

# TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

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**T**urkey and the US have had difficulty understanding one another for some time now. We are determined to work to overcome these difficulties, because at stake is an allied cooperation that developed over 60 years under difficult circumstances, of which the entire world benefited from. We have implemented some 200 agreements between us. This necessitates a common history. It is an asset for both of our countries. Highlighting an evaluation of this relationship is in the interests of both parties. The purpose of my article is to provide deeper insights that will facilitate our understanding of one another by transparently presenting some issues that I think have caused the disparity in viewpoints that exist in our respective publics. In the process, I will try, as a politician who has worked for years among the people, to incorporate their voice.

First of all, I would like to point out that the “Peace at Home, Peace in the World” principle that the founder of our Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk laid out in 1923 is still valid in all sincerity in Turkey's domestic and foreign politics. Our government is committed to this principle. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Defense have each developed a tradition of wise support for peace. They do not get hung up on snags that can be overcome through discussion among friends. A Turkish proverb says “Wisdom is to use violence as the last resort while foolishness employs it before anything else.” Our intention is to make our contribution to the advancement of mankind via peaceful means as far as is possible.

## ***Because of NATO the Free World Movement has succeeded without Open War***

The most significant cooperation between Turkey and the US has been within the NATO framework. The free world movement was only successful in avoiding open war because of the deterring existence of NATO.

Turkey has been a useful ally in strengthening the Southeastern flank of the Alliance. Furthermore, the fact that it is a democratic secular country whose market economy is advancing has also made it beneficial in that the US has not had to deal with additional problems. Experience has shown that Turkey has good intentions, is a friend, is serious, is prepared and keeps its promises. As a result of its efforts as a strong partner, Turkey is seen to deserve the right to become a member of the United Nations Security Council.

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In this regard, Turkey has two very valid questions: The first is, why is Turkey still not a commercial partner of the US after all these years, why are quotas still applied? Secondly, in spite of the mutual trust, when world conditions were changing after 1990, why has the US viewed Turkey as a place to wring concessions from via fait accompli instead of joying for its presence as its natural strategic regional partner?

Many people in Turkey are saying that in the US Turkey has been viewed as merely one of the Pentagon's jobs. Why has it taken so long for us to become acquainted on other levels? I wonder if maybe we are now being forced to devote some time to remedying this delay. Let there be no mistake. We have always been happy to work with the Pentagon but the issue of Turkey should not be restricted only to the military sphere.

In the chaotic environment following 1990, the movement away from politics and towards a unipolar world provided the US with the opportunity to be the world leader. Turkey comes from a historic tradition which acknowledges that even the worst leadership is better than chaos. More importantly, the US had some characteristics which would help the US provide good leadership. NATO was just one of these. I should point out that with this progressive viewpoint Turkey entered this new era consciously supporting the US as a world leader. When President Clinton came to Turkey in the aftermath of the major Marmara Earthquake of 1999, he experienced a hearty welcome from Turkey. On September 11, Turkey experienced the grief of the American people. When President Bush began his movement to rid the world of terrorism, the first offer of support came from a Turkey who wanted to share its experience. If a survey of public opinion had been taken at that time, support for the US by the Turkish people would have exceeded 90 percent, which forces us to ask this question: With the opportunity to start the 21st century on a foundation this strong in terms of Turkish-American relations, why have we entered a phase of eroding relationships riddled with questions about understanding one another? It seems that the answer to this question may in general be found by making the leadership style of the US more understandable and specifically by mutually reviewing the opinion we hold of one another. This article attempts to research where the answers lie by developing a mutual understanding.

### ***Making Foreign Policy Together with the Crowds***

Turkish-American relations cannot be understood with point analyses because it is a cooperation founded on worldwide balance. In order to understand the issue from a global perspective, it will be helpful to review the new difficulties of conducting foreign policy in today's chaotic world; difficulties experienced in Turkey and every other country.

After 1990, ideas regarding the use of armed conflict together with cold war tactics became a topic of discussion. In this context, issues of foreign policy development began to be discussed in the press before any progress had even been made on official grounds. Democracy that operates according to specified rules in every country is beneficial in terms of the development of ideas regarding domestic issues, reconciliation of different parties and the development of public opinion. However, ill-timed discussions in the press does not make a government's job any easier due to the fact that countries differ intrinsically from one another on foreign policy and defense issues, the unpredictability of how interests are understood, the fact that the citizens of countries are far removed from each other and the resulting difficulties related to communication and sound information

gathering, as well as the fact that international praxis which has developed over a long period of time lost its value with the US preemptive strike concept.

When viewed from the perspectives of other countries' public opinions, there exists generally no foreign party with which a face-to-face discussion can be carried out on foreign policy issues. In the other country, it is pretended that there is an opposing side that has been made the "Other"; you have trouble putting yourself in their place. For this reason, the public in any country always sees itself as unequivocally right regarding foreign policy issues and if they are provoked their tendency to escalate this increases. In order to soften foreign relations, governments need time and a period of calm to outline the issues and explain them to their people. However, the new world order concept could also be interpreted as a situation where everything is out in the open and concessions are sought from governments with artificial threats in the midst of the brouhaha coming from some section of the public. When misleading information and elements of psychological warfare are added, an abundance of material is suddenly available for those looking for new careers.

