have clear political platforms. Indeed, while there are some people who hold more sway than others, none of the factions have official leaders. In addition, since the death of Khomeini, the coalitions have often modified their views for short-term political reasons and created brief alliances with other factions. Thirdly, because of the loose alliances of small groups within a faction, the factions have no coherent organizational structure and therefore no official, defined political program.

¹⁹⁹ Green, *Understanding Iran*, 25.

²⁰⁰ Green, *Understanding Iran*, 25.

²⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, "Background Note: Iran," U.S. Department of State, February 17, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm>.

The religious foundations of the Islamic Republic are found in three main foundations: the Foundation for the Oppressed and Disabled, the Martyr's Foundation, and the Imam Reza Foundation. These have control over large parts of the economy, and are entrusted with safeguarding the Islamic principles of Iran. While these foundations claim to be charities that provide financial help to low-income groups, the families of martyrs, former prisoners of war, rural dwellers, the disabled and the handicapped, they also act in parallel to official government institutions, mainly as giant private monopolies, rather than as charities.

Ahmadinejad v. Khamenei

The Iranian government is organized in a way that ensures no single leader is powerful enough to pose a serious threat to the Supreme Leader's control of the regime on his own, and the only groups of leaders who could do so report solely to the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader's strong hold over the Iranian government is also reinforced by the influence he has over the Iranian political elite. In addition, the constitutional powers of the President are relatively weak. He does not have the right to veto legislation approved by Parliament, reject ministerial nominations, or give orders to the military. Therefore, much of the President's influence rests on his ability to mediate, cooperate and placate constituencies within Iran's defense and security establishments.

However, the President and Parliament should not be ignored. Indeed, while the Supreme Leader does control the armed forces, Iran's political leadership controls 60% of Iran's national wealth, and both the Parliament and the President can mobilize the Iranians to support a certain cause. A powerful president is able to arouse a powerful opposition. Some presidential administrations have been characterized by "factionalism between the president's party and his opponents. They have also been driven by tension over authority between the president and the Supreme Leader."²⁰²

Specifically, the relationship between Ahmadinejad and Khamenei is tense. Some believe Ayatollah Khamenei is a weak individual with an indecisive personality who occupies a powerful post but lacks the charisma needed to be a strong leader.²⁰³ However, he has exercised influence over the Iranian system by using "negative power", or blocking proposals he did not approve of.²⁰⁴ His strength rests on his assumed moral authority and his "skillful orchestration of informal networks," bolstering "the revolution's sagging legitimacy and discrediting any moves toward reform as externally inspired."²⁰⁵

However, it is important to point out that both Khamenei and Ahmadinejad's power is limited by other forces. Competing groups in Iran that are involved in the decision-making process limit the power of Khamenei because he is not Khomeini and does not have his prestige or his authority. Ahmadinejad also has a limited margin of manoeuvre because he can be voted out of

²⁰² Shaul Bakhash, "The Six Presidents," United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/six-presidents>.

²⁰³ Green, *Understanding Iran*, 7-10.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

office by Parliament. In addition, the Iranian military and the intelligence community have a voice in foreign and security policies, which Ahmadinejad has no control over. There are limitations on both the Supreme Leader and the President written within the constitution to prevent either of them from having complete control over Iranian policy.

Ahmadinejad is ruling Iran differently than previous presidents have. According to Shaul Bakhash, a leading expert in Iranian studies at George Mason University, Ahmadinejad is “building up a power base among the same constituencies in the military, judiciary and security agencies that are the Supreme Leader’s base of support.”²⁰⁶ He is considered a populist because he distributed charity to the poor and lower middle class. He also raised a lot of oil income because of extremely high oil prices, but wasted some of it on non-productive, short-term projects.

Now, the distance between Khamenei and Ahmadinejad is growing, despite the fact that Khamenei initially supported the President. This is because Ahmadinejad was able to build a base of support among the Revolutionary Guards, security agencies and the judiciary, which are institutions that Khamenei derives a lot of support from. These three groups of organizations crushed the Green Movement that emerged out of the protests to the contested 2009 election, and therefore they are now claiming an increasingly bigger role in political affairs. One can infer that having these three institutions’ support will only help Ahmadinejad in the upcoming 2012 elections.

The 2009 presidential elections were greatly contested and there have been several allegations of electoral fraud. This has caused much internal turmoil between the conservative hardliners who control the country and the people. The turmoil then developed into a political crisis that has “widened splits in the country’s political elite and undercut the regime’s legitimacy.”²⁰⁷ It has been determined that over Ahmadinejad’s presidency, the hardline conservatives are more likely to focus on consolidating their power by limiting opportunities for reformers to participate in politics or organize opposition. The regime will also work to “marginalize opposition elites, disrupt or intimidate efforts to organize dissent, and use force to put down unrest.”²⁰⁸

Foreign Policy

Before the Islamic Revolution, Iran was considered an ally of the U.S. because Iran was not an Islamic Republic at the time, and the Shah made considerable efforts to secularize and modernize the country. The American-Iranian alliance was solidified in 1946 when the United Nations, spearheaded by the United States, pressured the Soviets to withdraw their troops from their border with Iran. In 1961, the Shah began to implement a series of economic, social, and administrative reforms, all backed by the Kennedy administration, and as a result, the economy

²⁰⁶ Bakhash, “The Six Presidents.”

²⁰⁷ Dennis C. Blair, “Annual threat assessment of the US intelligence community for the senate select committee on intelligence,” (testimony, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Washington, D.C., February 2, 2010), http://www.dni.gov/testimonies/20100202_testimony.pdf.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 24.

grew exponentially. However, this economic growth was not supported by democratic reforms or an increase in civil liberties, which were in fact quickly deteriorating. The Shah's autocratic rule alienated large sectors of his population, including the Shi'ite clergy, who eventually banded together with nationalists, Islamists, and Marxists in 1979 to overthrow the Shah and start the Islamic Revolution.

During the first ten years that followed the Islamic Revolution, Khomeini's policies could be summarized by two main ideological principles: One was "Neither East nor West but the Islamic Republic," and second, the "Export of the Revolution." His first set of policies was designed to push Iran away from U.S. and Western influence, which he viewed as corrupt and detrimental to the Iranian people due to the continued support the Shah received from the West despite his excesses. His second set of policies sought to mobilize the Iranian people and encourage them to spread the Islamic Revolution, specifically into Iraq where there was also a Shi'ite majority. In sum, Iranian foreign policy from 1979 to 1989 was primarily centered on these two ideological principles, which led to a very hostile attitude towards the United States and Israel.

From 1989 to around 1996, a more pragmatic approach prevailed towards foreign policy. The elections of the presidents Rafsanjani and Khatami and the appointment of Khamenei as Ayatollah represented a power shift from radical Conservatives towards a more Leftist approach. The government focused on economic reconstruction and on the country's reintegration into the international economy after the Iran-Iraq War. Soon-to-be President Rafsanjani sought to increase the decision-making power of the President so that he would be able to focus more on economic development and post-war reconstruction and successfully incorporated these ideas in the 1989 amendments to the Iranian constitution.²⁰⁹ The priority of Rafsanjani's foreign policy was to improve relations with Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt. He also sided with the U.S.-led coalition to oust Iraq from Kuwait, and helped liberate American hostages held by Lebanese allies. However, his attempt to alleviate foreign pressures was hampered by Iran's opposition to the Arab-Israeli peace process in 1991 and by its support for Hezbollah. The Iranians also strongly objected to the large American military presence in the Persian Gulf. While he left behind a "legacy of pragmatism in domestic and foreign policy," he was not very successful in changing the conservative mindset and many of the policies that had been promoted by Khomeini.²¹⁰

Mohammad Khatami was President from 1997 to 2005. He pursued similar foreign policy objectives to those of Rafsanjani in regards to Iran's neighbors. However, he also improved Iran's relations with the European Union and its member states, while still opposing "westernization" domestically. He sought to "end Iran's opposition to Israel's existence and the Arab-Israeli peace process [...] [and] called for a dialogue between the Iranian and American people, a possible prelude to government talks."²¹¹ He also agreed to suspend Iran's nuclear fuel enrichment program to allow negotiations with Europe to go forward.

²⁰⁹ Glenn Eldon Curtis and Eric James Hooglund, *Iran: a country study* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008), 53.

²¹⁰ Bakhash, "The Six Presidents."

²¹¹ Ibid.

Since Ahmadinejad came into power in 2005, Iranian foreign policy has shifted towards a more hostile attitude, especially towards the West and Israel. Ahmadinejad has called for the eradication of Israel and denied the occurrence of the Holocaust. He also challenged America's international dominance and called for a new world order.²¹² American-Iranian relations have deteriorated due to Ahmadinejad's continued pursuit of a nuclear program despite U.S. and U.N. sanctions.²¹³

Syria

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Syria and Iran have had a close relationship. They share common traits such as opposing the West and being authoritarian regimes. While Iran is primarily Shi'ite, and Syria is primarily Sunni, Syria's current ruling class is a Shi'ite family, the Alawite. The Iranian-Syrian alliance also grew out of having common enemies, such as Saddam Hussein, the United States and Israel, while also having common friends such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. For example, Syria and Iran cooperated with each other in 1984 to force U.S. peacekeepers out of Lebanon and to thwart subsequent American interventions in Israeli-Lebanese relations.

