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**AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON TURKEY: AN EVALUATION OF THE
DECLASSIFIED U.S. DOCUMENTS BETWEEN 1947 AND 1960***

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1. Introduction

During the interwar years, U.S.-Turkish relations had been confined within the boundaries of conventional diplomacy. By the end of World War II, the Truman Doctrine of 1947 and the military assistance agreement that drew on it marked the beginning of a series of bilateral and multilateral agreements that bound the two nations together in the military as well as political, economic, and cultural fields. However, relations between the two states did not always proceed on a smooth path. Hence, the relatively optimistic, formative years of 1947-1960 were followed by the troublesome decades of the 1960s and 1970s. By the 1980s, mutual relations settled back on an upward track, reaching a peak during the Gulf War of 1990-91. With the

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demise of the Soviet system, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, and the end of the Cold War, some commentators expected the eventual dismantling of NATO and with it the waning of the American connection with Turkey. Turkey's "strategic value" in the eyes of the Americans, it was being argued, would necessarily diminish as the Soviet threat—the main component of this "value"—was disappearing. Developments throughout the 1990s, however, did not fully justify those pessimistic scenarios. In fact, by the mid-1990s, Turkey and the United States, with the occasional participation of other states such as Israel, began to build a so-called strategic partnership to contain regional and local threats (arising in the areas surrounding Turkey and ranging from the Balkans to the Middle East and the Caucasus) that had been unleashed by the destabilizing forces of the post-Cold War period. It should be noted that, in about the same period, U.S.-Turkish relations gained unprecedented new dimensions, economic and cultural, complementing and sometimes overshadowing the military one.

This paper will focus on the formative years of postwar U.S.-Turkish relations, from 1947 to 1960, a period during which relations between the two countries were confined to the fields of military cooperation and economic aid. Part of the paper will deal with the standard issues of international relations regarding Turkey and the United States, such as the Truman Doctrine and Turkey's entry into the NATO. The main thrust of the paper, however, will be an examination of the U.S. government's perceptions and evaluations of the problems and issues of Turkey's emerging capitalist economy and democratic regime. The major source of information on the U.S. perspectives on Turkey will be the declassified documents of the major

institutions of the U.S. government, such as the White House, the National Security Council, the Departments of State and Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency—all pertaining to the period under consideration. All the declassified documents referred to in the text were examined in the microfilm collections of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Information so gathered has been supplemented by a reading of the publicly available sources on U.S.-Turkish relations and U.S. perspectives on Turkish politics and economy.

Security appears to have been the leading motive behind the U.S. interest in Turkey during the period under consideration. The security in question, on the other hand, was not so much the security of Turkey proper but of the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Europe. In other words, Turkey's importance from a security perspective was not direct but derived. Turkey was to be protected against Soviet aggression not for its own sake but for guaranteeing the security of other regions deemed by the United States as valuable in terms of the economic resources they controlled, political institutions they embodied, or cultural values they represented. A second motive behind the U.S. interest in Turkey was to present Turkey as a showcase of fast economic growth within the framework of capitalism and democracy. The Turkish experiment was to be spotlighted to counter Soviet claims that in the poor countries of the Third World, fast economic growth was possible only in a Soviet-type economic and political system. In what follows, these and other American perspectives on Turkey's politics and economy will be examined, with an eye to their influence on Turkish thinking about themselves and the outside world.

2. The Truman Doctrine and the Period of Aid without Pact: 1947-1950

American policy toward Turkey underwent a significant revision in the fall of 1946—from a position of understanding for the Soviet demands from Turkey to a position of resisting Soviet expansionism toward Turkey and the Middle East. However, at that time, the United States still regarded the Balkans and the Middle East (including Greece and Turkey) as primarily a British area of responsibility. Therefore, the change in U.S. policy did not go as far as furnishing unilateral aid to Greece and Turkey. The U.S. administration decided that any U.S. aid to these countries had to be channeled through Britain. This U.S. position continued until February 1947, when Great Britain secretly declared to the United States that it was unable to support Greece and Turkey and that the United States had to move in to keep these two countries from succumbing to the Soviet sphere of influence. The British declaration came on 21 February 1947, in the form of two secret memoranda—one on Greece and one on Turkey—given by the British ambassador in Washington to the U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 35-37). To avoid panic, neither the Turkish nor the Greek government was informed of the British memoranda.¹ From the date the two *aide-mémoires* were received, the U.S.

¹ In the meantime, the Turks heard about the British decision to withdraw its support from Greece and Turkey. According to a telegram sent to the U.S. State Department from the U.S. Ambassador in Ankara, dated 4 March 1947, the Turkish officials were “seriously disturbed,” and they were considering mobilizing the army in case the Russians would use the British withdrawal as an opportunity for attack (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 88-89). In another telegram on the same date, Ambassador Wilson said that the Soviets were not thinking of launching an invasion into Turkey. Their strategy was to disrupt Turkey’s economic stability by conducting a continuous war of nerves and forcing the Turkish government to keep a large

administration held extensive meetings to discuss the matter. The Departments of State, War, and Navy, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were generally in favor of assuming the responsibility for Turkey and Greece, and they convinced President Harry Truman of the need to do so. They were instrumental in the preparation of the Truman Doctrine of 12 March 1947 (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 37-62). Hence, on 27 February 1947, the Secretary of State sent a memorandum to the President urging him to extend aid to Greece and Turkey (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 60-61). On 12 March 1947, the day Turkey became a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), President Truman made his famous speech to a joint session of the Congress, in which he said in unequivocal terms that the justification for his request of aid to Greece and Turkey was to protect freedom and democracy against internal subversion and external aggression.²

Truman's speech, however, was just showing the U.S. administration's intention to take over the defensive responsibility for Greece and Turkey from Great Britain. There remained for the administration the more painful task of convincing the U.S. Congress and the U.S. public of the wisdom of that action. Many people, in

standing army and to drain valuable resources away from civilian needs to the military (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 90-91).

