ETUDES HELLENIQUES

HELLENIC STUDIES

LA TURQUIE EN MUTATION
TURKEY IS CHANGING

Edited by / Sous la direction de
Vivi Kefala

With Associate Editor / Avec la collaboration de
Stephanos Constantinides

Contributors / Contributions de
Mersilia Anastasiadou
S. Gülden Ayman
Ioannis N. Grigoriadis
Vivi Kefala
Afendoulis Th. Langides
Gencer Özcan
Çiğdem Üstün
Christodoulos K. Yiallourides

CHYPRE / CYPRUS
Stephanos Constantinides
La Turquie, Chypre et la Méditerannée orientale

Poètes Chypriotes / Cypriot Poets

Nathalie Katinakis
*Lévendia, Philotimo, Kaïmos: Figures et Formes
Rebelles de la Musique Grecque*

1

Analysis of Turkey's Relations with the EU and the US in the light of 2011 Arab Revolts

Çiğdem Üstün[*]

RÉSUMÉ

Les révoltes arabes ont créé un nouvel environnement politique pour la Turquie, dans une région où elle a tout juste commencé à être un acteur plus dynamique et plus actif avec des objectifs multilatéraux. Les problèmes économiques, le chômage, l'oppression politique et la corruption ont créé des troubles sociaux chez les voisins de la Turquie, et ont mis en péril ses liens financiers et économiques établis avec ces pays. Avant ces révoltes, il y avait eu des débats sur l'orientation de la politique étrangère de la Turquie, se tournant vers l'Est tout en abandonnant son héritage historique de partenaire loyal de l'Ouest. Mais il a été observé que bien qu'il y ait eu des différences entre l'UE, les politiques américaines et turques, les méthodes et les attitudes envers les pays de la région, la Turquie a déployé des efforts pour équilibrer sa position, à la fois comme un pays de la région et comme un partenaire occidental de l'OTAN, tout en montrant une harmonisation avec la politique de voisinage de l'UE. Cet équilibre a exigé la coexistence des efforts économiques, politiques et militaires dans l'application des politiques à l'égard de la région, l'UE et les Etats-Unis. Cet article résume les héritages historiques des relations de la Turquie avec ses partenaires occidentaux et les analyse en liaison avec les soulèvements dans son voisinage proche.

ABSTRACT

Arab revolts have created a new political environment for Turkey, in a region where it has just started to be a more dynamic and active player with multilateral aims. Economic problems, unemployment, political oppression and corruption created social unrest in Turkey's neighborhood, and jeopardized its established financial and economic ties with these countries. Before these revolts, there had been debates on the orientation of Turkish foreign policy, about Turkey turning to the east while abandoning its historical legacy of being a loyal western partner. But it has been observed that although there have been differences between the EU, American and Turkish policies, methods and attitudes towards the regional countries, Turkey has put effort into balancing its position, both as a regional country and as a western partner in NATO, while showing harmonization with the EU's neighborhood policy. This balance has required economic, political and military efforts' coexistence in the application of policies towards the region, the EU and the USA. This paper summarizes the historical legacies of

* Gediz University-İzmir

Turkey's relations with its western partners and analyzes these in relation to the uprisings in its near neighborhood.

Introduction

From the 1830s until the foundation of the Turkish Republic, modernization in the country has been associated with westernization. Since the Republic was founded, after the Independence War, Turkey has been a part of western-originated international organizations, and a number of social, economic, and political reforms took place since the 1920s to enable the country to reach the level of contemporary civilization. In its foreign policy direction, Turkey emphasized its memberships in the United Nations (UN), NATO, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Especially during the Cold War, Turkey acted as the buffer zone against the communism threat and as an important partner for Western Europe and the USA. By the end of the 1980s, Turkey had applied for full membership to the European Community (EC), but the European Union (EU) did not grant Turkey candidate status until the end of the 1990s. During this period, Turkey experienced a number of ups and downs in its relations with the EU, while continuing to act as a partner of the USA after the Cold War. In the 1990s, Turkey continued to perceive the West as a combination of the EU and the USA. However, in the 2000s this perception started to change.

The EU member states' full support of the USA in the fight against terrorism came to an end when the USA began contemplating war with Iraq. It has been observed that EU member states were in disaccord in supporting the USA. Some member states, i.e. the UK and Denmark, supported the 2003 war and sent troops; other member states, i.e. France and Germany, did not accept military intervention in Iraq without a UN resolution on the issue. In addition to the United Kingdom, the Central Eastern European countries were pro-American, as future members to the Union. There was an obvious discontent between pro-Americans and pro-Europeans in the EU. All these developments brought back the old argument about Turkey's place in world affairs. Where does it see itself? As Robert Kagan puts it, Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus, where is Turkey from?[1]

The 2000s have been problematic years for both US-Turkey and EU-Turkey relations. On March 1, 2003 the Turkish Parliament voted down the Turkish government's motion to allow American troops to be deployed from Turkey

and to open a northern front into Iraq, thus creating problems in the strategic partnership. Also, Turkey was announced as a candidate country at the EU's Helsinki Summit in 1999. Since then, Turkey focused on reforms, in order to achieve the Copenhagen Criteria to open the accession negotiations. The negotiations started in 2005, after a long rocky road, but the accession of Cyprus to the EU created another problem and, in December 2006, the negotiations on 8 of 35 chapters were frozen.