If we were to take Turkey as an example, written and visual press developed itself in this country by taking advantage of expansive freedom of the press, which allegedly seeks to enlighten the public through defending the interests of the foreign side by basically referring to its own connections in the foreign press. For example, with the sensitivity of a barometer, defenders and expounders of issues have emerged, such as the stance of the US, pressures from the IMF, the new institutionalism plans of the World Bank, inspirations of Turkish opponents in the EU, contrived minority scenarios, protection of Kurdish and PKK terrorism, Armenia's demands, missionary approaches, the fabrication of artificial sects, the demonstration of ways to use the international community and human rights with a double standard, distortions of Turkish history and ill-treatment of the Turkish citizenship concept and the common identity it refers to have appeared on the scene. The authors of these projects must be definitely pleased that their voice is being heard and hope that their virtual existence will assist in achieving results. Nonetheless, they need to understand that this strategy sharpens the real public they are faced with and forces groups into unnecessary collaboration. In other words, it backfires. You will remember that by this type of activity prior to the Iraq War the percentage of Turks opposed to attacking Iraq soared to 94 percent. The Parliament's hands were tied. Later some people attempted to research the reasons for why the Turkish people perceived such a threat and what focal point was fueling this but nothing could be found. However, one need not look far: It was nothing more than reaction to the artificial broadcasting of that time period. There were also some realities that could not be ignored. A fire at your neighbors makes you uncomfortable, too. Of course, adding the instability and security problems in Iraq to Turkey's already packed schedule was not desirable. It should also not be forgotten that if the official spokesmen for both sides make irresponsible statements, this will only serve to make the people more angry at the foreign party, leading to the development of self-defense mechanisms as they try to understand the intentions of the media organization and people which they view as little more than hired spokesmen and leading to attempts to produce theories that explain the conspiracy. Still, our society has a fairly realistic outlook. It appears as if it will come through this bombardment having gained some sound societal training and a raised awareness.

Then in America we encounter the following interpretations: The observation that “Nationalism is on the rise in Turkey,” and objections like “Why don't the Turks want war?” Does this not seem contradictory?

In summary, all of these combine to narrow the area that politicians can use to maneuver in foreign policy. It is essential that the technical portions of foreign policy issues be prepared with negotiations on a diplomatic level. However, it is the politician's job to set foreign policy. But, now the politician does not have the chance to explain the facts to his/her people through the proper channels after having done his/her homework on foreign policy matters, watch the ensuing debate and after making adjustments in accordance with the will of the people, go through the process of asking for public approval with honest explanations of the issue. Today's politician is in the peculiar position of having to “make foreign policy based on the crowds’ opinion of the moment.” He/she is forced to seek solutions on a narrow playing field in countries which oppose one another without any basis and in an environment created by a segment of the public which are prejudiced, fanatic and even paranoid as a result of manipulation and its backlashes. This method results in a loss of time. It can only be the result of an attempt to wring a compromise out of your friend or enemy by catching them off guard. This approach only makes it more difficult for the US government as it would for any government.

Tacitly, the politician is being asked to act as the domestic executor of instructions established in accordance with the interests of a specific foreign focus. This is in total contradiction to the goal of spreading democracy throughout the world. A democratic government is expected to represent the sensitivities of the people. One cannot solve this by having the government make veiled threats. I am of the opinion that this is not a result of diplomatic practices, which governments can use as their first means of developing foreign policy, but rather from the fact that military methods, i.e. the last means, are being employed. I suppose, this is related to the fact that the US acted hastily without making clear its preference between being a “hegemonic power” or an “imperial power” and making its position clear in the eyes of the world.

### ***Hegemonic Relations or Imperial Power?***

Will the new world order be based on hegemonic relations or imperial power? This is the question that every country is asking today. World leadership can be achieved in two primary ways: Hegemonic Power and Imperial Power. Hegemonic power must be exercised with well-grounded hegemonic relations. In other words, it means an exercise of power and dominion in areas that belong to others by arrangements based on consent and agreement regarding the use of sovereignty rights. It is a win-win equation. The exercise of sovereignty rights in lieu of the owner or their joint exercise requires the arts of leadership. It is actually a communication and interaction project based on the ability to persuade. Imperial power is when a very powerful state uses political and military force to impose an expansion of its dominion. It is a win-lose conflict. It is actually both a cold war and open conflict strategy based on arrogant conquerer relations.

The democratic ideal has spread throughout the world as a result of two hundred years of propaganda. For example, Turkey's solid experience with real democracy has been a 60-year struggle. This experience has achieved the power to influence politics with very serious criticisms and alternatives. Writers like Pollock, who have a tendency to view power groups by segmenting them must take into account a public opinion that has

reached the point where it affects both civil and military decisions in Turkey. The priority of the people is progress and development for welfare. Today's Turkey does not afford any government the flexibility to move forward without getting the people behind it. The world has still not forgotten how those who tried to do this in 2001-2002 were completely swept away in the Turkish elections on 3 November 2002. On the other hand, even if some countries which have just begun to attain partial independence are still not steering a clear course, all their citizens carry the hopes and ideals of democracy. However, it is at just this time that the era of completely independent national states has run into difficulty due to globalization. People cannot easily understand the idea of interdependence. Especially if they have been exposed to various types of imperialism or if, like Turkey, they are located in a region sensitive to world politics, the people already have developed a mindset with difficulty in understanding the intentions of international reconciliation and consent relations. They are more likely to look with suspicion on any foreign cooperation proposed by their governments, civil movements or the military. So, it is essential for politicians of this region that the people be presented with solutions that can be explained in a candidly.