² For the full text of Truman's speech, see Paterson (1989, pp. 297-300). A 14 March 1947 telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in Ankara to the Department of State says that the Turks were "rejoicing" upon hearing the U.S. President's speech (U.S. Department of State 1971, pp. 118). According to Metin Toker, the biographer and son-in-law of Turkish President İsmet İnönü, when he was told of Truman's speech committing U.S. support for Turkey against the U.S.S.R., President İnönü "was awakened from his worst nightmares," and he was as relieved as in the summer of 1941 when the German armies in the Balkans had turned north to attack the U.S.S.R. instead of occupying Turkey on the south (Toker 1990, pp. 173-74).

and out of the Congress, did not think that aiding Greece and Turkey was in the best interests of the United States.³ A Bill to Provide for Assistance to Greece and Turkey gained Senate approval on 22 April 1947 and House approval on 9 May 1947.⁴ On 22 May 1947, President Truman signed into law the Act of Congress for U.S. aid to Greece and Turkey. Soon after the Congressional approval of U.S. aid to Greece and Turkey, on 5 June 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall spoke at the Harvard University commencement exercises and introduced the Marshall Plan, a much more comprehensive U.S. aid program for Europe.

At this point, it should be noted that the U.S. commitment for the defense of the “free nations” of the world against foreign aggression and internal subversion, symbolized by the Truman Doctrine, prepared the much-needed “internationalist” political and psychological ground in the United States for launching the subsequent Marshall Plan for European recovery (Duignan and Gann 1996, pp. 315-50 and Beloff 1963, pp. 13-28). The Truman Doctrine was political and military in nature, and its aid dimension consisted mainly of military aid in kind, in the form of transferring U.S. military equipment to the Greek and Turkish (and later to South Korean and

³ Some public-opinion polls, taken after Truman’s speech, showed that the majority of the U.S. public opposed unilateral U.S. aid, and in particular military aid, to Greece and Turkey (Kuniholm 1980, pp. 414-15). Moreover, during the Senate debates on the President’s aid bill, 28 of the 34 public witnesses were unequivocally opposed to the bill, and 12 were particularly opposed to U.S. aid to Turkey (U.S. Congress 1947a).

⁴ The Senate approved the bill by a vote of 67 (35 Republicans, 32 Democrats) to 23 (16 Republicans, 7 Democrats). An attempt to strip the military aspects from the program was defeated 68-22. An amendment that sought to cut Turkey out of the program was withdrawn. The House approved the bill by a vote of 287 to 107 (U.S. Congress 1947a and 1947b; Kuniholm 1980, p. 414).

other) governments. The nature of the Marshall Plan, on the other hand, was mainly economic, and it consisted of supplying the ailing Western European economies with aid both in kind and in cash. However, there is no doubt that the Truman Doctrine first overcame the isolationist tide that dominated the foreign-policy dispositions of the Republican-dominated American Congress and the mood of the American public in general at the end of World War II. Thus, according to Bruce Kuniholm, “the Truman Doctrine represents an inner turning point” in the American élites’ perceptions of the world and their role in it: “. . . the frame of mind which characterized decision-makers during the Korean War, and in the years that followed, was very much affected by the ordeal that led to the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine. In the minds of the officials, it was as difficult to dissociate events in Korea in 1950 from those in China in 1949, or from events in Greece and Turkey in 1947, as it was to dissociate the latter events from those in Iran and Turkey in 1946. In this sense, perhaps, the Truman Doctrine represents an inner turning point” (Kuniholm 1980, p. 421). Turkey and Greece, the main beneficiaries of U.S. military aid under the Truman Doctrine, were also included within the framework of the Marshall Plan, and they became founding members of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which was set up to coordinate the allocation of U.S. aid among the European countries.