In recent years, Syria and Iran have worked to enhance their economic and financial cooperation. As of January 2010, the annual trade between Iran and Syria was valued at roughly \$330 million.²¹⁴ Because of the mutual trust that stems from their strong economic and political ties, Iran and Syria also signed conventional military agreements and support similar paramilitary groups. In addition, these countries are the two most important parties that have opposed overall Palestinian-Israeli peace in order to promote their own Arabic and Islamic interests.²¹⁵ While Syria has offered to act as a bridge between Iran and Western governments, it also supports anti-Israeli organizations such as Hezbollah. Syria has also provided funding and vocal political support to Shi'ite Islamist groups since their creation in the 1980's. There was a "joint assistance for and advocacy on the behalf of Palestinians in the region has long since become a common refrain in bilateral cooperation, with both countries' officials often vociferously criticizing Israel on a host of issues related to Palestine."²¹⁶

Ahmadinejad said that, "the enemies will never succeed as long as Iran and Syria stand by each other," and insisted that "Iran and Syria will continue to cooperate on bilateral, regional and international issues." Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hassan Oashqavi stated during a July 27, 2009 press conference that "nobody can disturb the ties between the two countries, which are based on mutual respect and brotherly relations."²¹⁷ Because the Syrian-Iranian relationship is primarily defensive, it has been able to survive various leadership changes and

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*, 149.

²¹⁴ Raket, *Power, Islam, and Political Elite in Iran*.

²¹⁵ Jubin Goodarzi, "Iran and Syria," United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-syria>.

²¹⁶ Will Fulton, Robert Frasco and Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "Syria-Iran Foreign Relations," AEI IranTracker, August 15, 2011, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/syria-iran-foreign-relations>.

²¹⁷ Idem.

periods of tensions between Tehran and Damascus. Jubin Goodarzi, a professor of international relations at Webster University in Switzerland, also pointed out that, “their distinctive ideological difference, ironically, have also helped the relationship endure. Syria and Iraq were intense political rivals, and often came close to military blows, because they shared the same Baa’thist ideology. The political elites in Tehran and Damascus were never competing.”²¹⁸

Iraq

Competition between Iran and Iraq has been present since ancient times, but tensions have risen since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini’s motto of “Exporting the Revolution.” This exportation of Islamic ideology gave Iraq an excuse to invade Iran, which ended in a long, bloody, and inconclusive eight-year war that killed and wounded over 1 million people.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, however, Iran and Iraq are on much better terms than they were during the 1980’s. Iran has taken an interest in the reconstruction of Iraq which would give it an opportunity to expand its influence in that country and to transform an enemy into a partner or even an ally. Iranian officials have publicly stated that Iran would be happy to replace the U.S. as the main contributor to the reconstruction of Iraq and have frequently criticized the American occupation of the country. Since the fall of 2009, Iran has tried to influence Iraqi politics by working with the Shi’ite and Kurdish parties to create a “weak federal state dominated by Shiites and amenable to Iranian influence.”²¹⁹ Iran’s primary goal in Iraq is to unite Iraq’s Shiite parties so that they can “translate their demographic weight into political influence, thereby consolidating Shiite primacy for the first time.”²²⁰

Because Iran and Iraq are geographical neighbors, it is sensible that they would have economic ties. But since *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, these ties have experienced a dramatic increase, with bilateral trade between Iran and Iraq increasing exponentially from \$1.5 billion in 2006 to \$8 billion in 2010. In 2010, Iran became Iraq’s primary trade partner. According to the American Enterprise Institute, virtually all of the recent gains in bilateral trade have been driven by Iranian exports to Iraq.²²¹ During a July 2010 talk, the two Prime Ministers expressed the importance of removing trade barriers between the two countries and expanding their collaboration in electricity and oil production.

Since the Iran-Iraq War, there have been some border disputes between Iran and Iraq. Iraq sometimes responded to these disputes by organizing military exercises. This behavior has substantially hindered the advancement of political bilateral ties. Also, especially in recent years, regional media outlets have claimed that units of the Iranian military had entered Iraqi Kurdistan in pursuit of Kurdish militant groups. Overall, it is to be expected that Iran will continue to focus

²¹⁸ Jubin Goodarzi, “Iran and Syria,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-syria>.

²¹⁹ Michael Eisenstadt, “Iran and Iraq,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-iraq>.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Will Fulton, Ariel Farrar-Wellman and Robert Frasco, “Iraq-Iran Foreign Relations,” AEI IranTracker, August 5, 2011, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/iraq-iran-foreign-relations>.

on building a long-term influence in Iraq, to ensure a continuation of political dominance of its Shi'ite allies, to expand Iran's political and economic ties to Iraq and to limit Washington's influence.²²²

Afghanistan

Iran seeks to stabilize Afghanistan for personal gain, but trains and arms the Taliban, and provides safe haven for al-Qaeda members.²²³ It also supports the Karzai government, contributing to Afghanistan's reconstruction and fights against narcotics trafficking. According to Mosan Milani, the chairman of the Department of Government and International Affairs at the University of South Florida, Iran has four major goals in Afghanistan: the first is to collaborate with Karzai without abandoning its support to other Afghan allies. The second is to invest in Afghan reconstruction to create a "sphere of influence" and a security zone in the Herat region. The third is to avoid a direct confrontation with the U.S. while still pressuring Kabul to distance itself from American help and ensure that Afghanistan is not used to attack Iran. The fourth goal is to reduce and control the flow of Afghan narcotics into Iran.²²⁴

Iran is one of the largest donor states to the Afghan reconstruction. It has donated \$750 million in 2002, followed by an additional \$100 million in 2006. It has also worked bilaterally with the Afghanistan government to build roads and railways in order to increase cross-border transportation. In March 2010, Ahmadinejad met with Karzai to talk about the expansion of bilateral relations between Iran and Afghanistan. He also announced Iran's intention to build a new railroad between Pakistan and Iran via Afghanistan.²²⁵

According to Milani, "having gained strategic depth in Afghanistan, Iran has developed asymmetrical capability to disrupt U.S. operations or retaliate against American troops, should Iran's nuclear facilities be attacked," and has also created a sphere of influence and a security buffer zone in the Herat region, which is the center of Afghan industry.²²⁶ Since 2001, it has also increased its diplomatic ties to Afghanistan. The two countries have also taken significant steps to expand cultural ties.

However, Karzai emphatically stated in 2008 that Afghanistan will not allow its territory to be used in any outside conflicts and has reiterated that "Afghanistan does not want its soil to be used against any country and Afghanistan wants to be a friend of Iran as a neighbor which shares the same language and religion."²²⁷

²²² Blair, "Annual Threat Assessment of the US."

²²³ Thomas Joscelyn, "State Department: Iran Supports Taliban, Iraqi Militants," *The Long War Journal*, August 6, 2010, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/08/state_department_ira.php.

²²⁴ Mohsen Milani, "Iran and Afghanistan," *United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer*, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-afghanistan>.

²²⁵ Ariel Farrar-Wellman and Robert Frasco, "Pakistan-Iran Foreign Relations," *AEI IranTracker*, July 5, 2010, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/pakistan-iran-foreign-relations>.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ Will Fulton and Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "Afghanistan-Iran Foreign Relations," *AEI IranTracker*, 5 August 2011, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/afghanistan-iran-foreign-relations>.

Pakistan

Iran and Pakistan have developed a deep economic and political relationship despite the Pakistani-U.S. alliance. They cooperate on a number of trade issues, and in 2008 they agreed on a list of 300 tradable items in an effort to stimulate economic relations by helping both countries increase the volume of two-way trade by one billion dollars.²²⁸ Pakistan has encouraged trilateral trade with Iran and Turkey in commercial goods and the development of infrastructure.

Since 2005, Islamabad has been turning to Tehran to supply Pakistan's growing energy needs. Because of this, Pakistan has publically defended Iran's right to nuclear technology. According to the American Enterprise Institute, some American analysts suspect that Pakistani scientists employed by the Pakistani military are helping Iran acquire nuclear technology even if Pakistan officials deny any involvement in the Iranian nuclear program. Over the past several years, Pakistan has increasingly called for peaceful reconciliation on the international nuclear standoff. In February 2010, Fahmida Mirza, a Pakistani National Assembly speaker, said "Pakistan is against any kinds of sanctions against Iran and believes that Iran's nuclear disputes should be resolved peacefully and through dialogue."²²⁹

Cooperation regarding energy has increased since the 1990's and has helped provide the foundation for a stronger bilateral trade network between Iran and Pakistan. In 2010, the two countries were satisfied with an increase in bilateral trade that surpassed \$1.2 billion in the previous financial year. However, the lack of a banking system remains a major obstacle to Iranian-Pakistani trade. In 2010, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, the brother of former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, called for the creation of an economic free-trade zone between Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and other Islamic countries. Sharif noted that "deep, friendly relations exist between Pakistan and Iran and it is the need of the hour that socio-economic cooperation be promoted."²³⁰

However, in 2009, an attack on the IRGC in the Sistan-Baluchistan province of Iran threatened to damage Pakistani-Iranian relations. Ahmadinejad publically accused "certain officials in Pakistan" of involvement in the attacks.²³¹ Pakistani officials denied any involvement in the attacks and in 2010, officials from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran came to a joint agreement that "regional stability and security could only be advanced through sincere adherence to the principle of national sovereignty and territorial integrity."²³²

²²⁸ "Iran, Pakistan to Enhance Trade Volume by \$1bln," Fars News Agency, June 27, 2008, <http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8704070696>.

²²⁹ Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, "Pakistan-Iran."

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ "Pakistan Frees 11 Iran Security Officers," CBS News, October 27, 2009, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/10/27/world/main5423188.shtml>.

²³² Ibid.

Gulf Cooperation Council

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed in 1981 in response to the regional threat posed by the Iran-Iraq War and Iranian Islamism. From an economic standpoint, most GCC states independently have trade relations with Iran, and in September of 2008, the GCC accepted an offer from Tehran to begin negotiations on a free trade agreement.