If one begins his/her journey, in this type of a world environment by saying "Get rid of terrorism or state sponsored terrorism" and "Bring in democracy," while entering countries with organized revolts or wars, naturally people will not be able to understand whether they are in an agreement and consent relationship or whether they are being occupied. An excellent example of this was observed when the US and England entered Iraq to overthrow the cruel dictator Saddam. The soldiers who embarked on this journey thinking, "They will welcome us with flowers" faced resistance and insurgency.

It is necessary to take a closer look at the string of overthrown governments occurring one after another in Central Asia, the Near East, around the Black Sea and in the area of the Greater Middle East Project. On the surface it appears that the civil opposition started a grassroots revolution. If they are able to restructure production with democratically-based constituents and establish a mechanism to distribute a portion of the resources to the people, they might have a chance. Most of the time we encounter this response; "It is good to get rid of a dictator but let's see who the new man answers to." This shows us that the unemployed who take to the streets, the irresponsible youth some of whom are wealthy and live in luxury, the small crowds sent to certaination points, along with the looters and pillagers do not represent a change that the majority of the people can identify themselves with. The people do not think that this will lead to the right of self-determination, governance, opportunity and resources. It is obvious that the controlled public opinion leaders and media have not been sufficient. The mentality of the people is still that of exploitation. Their attitude is "Up until now this person consumed all of the resources and opportunity. Let's see whose turn it is now." Without seeing concrete improvements in their own lives, it will be difficult to change this mentality. This point shows us that the democracy movement is being brought in without having established widespread grassroots connections. Superficial and artificial change may serve only as a weak stimulus to democracy. In order to reach a final conclusion in this regard, we will have to see the results 20 years down the road.

We hear the following complaint from many Americans with good intentions. "We want to use our money, technology, power and military force to bring democracy and prosperity to the world, so why is hostility towards America spreading so rapidly in the world? Why don't they like us?" Hatred is the result of how the peoples of the world perceive imperial power in the unfolding of events. Imperial relations are repulsive.

Actually, when the US made its claims of a New World Order and the Greater Middle East, it gave the impression that it was after imperial power. It had set its goals and released them piecemeal. It had drawn up projects but had not fully explained the policies behind them and its strategy was not readily apparent. The philosophy and principles were unknown and we tried to figure them out as events unfolded. The US was expecting confirmation without giving explanation. It was not forthcoming about its strategic partnership intentions. It did not specify NATO's role nor did it speak with allies either bilaterally or multilaterally. It may be that the US itself was having similar difficulties with the changing balance of power.

For this reason, foreign policy parameters throughout the world are changing drastically and rapidly. No one, including EU countries, has been able to set forth clear enduring policies. This is why I do not agree with the criticism that says "Turkey has no Iraq policy." In this uncertain situation, Turkey has a reliable policy for providing every type of help for Iraq's territorial integrity, security and the return of peace to its neighbor, Iraq, for assisting in this period of transition to a democracy in which all of the people's of Iraq will be fairly represented, and extending humanitarian aid, as well as a defence policy that is as detailed as possible for taking adequate measures against harmful developments that might affect Turkey. If the situation changes, slight adjustments will be made.

The truth is that our world today has already started to expect development and progress based on a win-win relationship between the independent states and hegemonic power.

### ***Global US Leadership and Some Strategic Errors of Approach***

Turkey is a country which believes that having a just and visionary leader is key to achieving quick and effective results. Similarly, what the whole world expects is actually for the US to choose an approach that conforms to the values of the era which itself has been representing.

There is no objection to the recommended point of view and stated basic principles but the style with which the US administration has approached the issue has created problems. Let us consider the recommendations of "wiping out terrorism" and "spreading democracy." All of us support this whole-heartedly and we are prepared to cooperate to achieve success. In this regard, I think that there is a need for a few simple and clear definitions that would be properly understood around the world, coupled with a consistent and persuasive approach in implementation.

***The War on Terror:*** I would like to provide a few examples of approaches that have led to a misperception of what the US wants to do. There is no one who would oppose the elimination of terror but it is important that the terrorists be well-defined. The generalization used today that "terror = Islamic terror = Islam" is being objected to around the world. In the 19th century, we know that the American public was faced with a similar generalization by a group and that large grants were collected. However, it is impossible to apply this in an educated and increasingly democratic world where people follow the news, research issues and form their own opinions. Terrorism is not confined to any religion or people; the terrorist is only using such titles as a means. Portraying an entire religion as disposed to terrorism because a person who committed a terrorist act said he was a Muslim is a strategic error. It erodes support for and faith in the US because it is for one today and

for another tomorrow. In spite of the fact that Bin Laden, the man who caused America and all of us so much suffering, still has not been caught, it is hurtful for all Muslims to be treated as terrorists when even his name is not mentioned any more. This must be corrected. We are having difficulty finding any indication that this error is being rectified. First all Arabs were identified with Islamic terrorism, and then nuclear power was added to the equation with Iran. India and Israel were not included even though they also have nuclear weapons. Later Pakistan, Indonesia and then before you know it Turkey is added and the circle is expanded to include the entire Islamic world. Do you think this is right?

