

Post 9/11 Turkey-American Relations and Iraq

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Abstract

The United States' military operation in Iraq in the post 9/11 period is seen to have marked a deterioration in Turkish-American relations. Turkey, a NATO member and ally of the United States since the Cold War days, for the first time disagreed with its main ally, and did not cooperate in military operations in Iraq with the U.S. as it did in the first Gulf War. The United States considers its relations with Turkey as important and strategic to its interest not only in the Middle East, but in the Caucasus, parts of Asia and the Balkans as well. Turkey, on the other hand, also views its relations with the United States as important not just to Turkey's national security, but also for Turkey's various interests which the U.S. is supporting. Any deterioration in these relations is seen to likely affect the security interests of both nations. This paper examines how and why the United States and Turkey did not cooperate in the U.S. led Iraqi military operations; it takes a look at the perspectives of both sides and argues that both countries need one another in their relations.

Keywords: Turkey, United States, Iraqi, Security, Cooperation

1. Introduction

Post 9/11 U.S. Iraqi operation seemed to have complicated the relations between Turkey and the United States. The series of negotiations that followed the operations were characteristic of both cooperation and disagreement. The U.S. had been confident of Turkish support for the operation even before it approached Ankara for support. Ankara, on the other hand, had some reservations about the operation but was at the same time mindful of the importance of its relations with Washington. Turkey, it appeared, did not want to disappoint the United States, but at the same time became concerned about not only the legitimacy of the operation, but also other security concerns as well as certain interests regarding Iraq.

Iraq occupies an important place in both Turkish and American foreign policy for several reasons considered strategic and security as well. Internal developments within Iraq could easily affect Turkey, which shares a common border with it. The Kurdish issue and PKK remain central in Turkey's relations with Iraq. The two issues have posed serious security challenge to Turkey for many years. The Turcoman and other economic concerns such as energy resources also form part of Ankara's priorities in Iraq, which it was not willing to jeopardize. The United States on the other hand, sees Iraq as vital not only for its enormous energy resources, but as strategic to its wider Middle East interest and strategic plan. The Iraqi operation itself is seen to be in the pursuance of this strategic American interest, in accordance the "Grand Area" plan that was meant to project U.S. interests all over the globe, including the Middle East. The main concern though is the energy resources of the region and partly, the U.S. support for Israel.

Iraq had been an important ally, especially after the Iranian revolution of 1979. Iraq became important for Washington's Iran containment policy. After the invasion of Kuwait, the U.S. and allies moved against Iraq, and since then, the relations between the Saddam regime and Washington turned sour. This also worsened after the 9/11 attacks, when the U.S. accused Iraq of harboring terrorists and of possessing weapons of mass destruction, which became the primary motive for the Iraqi operation for which the U.S. sought the cooperation of Turkey. Even though at this time there were doubts of course as to whether the Saddam regime was actually in possession of such weapons as claimed by the United States or not. And no evidence was provided by the United States to convince the international community and ally nations regarding these weapons of mass destruction. As a result, the U.S. failed to secure the support of the United Nations, and no resolution was passed to support the U.S. led mission in Iraq. What happened thereafter was a unilateral decision by the United States and whichever that country chose to support its mission in Iraq.

The focus of this article is to know exactly why and how the United States and Turkey disagreed over the Iraqi operation, as this will show very clearly if there are justifications for these disagreements between the allies, or otherwise as the paper will show. The article also tries to look at the relations between the two countries in Iraq despite these disagreements, and despite the fact that the U.S. went on with the operation without Turkey. However during the operation, Turkey and the U.S. were seen to have cooperated in other areas like counter terrorism and trans-border operations against the PKK mainly in Northern Iraq, and the article argues that both Turkey and the United States need the support of one another in their relations with Iraq.

The article is divided into eight sub-sections, each analyzing the various aspects of the relations between the two countries with regards to Iraq in the post 9/11 period. It covers disagreements between the two on the Iraqi