However, Iranian-GCC diplomatic relations have been strained as a result of the GCC's lack of solid support for the Iranian nuclear program. The GCC supports a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the problem caused by Iran's nuclear program. Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Attilya, the former Secretary General of the GCC, claimed that diplomacy between Iran and the Western countries would resolve this disagreement.²³³ The relationship between Iran and the GCC has become further strained as a result of the uprising by the Shi'ites in Bahrain.²³⁴ The GCC feels that while Iran has a right to develop nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes, the key to security in the Middle East rests on resolving current problems, such as Israel's nuclear program and its occupation of Palestinian territories. However, even though the GCC is pushing for greater transparency, individual member states do not have a uniform opinion concerning Iran's nuclear program.

Turkey

While critics fear that Turkey and Iran may forge an alliance, history suggests that a solid political alliance between the two countries is quite rare. The Turkey-Iranian relationship has swung in and out of harmony and has been defined by mutual suspicion and competition. In 2009, Turkish President Abdullah Gul called Ahmadinejad to congratulate him on his re-election. This statement of friendship and Turkey's support of a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue did not signal a possible alliance between Iran and Turkey. Nonetheless, the improvement of Turkish-Iranian relations in recent years is worrisome to some American and Israeli policy-makers.

Even though Turkey and Iran were close allies during the monarchy of the Shah, relations soured after the 1979 Revolution. Iran saw Turkey as a close ally of the United States and therefore turned hostile towards it while Turkey saw Iran a threat to regional peace and stability. In addition, Tehran and Ankara have completely opposite worldviews. According to Henri Barkey, professor of international relations at Lehigh University, "Turkey is a constitutionally secular state where the military is the self-appointed guardian of secularism. Iran is a theocracy in which Islamic law rules and clerics play decisive roles, including control over the military."²³⁵ This gulf between the two countries' worldviews fuels the tensions between Iran and Turkey.

²³³ Will Fulton and Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "GCC-Iran Foreign Relations," AEI IranTracker, July 21, 2011, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/gcc-iran-foreign-relations>.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Henri Barkey, "Iran and Turkey," United States Peace Institute: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-turkey>.

Since 2002, there has been a drastic change in Turkish-Iranian relations. The victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey led the country to emerge as a regional power and to fully integrate itself into the global economic system. On the other hand, Iran is becoming increasingly isolated both economically and politically. Ankara's "zero-problems with our neighbors" policy alleviated the tensions between the two countries and led to frequent contact between the two heads of state. Erdoğan was also one of the first leaders to offer his complete support to Ahmadinejad after the 2009 elections.

Over the past few years, Turkey and Iran have gradually increased their financial cooperation, especially on oil issues. This has deepened their relationship due to the growing trade volume between the two states and their bilateral investments. As Turkey's needs for energy have increased, Iran has sought new markets for its most important export, oil. These new ties have created "greater avenues of cooperation" for the two countries.²³⁶ In 2002, Iran and Turkey agreed to construct the Nabucco pipeline, which would deliver Iranian oil across Turkey to Italy, thus greatly expanding the scope of Iran's oil markets in Western Europe. The project was a go until RWE, the German gas company involved in the project, denied reports that the consortium was already in negotiations with Iranian authorities over gas supplies. Former German Foreign Minister Joseph Fisher said that "as long as the political situation in Iran is the way it is, Iran is not an option for energy supplies."²³⁷ However, Turkey still believes that the Nabucco pipeline would be a good energy transportation route once the issue of Iran's nuclear program is resolved.

The diplomatic relationship between Turkey and Iran became more strained in the 1980's and 1990's since Iran was supporting the PKK, a terrorist group that was launching attacks on Turkey. After the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, Iran and Turkey agreed to cooperate against terrorist organizations in the region, and Iran finally declared the PKK a terrorist organization.²³⁸ Tehran's policy shifted after a PKK affiliate, the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK), successfully attacked Iranian security forces. In response to these incidents, Iran launched strikes against both the PKK and PJAK, and started sharing information with Turkey regarding those groups.²³⁹

Trade between Turkey and Iran increased more than six fold between 2002 and 2007, reaching \$7.5 billion in that year.²⁴⁰ In 2008, bilateral trade totaled about \$10 billion, with Iran exporting \$8.2 billion in goods, mostly hydrocarbons, to Turkey, and Turkey exporting \$2

²³⁶ Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "Turkey-Iran Foreign Relations," AEI Iran Tracker, August 2, 2010, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/turkey-iran-foreign-relations>.

²³⁷ Farrar-Wellman, "Turkey-Iran."

²³⁸ Banu Eligür, "Are Former Enemies Becoming Allies? Turkey's Changing Relations with Syria, Iran and Israel Since the 2003 Iraqi War," Crown Center for Middle East Studies, August 2006, <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB9.pdf>.

²³⁹ Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views," Report no. RL34642 (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, November 28, 20010): 21, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34642.pdf>.

²⁴⁰ Farrar-Wellman and Frasco, "Pakistan-Iran."

billion's worth of goods to Iran.²⁴¹ They are also both members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, an organization with ten member states created in 1985 to facilitate trade between its member states, and the Developing-8, an association of middle-income Muslim countries created by the Turks in the 1990's.

Turkey supports Iran's right to possess nuclear energy for peaceful purposes as long as Iran develops its program according to IAEA regulations. In November of 2009, Iran's uranium was sent to Turkey for temporary safekeeping. In December of the same year, Manouchehr Mottaki, the Iranian foreign minister at the time, stated that Iran would be willing to swap nuclear material with the West in Turkey as a counteroffer to the U.N. drafted deal aimed at inhibiting Tehran's ability to produce atomic weapons. These actions led to the May 2010 Tehran Declaration. The Declaration stated that Iran would ship 1,200 kg of low enriched uranium to Turkey for safekeeping in exchange for fuel rods for the Tehran Research Reactor, which is used for medical purposes.²⁴² While heralded by Turkey, it was rejected by the U.S. and many European countries, which then decided to impose sanctions on Iran. Turkey supports a diplomatic solution to the conflict and has offered to help negotiate a peaceful settlement between Iran, the United States and the European Union.²⁴³

While Turkey and Iran seem to have a stable relationship for the time being, they should not be considered allies. Ankara is seriously worried about Ahmadinejad's erratic behavior, and sees itself as a long-run competitor of Tehran for influence in the Middle East.²⁴⁴ They both see their own states as rising powers with great influence, but perceive the other as a mid-level power, which could become problematic in the future.²⁴⁵

Israel

Israel and Iran shared close ties during the Pahlavi dynasty, but their relationship turned very hostile during Khomeini's rule. Iran was the first Muslim-majority country to recognize Israel as a sovereign state. After the Six Day War, Iran supplied Israel with a significant portion of its oil, and Iranian oil was shipped to European markets via the joint Israeli-Iranian Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline. In addition, Israeli construction firms and engineers were very active in Iran during that period.

Iranian-Israeli military ties and projects were kept secret, but were thought to be wide-ranging. Pahlavi depended on Israel for a steady stream of arms and intelligence, and Israel depended on Iran as part of its "periphery policy of security alliances with non-Arabs on the

²⁴¹ Bulent Aliriza, "President Obama meets with Prime Minister Erdogan," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 7, 2009, <http://csis.org/publication/president-obama-meets-prime-minister-erdogan>.

²⁴² "Text of the Iran-Brazil-Turkey Deal," *The Guardian*, May 17, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2010/may/17/iran-brazil-turkey-nuclear>.

²⁴³ "Iran, P5+1 hold talks in Istanbul," *PressTV*, January 21, 2011, <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/161206.html>.

²⁴⁴ Barkey, "Iran and Turkey."

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Middle East periphery, along with Turkey, Ethiopia, and Lebanese Christians.”²⁴⁶ Thousands of Israelis went to Iran to work in the defense industry as military advisors and agricultural, health and technical consultants. Even after the Islamic Revolution, Iran secretly bought weapons from Israel after Iraq’s 1980 invasion, but this ended in the mid-1980’s due to the deterioration of their relationship and Iran’s failure to pay on time. In fact, between 1980 and 1983, Israeli sales totaled an additional \$500 million, including TOW anti-tank missiles, spare parts for armor and aircraft, and ammunition.²⁴⁷

Since 1979, Iran has severed all diplomatic and commercial ties with Israel, and its government does not recognize the state of Israel. It refers to the Israeli government as the Zionist regime. Khomeini declared that Israel was an “enemy of Islam,” and “The Little Satan.” He also sanctioned initiatives to encourage a sharp anti-Zionist stance. Iran’s opposition to Israel has become a religious crusade rather than a political conflict. Iran’s involvement in Lebanon and its moral, political, and logistical support to Islamist movements such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Islamic Jihad, made it directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

During the early 2000’s, Tehran strengthened its support to Hezbollah, which Israel took as a call to war. In 2002, the Israeli Navy seized the *Karine A*, a ship owned by the Palestinian Authority, because it was used by activists to smuggle numerous weapons, explosives, and ammunition provided by Iran into Israel.²⁴⁸ The United States and Israel had also tracked down large Iranian arms shipments to Hezbollah via Syria, which led Israel to initiate the 2006 Lebanon War, a 34-day military campaign against Hezbollah.²⁴⁹ During this conflict, an Israeli ship was almost sunk by an Iranian cruise missile.²⁵⁰

Relations have deteriorated even further since Ahmadinejad’s 2009 reelection. Ahmadinejad stated that Israel is “doomed to be wiped off the map” and claimed the Holocaust was a myth.²⁵¹ In July 2009, Iran accused Israel of planning to assassinate Ahmadinejad after his June reelection. In addition, it has repeatedly accused Israel of being engaged in a war of aggression against the Palestinian territories and it voted against Israel in the 62nd Session of the U.N. General Assembly’s resolutions on the Arab-Israeli Conflict. On the other hand, Israel accused Iran of funding and arming Hamas and Hezbollah, organizations that Israel and some Western states consider terrorist organizations, on multiple occasions.