For example, instead of taking advantage of Turkey's experience as a country that single-handedly fought a successful war on terrorism, someone had a scenario produced that portrayed Turks as terrorists to the American public simply because the majority of its people are Muslim and it is broadcast on channels with a large viewing audience. To make matters worse the season premier of this fully prepared series whose shooting had already taken place happened to coincide with the broadcast of public opinion research by a British company whose findings were that Turkey was the country who liked America the least. Of course, this approach cannot be attributed to the entire American administration but when this coincidence is brought up, the response is "We do not intervene in what the press and Hollywood do." However, when someone in Turkey publishes in a newspaper a ridiculous accusation like "The tsunami might have been caused by an American base in the area," the Government is told to "Get the press under control." Ambassador reports are requested because someone in Turkey wrote a novel like this, as if political science fiction novels are never written in America.

However, the fact that the terrorist gang that took 30,000 lives in terrorist actions in Turkey is currently being harbored in Northern Iraq, which is under US control now, is being ignored. With all of the major projects the US is struggling with, this may not be a priority and Turkey can only deal with the issue in proportion to its influence, yet the public's logical facilities do not work that way. As long as the PKK terrorist organization remains there under different names, it will contradict President Bush's statements about the war on terror, feed the belief that the US supported the group in the past, erode public confidence in the US presence in the region and cause an barrage of objections whenever the government tries to take a stand for US demands. When we examine this closely, we realise that this is not a reaction of the Turkish people neither to the US nor to the American people. It is a reaction to the terrorist group taking refuge there and its indirect reflection on the current policies of the US administration. Viewing this as a message from a friendly people will assist us in finding the truth as our cooperation moves forward. Furthermore, we should avoid generalizations, remembering that every country may have reasons like these, that erode confidence in one another.

***The Spreading of Democracy:*** The government coups in the various countries that I mentioned above are classic examples produced by the manipulation of certain groups. It reminds one of the Project Democracy rulings that passed the US Senate in 1980. The long and short of the debate was that the CIA could now do openly what it had only done in secret before. A different model could have been developed for the transition to democracy in Iraq while the event was arriving with such great promise. Some countries applauded even the fact that a controlled election was held as a success. Yes, the model was different but it was not democratic in its conception.

The laws and process of the transition to democracy in Iraq were not conducted with an approach that will help Turkish-American relations. After the Gulf War, when Iraq's Kurdish region had been stabilized due to tremendous efforts on the part of Turkey spanning a 12-year period and entry by the Special Forces, signs given before this last Iraqi war to the effect that attempts on the part of two tribal chiefs from the region to expand their lands and oppress the other elements of the population would be overlooked were unsettling. The result was that Kurdish gangs set fire to the population and title deed records of the Kirkuk region. Mistreatment of the Iraqi people escalated and the intimidation tactics at Abu Ghraib with scenes of prisoners being tortured and the Fallujah massacre brought this to the point of brutality. Article 8, subsection 2(b)viii of the Rome Statutes of the International Criminal Court was violated when Kurdish populations were moved to newly occupied areas. The census which should have been conducted before the election was sabotaged for two years and in the end the elections reached a point of being contested before they had even taken place. After all, this is what the parliament is that will have to prepare the constitution and enter the new election.

In spite of the assurances given for the territorial integrity of Iraq, the transition to democracy in Iraq is not an example of democracy that we can be proud of. The formula that the US found for the Iraqi elections gives the Kurds a special position with veto and representation rights that are disproportionately weighted and divided according to ethnic and denominational divisions. What country in the world still has an election law based on race and religion? In this way, another behind-the-times element is being introduced to Iraq. To put it another way, it offers no improvement over the administrative government that the Middle East was felt to deserve a century ago. That is, making one of the minorities dominant over the majority means to force the indebted power holder to be in service of the actual owner of that power. The new situation resulting from the elections is preparing the foundation for internal conflict. This is a development contrary to the promises that Turkey supported.

Two-thirds of the ballot boxes in Kirkuk were removed. In Tall'Afar 4 ballot boxes were set up and then removed; no voting took place. And in Mosul the election did not happen at all. These are all important oil producing cities and areas with Turkmen populations. In the end, the existence of only one-eighth of the over 2 million Turkmen is being acknowledged. With this racist approach, America appears to be getting even for the motion that did not pass the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 1 March 2003, all of which reinforces the views of the conspiracy theory advocates in Turkey.

Turkey has rights and interests in Iraq based on history. All of the Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds in Northern Iraq and most of those in the region including Baghdad are Turkey's relatives. The racist and denominational ideas which were spread from Western Europe to the world have no place in the historical tradition of Turkey. Because the US currently represents this structure, we think that it will clearly understand the benefits of our approach in the near future. For this reason, we did not want to discriminate between the people of Iraq. We have always supported them under unstable Iraqi administrations in their search for stability. Citizens of Kurdish descent in Turkey have always been treated as equals in every respect. The problem with Kurds of Northern Iraq today is related to the fact that they give heed to the provocations of a few clan leaders and provide refuge for the PKK. Being involved in an occupation that comes with messages of preference for segments of the population and having to take sides was a situation that is contrary to

Turkey's principles. For this reason, Turkey has had to be selective in the support that it provides to the US in Iraq.

Consequently, a Turkey whose interests in Iraq are frustrated by practices contrary to its principles and policies has difficulty seeing the logic of acting in cooperation with the US in Iran or any other neighboring country.