The half-decade between the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 and Turkey's admission to NATO on 17 October 1951 can be best described as “the period of aid without pact.” U.S. government documents related to U.S. policy toward Turkey, which were produced between the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine and Turkey's admission to NATO, justified U.S. military aid to Turkey on

two grounds. The first ground was that if the U.S. did not aid Turkey, Turkey would come under the Soviet sphere of influence, and if that happened, the security of the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean—and by implication that of Western Europe—would be endangered. Although they stressed the defensive importance of Turkey, they did not mention any U.S. willingness to enter into a joint military pact with Turkey. The U.S. commitment ended with strengthening the capabilities of the Turkish military so that it could resist a Soviet attack for as long as possible to gain valuable time for the Western powers. The second ground used by the U.S. policymakers to justify U.S. aid to Turkey was that Turkey was making determined progress toward democracy, democratization contributed to political stability, and political stability was necessary for maintaining Turkey's military capabilities at the desired level. American aid was meant to play two roles in relation to democratization: (1) economic stability was necessary for democratization to continue, and the U.S. aid would ease Turkey's economic difficulties by making it possible to reduce defense expenditures and redirect valuable resources to civilian needs; and (2) the U.S. aid would enhance the general sense of security from outside aggression and self-confidence, which would reinforce political stability and thereby bolster the process of democratization.⁵

3. U.S. Perspectives on Democracy and Capitalist Development in Turkey:

1950-1960

⁵ For the official U.S. views on the possible contributions of the U.S. aid to the democratization of the Turkish political regime, see U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (1948 and 1951) and U.S. Department of State (1948, 1949, 1950).

The Turkish elections of 14 May 1950 brought the Democratic Party (DP) to power, putting an end to the quarter-century-long one-party rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP). The DP remained in power for ten years, comfortably winning the elections of 2 May 1954 and 27 October 1957. It was a military intervention, and not an electoral defeat, that put an end to the DP rule on 27 May 1960. Developments during the DP period, and during the brief military regime that followed, determined the shape of the Turkish political and economic regime, and the pattern of civil-military relations, for the years to come. The underlying international context affecting Turkish domestic developments in the 1950s was no doubt the rapid proliferation of Turkish-American relations in the political, military, and economic areas. In June 1950, the Turkish government decided to dispatch a 5,000-strong brigade to join the U.S.-led United Nations forces in Korea. This decision positively affected Turkey's bid for NATO membership, and Turkey and Greece joined NATO in February 1952. The United States was the prime backer of Turkey's admission to NATO, and its backing was crucial in overcoming the opposition of Great Britain and other Western European members of the Atlantic Alliance.⁶ Significant amounts of American military and economic aid to Turkey constituted yet another aspect of the special relations between Turkey and the United States in the 1950s.⁷

U.S. government documents on Turkey from the 1950s indicate that the United States wanted the Turkish economy to achieve a level of development

⁶ On the issue of Turkey's accession to NATO, the role played by the United States in bringing it about, and the opposition of Great Britain and other European powers to Turkey's NATO membership, see Bağcı (1991), Erkin (1992), and McGhee (1990).

⁷ For a detailed account of U.S. economic and military aid to Turkey, see Harris (1972, pp. 175, 182).

sufficient to satisfy both the civilian demand for consumer goods as well as the basic needs of the military. In this way, the United States hoped to lessen the aid-dependency of the Turkish economy and gradually cut back on the aid. In the meantime, however, aid would foster economic prosperity, which would in turn promote the institutionalization of Turkey's new democracy. Democracy was seen by the United States as the safeguard for political stability in Turkey. A democratic Turkey, according to U.S. policymakers, would more easily identify itself with the United States and Western Europe. A dictatorial regime, on the other hand, would make Turkey much more vulnerable to Soviet infiltration, as the Soviets would surely focus their attention on any social groups excluded and suppressed by the state. Finally, the United States regarded Turkey as the showcase of the empirical possibility of capitalist development within the framework of democracy. The Turkish case was used to refute the Soviet claims that an underdeveloped economy could not possibly achieve rapid economic growth under capitalism, and that capitalist development was not compatible with a democratic regime.

A State Department pamphlet on the Turkish aid program justified aid on the grounds that it would not only "assist materially in breaking some of the existing military and economic bottlenecks in Turkey," but also that "its indirect effects on the country's political well-being and stability should be of paramount importance." The pamphlet specifically referred to the positive effects the U.S. aid would exert on the institutionalization of Turkey's new democracy: "The Turks are now accelerating the pace of Turkey's evolution toward the fully democratic processes set in motion by Kemal Atatürk. Further, this process of democratization and Westernization in

Turkey can have a profound influence in the future upon similar developments in neighboring countries in the Middle East” (U.S. Department of State 1948, p. 8). A national intelligence estimate by the Central Intelligence Agency commented upon the democratic institutions and relatively free press of Turkey as constituting “sufficient outlets” for social disaffection that might otherwise be exploited by communism. The same source also established a causal link between the extension of democratic procedures and the “building of a strong base for national power” (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1951, p. 4). Finally, a National Security Council (NSC) paper, *U.S. Policy on Turkey*, underlined two rationales for supporting Turkish democratization. One was that “encouraging . . . continued development of democratic ideas and institutions in Turkey . . . would help to insure Turkey’s identification of interest with the Western European and other free nations of the world.” The other was the demonstrative effect of a democratic and capitalist Turkey on the rest of the developing world: “Turkey is undergoing one of the most successful social, political and intellectual revolutions of modern times. Turkey desires to become a fully modern state based on Western cultural ideas and has been developing democratic forms of government and institutions. From an inefficient, tyrannical and theocratic state, it has reached a point where . . . it can well serve as an example of peaceful evolution for other underdeveloped areas” (U.S. National Security Council 1955a, pp. 11, 4). The same NSC paper pointed out that “achievement of a stable Turkish economy, which, by maximum Turkish efforts, can support an increasingly greater share of its defense expenditures, while maintaining investment outlays at realistic levels,” is one of the prime objectives of the U.S. policy on Turkey (U.S. National Security Council 1955a, p. 11).