Recently, Israel has begun to forge diplomatic ties with neighboring Arab countries that are worried by the Iranian nuclear program, such as Egypt. In 2009, the Israeli Navy moved three naval vessels that could strike Iranian nuclear facilities from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea

²⁴⁶ Stanley A. Weiss, “Israel and Iran: The Bonds that Tie Persians and Jews,” *New York Times*, 10 July, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/10/opinion/10iht-edweiss.2165689.html>.

²⁴⁷ Steven Simon, “Iran and Israel,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-israel>.

²⁴⁸ Lt. Gen Shaul Mofaz, “Interception of Ship *Karine A*,” Israeli Defense Forces, 4 January, 2002, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2002/Statement+by+IDF+Chief-of-Staff+Lt+Gen+Shaul+Mofaz.htm>.

²⁴⁹ Simon, “Iran and Israel.”

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ “Ahmadinejad’s Holocaust ‘myth’ comments slammed,” *Agence France Presse*, September 18, 2009, <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jh9nnA3zzgEArEoEgDFu9BngHENw>.

through the Suez Canal, but Israel later announced that it favored the use of international sanctions over kinetic operations.²⁵² Both countries are also planning to launch new satellites into space to monitor each other's armed forces as they prepare for a possible conflict.²⁵³

By 2010, tensions between Iran and Israel had reached an all-time high due to Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and its anti-Israeli rhetoric. On February 7, 2010, Ayatollah Khamenei said the destruction of Israel was assured, and according to the *Tehran Times*, Khamenei told the Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, "Israel is going downhill toward decline and fall and God willing its obliteration is certain."²⁵⁴ While Israel considered unilateral action against Iran's nuclear efforts, it would prefer if the United States and the international community compelled Iran to abandon its nuclear program.

Israel is thought to have 200 nuclear warheads and an accurate Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile capability due to its stock of Jericho 2 missiles, while Iran has so far successfully test two domestically built air defense missiles that are capable of hitting targets up to 150 km away²⁵⁵, and are also capable of shooting down aircraft, cruise missiles and ballistic missile warheads.²⁵⁶ Israel also has large stocks of joint direct attack munitions²⁵⁷ (JDAMs) that can be used to destroy Iranian facilities. Iran's weapons would not be enough to withstand an Israeli attack. While some Israeli officials do not believe that Iran would use nuclear weapons against Israel, they are worried that the WMD's would give Iran more confidence and assertiveness in the region and might even lead it to launch proxy wars against Israel through Hezbollah and Hamas.²⁵⁸

The United States

Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran was a strong ally of the United States. The U.S. supported many of the Shah's modernization plans, but these reforms were not followed by a democratization of the political system. This led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, which came as a big surprise to U.S. policy-makers. Shortly after, a group of Islamist students seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held its personnel as hostages. In reaction to this, the U.S. suspended its military exports to Iran and banned the import of Iranian oil. Then, in April 1980, Washington

²⁵² Steven Simon, "Iran and Israel," United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/iran-and-israel>.

²⁵³ "Iran and Israel Plan New Satellites," *United Press International*, February 2, 2010, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2010/02/02/Iran-and-Israel-plan-new-satellites/UPI-30381265135400/.

²⁵⁴ "Israel's Obliteration is Certain," *Jerusalem Post*, February 7, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=168066>.

²⁵⁵ "Iran Successfully Tests Domestic Air Defense Missiles," *Ria Novosti*, June 13, 2011, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20110613/164590209.html>.

²⁵⁶ "Iran Produces Air Defense Missile," *Jerusalem Post*, April 11, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=172845>.

²⁵⁷ JDAMs are precision-guided bombs that were developed by the United States. They have a range of up to 15 nautical miles (28km) and were intended to be all-weather ground attack munitions.

²⁵⁸ Henry Sokolski and Patrick Clawson, "Getting Ready for a Nuclear-Ready Iran," Strategic Studies Institute, October 2005, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub629.pdf>.

imposed a trade embargo on Iran, thus banning the import of Iranian goods and the export of American goods to Iran. In 1984, the U.S. imposed additional sanctions on Iran through the Arms Export Control Act and the Export Administration Act and accused the country of international terrorism.

However, Carter and Reagan failed to maintain a consistent policy towards Iran. President Carter considered a range of military options but eventually settled into a policy of pressuring Iran through economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, which in effect turned into a policy of limited containment.²⁵⁹ When President Reagan was elected, he was deeply critical of his predecessor, but he still adopted a containment policy. His containment policy, which showed a reluctance to confront Iran and therefore just put on economic sanctions, was in direct conflict with his aggressive “cowboy” reputation.²⁶⁰ Regardless of American hostility towards the Iranian regime, Iran remained a very important player in the region and could not be ignored by the U.S. It was strategically important because it had access to the Persian Gulf’s oil resources, which the U.S. depended on, and it shared a long border with the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Furthermore, Iran supported Hezbollah, a Lebanese-based terrorist organization, after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel.

By the end of the Iran-Iraq War, there was no change in the Iran-U.S. relationship. However, Iran’s foreign policy changed after Rafsanjani was elected President. He knew the importance of rebuilding Iran after the war and tried to pursue less confrontational relations with the West. Indeed, if Iran was to obtain the foreign capital and technical expertise necessary to rebuild the country and be reintegrated into the global economy, it had to adopt a more diplomatic foreign policy towards the West and the Persian Gulf states. Khomeini’s death in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 also facilitated the improvement of Iranian-American relations.

But this improvement in U.S.-Iran relations was to be short-lived. In the early 1990’s, the United States sought to protect European and Japanese access to reliable oil and gas sources, so it objected to the construction of any oil or gas pipelines from the Caspian region that would pass through Iran. In addition, U.S.-Israeli relations became stronger and therefore created a larger divide between the U.S. and Iran. In 1992, the United States passed the Iran Non-Proliferation Act, which introduced sanctions to isolate Iran and prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons. Although Bill Clinton, who was elected as President of the United States in 1993, was more flexible on the issue, he did not change the overall U.S. policy towards Iran. The U.S. kept its sanctions on Iran, blocked Iran’s access to international financial institutions and put additional pressure on Europe, Russia, and other countries to decrease their economic ties with Iran. Clinton thought it best to impose a containment policy towards Iran and Iraq and sought to isolate the regimes politically, economically, and militarily. The Iranian attitude towards the West changed slightly during this period. While remaining Islamist-based and non-aligned, Iran no longer promoted the “Neither East nor West” slogan or the “Export of the Revolution” slogan, and it tried to improve its relations with the Gulf States and the EU.

²⁵⁹ David W. Lesche, *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, (Colorado: Westview Press, 2003), 52.

²⁶⁰ Geoffrey Kemp, “The Reagan Administration,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/reagan-administration>.

On January 29, 2002, U.S. President George W. Bush gave his “Axis of Evil” speech, describing Iran, North Korea and Iraq as an axis of evil that supported terrorism, and warning the international community that the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) by these countries was a threat to international peace and security. A year after this address, the Bush administration reportedly received overtures from the Iranian government. With the help of the American Iranian Council, Iran purportedly proposed a “grand bargain” which would have resolved outstanding issues between the United States and Iran, such as Iran’s nuclear program and its support to Hamas and Hezbollah. According to Lawrence Wilkerson, Colin Powell’s chief of staff, “it was Cheney and Rumsfeld who made sure that Washington dismissed Iran’s May 2003 offer to open up its nuclear program, rein in Hezbollah and cooperate against al-Qaeda.”²⁶¹

When President Obama came into office in 2008, he repeatedly declared his determination to break the 30-year downward spiral in U.S.-Iranian relations. However, during the first two years of his term, there was very little communication between the two governments. Diplomatic efforts between Washington and Tehran were still based on “mutual suspicion, political ineptitude, misreading signals, bad timing and the power of inertia.”²⁶² In his June 4, 2009 Cairo speech, Obama spoke of a “new beginning” between the United States and the Muslim world that would be “based upon mutual interest and mutual respect.”²⁶³ Referring to Iran, he recognized the difficulties involved in overcoming “decades of mistrust” but stated that he was willing to move forward “without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect.”²⁶⁴ However, the 2009 Iranian elections that occurred a week later complicated matters between the two states.

President Obama also intended to jumpstart diplomacy on Iran’s nuclear program. Initially, Washington proposed a plan in which the International Atomic Energy Agency would provide fuel to Tehran while offering safeguards to the U.S. that this fuel would not be used for the development of nuclear weapons. Iran would ship 1,200 kg of low-enriched uranium to Russia, where it would be enriched, then sent to France to be converted into fuel rods for Tehran’s reactor.²⁶⁵ Initially, the plan seemed appealing to both sides, but eventually the deal fell through because of both domestic and foreign considerations. One of the biggest problems was the internal conflict within Iran’s political elite: Ahmadinejad and his faction embraced the deal while other political elites were entirely anti-American and rejected such a compromise.

Following the 2010 Tehran Declaration, the United States, in cooperation with Britain, France, and Germany, successfully lobbied for the adoption of additional sanctions on Iran in 2010, which led to U.N. Resolution 1929. This resolution required U.N. member states “to block the transfer of technology related to either missiles or nuclear weapons and to cut off commercial access to uranium mining or nuclear materials production in their territories. It also imposed a

²⁶¹ Trita Parsi, “NIAC Memo: Iran is Key to Course Change on Iraq,” National Iranian American Council, November 8, 2006,

http://www.niacouncil.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5863&security=1&news_iv_ctrl=1261.

