

OBAMA’S AND DAVUTOĞLU’S FUTURE VISIONS: COMPATIBLE, CONTRADICTORY OR PHANTASM?

President Obama’s policies of engagement with other countries and Turkey’s Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s approach to solving Turkey’s regional issues are both examples of the use of “soft power” to resolve disputes. At first blush, Turkey’s policy goals would appear to be compatible with those of the United States. However, recent developments appear to demonstrate that Turkey is turning away from America and the West. Moreover, while Turkey has made some inroads with respect to a number of regional disputes, it is hard to imagine that soft power alone will achieve “zero problems” with Turkey’s neighbors.

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There have been significant watershed developments in U.S. and Turkish foreign policy since the arrival on the scene of President Barack Obama and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Davutoğlu is the architect of Turkey's foreign policy who has been compared to Henry Kissinger (prior to assuming his post as Foreign Minister, Davutoğlu was the guiding force in foreign policy matters as foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Erdoğan, just as Kissinger was national security adviser before he became Secretary of State, but Davutoğlu's new position puts him at the forefront of the Turkish foreign policy arena).¹ He has utilized many terms to encapsulate his policy ideas including: "zero problems"² with Turkey's neighbors, "maximum cooperation"³, "strategic depth"⁴, "new paradigm of order" and that Turkey has changed its foreign policy "from being... crisis-oriented" to a policy "based on 'vision', allowing Turkish policy-makers to spot the potential crises before they emerge."⁵ Since Davutoğlu has assumed his position, Turkey has signed protocols with Armenia to establish a roadmap to peace, has focused attention and made headway on relations with Greece, and in connection with Cyprus, and directed its energies towards improving relations with Syria, Iran and Russia. When accused of trying to move Turkey out of the Western orbit, Davutoğlu has been "a strong advocate of Turkey's future membership in the EU and insisted that 'Turkey can be European in Europe and eastern in the East, because we are both.'"⁶ Davutoğlu has said that "we have been implementing a policy of 'zero problems with our neighbors', not just with Iran, but also Iraq and Syria and also with non-Muslim countries such as Georgia, Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Romania, and with all of our other neighbors."⁷

With the election of President Obama came a major change in the way that the United States approaches its relations with other countries. As U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice stated, "American interests can best be advanced by working with others and seeking to build bridges and cooperative relationships... So we will extend our hand, we will look to others to do the

¹ "New FM Davutoğlu to Build Order-Instituting Role for Turkey", *Today's Zaman*, 4 May 2009.

² *Anadolu Ajansı*, 28 October and 14 November 2008, as quoted in Emrullah Uslu, "Ahmet Davutoğlu: The Man Behind Turkey's Assertive Foreign Policy", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* Vol. 6 Issue 57, 25 March 2009, www.jamestown.org

³ *Today's Zaman*, 30 October 2008, as quoted in Uslu.

⁴ The name of his book is *Stratejik Derinlik* [Strategic Depth]. See also the Foreign Minister's book which he wrote in conjunction with the writing of his doctoral thesis, Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory*, (University Press of America: 1994).

⁵ "New FM Davutoglu to build order-instituting role for Turkey", *Today's Zaman*, 4 May 2009.

⁶ *The Economist*, 15 December 2007, as quoted in Uslu.

⁷ Owen Matthews, et. al., *Risky Diplomacy*, *Newsweek*, 28 November 2009, www.newsweek.com

same. But we won't pick unnecessary battles, we won't seek confrontation for confrontation's sake."⁸ Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed this sentiment by stating that the "President has launched a new era of engagement based on common interests, shared values and mutual respect."⁹ This policy of engagement is an example of the utilization of America's "soft power".