One major concern of the United States in supplying aid to Turkey was whether or not the aid was prudently and efficiently utilized. There are many statements in the U.S. documents accusing the DP government of wasting the aid money on politically motivated, unplanned, and unproductive investments. Hence, at the beginning of 1955, the U.S. government rejected Turkey's request for a \$300 million loan and recommended that the Turkish government reduce spending, increase tax revenues and the domestic savings rate, and establish a plan for its investments. The NSC paper dated 28 February 1955 stated that Turkey's request for an additional \$300 million loan was rejected because "Turkey has increasingly lived beyond its means, with the result that in the last two years foreign exchange resources have been exhausted, a burdensome external debt has been accumulated, and inflation has developed internally." The report complained that the Turkish government was "reluctant to recognize the seriousness of the situation and to accept reasonable limitations on the rate of economic development" (U.S. National Security Council 1955a, pp .8-9). Another NSC paper, dated 7 September 1955, stated that, despite the promises made by the Turkish officials to carry out economic reform, "there is as yet no convincing evidence that the Turkish government is prepared to carry out the kind of comprehensive reform program which the situation requires. . . Thus, the Turks appear to cling to the belief that because of the strategic importance of Turkey the U.S. will rescue Turkey from any financial crisis which may develop." (U.S. National Security Council 1955b, p. 3).

Perhaps the most important document reflecting the U.S. evaluation of the economic situation in Turkey was prepared by Clarence B. Randall, an American businessman who headed an economic survey mission to Turkey in February 1956 in

the capacity of Special Consultant to the President on Foreign Economic Policy. The final report prepared by the Randall Mission concluded that at the heart of the Turkish economic difficulties lay an “unsound” way of financing economic expansion, one that relied not on genuine domestic savings and increased export revenues but on budget deficits, an easy credit policy, and external loans and grants. One alarming outcome of this sort of development financing was that between 1950 and 1955, Turkey used up its entire foreign exchange and gold reserves. The report stated that the Turkish government had, up to that time, refused to comply with the U.S., IMF, and World Bank proposals to adopt a stabilization program. Hence, one of the primary objectives of the Randall Mission was to tell the Turkish government in unequivocal terms that any further U.S. aid would be conditional on Turkey’s adoption of sound economic policies. The report included the information that the Turkish government promised to take economic stabilization measures (U.S. White House 1956, pp. 5-19). As an NSC paper, dated 29 June 1957, later complained, the Turkish government had not honored its promise of carrying out economic reforms: “After exhibiting some restraint through the fall of 1956, the Turkish government has returned to a policy of increased developmental effort. Moreover, Turkey has not developed a comprehensive program which . . . could effectively achieve a reasonable degree of economic stability. Basic measures, particularly a revaluation of the Turkish lira and a slowing up of the development program generally, are required.” In the section entitled, “Major Policy Guidance,” the U.S. policymakers decided to make clear to the Turks that “the entire U.S. assistance program to Turkey is based on the assumption that Turkey will make progress towards economic stabilization and a realistic rate of exchange.” (U.S. National Security Council 1957,

pp. 4-5, 10-11).

A visible deterioration in the country's economic performance by the second half of the 1950s,⁸ and constant U.S. calls for a more prudent economic policy, finally elicited a response from the Turkish government. In August 1958, Turkey agreed to a joint U.S.-IMF-OEEC program of economic stabilization. The Turkish side would trim spending and deficit-financing, devalue the Turkish lira by more than 300 percent, and set up a planning commission staffed by international advisers to take government investments under control.⁹ In return, \$400 million of Turkish debt payments would be deferred, and a fresh loan in the amount of \$360 million (of which more than 65 percent would be supplied by the United States) would be injected into the Turkish economy.¹⁰ By the end of 1959, the economic situation began to improve. Nor did the achievements of Turkey's economic stabilization

⁸ The annual average rate of GNP growth, which was as high as 5.7 percent between 1950 and 1954, fell to 2.2 percent between 1955 and 1960. Paralleling this development, inflation rate increased from its annual average of 1.5 percent in the first period to nearly 12 percent in the second. Finally, external debt, which grew by an average annual rate of 3.5 percent in the first half of the 1950s, increased by an annual average rate of 9.4 percent in the second half. See Pakdemirli (1991, pp. 16-38) and Özmucur (1990, pp. 355-66).

⁹ It should be noted that to satisfy American and other Western demands for a more coordinated and consistent management of foreign and domestic resources, the Turkish government did indeed set up an economic planning office, headed by the noted Dutch economist, Jan Tinbergen. However, because of his utter dislike for the idea of a plan, Menderes kept this bureau and its activities hidden from the other branches of the government, as well as from the general public. Hence Turkey became the only country in the world with a "secret" planning agency! It was not until after the military intervention of 1960 that a meaningful and powerful planning office, the State Planning Organization, was set up within the Turkish economic bureaucracy.