operation, cooperation on counter terrorism, and the withdrawal from Iraq and Turkish concerns. The article further tries to look at the perspectives and priorities of both countries. The policy implications for both countries were also taken into consideration and a conclusion at the end. Many articles and some academic thesis were consulted in writing this article, some of these include: Noam Chomsky's article, "After the Cold War: U.S Foreign Policy in the Middle East," Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Perils and Prospects of Proximity," a Special Report of the United States Institute for Peace, F. Stephen Larrabee's article, "Turkey As a U.S. Security Partner," which was prepared for the United States Air Force by the Rand Corporation. Other articles consulted include: Desmond Fernandes' paper titled, "Turkey's U.S. Backed 'War On Terror': A Cause For Concern?," "The Neglected Alliance: Restoring U.S. –Turkey Relations to meet 21st Century Challenges," by Spencer P. Boyer and Brian Katulis, and published by the Centre for American Progress, along with many other articles that will be featured in the reference section at the end of the article. I wish to profoundly acknowledge the support of my teachers in the Department of International Relations at Yildirim Beyazit University in Ankara, Turkey, and particularly to Dr. Giray Sadik, Professor Selcuk Colakgolu, Professor Ramazan Gozen, Dr. Sabit, Dr. Eryada Progonati, my adviser Dr. Bayram Sinkaya and lastly to my friend Nancy Jo Marcet for helping with the editing.

2. U.S. in Iraq and Turkey

Turkey-American relations came to be dominated by the issue of Iraq in the post 9/11 period, as a result of eroding confidence between the U.S. and the regime of Saddam Hussein. The Turkish Prime Minister, Ecevit visited Washington on the 16th of January, 2002, and during the visit, officials in Washington shared their opinions regarding Iraq with the Prime Minister. Ecevit responded positively but emphasized that the territorial integrity of Iraq should be protected. Meanwhile on January 29, 2002, U.S. President George W. Bush made a speech publicly in which he referred to Iraq as belonging to countries in the axis of evil, along with North Korea and Iran. There were strong indications of Turkey's commitment to its relations with the United States, especially its taking command of the ISAF in Afghanistan in 2002. By July 2002, the United States had reached out to the Iraqi opposition. The Russians on the other hand, convinced of U.S. intentions, sent its Assistant Foreign Secretary, Sultanov to Ankara, to convince Turkey not to support the military action. The United States extended its initial demands to Turkey through its Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz on July 16, 2002, when he visited Turkey's Prime Minister, during which he expressed Washington's hope for Turkish support in the Iraqi operation. The Prime Minister of Turkey reiterated his earlier position and concern for the territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as its future, and security of the Turcoman. The United States had proposed the formation of a special channel within Turkey that would permit the passage of U.S. Special Forces into Northern Iraq along with Turkish forces.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development on September 17, 2002, Turkish President and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell met and signed an economic aid agreement totaling \$200 Million. At the meeting, Turkey maintained that any operation in Iraq must have international legitimacy. In the following period, U.S. Officials briefed the Turks on the plan of the United States on the Iraqi operation, with some demands by the U.S. from the Turkish authorities, which include among others: permission for pre-deployment of site surveys, approval of the Northern Iraq liaison elements teams, the stationing of 80,000 U.S. troops and 250 fighter planes, the use of six major and eight supplementary airfields, and two main and two supplementary ports in Turkey. As well as permission to use all Turkish lands for logistical support and unrestricted over flights. The United States had during the briefing maintained that there would be a unified Iraq, with territorial integrity, and that there would be equal treatment of all ethnic groups within Iraq, including the Turcoman, which in a way seemed to have taken care of some of Turkey's concerns about the operation. In addition, oil resources would be under the control of a central government. This position seemed to have allayed the fears of Turkey regarding the future of Iraq once the operation commences.

The Chief of Turkish General Staff met with his U.S. counterpart, General Richard Myers, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and his Deputy, Wolfowitz in Washington, where he made known the concerns of Turkey, which he said include: international legitimacy for the operation, compensation for Turkish losses after the first Gulf War, as well as the upcoming operation, and the future of Northern Iraq. And on the 18th of December, 2002, Turkey permitted U.S. officials to inspect air bases with the aim of modernizing them, upon obtaining a Parliamentary approval. But even at this time, Turkey felt that the war could be avoided, and the Prime Minister undertook a tour of the region and consulted with leaders within the region regarding the issue. On the 3rd of January, 2003, the Turkish government issued a statement reiterating its earlier position that any military action in Iraq would require a UN resolution. This is probably as a result of its consultation, which is likely the opinion of the regional leaders which it consulted before coming up with the public statement, this seems to be the likely explanation for issuing such a statement, otherwise the tour undertaken by the Prime Minister would have been meaningless if Turkey's decision would not be based on the respective opinions of the regional leaders. U.S. General Myers, who was in Turkey at the time, responded by saying that the United States would start the war with or without Turkey. Turkey had a lot of concerns regarding the war, both domestic and international. First, Turkey was an E.U. candidate, and France