***The Crusades*** : President Bush's words like "Our crusade has begun," that I believe were a slip of the tongue due to the grief he felt on September 11<sup>th</sup> was like a flash of lightning in the minds of many. Was the Islamic world, which has already suffered injustice and exploitation for almost two centuries at the hands of the Western world, entering the 21st century with another Crusade? Was S. Huntington's scenario going to be realized? Was the underhanded intermittent but continuing oppression of Muslims creating a new disguise for itself? The statement was denied but unfortunately its negative impact on the Islamic world continues on. It is useful to repeatedly make this clear. Still I cannot go on without stating that Mrs. C. Rice's statement to the effect that "If necessary, we may redraw borders in the Middle East" is perceived as a threat and a secret plan. In order to understand what kind of things statements like these bring to mind, I would like to look at this from another perspective and draw attention to the importance of working for peace between religions.

Though they may not make to the press frequently, there are sensitivities that politicians must take into account. For example, all of the statements that put the entire Islamic world and all Muslims in the same category are, in many countries, perceived to be related to these words by President Bush. The fact that the US press remains insensitive to the flow of Muslim blood but swings into action whenever a Westerner is killed causes resentment. There are reports from those with relatives in Iraq that the number of dead has exceeded 250,000. While there are no statements in this regard, losses of American soldiers being covered individually, gives the impression that the lives of Muslims are not valued. There are instances where civil populations, mostly Muslims, have become the victims of state terrorism with the excuse that they are causing unrest in Palestine, Chechnya, the Uyghur region of China, and even in countries like Nepal. The international community is silent on issues like these with these people even being the object of political bargaining and compromise. Before the world can even learn the nature and results of oppression against peoples in Ethiopia, Somali or the Sudan, events transpire, intervention occurs and the case is closed. The international community is silent on these instances, also.

For years, there has been an attempt to force Turkey to accept the civil war which happened as a result of some Christian citizens of the Ottoman Empire, in World War I, arming themselves and uniting with the forces of the aggressive Russian army preparing to invade Turkey and got killed as "ethnic cleansing." The fact that a temporary relocation was conducted to cut off contact between the armed Armenian population in a certain region of the country and the enemy is being portrayed as a crime is being ignored. It is obvious that the number of fatalities was increased not only by battles in this war but also by epidemic diseases and the starvation resulting from 3 years of not sowing crops. With the number of Muslim fatalities four times as great and 80 percent of the betraying party's population still alive, these claims are being used to keep the feeling of the crusades fresh. Some of the senators from American States gave parliamentary approval of this. Take a minute to remember that when the raid on Pearl Harbor was conducted, Japanese civilians living on the West coast of America were gathered up and sent to the interior states in spite of the fact that they were unarmed. Was that ethnic cleansing?

On the other hand there are events from the Atlantic to the Caucasus which could be perceived by the public as the spirit of the crusades and which are not reported by any significant news agency unless it reaches crisis proportions: The massacres caused by the French for years in Algeria; the recent Nigerian massacre; the fact that Europe stood by as a spectator while Muslims were massacred in Yugoslavia and then called in the US from the other side of the world after a significant majority of the Muslims had been wiped out; the fact that the new states stemming from old Yugoslavia were offered EU membership on a golden platter while Muslim Bosnia-Herzegovina was forced to share the government with the Christian population near their region; the restriction of Muslim rights in the chaos that occurred in Macedonia; the abrogation of the right to broadcast in the language of the Turkish minority on the same day that the UN peace-keeping force's commander arrived and the fact that the broadcasts being conducted today are disrupted with static; pressure to convert to Christianity in Albania; the fact that Muslims in Bulgaria are forced to work on their land and not allowed to take jobs where they can earn cash; the fact that Muslim Turks in Greece are the EU minority facing the most discrimination, and the EU's answer when reminded of this being "We do not interfere with the practices of our member states;" the silencing of the Muslim region of Georgia by occupation; the Armenian occupation of 1/3 of Azerbaijan, the exile of 2.5 million Muslims and the silence of the international community with regard to this population which spent several winters living in tents and the silent discontinuation of food aid that the United Nations was providing when the Azeri people took those living out in the open into their homes as guests; and finally the US sacrifice of the Turkmen in Iraq.

To continue with an example of the same sort, Muslims who were massacred in Cyprus from 1964 to 1974 should be mentioned. Diplomatic channels achieved nothing. Turkey entered these regions flowing with blood as a internationally agreed guarantor of peace and stopped the bloodshed. From that moment on the crimes of those who committed the massacres were forgotten. Turkey became the guilty side and the Cypriot Turks have become the whipping boy - from the weapons embargo applied to Turkey to the longest lasting commercial embargo in world history, which is still being applied to the Muslim segment of Cyprus for over 30 years now. Aid and assistance flows to that part of Cyprus responsible for the massacre, but no one said upto this time, "let's guarantee the rights of innocent people to live in freedom and get this over with." Under such double standards, it is always the Turks and the Turkish Cypriots who must compromise and the other side kept insisting that the Greek population on the island be allowed to represent the Turkish population. The peace plan put forward by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was voted on in a referendum two years ago. The Turkish side accepted it but the Greeks rejected it. The outcome is the persistence of the embargo against the Turkish side while the Greek side is unilaterally made an EU member ignoring the well founded EU criteria for the first time.