¹⁰ For the August 1958 economic stabilization program, see Simpson (1965, p. 151), and Turgut (1991, pp. 183-85).

program go unnoticed by the U.S. government. In fact, an NSC paper, dated 16 December 1959, expressed satisfaction for progress that had been made in the area of economic stabilization since August 1958: "Turkey has been reasonably successful in the implementation of the stabilization program announced in August 1958. . . . If Turkish officials continue to pursue firm fiscal and economic policies, a steady rate of economic growth through higher levels of production could be expected." Having said this, the paper also expressed strong misgivings about the lack of a "rational investment program" in Turkey and the "inability of Turkey to determine priorities for competing investment, consumption, and defense demands on the limited resources available . . ." (U.S. National Security Council 1959, pp. 1-2).

The 4 August 1958 economic stabilization program, including debt deferment and new long-term loans, was in fact a rescue operation planned by the United States to deliver Turkey from its economic and political quagmire. The U.S. decision was taken in the context of the new U.S. policy toward the Middle East outlined in the Eisenhower Doctrine of March 1957. The immediate cause of the U.S. determination for improving the economic situation in Turkey, and the standing of the strongly pro-American Turkish government, no doubt was the Iraqi revolution of 14 July 1958 and the Syrian-Egyptian unification. In an NSC paper dated 10 December 1958, which evaluated the 4 August 1958 economic stabilization measures taken by the DP government, there were clear references to the new developments in the Middle East as necessitating renewed U.S. economic and military assistance to Turkey: "Actions were taken by the U.S. on directives from the highest level, at the time of the Syrian union with Egypt, to accelerate U.S. aid to Turkey. The Iraqi coup resulted in even

greater efforts to enhance Turkey's military posture" (U.S. National Security Council 1958, pp. 7, 1).

The heightened U.S. interest in Turkey continued at full speed after the U.S.-orchestrated economic rescue operation of 4 August 1958. Hence, on 5 March 1959, a new and expanded U.S.-Turkish bilateral defense agreement was signed, giving the United States the power to intervene militarily in Turkish domestic affairs in the event of an armed rebellion against the Turkish regime.¹¹ The new élan of Turkish-American relations was reinforced by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes's visit to the United States in October 1959 and President Dwight Eisenhower's visit to Turkey in December 1959. President Eisenhower visited Turkey en route to his summit meeting with the U.S.S.R. Premier Nikita Khrushchev. According to the U.S. sources, during their meeting with Eisenhower, the Turkish side raised five points: First, they expressed their suspicions about secret summit meetings and the *détente*. Turkish Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu is reported to have said that because of U.S.-U.S.S.R. summits, "some nations might feel abandoned, particularly if a series of conferences were to give them the impression of a world directorate. This would make blackmail easy" (U.S. White House 1959, p. 3). Second, they demanded more aid from the United States and wanted the U.S. government to use its influence on the Western European countries so the latter would extend economic aid to Turkey. Third, they wanted the United States to help Turkey gain entry into the newly founded European Economic Community. Fourth, they invited the United States to become a full member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). And fifth, they

¹¹ For more information on the U.S.-Turkish bilateral agreement, dated 5 March 1959, refer to Gönlübol and Ülman (1987, pp. 307-9).

expressed Turkey's readiness to allocate fields for the deployment of the IRBMs (Intermediate Range Nuclear Missiles) (U.S. White House 1959, pp. 3-4).

4. U.S. Perspectives on the Military Intervention of 1960

A theory espoused by some Turkish political scientists and politicians alike claims that the United States was behind the military coup that toppled the DP government on 27 May 1960.¹² According to this theory, the U.S. government was extremely concerned that the imprudent spending policies of the Turkish government could create economic chaos and imperil Turkey's political stability. The Turkish government, on the other hand, had to continue its expansionary policies to sustain its political support base, and for this it needed access to foreign loans. Since the United States was no longer willing to supply Turkey with unconditional economic aid, the Turkish government decided to turn to the USSR, which was offering generous amounts of aid to try to improve its relations with Turkey after the death of Stalin. The United States calculated that once Turkey began receiving Soviet aid, it would inevitably be followed by a renewal of Soviet influence in Turkey's foreign and domestic policies. In order to prevent such an eventuality, the theory argues, the United States motivated the Turkish Army to overthrow the DP government on 27 May 1960, just prior to the Moscow visit of Prime Minister Menderes scheduled for June 1960.

An examination of the American declassified documents on the issue of the normalization of Turkish-Soviet relations suggests that the U.S. policymakers were

¹² See Altan (1990, pp 51-61) and Demirel (1990, pp. 74-80).

indeed apprehensive about the Soviet efforts to warm up relations with Turkey. According to the Americans, the Soviets were trying to take advantage of Turkey's economic problems; they were preparing to use economic aid for distancing Turkey from the Western alliance. A U.S. NSC policy resolution on Turkey, dated 10 December 1958, included an extensive evaluation of the Soviet bloc's economic, political, and cultural activities in Turkey. The U.S. policymakers concluded that Turkish-Soviet relations, on the political and economic levels, had recovered from the marked deterioration of late 1957, when the U.S.S.R. had castigated Turkey for preparing to take military action against Syria. The paper underlined "a major Soviet effort to encourage better relations with Turkey," including the appointment in April 1957 of Ambassador N.S. Ryzhov, who was an economic administrator, had a fair command of the Turkish language, and had been in Turkey in 1930 to establish a textile plant. The Soviet efforts, according to the U.S. policymakers, were "directed at exploiting Turkey's critical economic situation; Soviet officials and bloc propaganda are concentrating on raising doubts among leaders and the educated élite as to the advantage of continuing Turkey's strong Western orientation" (U.S. National Security Council 1958, pp. 14-16). However, U.S. documents also expressed confidence in the solid pro-Western stance of the Turkish government in the face of the Soviet gestures of friendship coupled with generous aid offerings. Hence, a U.S. NSC paper on Turkey, drafted only five months before the coup d'état, mentioned no U.S. misgivings on the foreign-policy orientation of the DP government, let alone a dangerous rapprochement with the U.S.S.R. On the contrary, the paper unequivocally stated: "Progress has been made towards attaining most of the U.S. policy objectives for Turkey. . . . For its part, Turkey strongly supports Free World