²⁶² John Limbert, “The Obama Administration,” United States Institute of Peace: The Iran Primer, December 1, 2010, <http://iranprimer.usip.org/resource/obama-administration>.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ “Salvaging the Tehran Reactor Deal,” American Foreign Policy Project, 2009,

<http://americanforeignpolicy.org/the-nuclear-file/the-iran-nuclear-stockpile-deal-what-went-wrong>.

new restriction on travel by Iranian officials associated with proliferation.”²⁶⁶ In conclusion, one can safely say that despite Obama’s willingness to engage with Iran, the road to a successful resolution of the Iranian issue will still be a long and complicated one filled with internal political struggles and mutual hostility.

²⁶⁶ Limbert, “The Obama Administration.”

Nuclear Issues in the Middle East

Ken Liu

The 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon illustrated that Turkey is gradually forging closer ties with its Middle Eastern neighbors while slowly seeking to adopt a more independent stance vis-à-vis its European counterparts. During this summit, alliance members agreed to establish a missile defense system that would protect Europe, the United States and Canada from missile attacks. But Turkey imposed a few conditions of its own before it would agree to such a declaration. Indeed, it asked that no particular state be singled out as an enemy designed to be deterred from offensive actions by the missile shield.²⁶⁷ This request shows Turkey's desire to have a more neutral position in regards to defense-oriented policies, especially to avoid worsening relations with neighbors such as Iran.²⁶⁸

Such actions symbolize Turkey's foreign policy of "zero problems with our neighbors", sometimes called the "compromise formula", a strategy that has led to tensions between Ankara and Western countries. Although the reasons for such a policy are many, a notable one is Turkey's increasing economic and commercial ties with fellow Middle Eastern states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. These ties make it more costly for Turkey to adopt an entirely pro-Western foreign policy as its neighbors could hurt Turkish economic interests in retaliation, which would cause a massive uproar in the increasingly powerful Turkish business community.²⁶⁹ This is not to say that Turkey is not committed to NATO anymore, an organization it has been a part of for over fifty years. However, one must realize that Turkey is a sovereign nation-state that wants to be more independent in the way it conducts its foreign policy.²⁷⁰ This trend can also be seen in the way Turkey deals with security and nuclear-related problems.

Turkey's involvement in negotiations regarding Middle Eastern nuclear problems became evident in May 2010 when a nuclear fuel swap was announced between Brazil, Iran, and Turkey.²⁷¹ In this agreement, the 2010 Tehran Declaration, Iran was to send 1200 kg of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey for light level processing.²⁷² If the Vienna group (the U.S., Russia, France and the IAEA) agreed to the agreement, it would provide Iran with 120 kg of 20% enriched nuclear fuel, in addition to fuel rods, for the Tehran Research Reactor within a year.²⁷³

²⁶⁷ "Turkey main obstacle for NATO missile defense system, diplomats say," *Haaretz*, November 3, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/turkey-main-obstacle-for-nato-missile-defense-system-diplomats-say-1.322731>.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Landon Thomas Jr., "Turning East, Turkey Asserts Economic Power," *New York Times*, July 5, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/06/business/global/06lira.html>.

²⁷⁰ Peter Kenyon, "Turkey Resists NATO's Missile Shield", *NPR*, November 15, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/2010/11/15/131325034/turkey-resists-nato-s-missile-defense-system>.

²⁷¹ "Iran signs nuclear fuel-swap deal with Turkey," *BBC News*, 17 May 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8685846.stm>.

²⁷² "Text of the Iran-Brazil-Turkey Deal," *The Guardian*, May 17, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/julian-borger-global-security-blog/2010/may/17/iran-brazil-turkey-nuclear>.

²⁷³ Migdalovitz, "Turkey," 21.

In any case, the uranium remained the property of Iran and could be reclaimed at any time. However, the the United States announced a new round of sanctions against Iran one day after the agreement was reached, illustrating that it did not view the Tehran Declaration favorably.²⁷⁴ This was a great blow to Turkey because Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that he had been in “constant contact” with the United States and that the Tehran Declaration was very similar in nature to a deal put forward by the U.S. in October 2009.²⁷⁵ These sanctions reduced Turkey’s credibility, humiliated Turkish and Brazilian diplomats, and hindered Turkey’s attempt to gain stronger diplomatic prominence. Overall, this event highlights some of the fundamental tensions between Turkey and the U.S. regarding the conduct of foreign policy in the Middle East.

The nuclear swap agreement was rejected by the United States due to a combination of factors. Firstly, the proposed swap did not include the United States, and would thus have concentrated power in the hands of Brazil and Turkey. In the long-term, this could potentially have weakened the U.S.’ negotiating position because it would have been successfully sidelined in 2010. Secondly, the Tehran Declaration was perceived by some American officials as a ploy used by Iran to delay the imposition of sanctions.²⁷⁶ After all, the October deal was quite similar to the Tehran Declaration but Iran rejected it then.²⁷⁷ One could legitimately wonder whether it was likely that Iran would have had a change of heart simply because the request came from Turkey instead of the U.S. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, President Obama had already declared that he would seek a new round of sanctions against Iran following the failure of the October negotiations, and negotiations were already underway between P5 members regarding new sanctions when the May agreement was reached.²⁷⁸ Thus, a reversal of U.S. policy would have signaled to the international community, and certainly to Iran, that Obama could easily be influenced by promises of cooperation.

Despite the failure of the nuclear swap agreement, the Tehran Declaration illustrates the rising influence of Turkey in Middle Eastern affairs, in particular regarding Iranian ones. As President Gul and Prime Minister Erdoğan aim for their country to become an important actor in the Middle East, Turkey will also face increasing pressure from Western countries and Middle Eastern ones given its unique location and its policy of compromise.

²⁷⁴ Scott Peterson, “US answer to Iran nuclear fuel swap: Overnight deal on sanctions,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 18, 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0518/US-answer-to-Iran-nuclear-swap-Overnight-deal-on-sanctions>.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Migdalovitz, “Turkey,” 21.

²⁷⁷ Trita Parsi, Barbara Slavin, Matias Spektor and Kadir Ustun, “Overcoming Iran Nuclear Impasse,” (panel, SETA Foundation, Washington D.C., June 16, 2011), <http://setadc.org/events/51-past-events/382-qovercoming-iran-nuclear-impasse-a-year-after-the-tehran-declarationq-june-16-2011>.

²⁷⁸ Parsi, Slavin, Spektor and Ustun, “Overcoming Iran.”

Turkey's vision of a nuclear free Middle East

In the September 2010 UN General Assembly meeting in New York, Turkish President Abdullah Gul called for a nuclear free Middle East.²⁷⁹ This was the first time that Turkey announced any interest in creating a nuclear free Middle East. Indeed, a few months earlier, in July 2010, there were rumors and information circulating about Turkey considering the acquisition of nuclear weapons.²⁸⁰ This was a sudden change in policy, and it might have had implications on Turkey's relationship with other countries.

Since the AKP's rise to power, Turkey's close relationship with Israel has slowly deteriorated.²⁸¹ Turkey's vision of a nuclear free region may potentially strain the relationship even further, as this view directly conflicts with part of Israel's military strategy. According to Sonar Cagatay, the Director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Turkish-Israeli ties have diminished as the public relationship between the two states, which was backed by economic, intellectual, and military ties, has deteriorated.^{282, 283} Prime Minister Erdoğan has also been accused of promoting anti-Semitism at home.²⁸⁴ A tense relation between Turkey and Israel may weaken Turkey's leverage as a middle level negotiator between states such as Iran and Israel. However, Turkey's growing relationship with Iran is not just one-sided, as it brings several benefits to Ankara.

By forging a better relationship with Iran, Turkey may reap many economic and diplomatic benefits in the region. In February 2011, Iran and Turkey signed a trade pact that was worth over \$30 billion dollars.²⁸⁵ The most recent economic feat is just a symbol of the strong working relation between the two countries, strengthened by over 20 years of annual economic meetings. Of course, a closer relationship between Turkey and Iran will result in greater tension with Turkey's other staunch ally, the United States.

For Iran, Turkey also serves as an important voice abroad. Considered an ally of the United States, Ankara may have greater influence on a global issue than Iran would have, especially since Iran is deemed a pariah by some of the international community. In an interview conducted with Fars news, the Turkish Ambassador to Iran, Umit Yardim, said that "in any political process, when we are weighing up options, we certainly take account of our

²⁷⁹ "Turkey calls for nuclear free Middle East," *World Bulletin*, September 24, 2010, <http://www.worldbulletin.net/index.php?aType=haber&ArticleID=64330>.

²⁸⁰ Gregory R. Copley, "Turkey exploits window of opportunity, moving quickly to acquire nuclear weapons," *World Tribune*, July 23, 2010, http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2010/me_turkey0701_07_23.asp.

²⁸¹ Soner Cagatay, "Turkish-Israeli Relations," Middle East Forum, April 3, 2009, <http://www.meforum.org/2117/turkish-israeli-relations>.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Alakbar Raufoglu, "Turkey-Israel relations in crisis," *Southeast European Times*, February 1, 2011, http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/02/01/feature-03.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ "Reports: Iran, Turkey sign trade pact potentially worth \$30 billion," *CNN*, February 7, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-07/world/iran.turkey_1_trade-pact-minister-ali-akbar-salehi-turkey?_s=PM:WORLD.

relationship with Iran.”²⁸⁶ The statement, which was made in reference to the NATO agreement on the establishment of a missile defense shield in Turkey, symbolizes the Iranian influence on Turkey and how this influence could affect Turkey’s NATO operations and its diplomatic relations with Western nations.

