

TURKISH FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY:
ITS ENVIRONS IN EURASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

*Spain – Turkey Joint Strategic Meeting
Ankara, September 2005*

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TURKISH FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY:
Its environs in Eurasia and the Middle East

Antonio Marquina and Mustafa Aydin, editors

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ISBN: 84-95838-12-5
Depósito Legal: M-51162-2006

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Introduction

Antonio Marquina, Director of UNISCI, Madrid

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The book contains the revised papers presented at the First Spanish-Turkish Strategy Seminar that was held on 29-30 September 2005 in Ankara. It is the result of the collaboration between the research group of UNISCI and professors from several universities in Turkey, especially invited to this event by Professor Mustafa Aydin. The aim of this joint discussion was to clarify and understand the changes in Turkey's foreign and security policy because of the fast changing scenario around that country as a result of Iraq War, the emerging situation in Iran and the changes that are taking place in the Caucasus. Moreover, the meeting tried to assess the role of one of the most meaningful issues for the European Union, energy, for Turkey, as well as Turkey's role in the East-West corridor from the Caspian, Iran and Iraq. It was also important to discuss and understand the diverse approaches that AKP government has brought into Turkish foreign policy making.

In this context, the book presents first of all a Spanish perspective by Professor Antonio Marquina in explaining how the changes in Turkey's foreign and security policy have been perceived in Europe, and specifically in Spain, since the AKP took office in November 2002. The change in the attitudes and approaches of the foreign policy, especially a greater engagement to the Middle East, the search for alternative sources of security as a result of increasing disillusion with NATO, the US (which has also created almost insurmountable problems for Turkish national security) and the EU (which shows important divisions on Turkey's full integration) explain the now noticeable changes in the traditional Turkish foreign and security policies. This, linked with the rise of political Islam in the Middle East and Turkey, might indicate increasing tensions among the NATO

allies, and a possible cooling of the Turkish people and government towards the EU. Thus Turkey looks for alternatives. Another paper by Professor Nur Bilge Criss, presents the context of the AKP government's foreign and security policy making. The chapter tries to clarify how Turkish foreign and security policies have been carried out differently from previous administrations, in spite of the continuity in the general agenda. Several cases show the difficulties of the Prime and Foreign Ministers' rather personal approaches. However, at the same time Turkey is facing systemic changes that have important regional repercussions, including the EU decision to begin accession talks on 3 October 2005. The privileged partnership with the US does not prevent the development of an important rapprochement with Russia, an autonomous policy in the Black Sea and other collaborations with neighbouring states. The prospect of EU membership has also been an important factor for change. Nonetheless, internal and external adaptation processes imply transformations in traditional foreign and security policies, as well as in domestic policies and politics.

The following paper by Professor Mustafa Aydın presents a reflection on the changes in Turkish-US relations, explaining the increasing differences and divergences that have arisen in the bilateral agenda; and how American unilateralism has been a problematic issue, preventing an improvement in mutual relations, which are clearly multidimensional. The next two chapters, one by Professor Meliha Benli Altunisik and another one by Colonel (Ret.) José Antonio Sáinz de la Peña, explain Iran's regional approach and context, as well as the evolution of the relationship between Turkey, Iran and Syria in the last few years, from different perspectives. The most problematic aspects in bilateral relations, conflictive relationships and the development of cooperation areas between these states are analyzed. Iran's regional approach and context is explained, especially taking into account the US military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. This makes it possible to understand different moves by Iranian diplomacy in the past few years: cooperation agreements, the search for a regional security system -excluding foreign powers-, the search for the withdrawal of US forces, maintaining a "controlled chaos" in Iraq and using its influence in the Middle East to put pressure when needed. The next two chapters study the Caucasian developments from different perspectives. Dr

Hasan Ali Karasar and Professor Alberto Priego present complementary approaches with regard to Turkish policies towards the Caucasus and Central Asia. There were important failures and a lack of capability in the Turkish approaches and policies in the last thirteen years. But there have also been some important successes achieved by the Turkish presence in the region. The assessment is clear: most of the failures had economic causes and the lack of sufficient funds for projects. At the same time, the lack of interest by the regional countries towards increased regional integration projects has presented problems both for Turkey and other countries that approached the region with different multilateral cooperation schemes. The chapter by Professor Priego explains in detail the complex and long-term security problems existing in the Caucasus, which could affect Turkey's relationship with this geographic space. The different types of problems presented require different policies, and there are noteworthy difficulties for cooperation.

