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*Turkey: Update on Selected Issues*

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August 12, 2004

**Abstract.** Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) are securely in power in Turkey, and they now have a two-thirds majority in parliament. The government's highest priorities are improving the economy and obtaining a date to begin accession talks with the European Union. With the aid of IMF loans and IMF oversight, the government has undertaken major macroeconomic reforms, achieved solid growth, and reduced inflation. Turkey has a huge debt burden, but fiscal discipline needed to pay it down sometimes eludes the AKP government. Nonetheless, the IMF reviewed the government's economic performance positively in early August 2003. The Turkish parliament has passed reforms to harmonize Turkey's laws and Constitution with EU standards. Recent laws provide for greater civilian control over the powerful military, potentially revolutionizing how the Turkish political system operates. Other new laws are supposed to improve cultural rights of Turkish Kurds and provide a limited amnesty for Kurdish separatists. The EU is expected to scrutinize implementation of the reforms before setting a date for accession talks.

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## Turkey: Update on Selected Issues

**Updated August 12, 2004**

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# Turkey: Update on Selected Issues

## Summary

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) remain popular and have a firm hold on power in Turkey. The AKP is trying to recast itself from an Islamist-rooted party to a centrist “conservative democratic” party. Although some AKP actions fuel secularist suspicions of a hidden Islamist agenda, the high priority that the party gives to attaining European Union (EU) membership may mitigate fears about its intentions and support its centrist ambitions.

The government remains focused on the economy. With the aid of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it has undertaken major macroeconomic reforms, achieved solid growth, and reduced inflation. The IMF has reviewed the government’s economic performance positively and is expected to approve a new three-year stand-by agreement for 2005-2007.

The government also has been challenged by terrorism and is dealing with both Kurdish terrorism, a radical religious terrorist threat with possible international links, and remnants of leftist terrorism.

In order to obtain a date to begin accession talks with the European Union (EU), the Turkish parliament has passed many reforms to harmonize Turkey’s laws and Constitution with EU standards. The EU is expected to scrutinize implementation of the reforms carefully before setting a date for accession talks. The situation on Cyprus is not expected to affect EU decision-making.

U.S.-Turkish relations were shaken on March 1, 2003, when the Turkish parliament rejected a resolution to allow the deployment of U.S. troops to Turkey to open a northern front against Iraq. Bilateral ties have been strained by other developments in Iraq. The Turkish parliament’s October 2003 decision to authorize the deployment of Turkish peacekeepers to Iraq helped to improve ties, even though the offer was not accepted. However, Turkey continues to be concerned about the situation in Iraq and U.S. actions there, which fuel anti-Americanism.

Turkey remains important to the United States. Turkish air bases were used in the Afghan war and its airspace in the Iraq war. Its ports, airbases, and roads are used to resupply coalition forces and for reconstruction efforts in Iraq. U.S. troops rotate to and from Iraq via Turkey. Turkey will be an important transit route for pipelines carrying energy resources from the Caucasus and Central Asia to the West, and the often sabotaged oil pipeline from Iraq to Turkey could be helpful to Iraq’s recovery. Turkish and U.S. intelligence agencies are cooperating closely in the war on terrorism. Turkish peacekeepers have served in many hot spots in support of U.S. policies, and commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Finally, some U.S. officials and analysts believe strongly that Turkey, as a predominantly Muslim, democratic country, could serve as an example to others.

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# Turkey: Update on Selected Issues

## Domestic Situation

### Politics

**Justice and Development Party.** In November 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a party with Islamist roots, won 363 out of 550 seats in parliament and formed the first single-party government in Turkey in over a decade.<sup>1</sup> Deputy party leader Abdullah Gul became the first AKP prime minister. He ceded the position to party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan in March 2003, after parliament lifted a ban on Erdogan's political participation and he won a seat in parliament.<sup>2</sup> Gul then became Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

Prime Minister Erdogan and the AKP appear to be securely in power and, with its parliamentary majority, AKP has been able to pass its legislative program. Divisions within the AKP evident on March 1, 2003, when parliament rejected a government resolution to approve the deployment of U.S. forces to Turkey to open a northern front against Iraq, have faded.<sup>3</sup> Although AKP's parliamentary group is cumbersome, it is not ripe for fissures mainly because of the strength of Erdogan's personality and his popularity with the grass roots, and partly because Members enjoy the perquisites of office. Erdogan's power and charisma are making AKP increasingly similar to traditional Turkish personality-dominated political parties.

To avoid the short lives of a series of earlier Islamist political parties, the AKP claims the popular center-right of the political spectrum. Erdogan rejects the Islamist label, preferring to call himself and his party "conservative democrats." Some of his statements could be part of an American debate regarding church-state relations. For example, he has said,

"While attaching importance to religion as a social value, we do not think it right to conduct politics through religion, to attempt to transform government

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<sup>1</sup> For more, see CRS Report RS21355, *Turkey's November 3, 2002 National Election*. As of July 2004, AKP held 369, having gained seats due to defections from CHP and the affiliation of former independents. The party thus has the two-thirds majority (367 seats) needed to change the Constitution without recourse to a national referendum.

<sup>2</sup> Erdogan was banned because he had been convicted in 1998 for "inciting hatred based on religion," by publicly reciting a poem declaring "Minarets are our bayonets, domes are our helmets, mosques are our barracks, believers are our soldiers."

<sup>3</sup> See CRS Report RL31794, *Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues*, last updated May 2, 2003, for an examination of Turkey's policies before and immediately after the Iraq war (known officially as Operation Iraqi Freedom). More recent developments are discussed below.

ideologically by using religion.... Religion is a sacred and collective value.... It should not be made a subject of political partisanship causing divisiveness ... to make religion an instrument of politics and to adopt an exclusionary approach to politics in the name of religion harms not only political pluralism but also religion itself.”<sup>4</sup>

The priority that Erdogan and other party leaders give to beginning accession talks with the European Union (EU) aids the AKP’s political repositioning. EU reforms and the values they impose would pull the entire country to the center and to Western values. For example, the EU requires equal freedoms for all believers — for Muslims who are not Sunni and not accepted as Muslim by the AKP’s more passionate Islamists, for Christians, Jews, and others who heretofore have not been treated equally in Turkey. (For more on reforms, see **European Union** below.)

However, Erdogan’s attempt to distance AKP from its Islamist roots is undermined when some party officials and Members of Parliament raise issues with religio-political overtones that generate friction with the secular establishment in the military, political opposition, and elements in the media. For their part, secularists create discord when acting preemptively to counter real or suspected signs of encroaching Islamism. There have been many instances of such tension. Head scarves are a major issue. In Turkey, a head scarf can simply be a sign of religious piety or it can be an assertive expression of opposition to secularism. The wearing of head scarves is banned in public buildings, such as parliament and universities. The military is particularly sensitive to this matter. On April 23, 2003, armed forces’ commanders declined to attend a reception because the Speaker’s wife wears a head scarf, and they did not know if she would attend. (She did not.) In August 2003, Chief of Staff General Hilmi Ozkok pointedly did not invite any officials’ wives to a reception. In October, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer invited wives of all his guests except those of AKP deputies who might wear head scarves to a Republic Day reception. Even some ardent secularists criticized the President’s action as divisive. Erdogan refuses to enter this fray, saying that he is waiting for a social/national consensus to emerge on the issue. He was “saddened” by the President’s discrimination, but attended the reception briefly with most members of his cabinet to avoid further tension. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled, once again on June 29, 2004, that Turkey’s ban on wearing head scarves in state schools does not violate freedom of religion, but rather safeguards the principle of secularism necessary for the protection of the democratic system.<sup>5</sup>

There have been other controversies about AKP’s supposed “Islamist agenda.” Foreign Minister Gul sent a circular to embassies encouraging contact with Turkish non-governmental organizations abroad, including the National View (*Milli Gorus*), which promotes an Islamic state in Turkey. An AKP-dominated parliamentary committee voted to add 15,000 new positions in the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which oversees mosques, reportedly horrifying AKP leaders and defying government

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<sup>4</sup> Speech at American Enterprise Institute, January 30, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> “European Court Rules Turkish Universities Have Right to Ban Headscarves,” *Anatolia*, June 29, 2004, BBC Monitoring Europe (hereafter BBC).

promises to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of public employment cuts.<sup>6</sup> The Finance Minister said that no such appointments would be made.<sup>7</sup> Finally, on three occasions, the Prime Ministers (first Gul, then Erdogan) and Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul have expressed reservations about the expulsion of allegedly fundamentalist soldiers from the armed forces at meetings of the Supreme Military Council (YAS), insisting that those expelled be afforded the right to judicial review.<sup>8</sup>

Of potentially long-term consequence for Turkey's secular identity is education. The most heated disputes involve the AKP's attempts, in October 2003 and May 2004, to have the government exert greater control over the Higher Education Board and to allow graduates of religious (*imam hatip*) vocational high schools equal access to universities as those of normal high schools. Opponents viewed the bills as an effort to boost attendance at religious schools or to enable *imam hatip* graduates to qualify for government positions. Secularists on the Board, in opposition parties, universities, and the Office of the Chief of the General Staff, argued that the initiative was aimed at undermining "the basic principles of the republic," and they denounced it.<sup>9</sup> The prominence of the military command in the debate raised concerns about the country's political stability and highlighted differences between civil-military relations in Turkey and the rest of Europe at a time when the AKP government is seeking EU accession talks. Some questioned why AKP decided to raise the issue at this time since the military's sensitivities are well known. With municipal elections just over and national elections years off, AKP's stated rationale of needing to reward grassroots was unconvincing. President Sezer vetoed the bills, asserting that they were "incompatible with the spirit of the Constitution, which is based on the Ataturk (Mustafa Kemal, founder of the Turkish Republic) principles...."<sup>10</sup> Although it could have overridden the vetoes by passing an identical bill again, the government withdrew the bills from consideration. It may resubmit the bill again.