Joseph S. Nye, Jr. has explained that "an aspect of power –which occurs when one country gets another country to want what it wants– might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants".¹⁰ "Soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments...The resources that produce soft power for a country include its culture (when it is attractive to others), its values (when they are attractive and not undercut by inconsistent practices) and policies (when they are seen as inclusive and legitimate)."¹¹ "Military power and economic power are both examples of 'hard' command power that can get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ('carrots') or threats ('sticks')."¹²

If Obama is the architect of the U.S. policy of engagement and the use of soft power in diplomacy, Davutoğlu is the architect of the use of Turkey's soft power, principally in dealing with its regional issues. Davutoğlu spoke approvingly of Obama when he said "Obama's style is to encourage more multilateralism, more consultation, more interaction with allies, instead of preparing policy and implementing it before consulting with other allies."¹³

Bülent Aras describes Davutoğlu's approach exemplified by Davutoğlu's seminal book, *Strategic Depth* as encompassing: "a new recognition of Turkey's historical and cultural roots"¹⁴ in the region surrounding Turkey, which has led to Turkey's involvement in these neighboring countries through the memory of "past relations, unfolding cultural and civilizational affinities, and exploring opportunities for engagement."¹⁵ The purpose of this "neighborhood policy" has

⁸ National Public Radio Transcript, 20 February 2009.

⁹ 15 July 2009, www.state.gov

¹⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Power in the Global Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 76.

¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The U.S. can reclaim 'smart power'", *Los Angeles Times*, 21 January 2009.

¹² Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 5.

¹³ Owen Matthews, et. al. "Risky Diplomacy", *Newsweek*, 28 November 2009, (interview with Foreign Minister Davutoğlu).

¹⁴ Bülent Aras, Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy, *Today's Zaman*, 30 June 2009.

¹⁵ Ibid.

been to minimize problems in Turkey's neighboring regions "which has been called [the] zero problem policy by Davutoğlu"¹⁶

"Turkey's soft power", explains Aras, "emerges from its on-the ground influence in the Middle East and the Caucasus, coupled with its political, cultural and economic abilities".¹⁷ Further, says Aras, "Obama's visit [to Turkey] contributed to Turkey's soft power image on the international stage... The challenge is to utilize converging regional and international interests between Turkey and the U.S. in the current era in order to create a win-win situation for all sides."¹⁸

In his speech in Cairo to the Muslim world on 4 June 2009, President Obama said "I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles – principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."¹⁹

There were high hopes for Turkey's being capable of using its soft power to advance U.S. interests as well as its own. Ömer Taşpınar²⁰ had put forward the idea that Turkey could offer its services as a venue for a multilateral summit on the Arab-Israeli peace process,²¹ that "Turkish diplomacy ... made substantial inroads in terms of mediating between Israel and Syria"²² and that the Turkish government ... also expressed willingness to mediate between Iran and the United States".²³ It was thought that "Turkey's much-improved soft power in the Middle East under the AKP" might have even turned "into a diplomatic asset for the Obama administration in areas such as facilitating dialogue with Damascus, Tehran and Hamas."²⁴ Another commentator noted that Turkey "has sought to engage more with the surrounding region and to establish itself as neighborhood soft power broker."²⁵ "With their strong military and economy, they have the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Obama's Vision – Speech to the Muslim World, 4 June 2009, www.whitehouse.gov

²⁰ Ömer Taşpınar, Obama's Turkey Policy: Bringing Credibility to "Strategic Partnership", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2009.

²¹ Ibid., p. 16.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 18

²⁵ Yigal Schleifer, "Turkey Moves to Engage More Deeply in Mideast - and With Neighbors," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 October 2009.

hard power, but what they are trying to do now is build up their soft power.”²⁶ It was suggested that Turkey use soft power rather than aim to be a hegemonic state and imposing or dictating its policies as the Ottoman Empire did.²⁷

The efficacy of soft power as a tool to deal with issues has itself been brought into serious question. Joseph Nye recognized that soft power does not always work and is “not the solution to all problems.”²⁸ “North Korean dictator Kim Jong II likes to watch Hollywood movies, but that is unlikely to affect his nuclear weapons program.”²⁹ Secretary of State Clinton echoed this idea during the hearing on her nomination to be Secretary of State:

Building the architecture of global cooperation requires U.S. to devise the right policies and use the right tools. I speak often of smart power because it is so central to our thinking and our decision-making. It means the intelligent use of all means at our disposal, including our ability to convene and connect. It means our economic and military strength; our capacity for entrepreneurship and innovation; and the ability and credibility of our new President and his team. It also means the application of old-fashioned common sense in policymaking. It’s a blend of principle and pragmatism.³⁰