Four chapters deal with a difficult neighbour: Iraq. Professor Xira Ruiz studies a fundamental question for the stabilization of Iraq, the security situation. Professor S. Gülden Ayman covers the Turkish perception regarding the war in Iraq and the Middle East in general. Finally, Professor Gracia Abad writes on the role of the UN, NATO and the EU in the stabilization of Iraq. Professor Carlos Echeverría presents some perspectives on the consequences of the electoral processes that have been held in 2005. The results of the December 2005 elections confirm the return to ethnic and religious identifications in Iraq. He presents several possible scenarios that the internal political situation permits one to forecast: a pessimistic scenario of progressive fragmentation and disintegration of the country, and a more optimistic scenario of holding together, even in a hard political and security environment. The political actors and their compromises are fundamental in order to decide for one scenario or the other. The central power is weak, and centrifugal forces -fed by insurgency and terrorist tactics- are increasingly powerful. In this regard, the chapter by Professor Ruiz is complementary: the security situation has deteriorated, potentially affecting neighbouring countries. Insurgency and terrorism have not yet been contained successfully yet, neither by the Iraqi government nor by the US. Sectarian violence, together with the lack of efficiency of the Iraqi army, and the sectarianism of the police forces, has created a political

situation that is very difficult to secure and manage. A political agreement between the main ethnic and religious groups is needed in order to prevent the fragmentation of the state and a possible civil war. However, such development is not on the horizon yet. In this scenario, the implications for the neighbours, including Turkey, would be of vital importance.

Professor Abad explains the limited role of the UN, NATO and the EU in the stabilization of Iraq. Their contributions have been limited by the initial US approach and policies. A greater involvement of these organizations is also limited by the weakness of the Arab League's role in the stabilization of Iraq. More control by the Iraqi government and an improvement in the security situation would make a higher level of implication of these organizations more likely.

The last two chapters by Necdet Pamir and Professor Javier Morales, deal with the European need to diversify its energy supplies and the role of Turkey in developing new energy transport routes. Projected and existing oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian and the Middle East to European markets converge in Turkey, offering an alternative to the environmental risks associated to transport by tankers through the Turkish Straits (Bosporus and Dardanelles), and perhaps more importantly to existing land routes controlled by Russia. This is in the interests of both the EU and Turkey, as was clearly demonstrated by the recent Ukraine-Russia crisis over natural gas prices: it not only caused an interruption in the gas supply to European countries, but also raised eyebrows in Turkey, heavily dependent on gas imports from Russia. The creation of a "South European Gas Ring" connecting the Turkish, Greek and Italian networks is especially important in this regard. On this issue, it is fundamental that Turkey's effective support of the East-West energy corridor meets with a reciprocating demand and encouragement from the EU.

Both editors wish to express their gratitude, first of all, to the UNISCI and TEPAV-EPRI teams, which helped to organize the seminar. In the case of UNISCI, the research programmes that the team is developing on the region are sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (BSO 2003-03312) and the "General Gutiérrez Mellado" Institute (1/2003).

1. Turkish Foreign and Security Policy: A Spanish Perspective

Antonio Marquina, Director of UNISCI, Madrid

Introduction

The perception from Spain of Turkish foreign and security policy is a perception of change, profound change, in one crucial country in the Eastern Mediterranean.

I can say that Turkey reflects more than any other country in NATO and the EU the tectonic changes that have occurred in NATO security since the end of the Cold War.

In the eighties and especially in the nineties, Turkey, located on the Eastern fringes of the Alliance and bordering the Middle East, was considered a pivotal country. But the post-cold war events had a particular impact in the country. Firstly I can mention the impact and the consequences of the war against Iraq for the liberation of Kuwait. To this, the limited results of the complicated policies implemented by Turkey in the new Central Asian countries, the difficult neighbourhood to be managed, and the slow progress in the accession to the EU have to be added. These are key elements for understanding the significant process of change that since the nineties have taken place in Turkish foreign and security policy.

These changes became more profound once the new Administration of President Bush started to implement a new foreign and security policy.

The following US policies can be mentioned as catalyst of change in Turkey: the devaluation of NATO as a defence alliance; the launching of the war on terror, centered on Islamist groups and cells; the new US policies regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the challenge of Iranian nuclear ambitions and the inclusion of Iran in the "axis of evil"; the increasing tension between Syria and the US; and