Aside from the education bills, Erdogan has generally been politically adroit considering that the Turkish armed forces are the constitutional guarantors of Turkey's secularism and have displaced civilian governments several times in the past. For example, he acceded to Chief of Staff General Hilmi Ozkok's request that the National Security Council (MGK) be headed by a military figure for one more year before it passed to a civilian in August 2004 as required by EU-related reforms. (For more on the MGK changes, see *European Union*, below.) Erdogan has benefitted from having the moderate, enlightened, discreet Ozkok as chief of staff. Ozkok consults privately with government officials, voices his opinions at closed National Security Council meetings. At an April 2004 news conference, he noted that the Turkish Armed Forces "should not be expected to adopt a stand regarding

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<sup>6</sup> "Ruling Party in Turkey Again Alarms Secularists," *Washington Post*, June 27, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> "Turkey Won't Employ More Clerics," *Reuters*, June 25, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Bilal Cetin, "Generals Accuse Government of 'Challenging' Armed Forces," *Vatan*, August 5, 2003, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS) Document GMP20030805000114; most recently, Fikret Bila interview with Minister of National Defense Vecdi Gonul, *Milliyet*, August 7, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040807000049.

<sup>9</sup> See, Office of the Chief of the General Staff, press release, *TRT2*, May 6, 2004, BBC.

<sup>10</sup> "Veto of the YOK Law," *Milliyet*, May 29, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040529000139.

every issue or to share everything with the public.”<sup>11</sup> Ozkok supports Turkey’s EU ambitions as the fulfillment of Ataturk’s vision of Turkey as a modern, European state, even if this means a diminished role for the armed forces and the continuation in office of what the military views as an Islamist government. The *imam hatip* bill provoked the general to issue rare public criticism of a government action.

In addition to the military, Erdogan and the AKP often clash with President Sezer, a popular former judge and ardent secularist, who wields his veto power liberally.<sup>12</sup> Sezer’s vetoes have delayed, but not prevented, passage of parts of the government program. He has been more successful in blocking AKP’s appointees to the government, many of whom he views as non-supportive of the secular state.<sup>13</sup> However, the AKP reportedly has placed many of those denied presidential approval in government positions not requiring presidential action.

**March 28, 2004, Municipal Elections.**<sup>14</sup> AKP won 41.6% of the vote in the municipal elections — a strong showing which exceeded the combined total of 38% of the vote won by its next three rivals. Strikingly, AKP won 57 out of 81 mayoral races, including 12 out of 15 races in major metropolitan areas. In other words, AKP confirmed its dominance of the center-right, the most popular segment of the Turkish political spectrum.

There are several reasons for AKP’s victory: First, its success in sustaining the country’s economic stability has created widespread optimism. Second, its steady pursuit of EU membership is very popular because of people’s expectations of economic advancement with accession.<sup>15</sup> Third, its national leaders, including the charismatic Erdogan who spoke in 55 cities, campaigned energetically and throughout the country. Finally, AKP profited from generally tame, uncritical media coverage of its tenure. AKP also courted its Islamist grassroots by choosing 80% of its mayoral candidates from the National View movement. The party fielded almost no women mayoral candidates ostensibly in order to avoid raising the visibility of the controversial head scarf issue. Women who wear head scarves ran for less prominent local assembly seats and won.

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<sup>11</sup> “Gen. Ozkok Briefs Media,” *TRT2*, April 13, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040413000208.

<sup>12</sup> If a parliamentary majority passes an unchanged bill a second time, the President lacks the power to veto it again. He can only be silent, refer it to the Constitutional Court, or call for a national referendum.

<sup>13</sup> Cuneyt Ulsever, “President Acting like Opposition,” *Hurriyet*, July 2, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030703000233.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview, see Yasemin Congar and Soner Capatay, “Local Elections in Turkey: A Landslide Victory for the Incumbent AKP,” accessible at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy website [<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org>].

<sup>15</sup> A Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) survey conducted in February and March 2004 corroborated growing optimism. “TESEV Survey Shows Rising Optimism,” *Anatolia*, March 31, 2004, FBIS Document GMP10040331000197.



AKP made noteworthy inroads into opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) strongholds on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts and into the Kurdish Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) cities in the southeast. The retrogressive, poorly led, center-left CHP nationalistically opposes the government's Cyprus policy and many of its other policies, but has not truly led opposition to them. It made no electoral headway by taking these positions, receiving 18.2% of the vote, down from 19.4% in the 2002 national election. This "leftist" party failed to draw the working class and middle class vote and is now said to be a party of fierce secularists, the upper middle class, and the Alevis, a heterodox sect mixing Turkish customs with Shi'a Islam whose secularism provides shelter from dominant Sunni Islam. CHP leader Deniz Baykal has kept his position by outmaneuvering party dissidents, not by policy achievements. DEHAP had allied with four small leftist parties to field candidates jointly as the Union of Democratic Forces, but together they polled fewer votes than DEHAP alone had won in 2002. AKP won 37% of the vote in the southeast. In other words, AKP's conservatism (or Islamism) trumped Kurdish nationalism. The combined votes of all of the so-called "left" parties fell from 30% in 2002 to 25% in 2004.

Nonetheless, the election results failed to herald the demise of the opposition. The center-right True Path Party (DYP) and the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) made comebacks, registering some gains and rising to 10.3% and 10.4% of the vote, respectively, primarily due to their jingoistic dissent from AKP's compromises on Cyprus. Were this a national election, they would have passed the threshold for entry into parliament.

## Economy

Turkey appears to have recovered from the severe recession of 2000-2001. It achieved economic targets for 2003 set by an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-monitored reform program, including a 5% (5.9%) Gross National Product (GNP) growth rate, an inflation rate of below 20% (18.4%), and a 6.5% budget surplus. The rate of inflation was the lowest in decades, exports grew 30% to \$48 billion, and interest rates dropped. Targets for 2004 — a 5% growth rate, 12% rate of inflation, and 6.5% budget surplus — are expected to be met. The State Institute of Statistics has announced that the GNP growth rate for the first quarter of 2004 was 12.4%, while the rate of inflation fell to 9.5%.<sup>16</sup> IMF reviews of Turkey's economic performance have been complimentary.

Yet significant problems remain. Unemployment remains high at more than 12% and underemployment is probably higher. Imports outstrip exports, despite export growth. The goal of earning \$4 billion in revenues from privatization of state enterprises was not met in 2003, with only \$2.2 billion gained, and government expectations of \$3 billion in revenues from privatization in 2004 are probably unrealistic. In June 2004, the court halted the sale of the Turkish Oil Refinery Corporation (TUPRAS) to a Russian firm for about \$1.3 billion. Earlier, the

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<sup>16</sup> "Turkey's Economic Growth in First Quarter 'Above Expectations,'" *Anatolia*, June 30, 2004, BBC; (Industry and Trade Minister) "Coskun Expects End-Year Inflation at 7-8 Pct," *Turkish Daily News*, August 5, 2004.

government had canceled the sale of the state tobacco monopoly after bids were deemed too low, while protracted preparations for the sale of 51% of the state telecommunications monopoly (TURK TELECOM) have not been concluded. Moreover, corruption scandals involving the Uzan family, accused of defrauding Motorola of billions of dollars, probably have affected sales to Western investors.

Despite the effects of privatization difficulties on revenues, the government increased pension payments and the minimum wage, prompting the IMF to seek and obtain offsetting budget cuts and increases in tax revenues. The IMF continues to encourage Turkey to improve tax administration to combat tax evasion and to undertake social security reforms, saying such measures would boost policy credibility and underpin the success of the reform program.<sup>17</sup> Current arrangements between Turkey and the IMF end in February 2005. Officials plan to sign a new three-year stand-by agreement to cover the period 2005-2007.

Turkey remains economically vulnerable because its public debt consumed about 75% of gross domestic product (GDP) as of December 2003. Although the ratio of debt to GDP is diminishing, much of the debt is short-term and rolled over at fluctuating interest rates.<sup>18</sup> The need to pay down the debt, especially the part carrying high interest rates, is the reason for IMF demands a 6.5% budget surplus.

Turkey relies heavily on borrowing partly because of lack of alternative sources of capital. It has very low foreign direct investment — only 0.15% of the world's foreign direct investment inflows in 2002.<sup>19</sup> Foreign investors have been wary of investing in Turkey because of time-consuming bureaucratic procedures and problems with transparency and rule of law in business relationships. The average time between authorization and investment reportedly is two years. Turkey ranked 77 out of 133 countries on the 2003 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>20</sup> In June 2003, parliament passed a new foreign investment law to guarantee equal rights for foreign investors and ease procedures for establishing companies. Investors probably will monitor implementation of the law before rushing to invest in Turkey. In addition to these measures, the government believes that economic stability resulting from the economic reform program and possible accession talks with the EU in 2005 should attract more investors.

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<sup>17</sup> International Monetary Fund press statements, April 19, 2004 and August 2, 2004.

<sup>18</sup> Undersecretary of State for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs Alan Larson, Speech at Brookings Institution, June 26, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *World Investment Report 2003, Country Fact Sheet, Turkey*, accessible via UNCTAD website [<http://www.unctad.org>].

<sup>20</sup> Transparency International is an international non-governmental organization dedicated to fighting corruption. It issues an annual report ranking countries according to how corrupt they are viewed. See [<http://www.globalcorruptionreport.org>].

## Terrorism

**Kurdistan Workers Party.** For a long time, terrorism in Turkey referred mainly to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and its successor groups. From 1984-1999, the Turkish armed forces fought a war against PKK insurgents (Turkish Kurds) who sought autonomy or independence. The PKK operated mainly in southeast Turkey, although it also attacked elsewhere in Turkey and Turkish targets in Europe. The PKK has appeared to flounder since its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, was captured and imprisoned in 1999.

In April 2002, the PKK renamed itself the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK), but retained many of the same leaders. In November 2003, KADEK dissolved itself and the People's Congress of Kurdistan (KONGRA-GEL) was established. KONGRA-GEL claims to be a purely political organization embracing the Kurds of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Its Constitution calls for "a durable solution to the Kurdish Question" by "promoting democratic forces" and does not mention independence or autonomy.<sup>21</sup> As the PKK transformed itself into KADEK and KONGRA-GEL, its military wing, the People's Defense Forces, was termed "independent" and did not dissolve or disarm. Turkish officials and media refer to PKK successor groups jointly with the PKK, e.g., PKK/KADEK or PKK/KONGRA-GEL. On November 14, 2003, the U.S. State Department spokesman said, "The PKK/KADEK, under any alias, is a terrorist organization, and no name change or press release can alter that fact" and, on January 13, 2004, the Department designated KONGRA-GEL as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

The PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL was relatively inactive as a terrorist group until recently, and its capabilities may be doubted. Although the State Departments and Turkish authorities allege that about 4,000 PKK members have taken safe haven in northern Iraq, that number dates from before Ocalan's capture and, given the possible dispersal of followers since then, the real strength of the group may be lower or different.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, KONGRA-GEL appeared to suffer a schism in 2004 involving Ocalan's brother Osman and others, which may have distracted it from the fight.<sup>23</sup> Another sign of PKK decline may have been apparent in KONGRA-GEL/PKK's support for the Union of Democratic Forces, which included the Kurdish party DEHAP and performed poorly in the March 2004 municipal elections.