and Germany were opposed to the operation as European States, and Turkey did not want to jeopardize its chances of E.U. membership. Also, within Turkey, polls indicated that 77.8% of Turkish people were opposed to the Iraqi operation, and the Turkish authorities needed a Parliamentary approval to station foreign troops in Turkey. The lack of support from European counterparts, as well as from within Turkey, made it difficult for the authorities to insist or confidently support the operation. They tended to lack the moral authority to prevail on the TGNA to approve its request, mainly as a result of the internal opposition to the operation. Nevertheless, a request was sent to the TGNA on March 1, 2003, which failed to reach the overall majority requirement, although by only 3 votes. Before the TGNA decision, there had been some disagreements regarding the operation, while the U.S. wanted to keep command of all the troops, Turkey wanted to command its own forces. Also, Turkey requested for a 25 Billion USD economic package, while the U.S. offered a 6 Billion USD package. And again, Turkey wanted a signed agreement on the future of Iraq, but the U.S. wanted Turkey to rely on verbal words only. The Turkish officials eventually got the TGNA approval for the operation despite all the disagreements. However, the approval was a little bit conditional, as Turkish troops were allowed to go only into Northern Iraq, and the use of Turkish air space also was for a limited period of six months. The United States declined, saying there was no need for Turkish troops. On the 20th of March, 2003, the United States unilaterally undertook the invasion of Iraq, ousting the government of Saddam Hussein and taking over control of the affairs of Iraq, with U.S. forces taking command.

3. U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq

Despite the fact that the United States carried out the Iraqi operation without Turkish troops, even though the TGNA in the end reached a decision to send troops, and to permit the use of Turkish air space by the Americans for a period of six months. The United States cooperated with the Republic of Turkey on cross border patrol and counter terrorism, an operation that was mainly targeted at the PKK. Initially, the U.S. had warned Turkey after the second TGNA decision not to approach Northern Iraq, and that the U.S. had troops already stationed in the north, but all this changed after the success of the operation, and Turkey and U.S. began counter terrorism operations in collaboration. At this point the dual nature of the Turkish-American relations regarding the Iraqi operation has become evident, characteristic of both disagreement and cooperation. And when the Iraqi Parliament ratified the status of force agreement between it and the United States, gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops followed the ratification. The withdrawal became a source of concern for Turkish decision makers; they were particularly concerned that with the U.S. withdrawal, their capacity to contain the PKK may be difficult. Generally, the Republic of Turkey thought that the withdrawal would create security problems in Iraq and complicate issues and provide the PKK with an opportunity to start operations in Turkey. The usual cross-border operation against the PKK, in cooperation with the U.S. troops, was feared by Turkey, that it would come to an end as soon as the U.S. pulled out of Iraq. For this reason, Prime Minister Erdogan, back in 2007, met with U.S. President Bush to discuss the matter and advised that the withdrawal be carefully planned. The U.S. President informed the Prime Minister that hence forth the approval of the Iraqi government would have to be sought for any cross-border activity to take place. The Turks feared that a free Iraq would want to consolidate its territorial sovereignty, which would not consider requests for border operations from Turkey. Turkey also feared that a power vacuum would be created by the U.S. pullout from Iraq, which may have the effect of sparking off sectarian and ethnic conflict that may become uncontrollable, and instability in Iraq may likely affect Turkey. The U.S. pullout, also to Turkey, would be a setback to the intelligence and daily satellite monitoring it provided to Turkey on the activities of the PKK. In 2008 alone, Turkey conducted about 30 air strikes against PKK targets in Northern Iraq with such intelligence support from the U.S., so once the U.S. pulls out, such a privilege will no longer be available, as the Iraqi air space would come under the control of the Iraqi government. These became serious issues of concern for Turkey as the U.S. troops began gradual pull out from Iraq.