In this paper, the relations between these three actors are analyzed in regards to the increasing importance of the Mediterranean and the Middle East due to the 2011 Arab revolts. The first part of the paper gives the background of the EU's Mediterranean policies and Turkey's reactions to these, followed by Turkey's perceptions on American policies in the second part. The final part of the paper explains these three actors' changing relations and perceptions due to the uprisings in the region.

Turkey-EU relations and the Mediterranean region

Turkey applied to the European Community (EC) in 1959. The application (on 31 July) was based on a wide range of political reasons, such as the application of Greece, the East-West conflict, and the political vacuum in the Eastern Mediterranean. The EC had its political and economic reasons to accept Turkey's application, as well. The Community wanted to give the impression that it was neither a closed shop nor a rich man's club, but also wanted to expand its sphere of influence through Turkey. In economic terms, cheap labor and the chance to get into the Turkish market were counted as the positive economic reasons in considering the applications.[2]

On 12 September 1963, the Ankara Agreement was signed and it came into force on December 1, 1964. This agreement envisaged the progressive establishment of a Customs' Union, which would bring the parties closer together in economic and trade matters. In the meantime, the EEC would offer financial assistance to Turkey. The process for the Customs Union was finally completed on March 6, 1995 and came into force on January 1, 1996. Meanwhile, Turkey had applied for full membership in 1987. In 1997, although the EU reconfirmed Turkey's eligibility for membership, the Commission excluded the enlargement process in its report entitled Agenda 2000. While the report conceded that the Customs Union was functioning satisfactorily and that it had demonstrated Turkey's ability to adapt to the EU and made no reference to Turkey's full membership objective. The Commission did not recommend accession negotiations with Turkey.[3] The

Turkish government responded by criticizing the EU's attitude, and stated that Turkey's goal of full membership and association would nevertheless be maintained, but that the development of bilateral relations depended on the EU's honoring its commitments and that it would not discuss with the EU issues remaining outside the contractual context of the bilateral relations as long as the EU did not change its attitude. The Helsinki European Council, in 1999, produced a breakthrough in Turkey–EU relations. At Helsinki, Turkey was recognized as a candidate country. After its candidacy was recognized, Turkey started reforms in order to open the accession negotiations. Until the accession negotiations started in 2005, priority was given to the EU reforms and the accession process. In this period the Iraq War began, and anti-American attitudes in Turkey increased. The March 1, 2003 decision against deploying US forces helped to move Turkey closer to the position of the Franco-German alliance that naturally constituted the dominant force within the EU bloc.[4]

However, the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004 has been a crucial obstacle in the relations between the EU and Turkey. The Mediterranean has been an important topic in Turkish foreign policy and Cyprus had a considerable weight in this policy. Turkey felt betrayed, since the Turkish government took risks in convincing the Turkish Cypriots to accept the Annan Plan. In the referendum process, both the American and EU partners of Turkey repeatedly emphasized that there would be negative consequences for any side that rejected the plan and rewards for those who supported it[5], but the Greek Cypriots became EU citizens and Turkish Cypriots were left out. Therefore, after 2004 there has been a clear negative attitude towards the EU due to the delay in admitting Turkey to the Union. Turkey's conviction that the EU is stalling membership, together with the feeling of betrayal, created an angry nationalism directed at the west in general.[6]

The EU's attitude towards Turkey and the region focused on moral values rather than strategic interests and, thus, issues such as human rights, freedoms and protection of minorities, and the role of the military in politics have been manifested in negotiations.[7] The EU has emphasized the importance of the democratic rule of law in the region since the middle of the 1990s, via the Barcelona Process, and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since 2004. [8] The issues that the EU focuses on are universal suffrage; free elections; multiparty structures; participatory decision-making; human rights; freedom of speech, assembly and religion; and an independent and effective judiciary[9] in the region's democratization process. In addition to the ENP, the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), as a much smaller

policy area than the ENP, aims to foster the democratic rule of law and respect for human rights, mainly by dealing with civil society organizations.[10]

The EU's interest in the region was first revealed through Euro-Arab Dialogue after the OPEC oil embargo in 1973. The EU drew attention to both bilateral and multilateral relations, with an aim to strengthen its ties with the region, but Euro-Arab relations did not precede any further due to mistrust caused by the legacy of European colonialism in the region.[11] The EuroMed partnership (a.k.a the Barcelona Process), initiated in 1995, has been perceived with suspicion as well, since it is seen as a containment policy by the EU to keep immigration originating from the region at a minimum level. The partnership foresaw political, economic and social cooperation and creation of a Free Trade Area (FTA) by 2010. However, the FTA goal could not yet be realized.