KONGRA-GEL announced that it was ending a five-year unilateral cease-fire on June 1, 2004, and warned foreign investors and tourists against coming to Turkey. There has since been an upsurge in incidents in southeast Turkey, which Turkish

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<sup>21</sup> "Constitution of Kurdistan People's Congress," FBIS Document GMP20040804000126.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, released April 2004, cites a strength figure of approximately 4,000 to 5,000 for KONGRA-GEL/PKK. In addition, about 9,000 Turkish Kurds live in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refugee camp near Irbil in northern Iraq. The UNHCR, the United States, and Turkey tentatively agreed on their voluntary repatriation to Turkey, but it has not been completed nor implemented.

<sup>23</sup> "Kalkan on Division within KONGRA-GEL," Neu-Isenburg *Ozgur Politika*, March 12, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040315000144.

officials attribute to the return of militants from northern Iraq. Turkish Kurds in the southeast, benefitting from reforms such as Kurdish language broadcasting and other language and cultural rights, do not want a return to war. Four former Turkish Kurdish parliamentarians released from prison in June called for the KONGRA-GEL to continue the cease-fire — an unusual public display of dissent.

The PKK remnants may no longer pose a major threat to Turkey. They nonetheless remain an obsession of the Turkish military, which views a PKK with a possibly nonviolent, political agenda as the same as an active terrorist PKK.<sup>24</sup> This unchanging view of the PKK is the prism through which much of Turkey's policy toward Iraq is formulated. (See also **Iraq**, below.)

**Radical Religious Terrorism.** In November 2003, local Turkish terrorists reportedly connected to the Al Qaeda international network perpetrated four suicide bombings in Istanbul: two targeting synagogues, one the British consulate, and one a local office of HSBC, an international bank based in London. Sixty-two people were killed, including the British consul, and more than 700 injured. Most of the victims were Turks. All of the suspects were Turks, and several have been charged with trying to overthrow the constitutional order, i.e., with treason.

Soon after the bombings, Turkish government spokesmen alleged that the terrorists and their associates “appear to be close to Al Qaeda.”<sup>25</sup> Some perpetrators reportedly were former members of the Islamic Great Raiders Front (IBDA-C) and Hezbollah (not affiliated with the Lebanese group of the same name), which are two domestic fundamentalist terror groups.<sup>26</sup> These operatives were said to have trained in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the 1990's, and to have fought in Bosnia and

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<sup>24</sup> See comments of Lt. Gen. Aydogan Babaoglu, head of planning for the Office of the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, “TSK Notes Problems in Talks with US on Timing of Operation against PKK,” *NTV*, February 27, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040227000130. Contrastingly, a Turkish Foundation for Economic and Social Studies (TESEV) survey reported in March 2004 found that only 1% of respondents identified terrorism as Turkey's most important problem. *Turkish Daily News*, April 1, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> “Turkish Government sees Links Al-Qa'idah to Istanbul Blasts,” *TRT2*, December 1, 2003, BBC. Dogu Ergil, a Turkish terrorism expert, alleges that about 350 Turks had trained at Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan after receiving indoctrination, from Egyptian, Pakistani, Algerian, and Jordanian teachers financed by Saudi Arabia, as “salafis” to restore society to the Prophet Mohammed's ideal. Interview, *Radikal*, May 31, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040531000267. In August 2004, Pakistani security forces arrested four Turkish nationals near the Afghan border and linked them to Al Qaeda. “Four Al Qaeda Linked Turkish Nationals Arrested in Pakistan,” *AFP*, August 11, 2004, FBIS Document JPP20040811000082.

<sup>26</sup> Hezbollah and IBDA-C were founded in the 1980s and seek to establish a Turkish state ruled by Islamic law. Some analysts claim that Hezbollah was created or tolerated by the Turkish military to fight the PKK, and the PKK and its supporters were its primary targets. After Hezbollah began to target official interests in 2001, however, Turkish security forces turned on it. Hezbollah was not active in 2002, but it is still included in the U.S. State Department's annual report on *Patterns of Global Terrorism* with “Other Terrorist Groups.” IBDA-C is not listed in the report, and it had been considered disabled since arrests of its leaders in the late 1990s.

Chechnya.<sup>27</sup> They returned to Turkey as “sleepers.”<sup>28</sup> Several reportedly had met Al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahiri, who may have ordered the attacks in Istanbul; one was said to have met Osama bin Laden. Prime Minister Erdogan stated that the attacks had been planned and organized abroad.<sup>29</sup> The attacks marked a significant increase in the operational capabilities of domestic terror groups and in their financial resources, seeming to confirm assumptions of foreign assistance with intelligence, explosives, and finances. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Eric Edelman observed that the sophistication of the attacks, the multiple attacks, and their coincidental timing were consistent with the pattern of previous Al Qaeda attacks.<sup>30</sup> Other outside links may have been evident when several suspects were captured at the Iranian border and the Syrian government handed over 22 others, although only one of them was charged. A telephone caller to a Turkish news agency claimed joint responsibility for all four bombings in the name of Al Qaeda and IBDA-C. A group calling itself Abu Hafis al Masri Brigades, Al Qaeda, (taking the *nom de guerre* of Mohammed Atef, an Al Qaeda leader killed in Afghanistan in November 2001) made claims of responsibility to Arab media.<sup>31</sup>

In June 2004, the government postponed the trial of 69 men charged in connection with the November 2003 bombings because the recently abolished state security courts had not yet been replaced. The indictment alleges that some defendants had direct contacts with Osama bin Laden, had trained at Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan, and had received \$150,000 from Al Qaeda to carry out the Istanbul bombings. Cell leaders were said to be still at large.<sup>32</sup>

On March 9, 2004, suicide bombers killed two, including one attacker, and injured six others at a Masonic lodge in Istanbul. A statement in the name of Al Qaeda sent to a London-based Arabic newspaper claimed responsibility. The indictment of the surviving bomber charged that he had received training at a Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LT) camp in Kashmir and had subsequently fought in Chechnya. LT may

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<sup>27</sup> See also, International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Terror in Turkey; The Problems of Intelligence-Gathering,” *Strategic Comments*, Vol. 9, Issue 10, January 5, 2004, FBIS Document EUP10040105000333. Brian Glyn Williams, “Turkey’s al-Qaeda Blowback,” *Terrorism Monitor*, Issue II, Volume 8, pp. 4-6, states that, after the November 2003 bombings, Turkish authorities were investigating approximately 1,000 Turks who had “waged jihad” in Chechnya and Bosnia.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Vick, “Turks Assert Al Qaeda Link in Bomb Arrest,” *Washington Post*, December 20, 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Interview by Antonio Ferrari, *Corriere della Sera*, November 26, 2003, FBIS Document EUP20031126000110.

<sup>30</sup> Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD) Washington Office, *Selected News on Turkey*, November 18-24, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Statement to London-based Arabic daily, *Al-Quds al-Arabi*, November 27, 2003, FBIS Document GMP 20031117000045, and posting on *Al-Qal’ah al-Arabiyyah* chatroom, November 20, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031121000072. The same group claimed credit for bombing the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Susan Sachs, “Trials of Istanbul Bomb Suspects are Delayed,” *New York Times*, June 1, 2004.

have ties to Al Qaeda.<sup>33</sup> Islamist radicals view the Masons, who have a well-established presence in Turkey, as supporters of the United States and Israel.

In May, 25 Turks were arrested simultaneously in Bursa and Istanbul; nine of them were charged with plotting to set off a bomb at the June 28-29 NATO summit in Istanbul and with membership in an illegal organization. A provincial governor claimed that the suspects included a leader and members of Ansar al Islam, a group linked to Al Qaeda, and described bomb-making and other equipment seized by police. Turkish television reported that some of those arrested had participated in the insurgency in Iraq.<sup>34</sup> In June, four more Al Ansar suspects were detained in Istanbul also in possession of bomb-making materials and charged with belonging to an illegal organization; two others were released.

The idea of Islamist terrorism appears to pose a philosophical dilemma for the AKP. Prime Minister Erdogan has denied that there could be “Islamic terror” and challenged attributions of “qualities such as terrorism to our sacred religion...”<sup>35</sup> He declared that terror is an act of perversion detached from all beliefs and that Islam “can never be associated with terrorism.”<sup>36</sup> A well-known Turkish commentator suggested that in order for the government to succeed against terrorist organizations, however, it had to identify the target by name and to focus on it resolutely.<sup>37</sup> He implied that the AKP could not crack down on Islamist terrorists if it could not recognize their possibility.

The broad intent of the November 2003 Istanbul bombings was to kill Jews and strike at Britain, a U.S. ally and former regional colonial power. The attacks coincided with President Bush’s state visit to the United Kingdom, which may or may not have been significant. Turkey also may have been the target because of its secular identity, close ties to the West, especially the United States, membership in NATO, and perceived good relations with Israel. Moreover, it is a predominantly Muslim state led by a party with Islamic roots, which has vowed loyalty to Turkey’s secular identity and the goal of building a pro-Western democracy.

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<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, 2003; “The Media was the Target of the Attackers on the Masonic Lodge,” *NTV*, June 15, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040615000188.

<sup>34</sup> “Police Foil NATO Bomb Plot,” *Turkish Daily News*, May 4, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Pinar Aktas, “Turkey’s Erdogan: The Expression ‘Islamic Terror’ Irritates Me,” *Milliyet*, November 26, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031127000149. Erdogan again took offense at a panel discussion in Chicago on June 12, 2004, “Turkish Premier Rejects Expression ‘Islamic Terrorism,’” *Anatolia*, June 13, 2004, BBC, June 17, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Recorded Address to the Nation, *TRT2*, November 24, 2003, FBIS Document, 20031125000037.

<sup>37</sup> Sedat Ergin, “The AKP Government and Terrorism,” *Hurriyet*, November 23, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031123000117.