The reality is that U.S. soft power has not been particularly effective. A significant example of this is Iran, where the U.S. has promoted a policy of engagement. President Obama called for “meaningful engagement” and “dialogue” with Iran³¹ even after a secret nuclear enrichment facility was discovered in Qom. Iran thereafter failed to engage with America and the West, emphatically refused to comply with a demand by the United Nations nuclear agency to cease work on a once-secret nuclear fuel enrichment plant, and escalated the confrontation by declaring it would construct ten more such plants.³² In November 2009, President Obama announced the need for an additional significant troop commitment in Afghanistan, hardly a soft power solution.³³ The Iranian scenario exemplifies the point that even if soft power is ineffective, carrots and sticks may also be inef-

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Turkish Soft power Changes Middle East” (interview with Sedat Laçiner), *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 12 November 2009.

²⁸ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “The U.S. Can Reclaim ‘Smart Power’”, *Los Angeles Times*, 21 January 2009.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Nomination Hearing To Be Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 13 January 2009.

³¹ President Obama’s Speech to the G20, 25 September 2009, www.huffingtonpost.com

³² David A. Sanger and William J. Broad, “A Defiant Iran Vows to Build Nuclear Plant”, *The New York Times*, 29 November 2009.

³³ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, Obama Issues Order for More Troops in Afghanistan, *The New York Times*, 30 November 2009.

fective (this has been the case also in respect to U.S. policy towards Cuba which has been “resistant to carrots and sticks.”³⁴)

On the Turkish front, although Turkey has signed protocols with Armenia to provide a road map to peace, the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and the impact of the Turkey-Armenia accords on Azerbaijan have not been resolved and could lead to further conflict and the inability of Armenia and Turkey to implement their accords. Further, the Armenian Genocide resolution has been reintroduced and will continue to be pushed in the U.S. Congress, because the U.S. interest groups promoting the passage of the resolution are not willing to link their issue to the larger and much more important Turkey-Armenian peace (one might see Turkey’s interest in entering into an agreement with Armenia as a way to stave off the passage of the Genocide Resolution in the U.S.) There is no guarantee that peace is imminent in Cyprus which has been the scene of endless peace negotiations, and conflict, over many years (and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a virtual pariah). The Kurdish issue is far from solved. Most importantly, as a result of Davos and other actions, policies and comments by Turkish leaders, Turkey will most likely not be able to play the role of “honest broker” in Israel-Syria negotiations, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and with respect to helping to forge a solution to the Iran nuclear crisis. Turkey may have lost its “third party potential” to play a meaningful and effective role in the “management and ... resolution of regional conflicts.”³⁵ While Turkey has made some inroads with respect to a number of its regional disputes, it is quite hard to imagine that soft power alone will achieve “zero problems” with Turkey’s neighbors.

The U.S. must use “smart” power in its foreign relations. Turkey must also forge a “smart” policy that does not alienate its neighbors and its most important ally, the U.S. The signals coming out of Turkey are, candidly, quite ominous. Walter Russell Mead said it very well when he recently commented: “Turkey is going through a painful time and virtually all the certainties of modern Turkish life are up for grabs. Nobody seems to know how it will all work out, but Turkey is becoming a steadily more complicated place – and the world around it is becoming less predictable and less secure (...) I worry that not enough Americans will understand just how important or how endangered our relationship with Turkey really is.”

³⁴ “Cuba and the United States, Resistant to Carrots and Sticks”, *The Economist*, 21-27 November 2009, p. 40.

³⁵ Meliha Benli Altunışık, “The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey’s Soft Power in the Middle East”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2008, p. 50.