security arrangements, and the U.S. and its allies enjoy continued access to Turkish resources and military facilities” (U.S. National Security Council 1959, p. 1).

Most important of all, U.S. documents on the 1960 coup d'état and the ensuing developments show that the United States was extremely alarmed about the political uncertainty created by the military coup. One U.S. concern was that the coup could evolve in a radical direction, which would imply the “complete independence” of Turkey from the West and the severing of its special relations with the United States. The second U.S. concern was that the Turkish military government might be tempted to accept Soviet offers of extensive economic aid and thus develop an economic and political dependency on the USSR. Hence, U.S. Ambassador Fletcher Warren, in a letter dated 11 August 1960 to the State Department, expressed his misgivings about the members of the junta, who had a tendency “to suspect the relationship with the United States and Turkey.” In this connection, he made the remark that “the attitude towards the United States is being determined by a group of inexperienced men . . . who basically feel that they should pull away from the United States as much as possible.” He then urged the U.S. government to try to see that the Turkish junta “doesn't succumb to Commie blandishments and that it remains loyal to the United States, to CENTO, to NATO.” Ambassador Warren pointed to three potential sources of danger created by the coup d'état. The first was the growing gap between the junta and the rest of the military, which might cause friction, infighting, and possibly other coup attempts. The second risk suggested by the ambassador was that the junta members were becoming accustomed to their powers and thus might not want to convey the reins of authority to an elected government. The third risk was that the

Turkish military government, like the Egyptian military government in the 1950s, might succumb to the tempting Soviet offers of economic aid. By far the most deleterious outcome of the 1960 coup, according to Ambassador Warren, was that the Turkish Army demolished the Kemalist tradition of nonintervention in politics and became “a coup d'état army.” An implication of that transformation was that there was no longer a guarantee that the military would not stage another coup (U.S. Department of State 1960, pp. 1, 5, 10).

The military regime's tendency to be more independent of the United States was also indicated in a U.S. National Security Council paper dated 5 October 1960: “The provisional government of Turkey (PGOT) is likely to continue its fundamental cooperation with the United States but is likely to be more independent than the previous government in assessing its own interests. . . . The present military leaders may well prove more independent and less readily amenable to U.S. influence on issues related to American presence in Turkey. They may be less inclined toward informal agreements and they may look more closely at the U.S. use of Turkish military facilities” (U.S. National Security Council 1960, p. 2). The worries of the U.S. government regarding the leanings of Turkey's military government were not without substance, as was shown later by the formation, within the ruling National Unity Committee, of a radical wing of younger officers apparently influenced by the then-trendy ideas of nonalignment and the noncapitalist path of economic development. This radical wing, commonly known as the Fourteen, was ejected from the ruling junta in November 1960, and its members were sent into exile. However, the ideas of independence and the noncapitalist path, symbolized most visibly by Nasserism in Egypt and Baathism in Iraq and Syria, continued to exert considerable

influence in the 1960s on the thinking of certain factions of the Turkish left and, more importantly, of a considerable portion of the Turkish officer corps. In the late 1960s, these ideas formed the basis for a left-wing coup coalition, which brought together civilian élites, some members of the Fourteen who had returned from exile and kept their political ambitions alive, and a number of active-duty junior and senior officers of the military establishment. According to many accounts, this coalition was about to stage a coup on 9 March 1971, but the attempt failed at the last minute because some top-ranking commanders, who had previously agreed to cooperate with the coalition, shifted their allegiances, allegedly under U.S. influence. The failed left-wing coup then led, three days later, to a repressive and revanchist right-wing coup, one of whose main goals was the purging of the radical officers from the ranks of the armed forces.¹³

The above-mentioned NSC paper pointed to the Soviet attempts, including renewed offers of extensive economic assistance, to allure the Turkish military government: “Since the coup the USSR has sought to exploit the situation. Immediately following the coup, the Soviet Union made renewed offers of extensive economic assistance to help the provisional government to strengthen Turkey’s weak economic position. Offers of a high-level exchange of visits were also made” (U.S. National Security Council 1960, p. 3). In this connection, the NSC decided to “urge Turkey to continue to deny or limit exports of strategic commodities to the Sino-Soviet Bloc . . . and discourage Turkey from (a) accepting Sino-Soviet Bloc aid in

¹³ On the issue of the hardliner-softliner struggles within the National Unity Committee following the 1960 military intervention, see Weiker (1963) and İpekçi and Coşar (1965). For two insiders’ accounts of the left-wing coup coalition of the 1960s, see Gürkan (1986) and Cemal (1999).

certain particularly sensitive fields of a kind or on terms which would be damaging to their security, and (b) engaging in trade with the Sino-Soviet Bloc at levels sufficient to create undue economic dependence on the Bloc, or on terms or other conditions seriously prejudicial to U.S. interest." (U.S. National Security Council 1960, p. 12).