**Other.**

On June 24, 2004, two days before President Bush's arrival in Turkey for an official visit and the NATO summit, bombs exploded in Istanbul and Ankara, killing four and injuring more than 20. A small Marxist-Leninist group claimed responsibility and the police arrested three suspects.<sup>38</sup>

The Al Qaeda-linked Abu Hafs al Masri Brigades claimed responsibility on an Islamist website for bombing two hotels and a liquefied natural gas pumping station in Istanbul on August 9, killing two and injuring nine. The Abu Hafs statement declared that the bombings were the first in a series to in response to the Europeans' "rejection" of Osama bin Laden's offer of a truce. A previously unheard of group, the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks, which Turkish authorities suspect is linked to the PKK/KONGRA-GEL, also claimed the act.<sup>39</sup> The police are focusing on the Kurds.

## European Union Prospects<sup>40</sup>

### Accession Issues

Turkey signed an association agreement with the European Community, the precursor to the European Union (EU) in 1963, submitted an application for membership in 1987, and began a customs union with the EU in 1996. Turkey wants the EU summit in December 2004 to set a date for accession (membership) talks. The EU reaffirmed Turkey's candidacy for membership in 1999, but Turkey must meet the EU's political and economic criteria for membership before accession talks can begin.<sup>41</sup> The Turkish parliament has passed nine packages of reforms since October 2001 — five since the AKP took office — to harmonize Turkish laws and Constitution with EU standards.<sup>42</sup> Among other actions, new laws legalize Kurdish broadcasting and education, abolish the death penalty, enhance freedoms of speech and association, and hasten investigations of allegations of torture and mistreatment of prisoners.

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<sup>38</sup> Bob Deans, "4 Killed in Turkey Ahead of Summit," *Austin American Statesman*, June 25, 2004.

<sup>39</sup> "Terrorist Organization Claims Responsibility for Explosions in Istanbul," *TRT2*, August 10, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040810000161; "Police Said Suspecting Militants Linked to PKK's Karayilan," *NTV*, August 11 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040811000237.

<sup>40</sup> For general background, see Birol A. Yesilada, "Turkey's Candidacy for EU Membership," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, no. 1, winter 2002, pp. 94-111.

<sup>41</sup> The Copenhagen criteria for EU membership include stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.

<sup>42</sup> See also Soner Capatay, "European Union Reforms Diminish the Role of the Turkish Military: Ankara Knocking at Brussels' Door," *Policywatch #781*, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 12, 2003.

A legislative package passed on August 8, 2003 was aimed at answering EU criticism of the lack of adequate civilian control over the military by introducing revolutionary changes in civilian-military relations. It limited the power of the National Security Council (MGK), the influential, military-dominated civilian-military government body which traditionally has made binding security and foreign policy recommendations to the government. The new law downgrades the MGK to an advisory board, allows a civilian to become its secretary general (although Erdogan agreed that a soldier would hold the position until August 2004), changes the frequency of meetings from monthly to bimonthly, gives authority to follow up decisions to a civilian deputy prime minister, and subjects military expenditures to legislative oversight but not public disclosure. The MGK budget was cut 60% for FY2004. Subsequent reforms legislated in May 2004 removed military designees from the national broadcasting and higher education boards. If fully implemented, the reforms have the potential to transform Turkey's political system.

Another EU priority has been improving the treatment of Turkish Kurds, who constitute about 20% of a population of 70 million. New laws are intended to improve cultural rights. Parliament also passed a Reassociation (or Rehabilitation) Law, a limited amnesty, reducing sentences of some prisoners and pardoning others. It did not apply to PKK leaders and expired on February 8, 2004. The PKK denounced the law and demanded a total amnesty. The government was not able to convince many PKK members to take advantage of the law, and it appears to have benefitted already imprisoned members of other domestic terror groups, such as Hezbollah, IBDA-C, and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), who made more applications for amnesty than did members of the PKK. On June 9, four former Kurdish Members of Parliament, most prominently Leyla Zana, were released from prison after serving 10 years for membership in a separatist organization (the PKK), pending appeal. Their case is a cause celebre in Europe and will be retried in October. Foreign Minister Gul met the four shortly after their release.

In November 2003, the European Commission issued its annual progress report assessing Turkey's compliance with the criteria for EU membership.<sup>43</sup> While recognizing significant progress, the report noted many shortcomings in meeting political criteria and in implementing reforms. Similarly the European Council (summit of leaders) in December 2003, called for "further sustained efforts," to achieve independence of the judiciary, fuller exercise of freedoms of association, expression, and religion, alignment of civil-military relations with European practice, and improvements in the "situation in the Southeast of the country and cultural rights." Prime Minister Erdogan tasked the Foreign Minister, Justice Minister, and Interior Minister to facilitate implementation of reforms.

A preliminary Council of Europe (COE) report, issued in March 2004, saluted Turkey's progress in human rights, while noting remaining deficiencies and making recommendations on how to address them. In June, the COE dropped Turkey from a list of countries monitored for democratic shortcomings. The COE had removed

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<sup>43</sup> European Commission, *2003 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession.*, accessible at [[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report\\_2003/pdf/rr\\_tk\\_final.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_2003/pdf/rr_tk_final.pdf)].



other EU candidates from monitoring before they began accession talks. Then, on April 1, the European Parliament (EP) approved a report which praised the “strong motivation and political will” demonstrated by the AKP government in passing “revolutionary” reforms. However, the EP said that reforms could only be judged on the basis of how they are put into practice, and repeated criticisms of the role of the military in politics and deficiencies in human rights practices. The report suggested that Turkey may need a new constitution to replace the current one which “carried the seal of the authoritarian regime of 1982,” i.e., a military government.<sup>44</sup>

Erdogan has lobbied for Turkey’s EU accession extensively in Europe. He emphasizes the beneficial effects that entry into the EU of a country that successfully reconciled Islamic culture with democracy could have on the EU image in the eyes of the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims. According to him, “it would prove that the EU is not a Christian club”<sup>45</sup> and that a compromise of civilizations is preferable to a clash of civilizations.<sup>46</sup>

It is not certain if Turkey will be able to adequately address deficiencies in its implementation of reforms or to overcome the qualms of many Europeans regarding its membership by December. The predominantly Christian member states already face problems integrating Muslim immigrants, and many Europeans blame Muslims for extremism, terrorism, and anti-Semitism. Many Europeans are grappling with issues of identity, and do not believe that Turkey can be European. They disagree with the U.S. official argument that admitting Turkey might help to spread democracy and moderation to other Muslim states. Some Europeans know that if populous Turkey enters the EU, it would be more populous than France and soon be larger than Germany, with the right to demand commensurate clout in EU political bodies. This undoubtedly adds to their doubts. As a sign of the sensitivity of the issue, the European Commission has decided to formally consult all 25 member countries before issuing its next progress report in October 2004.

## Cyprus<sup>47</sup>

Although a settlement on Cyprus is not a criterion for EU membership, it is generally understood that Turkey will not be admitted to the EU unless there is a settlement. Without a settlement, Greece and (Greek) Cyprus, both EU members, probably will veto Turkey’s accession. However, Greece supports the beginning of accession talks, and the (Greek) Cypriot government has indicated that it will not veto accession talks if there is a consensus among all other members on the issue. The November 2003 EU progress report declared, “The absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey’s EU aspirations.” European Commission

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<sup>44</sup> “Turkey: Political Criteria First, Negotiations on EU Legislation Later,” accessible at the European Parliament official website [<http://www.europarl.eu.int>].

<sup>45</sup> Interview by Mustafa Karaalioglu, *Yeni Safak*, October 6, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20021006000123.

<sup>46</sup> Speech at Harvard University, January 31, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> For more detail, see CRS Issue Brief IB89140, *Cyprus: Status of U.N. Negotiations*, updated regularly.

President Romano Prodi observed during his visit to Turkey in January 2004 that while Cyprus is not a precondition to Turkey's entry, "it is a political reality."<sup>48</sup>

Cyprus has been divided between Greek and Turkish Cypriots since a 1974 Turkish invasion/intervention (some Turks prefer "peace operation"). Turkish Cypriots administer the northern part of the island; Greek Cypriots govern the southern part of the island and are the internationally recognized government of Cyprus. The United Nations has made repeated efforts to reunify the island. In November 2002, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan presented a new settlement plan and subsequently revised it several times based on comments from the parties. Prime Minister Erdogan accepted the Annan Plan as the basis for further negotiations. Under pressure due to his EU aspirations, Erdogan repeatedly asserted that the continuation of no solution on Cyprus is not a solution, in contrast to former Turkish leaders who had argued that the issue had been settled in 1974. His government was able to make a joint reassessment of policy with the Turkish Cypriots after December 14, 2003, parliamentary elections in northern Cyprus brought pro-settlement forces to power.

Erdogan first secured the support of the National Security Council for a new initiative. On January 23, 2004, the Council reiterated "its political determination to rapidly reach a solution through negotiations in line with the realities on the island with the Annan Plan as a reference."<sup>49</sup> On January 24, Erdogan informed Annan that Turkey was ready to resume negotiations with his plan as a reference, with the goal of reaching an agreement and holding referenda to approve it before May 1 (when Cyprus was scheduled to join the EU). Erdogan boldly said that if the two sides cannot fill in all the "blanks," then Turkey would allow Annan to fill them in if the Greek Cypriots accept that as well.

Talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders on a Cyprus settlement resumed in mid-February. Predictably due to their hard line views, (Greek) Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash failed to agree on revising Annan's plan. Denktash then bowed out of the talks, and Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Talat, who favors a settlement, negotiated for the Turkish Cypriots. The Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers joined the Cypriots in consultations with the U.N. in Switzerland. On March 29, Annan presented a revised plan. Turkey accepted it. The Plan was put to referenda on the island on April 24. The Greek Cypriots decisively rejected it with 76% of the vote, while the Turkish Cypriots clearly accepted it with 65% of their votes. Notwithstanding the outcome, Cyprus entered the EU on May 1, as previously scheduled. The Turkish government escaped blame for the failure, which shifted to the Greek Cypriot leadership. Many in the EU no longer view a Cyprus settlement as a precondition for commencing accession negotiations with Turkey. Other issues have greater bearing on their determination.

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<sup>48</sup> Speech to Turkish Grand National Assembly, January 16, 2004.

<sup>49</sup> "MGK Notes Need to Begin Initiatives to Revive Cyprus Negotiation Process, *TRT2*, January 23, 2003, FBIS Document GMP10040123000189.