Turkey’s plan to create a nuclear free Middle East may be challenging, but it could be within the realm of the possible as Iran and Turkey’s relationship has greatly improved, which allows for constructive initiatives to proceed forward. Turkey can indeed take advantage of its unique relationship with both Iran and Israel to build a nuclear-free Middle East. In addition, this vision of a nuclear-free Middle East illustrates that Turkey seeks a more active role in international affairs. Right before this declaration, it had been highly involved in the Brazil-Turkey-Iran nuclear fuel swap.

Brief Overview of Iran’s Nuclear Program

Iran’s long history of nuclear involvement began in the 1950s with the help of Western nations, acting under the Atoms for Peace program.²⁸⁷ The program, spearheaded by the Eisenhower administration as an attempt to help Iran’s growth, was originally developed as a way for the United States to gain access into parts of the Iranian economy, such as the health care system.²⁸⁸ Under Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Iran established the Tehran Nuclear Research Center at Tehran University and was able to convince the United States to give it another reactor in the late 1960’s. This was the first step towards a decade long nuclear growth, as the country completed its Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, garnered assistance from France and Germany, and was on its way towards reaching 23,000 megawatts of power from nuclear sources. However, as early as 1974, concern for the program emerged since the United States became concerned about the shah’s potential ambition of building nuclear weapons.²⁸⁹

Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Western states fully withdrew their support. All diplomatic ties were severed the same year, and this effectively ended any Western aid to Iran. French and German companies tasked with building the nuclear components canceled their projects, and a temporary nuclear hiatus in Iran ensued.

However, a few years later, Iran restarted its nuclear program. Over the years, this program has become one of the major security problems facing the international community. Iran has asked for assistance from countries such as Russia, China, and Pakistan. It has many research sites, two uranium mines, a research reactor and uranium processing facilities, which include at least three uranium enrichment plants. The U.S. Congressional Research Service reports that the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center, one of the uranium-conversion centers, may employ as many as

²⁸⁶ Jorge Benitez, “Turkey’s relationship with Iran influenced NATO agreement,” Atlantic Council, April 25, 2011, <http://www.acus.org/natosource/turkeys-relationship-iran-influenced-nato-agreement>.

²⁸⁷ Greg Bruno, “Iran’s Nuclear Program,” Council on Foreign Relations, March 10, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/iran/irans-nuclear-program/p16811>.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

3000 scientists.²⁹⁰ Natanz, another research center, contains first-generation centrifuges that help Iran develop its nuclear weapon capability more rapidly.²⁹¹ While Iran claims that its nuclear program is used to preserve its oil supply, most Western states believe that Iran is seeking to obtain nuclear weapons, or at least the capability to manufacture them, and this dichotomy has led to decades of opposition between Iran and the Western world.

A Nuclear Iran's Impact on Turkey and its Foreign Relations

A nuclear Iran may result in a tenuous relationship with Turkey. A nuclear-armed Iran will bring great competition and pressure to the region and may lead other Middle Eastern states to expand their own military presence in order to restore the strategic balance of the region. Turkey may face greater pressure to act from both Iran and the United States, who both view Ankara as a possible partner. Such pressure would put Turkey in an uncomfortable situation, and this would affect the country's relationship with the European Union, NATO, and the United States.

According to the German Marshall Fund of the United States' analysis of Turkey and its relationship with a nuclear Iran, Turkey's abstention or rejection of sanctions against Iran in the Security Council may "hasten the use of force to deal with the problem" as Western states may view such a vote as proof that Turkey is aligning itself with countries like Iran, thus reducing the possibility of a diplomatic solution through a third party.²⁹² Western states' fear that they're "losing Turkey" may mean greater pressure on Turkey from the U.S. and its allies, and any action that is viewed by Americans as pro-Iran could create a large firestorm diplomatically.

A nuclear backed Iran may also result in greater military stress for Turkey. Following the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran, one could expect NATO to reorganize its strategy and incorporate more counter-nuclear planning. Potential responses by NATO, such as deploying defense installations and bases throughout the region, would require political negotiations, and NATO would surely ask Turkey for help, while Iran would pressure Turkey to reject any cooperation with the West. The German Marshall Fund' report also estimates that an arms race may develop in the region since such powerful weapons would upset the region's balance of power.²⁹³ If this occurs, Ankara may be pressured to follow suit.

Deployment of a nuclear umbrella: a nuclear deterring tool?

A nuclear Iran will place Turkey in an uncomfortable situation since it has strong diplomatic ties with both the United States and Iran. A potential response that the United States could adopt

²⁹⁰ Bruno, "Iran's Nuclear Program."

²⁹¹ Maseh Zarif, "Locations of Iran's Nuclear Program," AEI Iran Tracker, July 24, 2009, <http://www.irantracker.org/nuclear-program/locations-irans-nuclear-program>.

²⁹² Ian O. Lesser, "Can Turkey Live With A Nuclear Iran," German Marshall Fund of the United States, March 2, 2009,

http://www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/ForeignPolicyIanLesserOnTurkeyNuclearIran.pdf;jsessionid=afvf600Y8eOf_aLReh.

²⁹³ Ibid.

would be to formally provide a “nuclear umbrella,” which is a guarantee by a nuclear weapon holding state to protect a non- weapon holding state in the case of an attack or war, to allies in the region.²⁹⁴ In 2009, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton had already publicly mentioned that the U.S. government was willing to consider the deployment of a nuclear umbrella over the region if Iran continued to pursue nuclear weapons.²⁹⁵ An umbrella would serve as a deterrent against Iranian aggression as it would strengthen the military power of the protected state, decreasing the potential gains any opposing state could hope to gain from initiating a military conflict. A nuclear umbrella could also help slowing down nuclear proliferation in the region, as it would serve as an alternative to obtaining nuclear weapons, a costly and long process, for the states who feel threaten by Iran.²⁹⁶

For the United States, extending its nuclear umbrella over Israel and other states in the Middle East would mean increasing its involvement in the region, and could also lead to potential disagreements and diplomatic tensions.²⁹⁷ Such an important commitment could definitively become a political and military liability, and with the United States involved in two wars in the region already, such additional involvement may lead to criticism from leaders abroad and citizens at home, especially considering the domestic problems the U.S. is facing in 2011. This is perhaps why such an idea has remained at the theoretical level. No concrete steps have been taken to advance it further, at least none that the authors are aware of.

After Secretary Clinton mentioned the possibility of extending the U.S. defense umbrella, Israel’s Minister for Intelligence and Atomic Energy Dan Meridor expressed his concern to the Israeli Army Radio, claiming such an action would be “a mistake” as it would symbolize that the United States has already “come to terms with a nuclear Iran.”²⁹⁸ Pursuing the path of a nuclear umbrella might worsen the relations between the two states because Israel is vehemently opposed to a nuclear Iran and refuses to compromise on the issue.

Overall, despite the potential drawbacks of a nuclear umbrella, such a defense commitment could help bring stability to the region. The U.S. would have to express its unwavering commitment to defend its allies in the region in case of attack. This might potentially help alter Iran’s calculus regarding the benefits of obtaining nuclear weapons, and would certainly help restore confidence among our allies in the U.S.’s desire to protect them and their interests. In times of hardship such as these ones, the United States must make it clear to the international community, and to its strategic opponents in particular, that it will not back down from protecting its allies, even when the political costs are high. Finally, Iranian influence in the region may also decrease because neutral states would understand the dangers of alienating themselves from the Western world.

²⁹⁴ Scott Sagan, “How to Keep the Bomb from Iran,” Real Clear Politics, September 5, 2006, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2006/09/how_to_keep_the_bomb_from_iran.html.

²⁹⁵ Richard Lloyd Parry, “Clinton says US would arm its allies against a nuclear Iran,” *Times*, July 23, 2009, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6723037.ece>.

²⁹⁶ Bruce Riedel and Gary Samore, “Managing Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East,” in *Restoring the Balance: A Middle East Strategy for the Next President*, ed. Richard N. Haass and Martin S. Indyk (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, December 2008).

²⁹⁷ Parry, “Clinton says US would arm its allies.”

²⁹⁸ Parry, “Clinton says US would arm its allies.”

In conclusion, Turkey, a state that is strengthening its ties with Iran, will become an increasingly important player in the Middle Eastern arena as the Western world seeks to prevent Iran from successfully acquiring nuclear weapons. A nuclear Iran would upset the region's balance of power and would fuel tensions in the area. Turkey may face military pressure from its own military officers and a diplomatic dilemma between maintaining its alliance with the U.S. and siding with Iran. Indeed, since it has good relations with both the United States and Iran, Turkey will face increasingly strong pressure from both states to side with them on the Iranian nuclear issue. In addition, a sudden increase in the Iranian regime's military power may lead to an arms race in the Middle East, which would place an additional security burden on Ankara. Recent efforts to leverage Turkey's influence on Iran by striking a deal on nuclear fuel exchanges have failed because of bad timing and a lack of trust on the part of U.S. officials. If it is impossible to strike a deal with one's opponents, what options does one have left?

Oil Politics in the Middle East

James McCune

In his book *The Origins of the Modern World*, Professor Robert B. Marks contends that the preeminence of the European countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was due in part to their control of certain key energy sources such as coal.²⁹⁹ He suggests that vast coal reserves allowed European states to establish large empires, as the case of Britain demonstrates.³⁰⁰ In the modern age, energy sources, in particular oil, play a similar role in international relations. Indeed, just as coal played a vital role in fueling both the industrial advancements and military campaigns of the European countries during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, oil fuels the military and industrial power of states in the modern era. Additionally, the importance of coal to European dominance during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was magnified by the fact that it was the most effective energy source at the time. In the modern era, oil remains the most viable energy source, despite advances in the pursuit of nuclear and solar energy.³⁰¹ Based on professor Marks' assumption about leading energy sources, then, one may posit that oil holds an important position in the militaristic and economic aspects of international relations, and is therefore an effective bargaining chip for states.