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There have been a number of blips and bumps in U.S.-Turkish relations over the years. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the U.S. removed the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in a secret deal with Soviets to remove the missiles in Cuba (which the Turkish government thought was a superpower deal behind Turkey’s back).³⁷ The Cyprus crisis (including the U.S. arms embargo on Turkey after the 1974 crisis when Turkish forces captured one-third of the island of Cyprus³⁸ illustrated very clearly for the Turks the very pro-Greek orientation in the U.S. Congress and administration. The *pièce de résistance* was, in many respects, the failure of Turkey’s Parliament, in March 2003, to pass a resolution allowing the stationing of at least 60,000 American troops in Turkish territory which damaged U.S.-Turkish relations.³⁹ And, of course, there is the constantly recurring issue of the Armenian Genocide Resolution which remains high on Turkey’s foreign policy agenda because it affects Turkey’s image in the world.

The recent signals are a source of great concern. One commentator asked whether Turkey is leaving the West.⁴⁰ Some of these extraordinary developments include:

1. Hamas: The warm welcome accorded to Hamas leader Khaled Mashal in Ankara in February 2005.⁴¹
2. Iran: Erdoğan’s State visit to Iran and his statement that “Iran is our friend.”⁴²

³⁶ Walter Russell Mead, “Turkey Mon Amour”, 20 November 2009, www.the-american-interest.com

³⁷ Kemal Kirişçi, “US-Turkish Relations: New Uncertainties in a Renewed Partnership” in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (eds.) *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, (London: Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 132.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Mustafa Kibaroglu and Barış Çağlar, “Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey”, *Middle East Policy*, Winter 2008, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Soner Çağaptay, “Is Turkey Leaving the West?: An Islamist Foreign Policy Puts Ankara at Odds With Its Former Allies”, *Foreign Affairs*, 26 October 2009.

⁴¹ Mustafa Kibaroglu and Barış Çağlar, “Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey”, *Middle East Policy*, Winter 2008, p. 63.

⁴² “Iran is our friend” says Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan”, *The Guardian*, 26 October 2009.

3. Syria: Holding military exercises with Syria after in October 2009 canceling exercises with Israel (Anatolian Eagle). The U.S. objected to this cancellation (this cancellation may, candidly, have had more to do with issues concerning the Heron drone technology⁴³ which Turkey wishes to obtain from Israel) but the Syrian-Turkish military exercises are nevertheless a huge cause for concern.⁴⁴

4. Libya: Erdoğan state visit to Libya in November 2009 (the prior prime ministerial visit was the visit of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan in October 1996).⁴⁵ (these developments might be interpreted as the a movement towards the “Erbakanization” of Turkish foreign policy in that Prime Minister Erbakan’s first state visit was to Iran and his second to Libya; quite a disturbing sense of déjà vu).

5. Sudan: Erdoğan’s supporting Sudan’s leader Omar al-Bashir notwithstanding al-Bashir’s indictment by the International Criminal Court.⁴⁶

6. Israel: The Davos affair and subsequent actions and comments by Turkish leaders with respect to Israel. This issue seems to be calming down somewhat evidenced by the visit of a high-level Israeli envoy to Ankara in late November 2009 in connection with the meeting of the Turkish-Israeli Joint Economic Commission, but in no way is there a consistent or clear solution to what appears to be a significant rift in relations. President Gül, referring to the relations between Israel and Turkey was quoted as saying, “It is calm today, but this may not be lasting. There might be undesired developments in the future.”⁴⁷

The *Wall Street Journal* did not find these developments surprising “given how long Europe has brushed off Turkish ambitions to join its Union”⁴⁸ but added that “one may hope that the Turks, who have long been proud of their traditions of secularism, tolerance, freedom, and as a bridge between East and West, may not be so tempted to trade them in for darker glories.”⁴⁹

⁴³“Delay in delivery of Herons behind drill crisis, not politics”, *Today’s Zaman*, 14 October 2009; Turkey gives Israel new ‘deadline’ for Herons delivery, *Today’s Zaman*, 23 November 2009.

⁴⁴“Syria said to hold military exercises with Turkey” *Reuters*, 13 October 2009.

⁴⁵“Erdoğan Marks First Prime Ministerial Visit to Libya after 13 years” *Today’s Zaman*, 24 November, 2009.

⁴⁶“Erdogan’s Blind Faith in Muslims”, *The Guardian*, 11 November 2009.