## Iraq

### After the March 1, 2003 Vote

The Turkish parliament's refusal on March 1, 2003, to authorize the deployment of U.S. forces to Turkey for the purpose of opening a northern front against Iraq jolted the settled U.S. view of Turkey as a malleable strategic partner.<sup>50</sup> Although widely popular in Turkey as a statement of national independence and sign of democratic progress, the vote shook the AKP government which scrambled to repair the damage to the bilateral relationship.

The vote against the U.S. deployment has been attributed to many causes, including alleged U.S. arrogance in deploying ships to Turkish waters before the vote and insulting U.S. media portraits of Turkish officials as bazaar merchants bargaining for a higher price. Turkish officials also had earlier voiced many concerns about a possible war in Iraq: economic costs, a likely refugee influx, the demonstration effect of a possible independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq for Turkish Kurdish separatists, possible Kurdish control over oil resources that could support independence, and harm to Turkey's ethnic kin, the Iraqi Turkomen.

Many of Turkey's fears about an Iraq war were not realized. Economic costs were minor and transitory. Bilateral trade between Turkey and Iraq is on course to reach pre-war levels. The United States is purchasing humanitarian and military supplies from Turkish sources, and contracting with Turkish truckers to deliver them. Turkey's tourism and export sectors experienced temporary losses, but recovered quickly, and the IMF program was not derailed. There was no refugee crisis. Iraqi Kurds claim to have deferred their dream of independence in favor of participating in a federal Iraqi state. They did not take over oil facilities in the north, and are bargaining with other members of the Iraqi government over autonomy, revenue-sharing, and other issues. Kurdish-Turkomen tensions have not been uncontrollable.

After the war began, U.S. officials cautioned Turkey against sending more forces into northern Iraq, where about 5,000 Turkish troops have been posted for some time to act against PKK remnants and safe havens.<sup>51</sup> Since then, there have been problems between the U.S. and Turkish militaries. On April 22, 2003, U.S. troops arrested Turkish soldiers dressed in civilian clothes who reportedly were escorting a cargo of weapons hidden in an aid convoy.<sup>52</sup> Then, on July 4, 2003, U.S.

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<sup>50</sup> For details, see CRS Report RL31794, *Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues*.

<sup>51</sup> In November 2003, Chief of Staff General Ozkok said that there were only 1,500 Turkish troops left in northern Iraq. Interview by Mehmet Ali Kislali, *Radikal*, November 9, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031109000159.

<sup>52</sup> The attempted Turkish weapons shipment in was confirmed by Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in a pre-interview conversation with Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand, on May 6, 2003, disclosed by Birand to *Radikal*, May 16, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030520000052. See also, Jean-Christophe Peuch, "U.S./Turkish Relations Still (continued...)"

troops captured 11 Turkish special forces soldiers and others at a Turkish liaison office in Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq, covered their heads with sacks, and took them to Baghdad, where they were held for more than two days. U.S. spokesmen claimed that the action was prompted by reports that the Turks had been planning to assassinate the Kurdish governor of Kirkuk and to weaken the Kurds in the north through support of the Turkomen.<sup>53</sup>

The incident provoked such outrage in Turkey that the personal involvement of Prime Minister Erdogan and Vice President Cheney was needed to dampen it. After a joint military investigation, both sides officially expressed regret that the incident had occurred.<sup>54</sup> To mollify the Turks, U.S. officials reportedly agreed to force PKK guerrillas out of northern Iraq.<sup>55</sup> With their departure, Turkish forces were expected to leave northern Iraq. This U.S. promise has been repeated often, but not fulfilled. So Turkish troops remain in the north. Bilateral military ties still have not recovered from Sulaymaniyah.

## Turkish Peacekeepers

At the request of the United States, the Turkish government considered sending peacekeeping troops to Iraq. To convince a skeptical public, Foreign Minister Gul emphasized the peacekeeping, humanitarian, and developmental aspects of the mission. Chief of Staff General Ozkok supported the undertaking, noting, “possible instability in Iraq would be bad for Turkey.”<sup>56</sup> U.S.-Turkish negotiations about peacekeeping involved the command, location, and supply routes for Turkish troops, but the PKK presence in northern Iraq sometimes seemed to be the main subject of the talks. U.S. officials repeated their commitment to deal with the PKK. Meanwhile, a poll in August 2003 indicated that 65% of the Turkish public opposed

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<sup>52</sup> (...continued)

Rocked by Mutual Distrust Despite Attempts to Mend Fences,” *RFE/RL*, July 17, 2003.

<sup>53</sup> Some reports suggested that neither the Ankara government nor the Turkish high command had prior knowledge of the “rogue” operation. Henri Barkey, “Turkey: A New Basis for an Old Friendship,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 2003. Some Turkish commentators charged that U.S. allegations about Turkish activity in Sulaymaniyah were false. For example, Fikret Bila, “The Special Policy Document and Rumsfeld,” *Milliyet*, July 20, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030720000172. Others seemed to find them credible. For example, Soli Ozel, “Time to Ponder,” *Sabah*, July 10, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030711000126.

<sup>54</sup> “Statement issued by Turkish General Staff on the Final Declaration of the Joint Turkish-US Investigation Committee,” *NTV*, July 15, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030715000046.

<sup>55</sup> Leyla Boulton and Judy Dempsey, “EU Lauds Turkey’s Military Reforms,” *Financial Times*, July 31, 2003, and Hakan Atis, “Report on PKK Activities in N. Iraq Given to US Government,” *Turkiye’de Aksam*, July 31, 2003, FBIS document GMP20030731000060. For more on the Reassociation Law, an EU-related reform, see **European Union Prospects**, above.

<sup>56</sup> “Washington Should Assess Gen. Buyukanit’s Messages Carefully,” from Direction column in *Milliyet*, August 11, 2003, FBIS Document GMP 20030811000099, and “Turkish Commander says Decision on Troops for Iraq during US General’s Visit,” *TRT2*, August 30, 2003, BBC, August 31, 2003.

sending troops to Iraq.<sup>57</sup> The August 19, 2003, bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad aided opponents of a Turkish deployment.

U.S. officials did not press for a rapid decision by Ankara as openly as they had before March 1, but Secretary of State Powell and Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz lobbied the Turks.<sup>58</sup> The Americans reportedly wanted the presence of Muslim peacekeepers to diffuse charges that the United States is waging a war against Islam. Moreover, they viewed the addition of up to 10,000 Turkish troops as a way to relieve U.S. forces.

On October 7, the Turkish parliament approved a government motion to dispatch an unspecified number of troops to Iraq for one year by a vote of 358 to 183. The opposition CHP voted as a block against the measure. The motion conveyed several messages: it stressed that Turkey would take “all necessary measures to clear out PKK-KADEK elements in Iraq and prevent Iraq’s becoming an asylum for terrorists in the future;” it stated that “protection of Iraqi territorial integrity and its national unity and establishment of a new democratic Iraq ... carry vital importance for Turkey;” and it said that in addition to its security and stability missions, the Turkish army would “improve humanitarian aid and the economic structure.”<sup>59</sup>

Neither the U.S. nor the Turkish government accurately assessed Iraqi opposition to a Turkish military presence in Iraq.<sup>60</sup> The Iraqi Kurds’ antagonism was strongest as they feared that Ankara intended to use the troops to undermine their autonomy. The Kurds argued that forces from neighboring countries would bring their own political agenda which could have a destabilizing effect.<sup>61</sup> The Shi’a also resisted, claiming that the Turkish soldiers would be occupiers, after all the Turks as the Ottoman Empire had controlled the territory that is now Iraq for 400 years, or disparaging Turks because they are Sunni. Many Iraqis reiterated oft-voiced fears that Turkey seeks to control the oil-rich areas of Mosul and Kirkuk. The Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) reached a consensus on a statement opposing Turkish troops, but U.S. authorities were said to have prevented its release.<sup>62</sup>

As opposition grew in Iraq, it did the same in Turkey. Analysts wrote that Iraq was dangerous, and that Turkish casualties should not replace Americans. They

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<sup>57</sup> “Nearly Half of Turkish Ruling Party Supporters against Troops for Iraq,” BBC, September 11, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> “U.S. Envoy Rules Out Linkage Between \$8.5 Billion Loan, Troops for Iraq,” *NTV*, August 28, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030828000035.

<sup>59</sup> “Turkey’s Parliament Adopts Motion on Dispatch of Soldiers to Iraq,” *Anatolia*, October 7, 2004.

<sup>60</sup> Valentinas Mite, “Iraq: Many Iraqis Oppose Deployment of Turkish Troops,” *RFE/RL*, October 17, 2003.

<sup>61</sup> Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, a Kurd, made this argument pointedly. “Gul: Turkey to Choose its own Sector in Iraq among US Proposals,” *Turkish Daily News*, September 8, 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Sabah Jerges, “Iraqi Council Opposed to Turkish Troops,” *Associated Press*, October 7, 2003.

claimed that the U.S. would not give Turkey a role in determining Iraq's future, and doubted that thinly stretched U.S. forces in Iraq would keep promises to act against the PKK.<sup>63</sup> Turkish officials publicly sought to discount IGC views, but they were said to be discouraged by the IGC's attitude and by the lack of U.S. influence over the Council on the issue. Although U.S. officials in Washington had encouraged Turkey, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator Paul Bremer suggested that Turkey should discuss its deployment with the IGC. Turkey maintained that its interlocutor was the United States.

Events unfolded rapidly. On October 14, a suicide bombing at the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad wounded about 15. On October 16, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 authorized a "multinational force under unified command," answering questions about the international legitimacy of a possible Turkish troop deployment.<sup>64</sup> By the end of October, however, Prime Minister Erdogan told his parliamentary group, "we are in favor of abandoning the dispatch of troops into Iraq under the prevailing circumstances."<sup>65</sup> Turkish officials openly criticized the United States. Foreign Minister Gul observed, "there is a question of incompetence here. At first, they were very eager and did not want the matter to be delayed, but now they have their doubts. We, for our part, do not do business when there are doubts."<sup>66</sup>

The decision not to deploy was announced in Ankara. On November 6, Foreign Minister Gul telephoned Secretary of State Powell to "review the issue of Turkey contributing units to Iraq in light of the circumstances prevailing currently in Iraq" and said that his government would reconsider the proposal to send troops to Iraq.<sup>67</sup> Turks generally felt that the United States had treated them shabbily.