The NSC paper of 5 October 1960 also underlined the dangers that might be created if the military government did not honor its promise of returning to democracy in the shortest possible time: "Should the members of the CNU seek to perpetuate their power indefinitely by non-democratic means, widespread political instability could result because of the strong desire of the Turkish middle classes for representative political institutions. It is in the overall U.S. interest for Turkey to have a form of government responsive to the will of the people as soon as practicable" (U.S. National Security Council 1960, p. 3). Starting from these observations, the NSC decided on the following major policy guidance: "Encourage the holding of free elections and continuance in Turkey of a democratic form of government, impressing upon the Turks, wherever appropriate, the advantages of individual freedoms and democratic institutions and practices and the fact that these are desirable internally as well as in the interests of Turkey's international influence and prestige." (U.S. National Security Council 1960, pp. 10-11).

In light of these observations, it can be concluded that the DP leadership had no intention of extending Turkish-Soviet rapprochement beyond the standard limits of good neighborly relations and that therefore the United States had no reason to endorse a military coup against the DP government. Moreover, there were equally

strong domestic factors that would have pre-empted the DP government from taking large amounts of Soviet aid in return for a pro-Soviet shift in Turkish foreign policy. First, any unusual rapprochement of the DP government with the USSR would have provided the main opposition party, the RPP, and its leader, İsmet Pasha, with an excellent opportunity for charging that the DP was selling out the country to the communists. Second, most of the prominent DP figures and the great majority of its rank and file were staunchly pro-American and anti-Russian. Therefore, even if we assume that the DP's top leadership had become desperate enough to seek Soviet financial help to stay in power, and that the United States had wanted to get rid of them in order to keep Turkey in the Western camp, it would still have been much easier and safer for America to achieve its goals by using its considerable influence on the DP cadres to oust just the existing leadership of the governing party and replace them with U.S. loyalists— rather than to change the whole Turkish regime to an uncertain military dictatorship.

5. Concluding Remarks

During the Cold War, the leading component of Turkey's value in the eyes of the United States was its role in the regional and global security networks that were put in place to deter Soviet aggression. "Security" and "geopolitics" were the key terms of the official American discourse regarding Turkey. "The principal reason for Turkey's international significance," says a State Department research paper, "is its geographic location athwart the strategically important Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus" (U.S. Department of State 1949, p. 45). A CIA intelligence report, dated 1951, stated: "The alignment of Turkey with the West is of primary strategic

importance to the U.S. because of Turkey's political and military strength and its geographical position The Turkish army would be a major obstacle to Soviet advances in the Middle East through Turkey Turkey is the only country in the Near East capable of offering substantial resistance to Soviet aggression" (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency 1951, pp. 3-4). Turkey's geopolitical value, however, was a derivative one—derived from its proximity to and its capacity to defend the Middle East and its oil resources. And just as Turkey's geopolitical value was derived from that of the Middle East, Greece's geopolitical value, in turn, was derived from that of Turkey: "If Greece should fall to the Communists, the USSR would outflank the [Turkish] Straits and acquire natural harbors and more convenient airfields to threaten the oil resources of the Middle East and the sea routes through the Suez Canal." (U.S. Department of State 1949, p. 1).

This security-based American outlook on Turkey left a lasting imprint on Turkish perceptions of themselves and of the outside world. This influence can be summarized by what can be called the "geopoliticization" of Turkish ideologies and discourses—military as well as civilian, right-wing as well as left-wing—all through the Cold War and beyond. Hence, Turkish political élites have perceived and presented Turkey's global importance only in geopolitical terms, disregarding or mistrusting the country's economic, political, cultural, and historical assets and other possible contributions to the outside world. "Our geopolitical value" has become the main argument, used by the Turkish élites against Western governments, to extract "geopolitical rents" from them. A related notion, "our sensitive geopolitical position," was brought into play by the successive Turkish governments as an excuse to ignore or suppress domestic demands for political liberalization. Geopoliticization

infiltrated into such deep layers of Turkish political thinking that long after the end of the Cold War, in response to the European Union's insistence that Turkey liberalize its political regime in line with the Copenhagen Criteria, many Turkish political leaders continued to maintain that the EU could not possibly exclude Turkey because of "our geopolitical value."

The deep impact of geopoliticization on Turkish political thinking manifested itself once again after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, the subsequent U.S. bombardment of Afghanistan, and Turkey's decision to participate in the U.S.-led coalition in the war against terrorism. Many commentators in the Turkish media and among the political élites immediately started to think that Turkey's geopolitical value had now increased, especially for serving as the model of secular Islam as opposed to fundamentalist Islam. This geopolitical value, according to these commentators, could be used as leverage to extract more economic aid from the Western governments and international organizations without undertaking all of the required structural reforms in the economy, and to drive back some of the democratizing and liberalizing demands of the European Union. According to this line of thinking, democratization is not valuable in and of itself; it has only a geopolitical value. If democratization brings Turkey international prestige, if it serves a foreign-policy purpose such as accession to the European Union, then it may be cherished and promoted. However, whenever another factor emerges that serves the purpose just as well, then democratization can easily be brought to a standstill.