A Brief History of Oil Politics in the Middle East

Oil plays a clear role in the foreign policy initiatives of the United States today, especially those in the Middle East. Controlling more than half of the world's proven oil reserves³⁰², the countries of the Middle East have had an important role in international oil politics since the beginning of the 20th century, when the British first discovered oil in Persia. However, the United States did not become directly involved in Middle Eastern oil politics until the end of World War II. At this time, the United States developed an interest in Middle Eastern oil, and it became more actively involved in regional affairs as a result.³⁰³ To the United States, controlling oil in the Middle East was not only an economic victory, but also a key strategic one. In addition to bolstering its supply of oil, the United States would also be edging the Soviet Union out of what was considered an important source of strategic power. Given the increasingly hostile relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union at the time, the fact that the U.S. was making oil deals with Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia allowed it to gain leverage over its

²⁹⁹ Robert B. Marks, *Origins of the Modern World* (United States: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

³⁰⁰ Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² British Petroleum, "BP Statistical Review of World Energy", British Petroleum, June 2010, http://www.bp.com/liveassets/bp_internet/globalbp/globalbp_uk_english/reports_and_publications/statistical_energy_review_2008/STAGING/local_assets/2010_downloads/statistical_review_of_world_energy_full_report_2010.pdf.

³⁰³ Paul D'Amato, "U.S. intervention in the Middle East: Blood for Oil," *International Socialist Review*, no. 15 (December 2000 to January 2001), http://www.isreview.org/issues/15/blood_for_oil.shtml.

opponent as it moved into the Cold War because the U.S.S.R. could not have access to that cheap oil.³⁰⁴

Following the discovery of additional oil fields in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the early 1950s and subsequent U.S. deals to purchase that oil, the United States' dependence on the Middle East for its supply of oil increased.³⁰⁵ Indeed, these discoveries, coupled with a rising American demand for oil produced mass consumption, led to further demand for Middle Eastern oil on the part of the United States, which by the 1970's was importing one-third of its oil from the Middle East.³⁰⁶ This rapidly evolving oil connection between the West, particularly the United States, and Middle Eastern oil producers would ultimately lead the some Middle Eastern countries to secure their own burgeoning economic interests. One prime example of this phenomenon would be the formation of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), created in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela as a means of "securing fair and stable prices for petroleum producers."³⁰⁷ In short, OPEC was an attempt by oil producing countries to contain the influence of oil-consumers such as the U.S. and the United Kingdom on the price of oil. Ultimately, the conflicting interests of oil producers and oil consumers led to tensions in the Middle East throughout the latter half of the twentieth century and have contributed to similar issues in the early twenty-first century.

Examples of the tensions caused by clashing interests in the Middle East pervade the region's history throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In some cases, the causes of these incidents can be traced back to the oil politics of the region, such the 1956 Suez crisis, during which Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt following then Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. To the European countries, the Suez Canal was an important passageway for Middle Eastern oil on its way to Europe, with about two-thirds of all European oil imports passing through it.³⁰⁸ Because Britain and France both believed they had a controlling interest in the Suez Canal Company, and had a compelling interest in the form of their oil imports passing through the Canal, they decided, along with Israel, to intervene militarily in Egypt. This tripartite aggression forced the United States to launch a counter-intervention through diplomatic and economic channels as a means of preventing an escalation of conflict with the Soviet Union, which threatened to intervene militarily on the Egyptian side.

In addition to open military conflicts, oil has been a primary motivator for the West to intervene in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries and influence their political leadership. Two examples of such actions are the joint U.S.-British coup ousting Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953 and the U.S.' backing of Saddam Hussein and Iraq during the 1980 Iran-Iraq war. In the first instance, the United States and Great Britain launched

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ S. Mintz, "The Politics of Oil," *Digital History*, September 5, 2011, <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/oil.cfm>.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ OPEC, "Brief History," Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/about_us/24.htm.

³⁰⁸ Paul Reynolds, "Suez: End of an Empire," *BBC News*, July 24, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/5199392.stm#map.

a successful coup against Mosaddegh and replaced him with Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi. The nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by Mosaddegh was one of the main factors that led the U.S. and British governments to launch a coup. If the Company had been successfully nationalized, the total British oil production would have dropped by about 700,000 barrels per day.³⁰⁹ The United States at that time had a vested interest in the well-being of the British economy, having poured millions of dollars through the Marshall Plan into the refining of Iranian oil in British refineries, and it needed Britain's support in the Korean War; these interests likely influenced the United States to take action against Mosaddegh.

Oil also served as a primary motivator for the political alignments of the United States during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. In 1983, President Reagan sent Donald Rumsfeld to meet with Iraqi leaders, including Saddam Hussein; it was in these meetings that Rumsfeld described the American position on oil as similar to that of Iraq. For example, the United States expressed disdain at the Iranian curtailment of Iraqi oil operations in the Persian Gulf and sought to find alternative transport routes for said oil.³¹⁰ Additionally, both American and Iraqi leaders negatively viewed the recent behavior of Syria, then an Iranian ally, which cut off an Iraqi oil pipeline within its borders.³¹¹ In 1984, the United States openly denounced Iran's position in the war and supported Iraq. Rumsfeld's talks with the Iraqi leaders suggest that the United States' interest in Iraqi oil played a major role in the country's support of Iraq during the Iraq-Iran war.

One could also reasonably argue that oil politics have influenced the actions of the United States in its more recent dealings with the Middle East. An example of such influence can be seen in the Iraq War. Indeed, in addition to the United States' condemnations of Saddam Hussein's crimes against Iraqi citizens, Iraq's suspected links with terrorists, and the threat posed by the country's alleged possession of WMD's, oil politics can be said to have potentially played a role in the United States' decision to invade Iraq. In 2002, Iraq controlled about 112 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, second only to the approximately 262 billion barrels of proven oil reserves controlled by Saudi Arabia.³¹² According to Dag Harald Claes, professor at the University of Oslo, the United States might have sought to establish a stable government in Iraq, the country with the second greatest amount of proven oil reserves in the world, to stabilize oil markets in the long-run, despite the fact that the war currently has the opposite effect on oil prices.³¹³ By establishing a more stable Iraqi government, the United States would reduce the likelihood of Iraq waging war on its neighbors, many of whom are important oil suppliers. In turn, the oil markets would be more stable because the fear of disruption of trading would be

³⁰⁹ J.H. Carmical, "World Eyes Iran on Oil Seizure Bid," *New York Times*, March 25, 1951, <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/032551iran-oil-vote.html>.

³¹⁰ Joyce Battle, *Shaking Hands with Saddam Hussein: The U.S. Tilts Toward Iraq, 1980-1984*, National Security Archive, no. 82 (February 25, 2003), <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB82/>.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² John S. Duffield, *Oil and The Iraq War: How the United States Could Have Expected to Benefit, and Might Still*, *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no.2 (June 2005), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2005/issue2/jv9no2a7.html>.

³¹³ Dag Harald Claes, "The United States and Iraq: Making Sense of the Oil Factor," *Middle East Policy* 12, no.4 (Winter 2005): 48-57, doi: 10.1111/j.1475-4967.2005.00223.x.

reduced, at least in that region. With this reasoning in mind, one could make the claim that oil may have at least played some role in the United States' decision to intervene in Iraq.

Turkey: A Point of Interest in Middle Eastern Energy Politics

When one notices Turkey's unique situation in the Middle Eastern environment, the conclusion that Turkey could greatly impact Middle Eastern energy politics is not farfetched. The most obvious of Turkey's characteristics is its good working relationship with the United States. However, unlike many of the large-scale oil producing countries in the Middle East, Turkey's oil production is almost completely inconsequential. Turkey's total proven oil reserves amount to about 270 million barrels, a very small figure compared to the oil giants of the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran.³¹⁴ In 2009, the entire oil production of Turkey amounted to just 52,980 barrels per day (bpd).³¹⁵ Ultimately, Turkey's 2009 oil production amounted to a mere ten percent of its total oil consumption, thus following that Turkey imports the vast majority of the oil it consumes.³¹⁶ Although its proven oil reserves and oil production are very low, Turkey has in recent years risen into the role of an energy transit hub in the Middle East, and it is herein that its value to the United States in energy politics lies. Turkey is an energy transit hub because it is an extremely crucial link in the transportation of oil and natural gas from Russia, the Caspian Sea, and the Middle Eastern countries to European oil and natural gas markets. Thus, it plays an important strategic role on both the supply side and the demand side. In sum, because Turkey connects the two major oil and natural gas markets of Europe and the Middle East, it is an important player on the stage of international energy politics and a crucial ally for the United States.

Turkey's status as a growing energy hub in the Middle East has profoundly affected its relationships with other countries. However, one country of particular interest in terms of energy politics, and the relationship between Turkey and the United States, is Iran. In recent years, Turkey and Iran's economic relationship has improved, particularly through the trading of oil.³¹⁷ As Turkey's energy needs have increased, it has turned to Iran, which seeks to expand its presence in European oil markets by utilizing Turkey's energy-transferring capabilities.³¹⁸ Specifically, Iran, Turkey and other European countries such as Germany have been discussing constructing an oil pipeline that would deliver Iranian oil to Italy through Turkey, known as the Nabucco project.³¹⁹ If this project was to move forward, Iran would gain access to European oil markets while Turkey would more firmly assert its position as the main energy transit hub of the Middle Eastern region. However, Iran's noncompliance with U.N. nuclear policies, and the resultant instability in the region, has bred worry among the European countries involved in the

³¹⁴ U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Country Analysis Brief: Turkey", U.S. Energy Information Administration, February 2011, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=TU>.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ariel Farrar-Wellman, "Turkey-Iran Foreign Relations," AEI IranTracker, August 2, 2010, <http://www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/turkey-iran-foreign-relations>.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

Nabucco project, in particular Germany.³²⁰ As a result of this uncertainty, Turkey has offered to mediate the dispute between the U.S., the European Union, and Iran regarding Iran's nuclear program. Ultimately, one may conclude that the resolution of the Iranian nuclear crisis would be in the interests of all countries involved in the Nabucco oil project.