## After the Peacekeeping Issue

Although the peacekeeping issue ended awkwardly, the AKP was spared the sight of and responsibility for body bags returning from Iraq. Since the deployment was unpopular, the party also escaped a resulting loss of popularity.

The Turkish government has since worked to normalize relations with the Iraqi government by hosting its leaders, expediting aid shipments, and boosting trade. At the Madrid donors' conference in October 2003, Turkey pledged \$50 million in aid for Iraq over five years. Turkey provides electricity, water, and fuel to Iraq. Nearly 1,000 Turkish businessmen are working in Iraq, and Turkey expects to export over \$1.6 billion in goods to Iraq in 2004. However, this goal may be threatened by terrorists who have kidnaped and murdered Turkish truck drivers in Iraq, demanding

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<sup>63</sup> See Ferruh Demirmen, "Sending Turkish Troops to Iraq Ill-conceived," *Turkish Daily News*, October 15, 2003.

<sup>64</sup> Accessible via U.N. website at [<http://www.un.org>].

<sup>65</sup> Ercan Yavuz, "Turkey is Considering the Shelving of the Bill on Troop Dispatch into Iraq," *Turkiye'de Aksam*, FBIS Document GMP20031031000037.

<sup>66</sup> "USA Must Solve Problems before Turkish Troops go to Iraq - Minister," *NTV*, October 28, 2003, BBC.

<sup>67</sup> Statement of Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman, November 6, 2003.

that Turks demonstrate against the United States and stop doing business with U.S. forces. In reaction, the Turkish trucking association called on its members to stop all deliveries to U.S. forces in Iraq. The Turkish government is determined to continue to trade with Iraq and says that it is taking measures to minimize risks.

Ankara granted a major concession to Washington when it approved (without recourse to parliament) a November 28, 2003, U.S. EUCOM request to use Incirlik Air Base for the rotation (transit) of tens of thousands of troops from Iraq between January and April 2004. Half of all U.S. troops rotated traveled via Incirlik. Others traveled through other countries.

There still has been no U.S. military action against the PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL in northern Iraq. On April 29, 2004, U.S. Counterterrorism Coordinator Cofer Black amended earlier U.S. promises when he stated, "The most efficient and effective way to address this is using elements of diplomacy, to get the community of nations to assist us in this, to use law enforcement, to use financial means.... And if we are unable to reach out objective using this spectrum of elements of statecraft, we will use military force when is appropriate."<sup>68</sup> On June 18, U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Eric Adelman said that he did not expect a U.S. military operation against the PKK in the near future.<sup>69</sup> On July 9, Deputy Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug observed, "It is clear that the United States has so far failed to ... live up to expectations."<sup>70</sup> He declared that Turkish troops would not withdraw from northern Iraq until the PKK is eradicated.

## The Future

During their meeting at the White House on January 28, 2004, President Bush assured Prime Minister Erdogan, "The United States' ambition is for a peaceful country, a democratic Iraq that is territorially intact,"<sup>71</sup> but the two leaders reportedly did not discuss Iraq's governmental structure, Kirkuk, its oil revenues, or the Turkomen.<sup>72</sup> Hence, the Turks were not fully reassured about the future of Iraq and how the Administration will handle the Iraqi Kurds, and were troubled when the draft Iraqi constitution's failed to give Turkomen equal status to Arabs and Kurds and

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<sup>68</sup> Statement during press conference held to "roll-out" *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*, available at [<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rm/2004/31973.htm>].

<sup>69</sup> "U.S. Envoy Rules Out More Bases in Turkey, No Action Planned Against Kurdish Rebels," *Anatolia*, June 18, 2004, BBC.

<sup>70</sup> "General Staff Second in Command Briefs Press on Terrorism, US Relations," *Anatolia*, July 9, 2004, FBIS Document GMP200407090000115.

<sup>71</sup> Report on CNN.com, January 28, 2004.

<sup>72</sup> Sedat Ergin, "What Came out of the Oval Office, What did Not," *Hurriyet*, January 29, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040129000035; also Steven R. Weisman, "Turkey, Seeking U.S. Pledge on the Kurds' Role in the New Iraq, Finds Mixed Message," *New York Times*, January 30, 2004.

granted the Kurds a favorable position in the government.<sup>73</sup> Despite its concerns, Ankara supported the U.S. transfer of political sovereignty to Iraqis on June 28 and welcomed NATO's decision to train Iraq's security forces.

Turkish officials state that the people of Iraq will decide on their form of government, but the Turks openly oppose a federation based on ethnic or religious identity — “structures that may lead to divisions and breakups in the future.”<sup>74</sup> Ambassador Osman Koruturk, Turkey's special representative to Iraq, said that Turkey would not oppose status granted to the Kurds in an Iraqi constitution adopted in a future referendum provided that it respects Iraq's territorial integrity. He also conveyed Turkey's “serious sensitivities” regarding Kirkuk.<sup>75</sup> Turkish arguments are usually couched in terms of concern for the Turkomen. Foreign Minister Gul warned against what he termed “faits accomplis and at changing the demographic situation” in the city, although it is not clear what Turkey could do.<sup>76</sup> As one observed commented, the Kurds seek to enlarge the scope of “their geographic, political, and economic sovereignty in the federal structure to be established,” while Ankara seeks to limit it to minimize the harm it might cause to its national interest.<sup>77</sup> So tension persists. Ankara thus far has chosen a dialogue with Kurdish leaders and other Iraqi officials as the way to communicate its reservations and uneasiness and to achieve its preferred outcomes.

## Relations with Israel<sup>78</sup>

### The New Chill

After warming in the 1990s with defense cooperation and fast-growing trade, Turkish-Israeli relations are cooling for several reasons. The Oslo peace process had provided political cover for Turkey to improve relations with Israel in the 1990's; but that process is now all but dead. Meanwhile, the AKP government came to power seeking better relations with Arab and Muslim governments. Its attitude toward Israel was prominent in the months before the June 2004 meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a solidarity group of 57 countries and others with significant Muslim populations in Istanbul. The AKP wanted its policies to be perceived as in line with those of other Muslim countries. Those countries and a majority of Turks were upset by Israel's actions against Palestinians, its construction of the security barrier in the West Bank, and its proposed unilateral disengagement

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<sup>73</sup> See statements of Deputy Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug, *Anatolia*, March 4, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040319000064.

<sup>74</sup> “Turkey Denies Accepting Kurdish Autonomy,” *AFP*, June 21, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> “Iraq Envoy Says Barzani, Talabani Warned Against Fait Accompli in Kirkuk,” *NTV*, June 24, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040624000095.

<sup>76</sup> “Kurds Fear Kurd Uprising in Iraq,” *AFP*, June 22, 2004.

<sup>77</sup> Sedat Ergin, “Problem of Dialogue with Iraqi Kurds,” *Hurriyet*, June 22, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040622000072.

<sup>78</sup> For background, see CRS Report 98-633, *Israeli-Turkish Relations*, July 17, 1998.



from Gaza. Moreover, distancing Turkey from Israel enabled AKP leaders to reassure their political base, which was probably disappointed by the party's failure to win acceptance of head scarves in state institutions and of *imam hatip* students in universities, of their loyalty. It should be noted, however, that criticism of Israel in Turkey is not limited to Islamists. The respected former Foreign Minister Iler Turkmen, for example, has called for rethinking relations.<sup>79</sup> In a recent Turkish poll, 75% of the respondents agreed that "it is unnecessary to cooperate with Israel."<sup>80</sup>

## The Kurdish Issue

At the same time that Turks are outraged by Israel's actions, they have a common interest with neighboring Iran and Syria in opposing a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. All three fear the potential impact that such a state could have on their own Kurdish populations. Damascus had produced a change in Ankara's views of it by expelling PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, obviating Turkey's need for Israel to pressure Syria to end its support of the PKK. Meanwhile, Iran is cementing ties with Turkey by conducting operations against the PKK in regions bordering Turkey. Turkey does not view Iran and its reported plans to develop weapons of mass destruction as a threat. Bilateral trade between Turkey and both countries is growing, and high level visits have been exchanged. In January 2004, Syrian President Bashar al-Asad visited Turkey and, in July, Prime Minister Erdogan visited Iran.

The commonality Turkey has achieved with its neighbors contrasts with its increasing suspicions about Israel's intentions in northern Iraq. It has been suggested that Israel hopes for a "decentralized, weak, and non-threatening Iraq" which the Iraqi Kurds may help them achieve, while Turkey seeks a strong, predominantly Arab, central government in Baghdad to constrain Kurdish nationalism.<sup>81</sup> Media reports have added to Ankara's distrust of Israeli actions. Most notably, a recent, controversial article by Seymour Hersh in the *New Yorker* claimed that Israelis are training Kurdish militias in northern Iraq and running covert operations from there into Kurdish areas of Iran and Syria.<sup>82</sup> Turkish newspapers independently charged that Israeli Kurds are buying land from Arabs in northern Iraq with the assistance of Iraqi Kurdish groups and that the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, is present in the region. The reports describe the alleged Israeli land purchases as a threat to

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<sup>79</sup> Iler Turkmen, "Turkey and Israel," *Hurriyet*, July 13, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040713000117.

<sup>80</sup> Soli Ozel, "Poll on Foreign Policy," *Sabah*, July 18, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040718000093; also "The Turkish People do not Want Cooperation with the United States," *Milliyet*, July 26, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040726000056.

<sup>81</sup> Soner Cagaptay, "Fixing Turkish-Israeli Relations," [<http://www.haaretz.com>], July 22, 2004.

<sup>82</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, "Plan B: As June 30<sup>th</sup> Approaches, Israel Looks to the Kurds," *New Yorker*, June 28, 2004. Hersh's piece has been controversial and his sources have been questioned. The opposition newspaper *Cumhuriyet* charged that Gul was a Hersh source, although Turkish spokesmen denied it, Herb Keinson, "Olmert to Turks: Israel not Aiding Kurds," *Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2004.

Turkomen.<sup>83</sup> Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom has said that Israeli businessmen active in northern Iraq are not acting on behalf of the Israeli government, and stressed that Israel “will not do anything that could undermine Turkey’s interests in northern Iraq.”<sup>84</sup> The Israeli government specifically denied Hersh’s report. Foreign Minister Gul publicly accepted the denial. Yet, official Israeli statements are not widely believed in Turkey — 65% of the respondents in a recent poll asserted that they believe that Israel is supporting the PKK.<sup>85</sup>

## The EU Factor

Turkey may be attempting to conform its foreign policies to those of major European Union members in order to get a date for accession talks. The EU, the largest foreign donor to the Palestinian Authority, is generally critical of Israeli conduct toward the Palestinians. Turkey’s rapprochement with Syria and Iran may also appeal to Europeans concerned about instability along Turkey’s borders.