Since 1995, the EU's Mediterranean policies have evolved, and in 2004, the Barcelona Process became a part of the ENP which covers the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Eastern neighbors, and in 2008, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was launched, foreseeing the League of Arab States' participation in the meetings; co-presidency system to be applied; co-ownership to be provided; and south-south multilateral relations to be supported. During the establishment of the UfM, Turkey had its criticisms over the original Mediterranean Union idea of French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. The Union for the Mediterranean was perceived as a substitute for Turkey's EU membership, and Ankara objected to the creation of this kind of a Union. Certain EU member states i.e. Germany also objected, on the grounds that it would damage the Barcelona Process and the ENP, into which the EU had put much economic and political effort. After negotiations, the Mediterranean Union idea became a part of the ENP of the EU and Turkey agreed to participate. But these efforts of Sarkozy created a negative attitude towards the EU, both in Turkey and in the region. The Turkish public's support for Turkey's membership to the EU has fallen from 75% to 50-55% during these debates on Cyprus and the UfM.

The EU has been seen as fostering these suspicion-raising debates, and as an actor which preferred to distance itself from the conflict zones that surround it; this has negatively affected Turkey's security perceptions vis-à-vis the EU, as the EU's disengagement from the Middle East could potentially put Turkey in limbo regarding its European aspirations.[12] It has also been argued that Turkish and EU definitions of, and priorities for, the region have differed. The EU has conceived the region as a whole[13] and has created policies towards the general issues arising from the region's lack of democracy

and fully functioning liberal market systems. Turkey, in the 1990s until recently, focused on specific issues on a bilateral basis in its relations with the regional countries. Most of its relations were associated with perceived security threats (i.e. the PKK, Syrian support of Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish separatist groups in Northern Iraq, fundamentalist Islamic threats from Iran), the geopolitical importance of Cyprus and the continental shelf, and territorial disputes with Greece. Changes brought to the ENP and funding schemes after the uprisings in the region in 2011 once more demonstrated that the EU conceives the region as a whole. In May 2011, the EU revised its policies and this revision foresaw that the countries which made more democratic reforms would receive more EU funding, that the total funding budget was increased to 1.2 billion, while increasing their relations with the Union.[1]

In debates over differences between the EU and Turkish perceptions of the region, Turkey has been portrayed as a country more closely aligned with American policies. However, similar to the EU, the US has started to underline democratization and rule of law and has created a program, USAID, for technical assistance and support for reform minded governments and nongovernmental actors in the region. Such programs promote the rule of law and human rights, transparent and fair elections, competitive political process, free and independent media, stronger civil society and greater citizen participation.[15] Also, USAID prefers civil society capacity building, in order to increase societal and political will for reform, and emphasizes decentralization,[16] different from the EU model of funding programs for the region.

Turkey-US and the Mediterranean Region

Close relations with the USA have always been important for Turkey. During the Cold War years, the USA was seen as the guarantor of Turkish security, but Turkey wanted to play a role in providing security to the west as well. Therefore, Turkey was one of two countries (the other being Italy), which accepted American missiles on its territory during the Cuban Missile Crisis.[17] Since the end of the Cold War, relations between Turkey and the USA have altered. In the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the great threat to western security, but in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the threat became the Middle East, Caspian region, and Balkans.[18]

It was argued that in the 19th century the USA became interested in North Africa, the Mediterranean region, and the Ottoman Empire because of economic interests more than political, strategic, humanitarian or militaristic interests.[19] However, political relations as a result of the economic interaction

between the USA and the Ottoman Empire increased as the USA tried to protect the rights of its own citizens living under the empire's rule.[20]

On the other side, the Ottomans were under the economic and political pressures of the European states. The USA, especially in the second half of the 19th century, became an ally for the Ottoman Empire against the Europeans. The Ottomans and the French were arguing over Egypt, and there was continuous Russian pressure on the empire. Thus, the Ottoman Empire wanted to develop military and political relations with the US.[21] In the 19th century, despite concerns over American schools and missionary works, Ottoman-American relations developed in a friendly manner because there was no direct threat from each other.[22] Due to their positive perception of the USA, some Turkish intellectuals supported the American mandate after the First World War, since the USA seemed more idealist and understanding than the Europeans in terms of rights and freedoms.[23] After the Second World War, as the USA became a world power, Turkey became a prominent element of American global strategy. In 1952, Turkey became a member of NATO and in 1957 it accepted the Eisenhower doctrine.[24]

However, in 1963-64, Cyprus became a problem between the two countries. President Johnson sent a letter to Prime Minister Inonu, telling him not to use American weaponry against the Greeks, otherwise the 5th article of the NATO agreement would be void in a threat from the Soviet Union. Inonu's response - "A new world would build up and Turkey would take its place in this world" - made the relations tense, and Turkey's efforts in the aftermath of this letter to normalize relations with the Soviet Union has been perceived as one of the most serious backlashes in Turkish-American relations.