4. Turkey-U.S. Counter Terrorism Cooperation

Counter terrorism cooperation between Turkey and the United States predates the 9/11 period. It began in the 1990's during the Clinton administration but was consolidated under the administration of Bush, following the 9/11 attacks. The Kurdistan Workers Party or the PKK which was founded on Marxist principles, and began its armed campaign for Kurdish Independence in 1984. There are approximately 14 million Kurdish people in Turkey, highest in the entire region. The PKK poses a serious security challenge to the Republic of Turkey over the years, demanding an independent Kurdish republic. In 2005, Washington authorities designated the PKK as a terrorist organization as a result of its violent activities within Turkey, and this deepened the efforts of both the U.S. and Turkey in dealing with the group. U.S. President George W. Bush pledged to cooperate and support Turkey to see to the end of the PKK insurgency. However, there are two basic perceptions about the counter terrorism cooperation on the PKK from the perspective of the U.S.-Turkish military officials. It is an operation that is targeted at the PKK, which they consider a terrorist organization, along with aiming to protect the territorial integrity and security of Turkey against the demand for a Kurdish state championed violently by the

PKK. On the other hand, some Human Rights organizations and Kurdish groups view the operations as purely a case of Human Rights abuse. These groups generally claim that many innocent people have been killed in cold blood by the Turkish guerilla fighters in the name fighting PKK terrorists. The PKK was said to have issued a statement, saying that Turkish politicians and media do not only refer to the PKK when speaking about terrorists, but rather all Kurdish organizations, associations and to all Kurds, citing examples of what they termed as cold blooded murder of Kurdish people even when it is very clear they have no connection with the PKK. The European Union had also in the 1990's criticized Turkey's handling of the PKK issue which it views as constituting violation of Human Rights.

The struggle between Turkish forces and the PKK had led to the death of many. It is estimated that between 1984 and 1999, about 37,000-40,000 people including civilians and members of the Turkish forces died due to the insurgency. Economically, it is estimated that about \$100 Billion dollars had been spent in the war against the PKK. In July 2005, U.S. ordered the capture of the commanders of the PKK in Iraq, and it continues to provide intelligence to Turkish security forces carrying out anti-terrorism operations near the Iraqi border. The CIA and the U.S. army provided information that led to the capture of many PKK terrorists. The United States played a very prominent role in the capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, in 1999 after it pressurized Syria to expel him and was later captured in Nairobi, Kenya, with aid of U.S. intelligence. U.S. satellites monitoring the Middle East screened Southeast Turkey and spotted PKK elements on many occasions. Also, the U.S. was tapping communication from the organization's authorities, and then passing this information to the Turkish authorities for necessary action. The U.S. Congress approved the international military education training courses for Turkish forces with a view to equipping them to handle terrorism. Not only that, the U.S. also provided foreign military financing for Turkey mainly as a result of the PKK issue and as part of its contribution to the cooperation on counter terrorism. These grants were to assist Turkey purchase weapons, services and personnel training as well. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Agency are also involved in training the Turkish Police and Paramilitary forces to counter drug trafficking, terrorism and organized crime. The FBI, according to its Director is working with counterparts elsewhere and in Europe and Turkey to address the PKK issue and is working cooperatively to find and cut off financing for the PKK, to render it completely ineffective. In 2011, the U.S. planned to sell Super Cobra attack helicopters to Turkey to be used for operations on the PKK, and further redeployed four drones to Turkey from Northern Iraq for fighting the PKK, thereby improving Turkey's strength and ability to contain the PKK insurgency.

5. Turkey's Perspectives and Priorities

Just as Turkey considers its relationship with the United States as strategic and important, nevertheless, Turkey views this relationship with regards to Iraq within the context of its own interest in Iraq, both short and long term interests. Many years before the Iraqi operations beginning with the 1980's, the Republic of Turkey had been faced with the problem of the Kurdish insurgency. These have led to the creation of various Kurdish groups including the PKK, which is championing the cause of a Kurdish State. Both Turkey and Iraq have Kurdish population with the largest concentration in Turkey. It is estimated that about 14 million Kurds reside in Turkey. Turkey's main concern is controlling the activities of these Kurdish groups, especially with regards to the influence of the Iraqi Kurdish population's political activities within Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds are known to have rebellious tendencies against the Iraqi State, with deep grassroots mobilization aimed at challenging the Iraqi State. Despite the fact that the insurgency has been reduced in recent times, it still remains a source of concern for Turkey which fears the contagion effect of the Iraqi Kurdish insurgency. Turkey's fears are strengthened by the long history as well as strong tribal, familial bonds that unify the Iraqi and the Kurds within Turkey.