⁴⁷“Gül Tells Israel to Revise Settlement Policy, Prove Commitment for Peace”, *Today’s Zaman*, 25 November 2009.

⁴⁸“The Turkish Temptation: The Erdoğan Government Shifts its Allegiances to Anti-Western Islam.”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 October 2009, page A24.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

The Obama and Davutoğlu visions from the point of view of using engagement and soft power to solve problems would, on the surface, appear to be compatible. However, when looked at more deeply, various elements of Turkey's foreign policy (as pointed out above) are opposed to the interests of the West and the United States. Viewed from the point of view of the efficacy of soft power to achieve tangible foreign policy results, it would seem that the Obama and Davutoğlu visions may be more form than substance, and possibly even phantasms which are of little or no significance, purely ephemeral in nature.

Unfortunately, it may be that whatever limited soft power may be utilized by the U.S. in achieving better relations with the Muslim world following President Obama's outreach in his Cairo speech, may be dissipated. In the view of one commentator: "as the United States devotes much of its energy abroad to Muslim countries, from opposing radicalism to countering Iran's nuclear program, the AKP will oppose these policies through harsh rhetoric and opt out of any close cooperation."⁵⁰ In this commentator's view, because of the AKP's policies, "a mountain is moving in Turkish foreign policy, and the foundation of Turkey's 60-year-old military and political cooperation with the West may be eroding."⁵¹ Indeed there were great expectations that Turkey could even "complement and supplement what America is trying to do" in the region and "lead to the kind of stable and peaceful Middle Eastern order that does not depend on a large American presence or high-profile American leadership."⁵² It was thought that "a democratic Turkey that has respect in Muslim capitals" was "exactly what the West needed."⁵³ With recent developments, however, these expectations have been called into serious question.

Both Turkey and the U.S. need to develop 'smart power' policies that utilize a "smart combination of soft and hard power."⁵⁴ Soft power alone will not work. Turkey must re-orient its policy so that the fulcrum of its policy axis is pointed westward. The EU must admit Turkey to full membership at the earliest possible time. In addition, "... Turkey-EU relations should constitute the main anchor or axis of Turkish foreign policy."⁵⁵ While it is heartening that Foreign Minister Davutoğlu

⁵⁰ Soner Çağaptay, "Is Turkey Leaving the West? An Islamist Foreign Policy Puts Ankara at Odds With Its Former Allies", *Foreign Affairs*, 26 October 2009.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "US Expert Links Obama's Success to Role of Turkey", *Today's Zaman*, 21 November 2009 (referring to the views of Walter Russell Mead, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations).

⁵³ Mustafa Akyol, "Obama's Turkish Partners", *Newsweek*, 15 December 2008.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009.

⁵⁵ E. Fuat Keyman, "Turkish Foreign Policy in a Globalizing World", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring 2009, p. 40.

has said that we are entering the “Golden Era of U.S.–Turkish relations” and that “the axis of our [Turkey’s] foreign policy is towards NATO, the EU and the transatlantic process”⁵⁶, the actions, policies and statements of Turkish leaders seem to belie the fact that this is indeed the intention and direction of Turkish foreign policy. Also very disturbing is the persistent anti-American feeling in Turkey. In a recently released report by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, as reported by one summary, “animosity toward the U.S...continues to run deep and unabated in Turkey”⁵⁷; the negative numbers are quite staggering (opinion of Americans, 65 percent unfavorable; opinion of the U.S., 69 percent unfavorable). One area of improvement was related to confidence in the U.S. President which went up 31 percentage points from two percent favorable in 2008 to 33 percent favorable in 2009, but still showed 52 percent unfavorable. The Obama speech in Cairo does not seem to have appreciably altered these negative feelings towards the U.S.⁵⁸ For Turkey to be an American and Western-oriented country, this anti-Americanism should be addressed without delay. This is a major imperative for the Turkish leadership if they really mean what they say.