## Erdogan Lambastes Israel

Prime Minister Erdogan has taken the lead in criticizing Israel. He condemned Israel’s assassination of Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmed Yassin in March 2004; On May 20, he labeled it “practically state terrorism.” Turkish officials describe Yassin sympathetically as a “spiritual leader” and “invalid.” On May 25, Erdogan asked a visiting Israeli minister, “How is what you are doing different than what the terrorists are doing? They kill civilians, you also kill civilians.” He added that Israel’s actions do not promote peace, and renewed an oft-made offer to mediate between Israel and both the Palestinians and Syria.<sup>86</sup> On May 31, Erdogan repeated his criticism of the “assassinations,” arguing a government must uphold international law.<sup>87</sup>

One day later, Foreign Minister Gul recalled Turkey’s ambassador to Israel for consultations. Gul said, “We attach importance to our relations with Israel, but ... we are openly declaring that the policy pursued by the Israeli prime minister in the Middle East is wrong.” Erdogan subsequently denounced what he called Israel’s lack of sincerity in talking about evacuating Gaza, while continuing operations there.<sup>88</sup> In an interview with an Israeli newspaper, Erdogan repeated his accusation that Israel is “killing people without any consideration — children, women, the elderly — razing their buildings ... and there is no way to describe such actions except as ‘state

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<sup>83</sup> Zeynep Tugrul, “Israel is Buying Land in Kirkuk,” *Sabah*, June 23, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040623000158.

<sup>84</sup> Itamar Inbari, “FM Shalom Says Israel Wants Diplomatic Ties with Iraq,” *Ma’ariv*, June 30, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040630000124.

<sup>85</sup> Ozel, “Poll on Foreign Policy” and “The Turkish People do not Want Cooperation with the United States” both FBIS Documents, above.

<sup>86</sup> Yoav Stern and Aluf Benn, “Turkey: Ambassador to Israel May be Recalled to Ankara,” *Ha’aretz*, May 26, 2004.

<sup>87</sup> “Turkish Premier Accuses Israel of ‘State Terrorism,’” *NTV* May 31, 2004, BBC.

<sup>88</sup> “Turkey Does not View Israel as ‘Target’ - Premier,” *Anatolia*, June 10, 2004, BBC.

terrorism.”<sup>89</sup> Israelis were particularly offended when Erdogan later charged that “Israel is causing a rise in anti-Semitism in the world.”<sup>90</sup>

## Israel’s Reaction

The Israeli government had been circumspect in reacting to the barrage of criticism from Turkey because it values relations with its sole friend in the region. However, the Foreign Ministry responded on June 13, rejecting Erdogan’s “statements and implications.” It noted that “Israel is not fighting against stones but against the terror of suicide bombers....” It advised those wishing to promote the peace process to “display a balanced and realistic view of the situation in the area.”<sup>91</sup>

In June, the Israeli airline El Al cancelled dozens of flights to Turkey ostensibly because Turkish authorities refused requests concerning armed guards on flights and at the Istanbul airport. However, some interpreted the action as a warning to Ankara that 400,000 Israeli tourists, who spend millions of dollars on vacation in Turkey, could be withheld if relations deteriorate further.<sup>92</sup> On June 21, Foreign Minister Shalom warned that Erdogan’s remarks were liable to harm the “fabric” of Israeli-Turkish ties and that Israel would not be able to “restrain itself” over a long period of time in light of the recent developments in relations.<sup>93</sup>

## Current Situation

While levying accusations, Erdogan also noted that Turkey had “positive relations with Israel and will continue so.”<sup>94</sup> Turkey’s military, political, economic, and commercial ties with Israel continue. The recall of the ambassador was brief. Bilateral trade is about \$1.7 billion a year, and both countries want to expand it. The trade balance favors Turkey. (Neither is a major trading partner of the other.). Israel is upgrading Turkey’s weapons systems, although no new contracts have been signed since early 2003. In March 2004, Israel signed a framework agreement to buy 50 million cubic meters of water annually from Turkey for 20 years, but the Turkish government has not yet authorized Israeli companies to begin work on the project. Agreements signed for Israeli participation in the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP)<sup>95</sup> region similarly have not been implemented because, Turkish officials say, of a lack

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<sup>89</sup> “Turkey’s Erdogan says Israel Perpetrates ‘State Terrorism’ against Palestinians,” *Ha’aretz*, June 3, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040603000085.

<sup>90</sup> “Turkish Premier says Israeli Policies Increased Anti-Semitism,” *Anatolia*, June 25, 2004, BBC.

<sup>91</sup> Yo’av Stern, “Israel Slams Erdogan Claim It is Inflaming Anti-Semitism,” *Ha’aretz*, June 15, 2004.

<sup>92</sup> Amberin Zaman, “Israel-Turkey Relations Hit Turbulence,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 2004.

<sup>93</sup> At a briefing for Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, June 21, 2004, “Israeli Foreign Minister Warns Turkey,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 22, 2004.

<sup>94</sup> “Turkey Does not View Israel as ‘Target’ - Premier,” *Anatolia*, above.

<sup>95</sup> A major project of dams and agricultural development.

of financial resources. In May, a Turkish company signed an agreement to construct three natural gas power stations in Israel for \$800 million

On July 14, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Turkey to heal relations. He met with President Sezer, Foreign Minister Gul, State Minister Babacan and others, but not with Prime Minister Erdogan. The Prime Minister was on vacation — which he interrupted to lunch with visiting Syrian Prime Minister Muhammad Naji al-Itri on July 13. Gul noted that bilateral relations were in the interests of both countries and “would continue strongly,” while Olmert gave reassurances concerning Israel's interest in a unified Iraq, and maintained that “there is no official or unofficial Israeli presence there, and no attempts are being made to set up a Kurdish state. Israel is opposed to this, and its position in this respect is identical to the U.S. position.”<sup>96</sup> Gul reiterated Turkey's long standing offer to contribute to the Arab-Israeli peace process, but said that he had no plans to visit Israel. Since the AKP came to power, neither Erdogan nor Gul has visited Israel. Erdogan has not met Prime Minister Sharon, although Gul has met Foreign Minister Shalom.

## Other Issues in U.S.- Turkish Relations

### U.S. Interests in Turkey

Most analysts conclude that, despite difficulties in the relationship, Turkey is still strategically important to the United States. It remains geographically near to crisis areas in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Balkans. For over a decade, U.S. and allied planes flew out of Incirlik Air Base in southeast Turkey to enforce a no-fly zone over northern Iraq. U.S. planes have flown more than 8,000 flights out of Incirlik in support of Afghan operations. NATO is using Incirlik to support the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. And, although not using Turkish air bases, U.S. planes flew more than 4,000 flights through Turkish airspace during the Iraq war. Since the war, the United States has used Turkish ports and overland routes to resupply coalition forces in Iraq. Turkey is a source of water, gas, and other supplies for U.S. forces there. Turkey allows the use of Turkish bases, ports, and airports to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq. And, as noted above, thousands of U.S. troops are rotating from Iraq via Incirlik. On June 12, 2003, NATO defense ministers agreed to move NATO's southern air command headquarters from Naples to Izmir, affirming NATO's growing interest in the east.

Turkey's role as a transit route for energy resources from Caucasus and Central Asia is being realized with construction of the long-awaited Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and of a gas pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey, with both pipelines scheduled for completion in 2005. The oil pipeline from Iraq to Turkey is considered vital to the revival of Iraq's economy, although the segment in Iraq has been sabotaged repeatedly.

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<sup>96</sup> “Israel's Olmert Meets with Gul, Sezer, Babacan,” *Anatolia*, July 14, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040714000182, also “Olmert: No Israeli Involvement in Iraq,” Voice of Israel, July 14, 2004, FBIS Document GMP 20040714000083.

Turkey is closely cooperating with the United States in the war on terrorism. Arrests of Al Qaeda operatives have been made in Turkey as a result of close cooperation between Turkish and U.S. intelligence agencies.<sup>97</sup> After the November 2003 bombings in Istanbul, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told the Turks, “Our enemy is your enemy.... We are very much closer now, in the wake of this tragedy.”<sup>98</sup>

Turkey’s large army is among the most experienced in the world in peacekeeping. Turkish forces have served in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, East Timor, and led ISAF in Afghanistan from July 2002 to February 2003.<sup>99</sup> Turkey lost several soldiers in Afghanistan, and some of its civilian workers were kidnaped there. After its period of command, Turkey reduced its forces in Afghanistan and, as of June 15, 2004, only 161 Turkish soldiers remained there. In November 2003, respected former Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin became NATO’s Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. In May 2004, Turkey dispatched three helicopters and 56 flight and maintenance personnel to assist ISAF. Deputy Chief of Staff General Ilker Basbug said that Turkey may command ISAF again from February to August 2005.

Turkey also participates in the U.S.-initiated Southeast Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG), Black Sea Naval Group (BLACKSEAFOR), and provides NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) training for countries of the Balkans, Caucasus, and Central Asia.

Finally, Turkey is an example of a predominantly Muslim, democratic country at a time when U.S. policy is to encourage democratization in the Muslim world. In this area, Turkish officials echo the U.S. agenda, sometimes with caveats. On May 28, 2003, Foreign Minister Gul delivered a landmark speech at the Organization of the Islamic Conference foreign ministers’ meeting in Teheran. He called for the group to act with “a refreshed vision” in which good governance, transparency and accountability would reign, and fundamental rights and freedoms as well as gender equality are upheld.<sup>100</sup> In June 2004, Prime Minister Erdogan attended the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia, as a “democratic partner” for the formal launching of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview of outgoing U.S. Ambassador Robert Pearson, *Turkish Daily News*, July 22, 2003. See section on Turkey in CRS Report RL31612, *European Counterterrorist Efforts since September 11: Political Will and Diverse Responses*.

<sup>98</sup> Interview by *NTV*, November 22, 2003, BBC, November 23, 2003.

<sup>99</sup> Turkish forces served two months longer than Ankara had promised, were solely responsible for the ISAF command, and handed it over to a joint German-Dutch command, which ceded it to NATO.