After the Iraqi operations, the Republic of Turkey was forced to reconsider its policies and priorities in Iraq. Accordingly, the first priority for Turkey at this time was the return of central government authority and control over the entire Iraqi territory. This, according to Turkey, will enable Iraq to overcome the ethnic and sectarian divisions that have taken over in Iraq since the U.S. operations. Turkey considered stability in Iraq as a priority so as to continue economic activities within the country. Turkey was concerned about the security of the two pipelines that convey oil from Northern Iraq to Turkish terminals at the Mediterranean port city of Ceyhan. Another concern for Turkey is the ability of the new Iraqi government at handling the activities of its Kurdish population along the Northern border, so as to stop the infiltration by the PKK. Turkey feared that a federal Iraq may not be capable of securing its border with Turkey, as against an Iraq with a strong central government. In the past, the U.S. had considered the idea of Federalism in Iraq, while negotiating a truce between factions of Kurdish groups. The oil resources of Iraq also remained an issue of concern for Turkey. Turkey wanted oil resources to remain under the control of a firm central government, lest oil resources are used by certain elements such as the Kurds to project their dream of future independence. Another important priority which came to be articulated a little late was the issue of the Turkmen in the 1990's. In this regard, Turkey became concerned with the rights of minorities in Iraq. Through such a policy, Turkey was able to slow down Kurdish activities. It also provided Turkey with an opportunity to remain relevant in Northern Iraq. Not only was Turkey

promoting the rights of this group, but it also wanted the group involved in determining the future of Iraq, as well as the control of the oil rich city of Kirkuk, which is contested by both the Kurds and the Turkmen.

6. American Perspectives and Priorities

The United State's perspectives as well as priorities in both Iraq and Turkey must be understood from its broader interest in the Middle East or the Persian Gulf region as it is known. The U.S. policy towards the Persian Gulf and the Middle East was framed within a conception of a New World Order. The New World Order System was established after the World War II, when the United States was at the peak of its power. Cognizant of its power status, extensive plans were made regarding what came to be known as the "Grand Area," which was a world system in which the interest of the United States is expected to be dominant. The "Grand Area" plans for the Gulf region was developed and one of its major concerns remained the enormous energy resources of the Middle East region, which was expected to be put into the United States dominated system. The U.S. considered displacing all other interests in the region, and extending its influence over what the U.S. State Department described as a "stupendous source of strategic power, and one of the greatest material prizes in world history." U.S. President Eisenhower was said to have referred to the Persian Gulf region as the most "Strategically important area in the world." It was within such a conception that United States Corporations gained a leading role in the production of the Middle Eastern oil.

The second priority for the U.S in the region, which has been of much concern, was the relationship with the State of Israel. American support for Israel was seen as mainly arising from its military success in the 1948 Arab /Israeli War, which portrayed it as a potential regional power that could offer the United States the means to gain strategic advantage in the Gulf region. Israel was seen by the U.S. as second only to Turkey, as a military power in the region, and as such was viewed as an asset to the United States. U.S. priorities could further be identified since it has already made clear the threat to its interests in the region. The U.S. identified "indigenous nationalism" as well as regional unrest as the main threats to its interests in the region. The U.S. National Security Strategy Report of 1990, which was presented to the U.S. Congress, had proposed the projection of U.S. military power into the Middle Eastern region, where it thought it was facing a threat from enemies of "unimaginable power," and predicted that non-Soviet threats would require greater attention in the region. Turkey's importance to the U.S. cannot be over-emphasized if the priorities of the U.S. regarding the Middle Eastern region are considered carefully. Turkey's strategic location and proximity to the Middle Eastern region, including Iraq, cannot be dismissed. Turkey is seen by the United States as both a bridge to the Muslim World, and a stabilizing force in the Middle East and Asia, both are of great importance to the United States. The United States continuous to have strong interest in maintaining its strategic cooperation with Turkey, so long as its interests in the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia remain.

7. Policy Implications for U.S. and Turkey

The U.S. appeared to be heavily relying on the Kurds as allies during its operation in Iraq, a situation that Turkey did not like. U.S. support for the Kurds over the Turkmen in Northern Iraq became very likely. The U.S. support for the Kurds here can be viewed with two main implications for Turkey. One is within Iraq against the Turkmen, as well as control over Kirkuk, the oil rich city. The second is Washington's likely support for a future Kurdish State within Iraq, which is totally against Turkish interest. The two issues have implications related to domestic peace and security within Turkey as a result of the relations between the Turkish Kurds and the Iraqi Kurds. Instability in Iraq is also likely to spill into Turkey, and may likely lead to Turkish intervention in Iraq, either to protect the Turkmen or otherwise. This was seen as likely to affect Turkey's European Union bid as a candidate. The E.U. had on many occasions considered Turkey's actions towards the Kurds as repressive and constituting human rights violation, which is among other issues hindering Turkey's entry into the Union. Generally, Turkey must be able to balance its preferences with regards to its relations with Iraq and the United States. Despite the many differences that may have existed between the two nations, the U.S. involvement in Iraq has brought about many complications for Turkey in Iraq. A policy of U.S. isolation may not be in the best interest of Turkey despite its relations with the E.U.