When the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey damaged relations with the EU, the USA became the main western power that Turkish foreign policy emphasized. Turkey and the US signed a Defense and Cooperation Agreement on March 29, 1980, which aimed to maintain a strong bilateral defense relationship and preserve American utilization of military facilities in Turkey. This agreement was followed by the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Force in the east of Turkey, to prevent the increase of the Soviet Union's influence in the region and to maintain a watchful eye on the oil lands, i.e. the Persian Gulf region and the whole Middle East. [25]

Just after the end of the Cold War, the Desert Storm operation against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait further developed the relations between Turkey and the USA, and Turkey became a central country of interest for the USA, bordering three areas of instability: the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East. During the Gulf War, Bosnia and Kosovo operations, Turkish airfields were used, and

in the 2000s the same bases were used to support American operations in Georgia and Afghanistan.[26] Turkey has been concerned about the transformation of NATO's western defense identity into a political and global collective security identity after the collapse of communism, since Turkey perceived NATO as a confirmation of its western and European identity.[27] Therefore it has been eager to open its military airbases in NATO operations in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, since it wanted to reemphasize its role as a security provider for the western allies even after the Soviet Union collapsed.

In 2003, after the American administration's decision on war in Iraq, relations between Turkey and the USA began to change and the strategic partnership began to be questioned. During the Gulf War, closure of the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline, sanctions and the impoverishment of Iraq's economy affected cooperative economic relations between Turkey and Iraq. Also, promises that were made by the US administration on compensating Turkey's war losses were not kept after the Gulf War. Thus, fear of the same consequences and of the possibility of the disintegration of Iraq and increased Kurdish uprisings were major concerns of Turkey.[28] On March 1, the Turkish Parliament said "No" to the motion to permit deployment of more than 60, 000 U.S. troops from Turkish bases and ports in the event of a war with Iraq.

Turkey's "no vote" was not because of any sympathy the Turkish government felt for Saddam Hussein; it was due to the Parliament's anxiety over Turkey's military, economic, and strategic concerns over what an attack against Iraq might mean for its own national interests.[29] It has been argued that any intervention with regard to Iraq was likely to suffer from a lack of legitimacy. Neither UN Security Council Resolution 687 (S/RES/687), nor 1441 (S/RES/1441) gave the US the right to intervene. Besides, Article 2.4 of the UN Charter forbids states, including the permanent members of the Security Council, to use force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any country. Secondly, the Turkish constitution permits the Turkish parliament to accept war only when there is international consent, where international law accepts it as a legitimate war. In this case there was not legitimacy on the basis of international law, thus the parliament rejected the motion. Consequently, the instability in the region due to the war in Iraq increased concerns over the rise of terrorist attacks. Turkey, as the only western looking country in Iraq's neighborhood, was concerned that the attacks from the region would target its own soil. However on March 20, 2003 the Turkish parliament gave permission to the Turkish army to enter Northern Iraq, and over-flight rights were granted to the US. Nonetheless, it

must be remembered that although the March 1 "no vote" prevented American access to the northern flank from Turkish soil, Iraqi Kurds offered their soil to the US forces and Americans relied on Iraqi Kurds more than Ankara would ever have desired.[30]

Another problem between Turkey and the US occurred when the American army arrested a Turkish army Special Forces Team in Suleymaniya in July 2003 for allegedly conspiring to assassinate the Kurdish governor of Mosul. This has been perceived as payback for the rejection of the March 1 motion. This period is unusual, in that Turkey's relations with the USA and the EU were seemingly deteriorating at the same time.[31] In the 1990s and at the beginning of the 2000s, the US had been a strong supporter of Turkey's EU membership, with an aim to anchor Turkey more firmly to the West[32], but after the 2003 War in Iraq, there has been a more aloof attitude of the US administration over Turkey's EU membership bid.

In addition, the confrontation in May 2010 between Israeli commandos and Turkish citizens on the ship Mavi Marmara[33] in the Mediterranean increased the tension between Turkey and the US, and augmented the negative feelings toward the USA.[34] As the feeling of mistrust increased, it has been argued that a real estate agent's view of strategy ("location, location, location") has not served well in relations among Turkey and the USA.[35] Nearly 80% of the Turkish people thought that Turkey and the US were not allies at the time[36] and the Turkish-American strategic partnership was starting to be questioned.[37]

Turkey's potential to be a role model as a secular democratic country in the region has been debated both by the EU and the USA in the 2000s.[38] On the one hand, this has been perceived as a positive matter, demonstrating Turkey's regional characteristics together with western orientations. On the other hand, some Turkish observers were not content with the US perception of Turkey as an Islamic model, and the Turkish government did not share the US goal of isolating Iran, Syria, and Sudan. Also, on the one hand Turkish government's political relations with Hamas created concerns in the EU and the US, on the other hand, Turkey criticized the EU and the US' isolation policies towards Hamas.