<sup>100</sup> Speech made available by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press and Information Department. Although U.S. officials often argue that Turkey is a role model for countries in the Middle East, Turks are more often resented than copied in the region. They are not Arab or Persian, were imperial rulers in Ottoman times, and effectively sidelined Islam under Ataturk. For more, see Omer Taspinar, “An Uneven Fit? The ‘Turkish Model’ and the Arab World,” *U.S. Policy Toward the Islamic World, Analysis Paper #5*, Brookings Institution, August 2003 [<http://www.brook.edu/fp/saban/analysis/taspinar20030801.htm>].

Turkish officials have cautioned that reforms should be generated from within societies, not imposed, that the agenda and pace of reform must be decided by each country to suit the needs and sensitivities of its society, that it is a gradual process, and that it cannot be thought of in isolation from international problems such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iraq.<sup>101</sup> Gul has noted that reforms would not come automatically even if the Arab-Israeli conflict were solved, and urged that they be started without delay. He argued that the Islamic world must address both issues. Gul has acknowledged that Turkish reforms demonstrate that Islam and modernism can be integrated and that Turkey could not prevent itself from being used as a model.<sup>102</sup> In contrast, Turkish secularists find inappropriate the idea that Turkey should be a model for Islamic countries. President Sezer reportedly lectured President Bush at the NATO summit in June 2004 that “Turkey is a country with predominantly Muslim population, but it is not an Islamic country ... religion is separated from state affairs.”<sup>103</sup>

U.S. officials have accommodated Turkish language preferences and now refer to Turkey as an “example” or “symbol.” President Bush declared that he admired “the example” Turkey “has set on how to be a Muslim country and at the same time a country which embraces democracy and the rule of law and freedom.”<sup>104</sup>

Some observers doubt the sincerity of AKP’s commitment to democracy. They question whether behind the party’s democratic rhetoric, in the actions of its Islamist elements discussed above, and in legislation to reduce the power of the secularist military, the party has begun a process that could transform Turkey into an Islamic republic.<sup>105</sup> Such a transformation, these observers assume, would be contrary to U.S. interests.

## U.S. Image in Turkey

Opposition to the war in Iraq and U.S. actions against Turkish soldiers at Sulaymaniyah helped to form an unfavorable image of the United States in Turkey. According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted in May 2003, 83% of Turks had a somewhat or very unfavorable view of the United States, while only 15% viewed it positively. A Pew poll in February 2004 indicated improved, but still negative, perceptions of the United States: 63% of Turks with negative perceptions, compared

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<sup>101</sup> Foreign Minister Gul’s speech to a symposium on the “Islamic World in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” in Istanbul, June 12, 2004.

<sup>102</sup> Address to conference on NATO at a New Crossroads, June 26, 2004, *TRT2*, BBC.

<sup>103</sup> “Turkey not Model for Islamic States,” *Cumhuriyet*, June 28, 2004.

<sup>104</sup> TUSIAD Washington Office, *Selected News on Turkey*, June 22-28, 2004.

<sup>105</sup> Daniel Pipes, “The Islamic Republic of Turkey?” *Jerusalem Post*, August 6, 2003. For a Turk on AKP actions with possible Islamist intent, see Tufan Turenc, “Tayyip Bey is Right: The Water is Indeed Clear,” *Hurriyet*, October 17, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031017000181, or Emin Colasan, “Military Issues Warning to Imam Hatip,” *Hurriyet*, October 3, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20031015000366.

to 30% with positive ones.<sup>106</sup> The Foundation for Social, Economic, and Political Research in Turkey (TUSES) reported poll results in March 2004, which found that 52.6% of responding Turks viewed the United States as a danger to the rest of the world, while 86% viewed the U.S. military intervention in Iraq as unjustified.<sup>107</sup> Only 6% of the respondents in a Turkish Pollmark Research poll later in 2004 “desire to be close to the United States,” 60% oppose the U.S. operation in Iraq, while 42% support the resistance and attacks against U.S. forces there.<sup>108</sup> Turkish far-right nationalists and leftist secular nationalists promote antipathy toward U.S. policies.

The Turkish government does not appear to be countering these sentiments. AKP leaders did not argue that relations with the United States were so important that their repair warranted sending Turkish peacekeepers to Iraq, among reasons for a possible deployment. While Turkish visitors to the United States and op-ed articles by Turkish officials in U.S. newspapers inform American audiences of the importance of the bilateral relationship, a survey of the Turkish press indicates that the same messages are not delivered at home. In fact, Foreign Minister Gul thanked those who had demonstrated against President Bush during the NATO summit in June 2004 for helping to secure the release of three Turkish hostages in Iraq, thereby fulfilling a demand of abductors.<sup>109</sup> The absence of an AKP government response to anti-Americanism at home has led some to suggest that Washington should question its sincerity.<sup>110</sup>

## Trade

U.S.-Turkish trade relations have not developed as planned since 2002. A U.S. initiative to create qualifying industrial zones (QIZs) in Turkey as an extension of the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement has not been achieved.<sup>111</sup> Goods in the zones were to be eligible for tariff-free and quota-free status. Legislation proposed in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress would have excluded Turkish textiles and apparel products from the QIZ program, making 49% of Turkey’s exports ineligible for the enhanced treatment. Turks were disappointed that the Administration was unwilling to challenge champions of U.S. textile manufacturing and demanded the inclusion of textiles in the QIZs. Administration officials repeatedly reminded their Turkish counterparts that global textile quotas are to be eliminated in January 2005. In April 2004, Turkish State Minister Kursad Tuzmen signaled a change in Turkey’s view of QIZs

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<sup>106</sup> The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, “A Year After Iraq: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists,” released March 16, 2004 (also summarizes findings of earlier polls), accessible at [<http://people-press.org>].

<sup>107</sup> “AKP Leads by Wide Margin,” *Radikal*, March 2, 2004, FBIS Document GMP20040302000087.

<sup>108</sup> Ozel, above, and *Milliyet*, July 26, 2004, above.

<sup>109</sup> Maura Reynolds, “Bush Urges Reform in Mideast,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 2004.

<sup>110</sup> Yasemin Congar, “The Mending has Begun,” *Milliyet*, June 24, 2003, FBIS Document GMP20030624000026.

<sup>111</sup> For background, see CRS Report RS21458, *Turkey: Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) - Issues and Economic Implications*, March 12, 2003.

accepting that they might be limited to high-tech products and thereby recognizing that insistence on textiles was impeding development of the QIZs.<sup>112</sup>

A U.S.-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission under the co-chairmanship of the U.S. Undersecretary of State for Economic, Business, and Commercial Affairs and the Turkish Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry has met twice. The U.S. team includes representatives from Treasury, Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative, Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Trade and Development Agency. Trade is one subject discussed by the commission.

## Recent Assistance

After the September 11, 2001, attacks, Turkey received \$20 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) from the Emergency Response Fund set up by P.L. 107-38, September 18, 2001. On March 19, 2002, Vice President Cheney said that the Administration would provide Turkey with \$200 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) to help address the financial difficulties caused by Turkey's ongoing economic crises "that seriously affect Turkey's ability to contribute to current and future U.S. government policy objectives" and \$28 million in FMF to help defray the costs of assuming leadership of the ISAF in Afghanistan.<sup>113</sup> The funds were provided in the FY2002 supplemental appropriations approved in P.L. 107-206, August 2, 2002.

For FY2003, the Administration requested \$17.5 million in FMF and \$2.8 million in International Military Education and Training Funds (IMET), which were appropriated in P.L. 108-7, February 20, 2003. As part of the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-011, April 16, 2003, Turkey was to receive \$1 billion in ESF to support not more than \$8.5 billion in direct loans or loan guarantees. The Conference Report, H.Rept.108-76, April 12, 2003, provided that the \$1 billion remain available until September 30, 2005. However, the funds may not be made available if the Secretary of State determines and reports that Turkey is not cooperating with the United States in Operation Iraqi Freedom, including the facilitation of humanitarian assistance to Iraq, or has unilaterally deployed troops into northern Iraq. The President will determine the terms and conditions for issuing the assistance, and should take into consideration budgetary and economic reforms undertaken by Turkey. Under the terms of a loan agreement signed by the United States and Turkey on September 22, 2003, the loan will mature in 10 years and have a four-year grace period for repayment. Funds may be disbursed in four equal installments over 18 months; none have been disbursed so far. Minister of State Babacan has said that they are not needed, while Prime Minister Erdogan suggests that "the political condition" that Congress attached to the loan is the reason that the funds have not been drawn down.

For FY2004, the Administration requested \$50 million in FMF and \$200 million in ESF. There were no economic or military assistance earmarks for Turkey in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-199, January 23, 2004, and, in FY2004,

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<sup>112</sup> Speech at the Annual Conference of the American-Turkish Council, April 5, 2004.

<sup>113</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, FY2002 *Supplemental Appropriations Financial Plan*.



Turkey will receive an estimated \$40 million in FMF, \$99,410,000 in ESF, and \$5 million in IMET.<sup>114</sup>

For FY2005, the Administration has requested \$50 million in ESF, \$34 million in FMF, and \$4 million in IMET. H.Rept. 108-599, July 13, 2004, for H.R. 4818, the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY2005, passed on July 15, calls for a \$50 million reduction in assistance for Turkey, noting that \$1 billion appropriated in P.L. 108-011 remains unexpended. H.R. 4818, Sec. 578 would prohibit use of funds made available to Turkey to lobby against H.Res. 193, which would reaffirm support for the Genocide Convention (and mention the Armenian genocide). State Department spokesman Richard Boucher has said that the Administration opposes the measure. House leaders have observed that the provision is not needed because law already prohibits use of U.S. aid for lobbying and said that they will insist that conferees drop it. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, Majority Leader Tom DeLay, and Majority Whip Roy Blunt issued a statement declaring, "Turkey has been a reliable ally of the United States for decades, and the deep foundation upon which our mutual economic and security relationship rests should not be disrupted by this amendment."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Along with other non-earmarked countries, ESF for Turkey was reduced sharply from the original Administration request because over 70% of the ESF account was earmarked at or above requested levels for countries of special interest, mainly in the Middle East.

<sup>115</sup> Harry Dunphy, "Bush Administration Opposes House Measure on Turkey," *AP Worldstream*, July 16, 2004.