Turkey has placed itself in the West and values its tight allied relationship with the West. In addition, it has very ancient historical connections with every cultural group because of its location at the center of three continents. In accordance with a new version of Orientalism politics, which has come into fashion again, the labeling, mistreatment, contempt and disdain that the people of the Middle East and Asia suffer for their beliefs and culture and their classification as second class humanity has boosted. Turkey's own historical magnanimity, progressive humanitarian values and understanding of justice makes it is impossible for her to look with tolerance upon the situation. The people in these regions of the world want to see those superior values preached and practiced justly in every place by

those who claim to possess them. If this does not happen, endurance of the situation until the appropriate time should not be confused with acceptance. Results achieved through this kind of action are destined to be superficial and temporary. Turkey desires to serve common purposes that are meaningful and constructive for all.

If we cast an eye on the past, history can accommodate us with valuable knowledge. The chain of events that transpired during the process of the “Eastern Problem” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose goal was the demise of the Ottoman Empire, are examined, it is easy to see that it could be called the 9<sup>th</sup> Crusade. Twenty-six nations came out of the estate that was the Ottoman Empire as its dissolution completed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of its available capabilities were used for common needs. All of the new states including Turkey were equally poor at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were no exploiters or the exploited. Of these 26 states none but Turkey, who fought its own war for independence, developed a republic. Even though the dynasty belonged to the Turks, they abrogated the sultanate and took the first steps towards democracy. The mentors of the other states which broke off from the Ottoman Empire were the big powers, the Western nations of the day. The new states would have nothing remotely to do with the idea of a republic. Kingdoms, sheikhdoms and emirates came into being. Dynasties were founded on old families and tribes. Having struggled to break away from the Ottomans in their enthusiasm for independence, freedom and the hope of development of their own resources in a fresh era, these peoples and their intellectuals found themselves heirs to the effects of the ongoing new colonialism. In this happy scenario, their mentors used the resources, mainly petroleum, of the region for their own purposes for over a century together with the new administrations, most of whom were controlled. Those who now look down upon these peoples as undemocratic and who have embarked on a journey today to bring democracy to the backward via war should do a conscience check regarding their share of responsibility for the situation. Making the decision to suddenly go to war is no light matter for anyone. If our goal is the development of sound democracy in this region, then doing it with mutual assistance programs open to partnership will provide more trustworthy and productive results than doing it with war.

All of the aforementioned examples have their own story and reasons because they all needed to be tackled by the procedures of the state mechanisms. However, the publics of every country try to figure out the general approach in terms of their own values and at that point what the press says is no longer of any importance. What we can observe from their perspective is generally interpreted world over in the following way: “Almost all of these situations are happening to Muslim societies and in the end Muslim communities are tried to be brought to a position of subjection, are governed and held under guardianship. There is an attempt to bring their lands under the dominion of others. It seems as if rights and human rights are not for these people, which implies that there is a cunning anti-Muslim movement. That must have been what President Bush was saying...”

In order to ensure that impressions such as these do not take root as the general opinion, there needs to be more examples worldwide that illustrate mutual superior human values.

Here I would like to stress that Turkey is not content only by trying to help gain more insight into the situation in the Middle East or Eurasia regions, but is determined to bring to the attention of these areas the uses of for faster democratization. In all of our contacts with a wide range of countries, especially at Islamic Conference we have made calls for

open democracy and voiced some criticisms which had never been brought up in those bodies.

### ***How the US has Benefited Turkey***

One of the niceties that exists between us is the oft repeated fact that the US has helped Turkey in difficult times. This is true and Turkey has always appreciated this support. However, there is another point to be made. The people look for concrete solutions and have a habit of comparing them. Turkish people accept that assistance has been received but through experience infer that aid has often come too late, it is generally inadequate, it may come at the expense of merciless concessions and most of it has not resulted in anything tangible even after many years. In the following paragraphs I will mention some of them. Let everyone decide for themselves whether it is true or not.

***Turkey's Membership in a Military Partnership Organization and the US:*** The period beginning with the expansion of the Soviet Bloc started a new era in which military support was sent to the Korean War and Turkey's partnership with NATO was initiated in 1952. This alliance played a significant role in the life of Turkey by protecting it from Soviet Russia's assault and from communism, and Turkey is very well aware of this fact. In return the Turkish military was always very well prepared and carried out its duty effectively. The alliance reached its goals. The cooperation between the US and Turkey made successful and productive progress toward these goals.

Due to the fact that it would lay the foundation of Turkish-American relationships, Turkey did her homework and the government educated the people regarding the characteristics and strengths of its allies through educational programs. It taught its people to value democracy by emphasizing not President Wilson's attempt to establish protectorate in Turkey in the 1920s as the Ottoman Empire was collapsing, but rather the fact that the American Senate had rejected this idea. Can the US claim that it has done the same homework for her citizens? School textbooks still contain the unfavorable picture about Turks that was drawn by missionaries during the First World War in order to gather donations. Turks are curious as to whether American children deserve to learn the truth or not. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the majority of American children had not learned Turkey's location from their geography books, yet. The Armenian terrorist organization became uneasy when Turkey became a part of NATO in 1952 and initiated a period of reactionary assassinations policy from America after 1955 which has negative consequences that continue today. Turkey, on the other hand, brought under control the anti-US violence initiated by the leftist movement in the 1960's..