However, in 2005, several high level contacts between the Turkish government and American administration started, and, in 2006, the "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-US Strategic Partnership" was announced, aiming to increase cooperation, including intelligence sharing.[39] In 2007, both countries started to focus on more common issues rather than differences, issues such as stability in the region,

energy security, the enlargement of NATO and, last but not least, the fight against terrorism.

Effect of the Arab Revolts on Turkey-EU and Turkey-US Relations

When the Turkish Republic was founded, relations with the West were prioritized, but the relations with the Middle East and the Arab world were also balanced. In 1947, Turkey was one of the countries that rejected the UN decision on the partition of Palestine, and in the Cold War era, Turkey acted differently than its NATO allies during the Arab-Israeli War, by declining the use of İncirlik base on the behalf of Israel and recalling its Israeli ambassador.[4] However, Turkey was a member of NATO, and with an increase in Arab nationalism, non-Arab Turkey was seen as an outsider in the region.[41] After the Cold War regional conflicts, border disputes and ethnic clashes increased Turkey's security shield towards the region.

After (PKK leader) Öcalan was expulsed from Syria and the Adana Agreement was signed, relations with Syria started to prosper. In 2004, the two countries signed a free trade agreement, and in 2007 the Turkish-Syrian Business Council was established. Cultural exchanges between Turkey and Syria began, and trade volume increased to 2.3 billion €.[42] Turkey's relations with Syria were not the only case where Turkey and the regional countries got closer. The share of trade with regional countries increased to 19% in 2008 from 9% of the 1990s.[43] Therefore, by 2010 Turkey had established the "Close Neighbors Economic and Trade Association Council" with Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, which aimed to establish a FTA among these countries. Also, similar to the EU policies towards its neighbors, Turkey emphasized flows of people, trade and ideas to establish a more stable, interdependent and integrated region.[44]

Since the 2002 elections in Turkey, Turkish foreign policy has been based on 5 principles: a balance between security and democracy, a zero problem policy towards neighbors, increasing relations with neighbors, multi-dimensional foreign policy and rhythmic diplomacy.[45] The main concerns of Turkey in the region have been security, dialogue, economic interdependence and cultural coexistence. Hence, foreign policy has not been a series of bilateral relations only, but mutually reinforcing and interlocking processes.[46] In the 1990s, due to the political vacuum in the region, Turkey was a supporter of the status quo protection policies. In the 2000s, a policy focused on balance and diversification through active engagement in the region was accepted. This change of course

was a result of the change in government in 2002, but regional political changes facilitated Turkey's dynamic policy towards the region as well. Among these perceived regional changes were a decrease in Arab nationalism, political and economic crises, a decrease of legitimacy of governments in these neighboring countries and an increase in political Islam.

It must be mentioned that both the accession process of Turkey to the EU and the Turkish Parliament's rejection of the March 1 motion increased the prestige of Turkey[47] among the regional countries. It has been argued that the Arab world began to take a closer interest in Turkey after Turkey started its accession negotiations in 2005. A number of public opinion surveys and statements of regional leaders underlined the importance of Turkey-EU relations in order to create a stable and developed region.[48] It is believed that Turkey's increasing positive perception in the region, which falls under the ENP, can be used as a positive tool by the EU. 80% of the respondents in a TESEV survey have positive views on Turkey's role in the region and 66% believe that Turkey can be a model for the Middle Eastern countries.[49] This has been an important change since the 1990s regarding Turkey's role in the region. Also, these changes created some concerns over Turkey's position as a NATO ally and questions on Turkey's orientation towards the East or the West began to be asked. Although some American and European observers argued that Turkey is turning away from its historic western orientation[50], Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu clearly argued that the more Turkey strains its bow in Asia, the further its arrow will extend into Europe.[51]

In this period Turkey also manifested its intentions to act as mediator in the regional conflicts, i.e. Israel and Syria. Turkey has been involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also, through economic, social and humanitarian projects. This has been another change in Turkey's non-intervention policy in the region. Some regional actors, i.e. Egypt, Abbas and Iran, did not welcome these changes in Turkish policy towards the region. However, especially after the *Mavi Marmara* incident, Turkey's role as a mediator has ostensibly failed.