From the Truman Doctrine onward, and all through the 1950s, the geopolitical identities of Greece and Turkey, in the eyes of the Americans as well as the Western

Europeans, were ambiguous. On the one hand, Turkey and Greece were seen, by the Americans and the Western Europeans alike, as part of the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. As such, neither the Americans nor the Western Europeans thought of these two countries as belonging to Europe proper. In fact, in 1948, Turkey and Greece, together with Iran, were categorized as the GTI (Greece, Turkey, Iran) division within the newly created NEA (Near East and African Affairs) office of the U.S. Department of State (Kuniholm 1980, pp. 423-25). On the other hand, though, Greece and Turkey were members of such European and Western organizations as the Council of Europe, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC, which later became OECD), and NATO. When Western European economies began to recover from the destruction and hardships of World War II, and particularly after European integration—a process that had been started, sponsored, and supported by the United States—culminated in the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC), both Greece and Turkey began to express their desires to clarify their ambiguous geopolitical identities, to be accepted as European states, and to join the EEC.

The United States turned out to be the prime backer of the European aspirations of Greece and Turkey. This U.S. backing was motivated by two factors. First, the United States wanted to share the financial burden of Greece and Turkey with the Western European states. And second, the United States aimed to stabilize the Greek and Turkish economies and political regimes, and to consolidate the Western orientations of these states, by linking them firmly with the process of European integration. A 1960 U.S. National Security Council paper on U.S. policy towards Turkey stated: “Successful association of Turkey with the EEC would be in

the U.S. interest since Turkey's trading position would be strengthened, thereby lessening the danger of Turkey's ever becoming excessively reliant upon Soviet bloc markets for disposing of its exports. Furthermore, association would probably lead to additional development funds for Turkey and generally to the acceptance by the EEC countries of greater responsibility for Turkey's economic and political fortunes" (U.S. National Security Council 1960, p. 5).

Both Greece and Turkey applied to the EEC for full membership in 1959. Both countries concluded very similar association treaties with the EEC in the early years of the 1960s. However, both countries had significant political forces—such as the supporters of the nationalist right, religious right, socialism, nonalignment, and the noncapitalist path—that were vehemently opposed to integration with the EEC, which they commonly perceived as an imperialist club. Nor did the political regimes of the two countries in the 1960s and early 1970s—tainted as they were with occasional military interventions and authoritarian rules—fit with the European pattern of liberal democracy. Hence, it is worth remembering that, let alone being admitted to the EEC, Greece was ousted even from the Council of Europe during the Colonels' junta. The paths of the two countries toward Europe, which proceeded almost in tandem up until the mid-1970s, began to diverge significantly from that point onward. Hence, while Greece, after the fall of the junta and the restoration of democracy in 1974-75, underwent a rapid process of Europeanization,¹⁴ Turkey lagged behind, oscillating between the three worlds.

¹⁴ See Tayfur (1991) for an account of the Europeanization of Greek foreign policy and domestic politics by the mid-1970s. According to Nicos Poulantzas, democratization of a dependent state like Greece meant that the newly grown domestic bourgeoisie joined foreign capital and the comprador bourgeoisie in the ruling coalition. The

It seems that this indecision and oscillation of Turkey had to do more with its domestic political forces than with the foreign policies of the European states or the United States. Hence, during the 1970s, Turkey's pro-European center-right (represented by the Justice Party) was electorally weakened and, in terms of its ideology, cadres, and foreign and domestic policy, came under the domination of the anti-Western nationalist and Islamicist radical-right parties (the Nationalist Action Party and the National Salvation Party). The center-left side of the political spectrum, on the other hand, was occupied by the Republican People's Party, which was itself advancing a left-wing populism with strong Third Worldist overtones. Needless to say, the radical left, which exerted a significant degree of influence on the center-left and on Turkish politics in general, was altogether opposed to any idea of Turkey's integration with capitalist Europe. Turkey's indecision toward Europe continues even today, after Turkey has finally become a candidate state "destined to join" the European Union. There still exist in today's Turkey significant political forces defending various non-European options, ranging from Turkey being a regional power to Turkey being the leader of a Turkic union or of an Islamic union. The decision is Turkey's to make, caught as it is between the opposing tides of the European and non-European options, upbeat with the upward stirrings of its geopolitical value and downbeat with its downturns.

democratization process "... signifies a redistribution of power relations and a certain limitation of both the prerogatives wielded up to now by the comprador bourgeoisie and foreign capital, and of the overwhelming role of the United States." (Poulantzas 1976, p. 128). Therefore, the former authoritarian power bloc of foreign capital and the comprador bourgeoisie always has the incentive to reverse the process: "... this limitation [of their powers], or even the renegotiation of the equilibrium of the compromise, may sometimes be enough to provoke a putchist

reaction from the comprador bourgeoisie, from imperialist capital and the United States . . ." (Poulantzas 1976, p. 128).

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