Recently, Turkey is seen to be drawn more and more into Middle Eastern affairs as a result of the Kurdish issue, cooperating with Syria and Iran, perceived enemies of the United States. The many differences between Turkey and U.S., such as the Cyprus issue and of recent Iraq, clearly indicate the likelihood of future disagreements. As a result, the United States may not be able to count on the support of Turkey for the use of its air force bases, or for any future military operations in the Middle East. This is possibly due to the fact that Turkey may not support U.S. policy of isolating either Iran or Syria. Turkey seeks to engage both countries, and this is seen to be a source of concern for the U.S. and the NATO alliance. The issue of the PKK remains a source of concern for Turkey even in recent times, and the general opinion in Turkey is that the United States has a big role to play in curtailing the strength and influence of the group. The issue had at some point created suspicions in Turkey

about U.S. intentions regarding the Kurds, and a general belief that the U.S. is not helping Turkey enough to see an end to the PKK insurgency. The Turk's believe that it is within the ability of the U.S. to assist in ending the insurgency, which led to a disappointment and growing anti-American sentiments within Turkish society. There is a growing change in Turkey's political leadership that requires the United States to change and evaluate its policies towards Turkey, especially with regards to leadership within Turkey. There is a shift in leadership in recent times that has seen the decline in power and influence of the Kemalist elites in directing the affairs of Turkey. There is need for the United States to re-articulate its policies and take into account the new differences in the political ideology in Turkey, between the secularists and the Islamists, and reach out to the new generation of Turkish politicians, which are quite different from the politicians of the past, whom the U.S. had depended upon with regards to its relations with Turkey.

8. Conclusion

The U.S. Iraqi Operation appears to have only sparked off a disagreement with Turkey, but one cannot conclude that it actually affected Turkish-American relations. It is normal for states to agree and disagree on issues, based on certain principles, and it is another thing for relations between states to go bad. If the disagreement had actually affected the good relations between the two countries, then the trans-border counter terrorism cooperation between Turkey and the U.S. during the U.S. occupation of Iraq would not have taken place. It may therefore be assumed that the Iraqi issue has been blown out of proportion or exaggerated. It was very clear that Turkey's leaders had shown willingness to cooperate with the U.S. in the operation, but needed the approval of the Turkish Parliament. They, in turn, needed the consent of the ordinary people, which was somehow negative. For this reason the Parliament failed to give the Turkish government the green light over the operation. But on the whole, other factors that influenced the decision include the lack of international legitimacy for the operation, as well as Turkey's experience in the first Gulf War and its economic losses. The economic package which was not met by the U.S. and the external and internal opposition to the operation generally, which coincided with Turkey's E.U. aspiration, contributed to the reluctance of the TGNA to give its approval for the operation. Major E.U. countries of Germany, France and even Russia were against the operation, and Turkey did not want to ruin its chances in the E.U.. It would appear that Turkish concerns were genuine, and Turkey was not only opposing the operation or just declined to support the United States as an ally without any justification.

As mentioned, the counter terrorism cooperation during the U.S. occupation is also indicative of the usual continuous collaboration between Turkey and the U.S. on terrorism which began since the 90's. And it is particularly in this area that the relation between the countries appears significant. Turkey will always remain strategic to all U.S. Middle East interest as a regional power, considering how vital the Middle East is to U.S. concerns. Turkey on the other hand, needs the partnership of the U.S. for its security concerns, particularly within Iraq. The long years of agitation for Kurdish State and the activities of the PKK remains a great concern for Turkey. The issue of the Turkmen's conflict with the Kurds for control of the oil rich Kirkuk City, is of significance to Turkey. The United States as an ally of Kurds in Iraq, is in a position to assist Turkey curb such ambitions, it can balance Turkey's interests within Iraq, just as it will help in the struggle against the PKK, which the Turks admit needs American help and support to be able to stop it. It is based on this that one can argue that the two countries will continue to need the cooperation of one another. Recent developments in Iraq, including threat by ISIS, and the Turkish Embassy hostage taking suggests that cooperation is necessary in Iraq. Turkey was initially reluctant to join the U.S. led coalition against ISIS, but later joined the coalition as a result of the necessity to do so.

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Biodata

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