In 2010 and 2011 the region went through crucial times once more. On the one hand, Arab revolts have complicated regional politics and relations among the actors have become more polarized. On the other hand, the ballistic missile shield to be built under the NATO umbrella has become an issue in not only Turkey's neighborhood but also between Turkey and its western partners. Following long debates and hesitancy, during the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, Turkey accepted the concept of a NATO missile shield to be built mainly against threats coming from the Middle East. Although the document on the missile shield did not specify names of countries or groups

perceived as threats, most of the commentators on the subject have concluded that this shield was especially thought to protect the west against possible Iranian missiles. Therefore, Turkey's prospering relations with the regional countries and its attachment to the western organizations and security complex created questions on drifting foreign policy. Turkey's attitude during the War in Iraq was seen as more compatible with that of some EU member states, which also wanted no part in the armed conflict. The EU has emphasized the importance of creating a region without dividing lines. Turkey's policy over Iraq was seen as leaning toward this method. However, NATO's member, Turkey, by accepting the missile shield, opted for a policy that potentially creates dividing lines between the region and the west.

As demonstrated in the previous sections, there has been a difference between the EU and US attitudes, in the choice of multilateral or bilateral policies towards the regional countries. Before the Arab revolts, American and European perceptions on the region were diverged widely due to the different perceptions of the method, means and ends of democratization policies of the American and European sides.[52] Turkey, as a candidate country to the EU and as a member of NATO, tried to converge these different policies into one policy and create a more stable and secure neighboring region for itself, which proved to be a difficult policy to maintain.

Turkey perceived the chaos and anarchy in Iraq as negative consequence of foreign intervention, but it finds the revolts in Northern Africa as important processes for the democratization of the whole region. The Arab revolts started due to the economic inequalities, political corruption and coercion in Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt, among others. Turkey presented itself as a role model in the region, and emphasized the importance of democratization, prosperity, human rights and freedom for regional countries. However, Turkey also emphasized the importance of a bottom up approach in this democratization process, and rejected international intervention for some time. Turkey's policies in this sense were perceived as closer to those of the ENP, and Turkey argued that the intervention in Iraq created chaos and anarchy since there was an externally imposed democratization process. Turkey's thesis has been that there is a need for democratization in the region; however, these processes should arise from domestic bottom up approaches rather than international interventions.

As it can be seen, there were increased differences in the regional politics of Turkey, the EU and the USA, which affected the relations among these three actors negatively. However, as the revolts started and the leaders of the North African countries were challenged by the masses and forced to step down,

Turkey and the US started to coordinate once more.[53] During the revolts, leaders such as Mubarak, Qaddafi, Ben Ali, Abdullah Saleh - the very political leaders with whom the Turkish government had set up bilateral political, economic and social relations - had to step down, and Turkey, while supporting democratization, had to make contacts with the new leaders of these countries. In this environment, the relations with the USA have been crucial once more, due to its historical leverage in the region.

Libya has been the first case to test Turkey's policies, since Libya is essential not only in terms of political relations but also regarding the economic and financial investments of Turkish business people in that country. It has been argued that 18.4 million dollars worth of projects and 100 million dollars in cash in Libyan banks were threatened[54] during the revolts. Initially, Turkey opposed NATO intervention in Libya, in line with its position on non-intervention by foreign forces in the region, but approved of humanitarian aid. As the international reaction increased in line with UN Security Council resolution 1973 on March 17, 2011, authorizing countries to take measures to stop the violence against civilians, Turkey agreed to participate in NATO operations.

Following Libya, Turkey supported a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian regime.[55] In the Syrian case, Turkey puts efforts into facilitating the stepping down of Assad while simultaneously establishing a political relation with the opposition groups. As the crisis continued and Assad did not step down, Turkey's rhetoric approached that of the Americans. These developments have complicated Middle Eastern politics[56] and the international system, historical memory, systemic influences and domestic political changes[57] affect both positively and negatively the relations among the states in the region. This has not only been a problem for Turkey, but also for the EU countries. The EU was divided over the conflict and intervention in Libya. France and the UK supported the intervention; Germany kept its distance.

The spread of unrest in the region caused some questioning of the dynamic and multi approach Turkish foreign policy. As an ally of the US and a candidate of the EU, Turkey has emphasized democratization and human rights and has aligned itself with western policies.[58] Some observers argued that this alignment put Turkey back into western circles and forced it to leave behind the new policies adopted in 2002. However, it must be emphasized that although Turkey's relations with the US became more visible, Turkey did not turn its back on its neighbors, which are going through a transition period, and definitely did not return to its non-intervention policies of the 1990s. Especially in Syria, Turkey established close relations with the opposition and

hosted the Syrian opposition groups when the unrest started. This has been in line with Turkey's argument that there has to be a democratization process originating from the people of the region.