Although Turkey's strong support of NATO continues at the current time, unfair developments occurred in US-Turkey relationships whenever issues related to Turkey come to the fore. The primary examples of this are President Johnson's letter written when Turkey requested intervention in the massacres in Cyprus in 1964, the US embargo on its ally Turkey after it intervened in the Cyprus massacre in 1974, and the fact that Cypriot Turks have undergone the longest economic embargo in history. While the foreign-supported PKK has been left in limbo as an "internal affair," there have been instances of insincerity such as the appearance of maps on the walls of NATO headquarters showing Kurdistan expanding into Turkey's borders. These issues became the subject of G. Harris' book, "Troubled Alliance."

One of the observations that has been made in Turkey is that, while initially the condition for Turkey to enter NATO was to be a democratic multi-party regime, the US did not react as strongly as Europe to the four military coups each with a different tone, in Turkey. When Turkey started down this path, we were serious about democracy. Consequently, Turkey considers being a democratic partner with America as being just as important as being its military partner. During this tough process, Turkey has significantly improved its democracy from top to bottom. Today, in a Turkey that would be governed by 3 or 5 people or some institutions, neither the US nor the EU can easily see support for it coming from the people.

The US established the ratio of Greek-Turkish military support as 7:10. Although, in my opinion, all indicators and Turkey's contributions required a balance of 2.5:10 at the maximum, Turkey has survived with the ratio that was initially established. In spite of its ongoing economic and social development programs, Turkey paid a high bill and continued to furnish a large army for NATO, provided frontline security on Russia's border, and was a stabilizing factor in the Middle East, and acted as a security buffer for Europe.

In spite of all these years of military alliance, in 2002 when US-Saddam tensions began, Turkey found out that if Saddam invaded Turkey, NATO members are not prepared to share responsibility for protecting Turkey. As a response to Turkey's reaction, the US intervened and arranged the setting up of temporary defense missiles. In order to understand what this feels like, we should recall that in the Lombardy amphibious assault alone, the US lost 70,000 men, more than France did in all of the Second World War, and that today it is unable to gain the support of some NATO member nations.

On the other hand, although the US is not requesting anything from other NATO members or from Greece, which it helps significantly, all of a sudden it became apparent that it had numerous presumptions like transferring troops through Turkey, basing troops in Turkey, expansion of the Incirlik base, the use of harbors and airports, and requests from Turkey to send troops. Moreover, Turkey was assumed to give blind approval to US projects which she knew nothing of and which had been developed outside of NATO.

***Turkey's Economic Crisis and the US :*** While the Asian financial crisis that began in 1997 was continuing to affect the whole world, calculations were being made as to its future ramifications for Turkey. In order to correct the risky financial situation that had developed due to the effect of the inflow of speculative foreign currency on its foreign currency markets, Turkey asked for competitive new foreign business opportunities, for in the past it had improved its financial crisis management skills and its production capacity was high. At the time Turkey was also experiencing a change of government with one last veiled government coup.

The increasing corruption was used as a pretext against Turkey. Actually, the corruption had primarily cropped up in relation to the vicious circle of high interest, high return and high government indebtedness arising mainly from the pressure for the constant influx of speculative foreign currency, called "the hot money" in Turkey. Provision was to be made for the expected crisis to be directed by the IMF, for supplying Turkey with credit loans with the condition of high interest rates and rapid repayment. At the same time, its opening up to globalization was asked to be maintained. Those were not harmonious policies. However, under the political circumstances prevailing in the country, Turkey chose to

hope to get over the crisis situation rapidly. Although similar measures had been implemented in Brazil and Argentina, which were in the same condition, they did not agree to pay their debts for a period of time.

The struggle against inflation stretched out over 6 years in an environment of high debt and speculative foreign currency. The IMF took control, but four crises that took place between 1998 and 2002, two of them serious, could not be prevented. Stability measures such as strict monetary policies, structural budget reforms and budget discipline, reduction in production, a halt in public investment, privatization, and cost saving measures, high indebtedness and debt payments still continue in 2005. These measures are expected to remain for two more years. The most positive result obtained during this period has been the reduction in inflation. In contrast, big mistakes have been made such as the collapse of agriculture due to loans for non-production, the regulatory laws that have disrupted industry by setting up different norms for each market instead of supporting the market mechanisms, the fact that privatization, which was initiated to regulate the market, turned into a liquidation of government assets, the attempt to keep the value of Turkish currency high, and putting Turkey into unnecessary debt. The IMF has not done its principal job of implementing structural measures to balance the foreign trade deficit, keeping the value of money close to the market value, and converting speculative foreign currency, which enters the market with the hope of short term profit, and not into productive investments. The IMF is simply turned to be made a front, and the people still continue to be robbed.

It was known from the beginning that it is impossible to expect any improvement in unemployment or the distribution of income with such policies. What is most saddening is that the policies implemented have not put an end to a situation where real interest rate is high and the speculative stock market has recorded incredibly high profits. No matter how much effort is made to boost morale via the press, the people accuse the governments that have bowed to the IMF of economic failure, and showed their reaction in the October 2002 elections.

It would be best to not attribute the increase in opposition to America only to political misunderstandings between high levels of the administrations due to the Iraq war. It would be more prudent to look at other elements that could affect its widespread prevalence. The people perceive the IMF as an American institution, and their perception is not completely unfounded. As economic dissatisfaction spreads to the grassroots, many people such as store-owners and craftsmen, small and medium-sized business, farmers and the unemployed have become very disadvantaged, and the number of people that blame America for this situation keep increasing.