The United States' Reaction to Turkey's Desire to be an Energy Transit Hub

Overall, the United States supports Turkey's desire to be an energy hub in the Middle East. For example, in 2006, Daniel Fried, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian affairs stated that the United States viewed Turkey's desire to become an energy hub in the Middle East favorably.³²¹ In particular, Fried expressed overwhelming U.S. support for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which funnels oil from the Caspian Sea region through Turkey.³²² Additionally, Fried suggested that the United States favored the creation of the Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline, which would transport Russian oil through Turkey to European oil markets.³²³ According to the U.S. State Department, Turkey serves "as an important link in the East-West Southern Energy corridor, bringing Caspian, Central Asian, and Middle Eastern energy to European markets."³²⁴ As such, one can see that the United States views Turkey's growing role as an energy hub in the Middle East favorably because of Turkey's function as a conduit that allows oil to flow from Eastern to Western markets.

Ultimately, the acceptance of Turkey's role as an energy hub is dependent on an increase in Turkey's reliability as a transporter of energy. According to the March 2009 CSIS report "Turkey's Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations," the United States, if willing to invest in Turkey's position as a Middle Eastern energy hub, must increase confidence in the ability of Turkey's pipelines to effectively transport oil.³²⁵ To accomplish this, CSIS senior fellow Edward Chow argues that Turkey, with the help of the United States, must increase upstream production capacity, enhance sovereignty and governance in Central Asian countries, and create shorter, more viable pipelines that would build more confidence in a Southern energy corridor through Turkey.³²⁶ Additionally, Turkey must increase the working capacities of certain pipelines, such as the Kirkuk-Ceyhan and the BTC pipelines.³²⁷ By accomplishing these initiatives, the United States would be able to eliminate the major challenge to promoting Turkey's primacy as a Middle Eastern energy hub: a lack of confidence on the part of investors in

³²⁰ Farrar-Wellman, "Turkey-Iran."

³²¹ Vince Crawley, "U.S. says Turkey can be Cultural Example, Energy Hub in Europe," Embassy of the United States in Turkey, July 7, 2006, http://turkey.usembassy.gov/news_07072006.html.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Studies, *Background Note: Turkey*, May 13, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm>.

³²⁵ Edward C. Chow, "Turkey As an Energy Bridge," in *Turkey's Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations*, ed. Stephen J. Flanagan et al. (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2009), 79.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid, 78.

Turkish oil pipelines. If the United States were to invest in the development of Turkish oil capacities, the advantages could include preferential treatment for any U.S. companies utilizing the various pipelines running through Turkish territory as well as an increased willingness on the part of Turkey to collaborate with the U.S. on other international issues, such as counterterrorism and Iran.

Since 2009, the United States and Turkey have been cooperating more closely with one another on energy issues in the Middle East. For example, the Turkish Petroleum Company is currently undertaking exploration projects alongside ExxonMobil and Chevron.³²⁸ Additionally, Chevron, along with Hess and Connoco Phillips, are partners and hold shares in the BTC pipeline.³²⁹ Cooperation between Turkish and U.S. companies has increased in the energy field, but it has increased between the two governments as well. According to a May 2011 State Department statement, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Commerce are all working with the Turkish government on energy-related projects.³³⁰ For example, the Department of Commerce has been working on a business development mission in Turkey with U.S. oil and gas companies since June 2011, with a second mission involving renewable energy slated for October 2011.³³¹ In conclusion, then, one can see that the United States not only accepts Turkey's perception of itself as an energy hub in the Middle East, but has begun to actively support Turkey in growing into this new role.

Where Does This Lead The Middle East In the Coming Years?

If Turkey's bid for supremacy as a Middle Eastern energy hub is successful, the dynamics of the energy situation in the region are likely to shift: Central Asian oil will flow into Europe and Turkey will have greater political power. Firstly, if Turkey's capabilities as an energy hub were to expand as CSIS fellow Edward Chow suggests, Central Asian oil, in particular oil coming from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, will be funneled through Turkey to European markets. In turn, this influx of non-Middle Eastern oil into European markets will most likely lower the price of oil. If such devaluation was to occur, the member countries of OPEC would surely use a variety of instruments, such as decreasing their output and pressuring Central Asian states to reduce their production, to counteract the influx of Central Asian oil. Therefore, even if OPEC is not fully successful in influencing Central Asian countries, it is unlikely that the price of oil would decline significantly, especially since countries like Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan do not produce that much oil to begin with. However, Europe would have greater energy security because its oil supply would be coming from a greater variety of countries. Secondly, if Turkey's bid to become a major energy hub was to succeed, it is likely that Turkey could see an era of greater political power. Indeed, because it would control the oil flow of several Middle Eastern and Central Asian

³²⁸ Douglas A. Sillman, "Remarks by Douglas A. Silliman, U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission to the STEAM Conference." Embassy of the United States in Turkey, May 24, 2011, http://turkey.usembassy.gov/statement_052411.html.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

countries such as Iran, Turkmenistan, and possibly Iraq, it would surely have greater influence on those countries. In addition, it would perhaps gain leverage over Europe because it would control some of Europe's oil supply.

In the event that Turkey becomes a major energy hub in the Middle East, the United States would profit by investing money to increase the capacity of Turkey's oil and natural gas pipelines. In exchange, U.S. companies would have privileged access to said pipelines. Increasing the capacity of Turkey's pipelines would make foreign investors more confident in Turkey's energy hub reliability and would thus begin to utilize Turkish pipelines for the transportation of their oil. The United States would then be able to profit from its original investment in the welfare of Turkish pipelines by receiving concessions from the Turkish government.

Gaining Leverage over Iran through Oil and Turkey

There are two scenarios that would allow the United States to use Turkey's position in Middle Eastern oil politics to improve its relationship with Iran. Both of these scenarios would involve compromise on the part of Iran regarding its nuclear program, and on the part of the U.S. and the U.N. regarding their sanctions, specifically those involving the curtailment of investment in Iranian oil. Indeed, if there was an easy and pain-free solution to the Iranian nuclear problem, it would have been implemented by now.

The first scenario involves an agreement to lift sanctions against Iran and provide it with high-enriched uranium in exchange for the cancellation of its enrichment program. The United States and Iran would be required to open talks regarding the Iranian nuclear enrichment program while using Turkey as a mediator. Turkey would accept such a role because it seeks to resolve the Iranian issue, promote stability in the region and take on a more important role in the international arena. In exchange for the lifting of the U.S. and U.N. sanctions imposed on the Iranian oil trade, the United States and the U.N. could ask for the discontinuation of the Iranian uranium enrichment program in favor of a program in which certain countries, approved by all parties, subsidize the transfer of enriched uranium to Iran. Such an agreement could be inspired by the 2010 Tehran Declaration, which included the transfer of low-enriched uranium (LEU) from Iran to Turkey, where it would be enriched further and returned to Iran as high-enriched uranium (HEU). In exchange for Iran's compliance with the demands of the United States and the U.N., the United States and its allies would lift economic sanctions, which would allow Iran to supply natural gas to Europe through the Nabucco pipeline.

Ultimately, this plan relies on the assumption that Iran would willingly give up its nuclear enrichment capabilities. The idea behind this is that if Iran was to relinquish its uranium-enriching capabilities, other countries would be allowed to supply it with a sufficient amount of enriched uranium to run its nuclear power plants. The promise of reviving the Iranian oil trade, in particular with regards to supplying natural gas to the Nabucco pipeline, is an incentive that the United States could use to its advantage in the negotiations. However, this plan has three main issues: the Nabucco deal may not be a powerful enough incentive because negotiations regarding the pipeline have not yet been fully completed, the possible negative domestic

reaction to an Iranian compromise in the United States, and the fact that Iran has not yet been willing to relinquish its capacities for the enrichment of uranium.

The second plan is much like the first in that negotiations would revolve around Iran's nuclear enrichment capabilities and the U.S. and U.N. sanctions. In return for the cancellation of Iran's enrichment program, Iran would be provided with HEU and the sanctions against it would be lifted. But in addition, the U.S., Turkey and Iran would build a pipeline that stretches from Iran to Europe. Indeed, rather than counting on the promise of the Nabucco pipeline and other Iranian oil prospects, the United States, along with Turkey and Iran, could establish a separate pipeline tapping into Iranian oil reserves and transporting the oil to European oil markets. This pipeline would be jointly established and owned by the governments of the U.S., Turkey, and Iran, and each would a share of the profits proportional to their investments in the project. This solution presents a viable method to achieve closer cooperation between the United States, Turkey, and Iran.

The second scenario, like the first one, is based on the assumptions that Iran would be willing to relinquish its uranium-enrichment capabilities and that the people of the United States would not react too negatively against a U.S.-Iran partnership, both of which are tenuous assumptions. In addition, before such a proposition is made, one would have to conduct a profitability study and find private partners willing to run the risk of building a pipeline connecting Iran and Europe. This scenario also requires a strong and determined leader in the White House, because it is certain that any American leader who is seen as making concessions to Iran will face tremendous political pressure from the media and his or her opponents. However, unlike the first plan, this scenario avoids the pitfall of using the promise of vague compromises involving Iranian oil in favor of a concrete plan of action worked into the original tri-partite agreement. In a sense, then, this second suggestion has a greater chance of achieving the desired results, but at a greater cost, than the first plan of action.