Yet, it needs to be highlighted that although Turkey is a supporter of a domestic bottom up approach towards democratization of the regional countries, it lacks the conditionality aspect in its foreign policy. Therefore, it has been argued that the cooperation between Turkey and the EU, who holds the conditionality stick[59], would be instrumental in Turkey's relations with the Mediterranean countries. Since the region is proved to be prone to revolts, conflicts between regional countries and clashes among groups, Turkey's zero problem policy with its neighbors was tested and demonstrated constraints. Analysis of Turkey's regional policies in relation to its westernization process surfaced once more, since the USA and the European countries have been a part of the regional politics for a very long time; therefore Oğuzlu argued that there is a need for a new version of the zero problem policy, one that includes the western actors, especially the EU.[6] As a country, which highlighted its strategic position through its history, Turkey has tried to balance its relations with the EU, the USA and the region. Thus, the debate over whether Turkey's orientation is towards the west or the Middle East has proved to be an inefficient means to analyze Turkish foreign policy matters.

Conclusion

Turkey, as a part of the western allies, opted for a more dynamic and multilateral foreign policy toward its Mediterranean and Middle East neighborhoods since the beginning of the 2000s, not only due to domestic changes in Turkey but also to changes in regional politics. However, the region had another shaky development in 2011, as civil unrests and revolts started to force leaders of some regional countries to step down. This has been a test case for Turkey's newly introduced policy towards the region, but also towards its western allies in NATO and in the EU. Both the US and the EU emphasized the necessity for democratization in the region and applied different policies in this regard. The EU treated the region as a whole and created neighborhood policies, but the USA focused on a more bilateral approach in its relations with the regional countries. Turkey, on the other hand, had status quo-oriented bilateral relations with the regional countries in the 1990s, but changed to more multilateral relations on the basis of increased economic relations. In this framework, Turkey's dynamic policy towards the Mediterranean and the Middle Eastern regions has been

perceived as closer to the EU's method, but the Libya case reminded us once again that Turkey is a NATO member with close relations with the USA. Turkey established important economic and financial ties with the economic and political actors in these regional countries, and especially the revolts of 2011 jeopardized these newly founded links. It has been observed that during the unrest in the region, Turkey did not turn its back on its neighbors, but did not reject the American or (some) European policies either. As a country located between the west and the region, it had to find a balance in its foreign policy, not only between the West and the region, but also between the EU, the USA and the region, due to the differences among the policies of the EU and the USA. Thus, although there has long been a debate that Turkey is leaning towards easternization rather than westernization, these Arab revolts demonstrated that Turkey continues to be a western partner while trying to help establish a more stable, secure and dependable neighborhood in a fragile and complicated situation.

NOTES

1. Othon Anastakis, welcoming speech in the Conference of *Turkey, the EU and the 2004 milestone: Is this time for real?*, 14.03.2003, Oxford, UK.

2. *Turkey – EU Relations*, European Economic Consultancy Center, Ankara, 2001, pp. 115-116.

3. Meltem Müftüler, "The Impact of European Union on Turkish Politics", *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 2000, p. 160.

4. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Spring 2005, p. 274.

5. Philip Gordon and Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey on the Brink", *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2006, p. 63.

6. Rajan Menon and Enders Wimbush, "The US and Turkey: End of an Alliance?", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2007, p. 142.

7. Bruce Kuniholm, "Turkey's Accession to the European Union: Differences in European and US Attitudes, and Challenges for Turkey", *IREX*,
http: //www.irex.net/system/files/kuniholm.pdf (accessed on 06.03.2012)

8. Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 48, No.3, 2006, p. 92.

9. Daniela Huber, "Democracy Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa: A

Comparison of US and EU Policies", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 13., No. 1, p. 45.

10. ibid p. 54.

11. Pınar Bilgin, "A Return to 'Civilisational Geopolitics' in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era", *Geopolitics*, Vol.9, No.2, 2004, p. 274.

12. Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Future of Turkey's Westernization", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 9, no. 3, 2007, p. 55.

13. Bilgin, "A Return to 'Civilisational Geopolitics' in the Mediterranean? Changing Geopolitical Images of the European Union and Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era", op. cit., p. 284.

14. Paula Sandrin, "The Arab Spring and Calls for a Turkey-EU Foreign Policy Dialogue", *Political Reflection*, Vol. 2, No. 4, 2012, p. 34.

15. USAID From the American People, *At Freedom's Frontiers A Democracy and Governance Strategic Framework*, December 2005, p. 4.

16. Daniela Huber, "Democracy Assistance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Comparison of US and EU Policies", op. cit., p. 49.

17. Barton J. Bernstein, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 95, No. 1, 1980, p. 99.

18. Zalmay Khalilzad, Ian O. Lesser and Stephen Larabee, *Türk Batı İlişkilerinin Geleceği: Stratejik Plana Doğru*, Ankara, Avrasya-Bir Vakfı, 2001, p. 48.