Turkey will not achieve the status of a significant power if it continues in the direction it appears to be pursuing in seemingly leaving the Western sphere. Turkey serves as a vital energy corridor and is a major NATO ally of the United States and is truly a “multiregional” power which is located at the “hub of the world’s most problematic regions”.⁵⁹ It can once again achieve the status of broker and arbiter of international disputes. It is not enough to achieve zero problems with its neighbors; Turkey must become engaged, as a Western-oriented country, in politics in the region and in international relations. Dalliiances with Ahmadinejad, Assad, and Qaddafi can lead nowhere other than political oblivion, mired in the Byzantine politics of the Middle East from which it will easily be extricated. While it is true that Turkey cannot choose its neighbors or its location⁶⁰ this is not a justification for supporting the policies of rogue nations and organizations. There is a sort of schizophrenic politics at work here: “As a secular Muslim state, Turkey has been a pillar of NATO and a bulwark against the political radicalism (Communist, Baathist, Islamist) of its various neighbors. Now Mr Erdoğan may be gambling that Turkey’s future lies at

⁵⁶ “Davutoğlu rules out shift from transatlantic axis”, *Today’s Zaman*, 23 March 2009.

⁵⁷ *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, www.pewglobal.org

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Şule Kut, “The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s” in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (eds.) *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (London: Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 10.

⁶⁰ “Turkish Soft power Changes Middle East” (interview with Sedat Laçiner) *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, 12 November 2009.

the head of the Muslim world, rather than at the tail of its Western counterpart.”⁶¹ The Turkish leadership really needs to choose which direction it will follow.

One suggestion has been for the Obama administration to “work with the Turkish Government to establish a regular high-level policy dialogue, and an agenda for joint action with time lines to advance specific initiatives supported by bilateral working groups charged with monitoring the implementation.”⁶² Also, the recommendation has been to enhance economic cooperation and expand U.S.-Turkish trade and investment. Such contacts would keep U.S. policymakers apprised of developments in Turkey and allow for better coordination, and would avoid a sudden cataclysm with much soul-searching after the fact which occurred, for example, after China became Communist and a debate ensued on “Who Lost China?” The U.S. should be proactive and engage with the Turkish Government in advance of crises.

Turkey has to take a leading role as a Western-oriented country in world affairs and show the West that it is a “responsible actor and useful ally” on which the U.S. and the West can rely.⁶³ The U.S. needs Turkey more than ever. Turkey also needs the United States. To rectify the situation will require an intensive top-down effort by Turkish leadership to change the current state of affairs.⁶⁴ As one commentator noted, “Turkey has long mattered – as NATO ally, friend of Israel, EU applicant and energy route to the west. But its growing economic strength and diplomatic reach give it influence over some of the toughest issues facing Washington and other capitals – from frozen conflicts in the Caucasus to Iran’s nuclear ambitions to the threat of disintegration in Iraq.”⁶⁵ As envisioned by Davutoğlu, Turkey can use its geopolitical and geostrategic position to become a global actor.⁶⁶ Turkey has the potential to be a key country but to achieve that status, Turkey must make decisions that keep it oriented on the Western path.⁶⁷

⁶¹ The Turkish Temptation: The Erdoğan Government Shifts its Allegiances to Anti-Western Islam.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 October 2009, page A24.

⁶² Statement of Dr. Stephen Flanagan, Senior Vice President and Henry A. Kissinger Chair of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, at Hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, “The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership”, 14 May 2009, p. 29.

⁶³ Şule Kut, “The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s” in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, (eds.) *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, (London: Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 11.

⁶⁴ “US Expert Links Obama’s Success to Role of Turkey”, *Today’s Zaman*, 21 November 2009 (referring to the views of Walter Russell Mead, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations).

⁶⁵ “Turkey FM Davutoglu: ‘Zero Problems with Neighbors’”, *Softa News Agency*, 24 November 2009.

⁶⁶ Lale Sarioğlu, “Davutoğlu Promoting ‘Strategic Depth’ in Turkish Foreign Policy”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume: 6 Issue: 89, 8 May 2009.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Turkey's leaders are in control of their vision for the future. How they mold and implement that vision and implement it will be of vital significance to the future of Turkey, the region, the Middle East and the West, and relations with the United States. Hopefully, Turkey's vision and America's vision will prove to be compatible and not contradictory.