19. The prominent authors who defend this view are L.J. Gordon, who wrote *the American Relations with Turkey 1830-1930, An Economic Interpretation*, and Uner Turgay, who wrote *the Ottoman American Trade During the 19th Century.*

20. Çağrı Erhan, *Türk Amerikan İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Kökenleri*, Ankara, İmge Kitabevi, 2001, p. 23.

21. Nurdan Şafak, *Türk Amerikan İlişkileri*, İstanbul, Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2003 p. 24.

22. Ibid p. 203.

23. Burcu Bostanoğlu, *Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinin Politikas: Kuram ve Siyasa*, Ankara, İmge Yayınevi, 1999, p. 326.

24. İbid p. 331.

25. İbid p 357.

26. Edward J. Erickson, "Turkey as regional hegemon-2014: strategic implications for the United States", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2004, p. 29.

27. Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Future of Turkey's Westernization", op. cit, p. 51.

28. Bill Park, "Iraq's Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US Policy", *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2004.

29. Mensur Akgün and Sabiha Şenyücel, "Reluctant Ally", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No 1, 2003, p. 60.

30. Bill Park, "Strategic Location, Political Dislocation: Turkey, the United States, and Northern Iraq, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2003, p. 20.

31. Philip Gordon and Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey on the brink", op. cit., p. 69.

32. Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views", *CRS Report for the Congress*, 29.08.2008, p. 12.

33. On 31 May 2010 at 4.26 a.m. a flotilla of six vessels was boarded and taken over by Israeli Defense Forces 72 nautical miles from land. The vessels were carrying people and humanitarian supplies. The flotilla had been directed to change course by the Israeli forces who stated that the coast of Gaza was under a naval blockade. Nine passengers lost their lives and many others were wounded as a result of the use of force during the take-over operation by Israeli forces. (Geoffrey Palmer, Alvaro Uribe, Joseph Ciechanover Itzhar and Mr. Süleyman Özdem Sanberk, *Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident*, July 2011, UN).

34. Sabri Sayarı, "Challenges of Triangular Relations: The US, the EU, and Turkish Accession", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2011, p. 261.

35. Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of geopolitics", op. cit. p. 85.

36. Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Future of Turkey's Westernization", op. cit., p. 56.

37. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?", op. cit., p. 274.

38. Meliha Altunışık and Esra Çuhadar, "Turkey's Search for a Third Party Role in Arab–Israeli Conflicts: A Neutral Facilitator or a Principal Power Mediator?", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2010, p. 374.

39. Füsun Türkmen, "Turkish–American Relations: A Challenging Transition", *Turkish Studies*, Vol 10, No. 1, 2009, p. 125.

40. Erman Akıllı, "Türk Dış Politikası Zemininde Arap Baharı", *OrtaDoğu Analiz*, Vol 4, No. 37, 2012, p. 42

41. Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2008, p. 42.

42. İlhan Tanır, "How the Arab Spring is Transforming Turkish American Relations", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2011, p. 75.

43. Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkey's Changing Middle East Policy", *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, No 23, 2010, p. 161.

44. Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey's "Demonstrative Effect" and the Transformation of the Middle East", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011, p. 44.

45. Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2008, p. 79.

46. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 10, No. 1, 2009, p. 9.

47. Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey's Soft Power in the Middle East", op. cit., p. 43.

48. Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey's "Demonstrative Effect" and the Transformation of the Middle East", op. cit., p. 48

49. Mensur Akgün, Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2011*, İstanbul, TESEV, 2012.

50. Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of geopolitics", op. cit., p. 89.

51. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", op. cit, p. 9.

52. Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "The Turkey-EU-US Triangle in Perspective: Transformation or Continuity?", op. cit., p. 274.

53. Soner Cagaptay, "How the Arab Spring Warmed US-Turkish Relations", *Cutting Edge*, 12.02.2012 available at: http: //www.thecuttingedgenews.com/index.php?article=71990 (accessed 06.03.2012)

54. "Arab Spring Hits Turkish Construction Business", *Business Turkey Today*, available at http: //www.businessturkeytoday.com/arab-spring-hits-turkish-construction-business/ (accessed on 06.03.2012)

55. Amanda Paul and Demir Murat Seyrek, *Turkish foreign policy and the Arab Spring*, European Policy Center, 15.07.2011.

56. Steven A. Cook, "Arab Spring, Turkish Fall", *Foreign Policy*, 05.05.2011.

57. Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian–Turkish Relations", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006, p. 246.

58. Seyfeddin Kara, "*Arab Spring" diminishes Turkey's credibility in the Muslim World*, available at http: //world.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/89871/ (accessed on 06.03.2012).

59. Günther Verheugen, Meeting the Geopolitical Challenges of the Arab Spring: A call for a joint EU Turkish Agenda, *Turkey Policy Brief Series*, No. 1, Ankara, TEPAV, 2012, p. 5.

60. Tarık Oğuzlu, "The 'Arab Spring' and the Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's 'zero problems with neighbors' Policy", *SAM Papers*, No. 1, 2012, p. 9.