As pressure increased for Turkey to provide unquestioned support for the Iraq War, the fact that foreign debt is used as a vehicle for blackmail, indeed, the impression that there is a desire to spread propaganda and toss another noose around the neck of the economy, has strengthened the public's opinion that the real reason for insisting from the very beginning that the Turkish administration deal with the crisis by going into debt has been to obtain a merciless political concession such as this one.

It is natural that the military also would learn a lesson from this situation. From 1998-2002, although it seemed that a political operation was being carried out, a series of problems eventually revealed a completely different scenario. As short lived coalition governments came and went like pieces of a puzzle, the decisions that were made during

the four economic crises that came one after another made it apparent that Turkey's hands and arms were tied financially, and that consultants sent in from outside the country only served to tie the economy to the dollar. And, a group that broke off from the political party that was facing pressures could manage to transform itself to meet Turkey's new expectations and formed a majority in Parliament.

People in Turkey now are increasingly of the opinion that the decisions taken during that period have exposed the country to three significant losses. The first is that those whose goal is to earn money from money have limited the expansion of the business and commercial capacity of the productive sector through manipulating the financial sector. An administration which could not prevent this situation lost the confidence of the people in terms of explaining subsequent decisions to the use of resources. Secondly, the economy has been put under a rapidly increasing burden by a vicious debt plan. Thirdly, Brazil and Argentina's attitude of not acting in accordance with IMF recommendations has put them in a more profitable position. It will become harder and harder to explain IMF's approach in Turkey.

***New Energy Pipelines and Turkey:*** There are various efforts to implement oversea shipping and overland pipelines to transport Caspian Sea crude oil to the Mediterranean Sea. Ten years ago the US gave its support to one of those that was to go through Turkey, and this pleased Turkey. When the project is completed, Turkey will have a relatively small share. The portion of construction in Turkey has been completed but now the Caucasus is unsettled. At the same time, Russia has put two projects into operation, including the Blue Stream.

***Turkey's EU Membership and the US :*** Turkey has been in the process of waiting to be accepted as a member to EU ever since 1959. The US has always supported Turkey's membership. Ten Eastern European countries freed after 1990 with the breaking up of the Soviet Union joined the EU. Even though these countries were behind Turkey according to several criteria including democracy, they have hurriedly been admitted before Turkey and made full members. Also, a unique Customs Union concession was wrought from Turkey in 1996 without making any significant commitments on behalf of the EU. Three new candidates have been admitted before Turkey and two of them will enter the EU in 2007. The US also supported the membership of all these nations. The EU states that it is not a Christian club, but EU public opinion is focusing mostly on the fact that most Turkish people are Muslim. The US again did not fail to make it clear that it supported the initiation of negotiations with Turkey in 2005. The EU intends to take 15 more years in order to complete these negotiations. On February 23, 2005 President G. W. Bush came to his meeting with the European Parliament with the Ukrainian secretary of state at his side, and declared his personal support for EU membership for Ukraine, which had not yet even made an application. Now the question is, would Turkey, America's ally ever since 1945, be unjust in thinking that Ukraine is receiving a stronger support?

***The Capture of a Terrorist Leader and his Turnover to Turkey:*** It was difficult to capture Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK, which caused the death of tens of thousands of people with terrorist actions against Turkey, because he kept receiving support from various countries. Even though Turkey informed everyone of where he was located, he continued to cause destruction for fifteen years. In the end, the US decided to assist in his capture. When Turkey took action to remove him from his refuge in Syria, he was hidden

by Greece, Italy and other countries. With America's aid he was captured in Kenya and brought to Turkey. Turkey is grateful to America for helping in his final capture. As the people, we would have anticipated America to condemn the countries that had supported and harbored a terrorist for so many years. The PKK organization and its terrorists currently continue to take refuge in Northern Iraq, an area under US dominion now, and this is one of the problems that creates tension in the relationship between Turkey and US.

### ***Pressure Tactics and Tension Regarding the Motion***

It is undeniably true that on the issue of Iraq Turkey has been faced with organized pressure and fait accompli. When entering Iraq, the US presented Turkey with many requests that were to be carried out without debate and in short order. In addition to the US, international loan organizations, IMF requests and new loan offers, the United Nations Annan Plan for Cyprus, pressure regarding Cyprus, EU progress and request reports and European Council decisions all raised their voices in their own fields but in a coordinated fashion.

The impression that this was not a random conjuncture can also be obtained by reviewing Turkey's domestic economic affairs. Turkey's elections on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 were being expected. Let us also look at the issue from the view point of the Turkish people. This was the situation: AKP (The Justice and Development Party) gained the majority in the election, and the party leader was not admitted to Parliament for some legal reason. However, he was able to enter Parliament in February 2003 via an election that had to be repeated in one electoral constituency. Within the three months during which these internal events took place, the aforementioned international organizations announced all of their subjects at hand, and America advanced its demands. The Provisional Government, waiting for the missing election part to be completed, had to handle the the 1<sup>st</sup> Motion and passed it through the new Parliament, which specifies the principles and framework for military support. After this, the US escalated its demands and in a fait accompli brought a significant part of its fleet to the Turkish port at İskenderun, expecting to transfer troops through Turkey. This required the Turkish National Parliament to approve the scope of a second motion. It was said that the issues included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion exceeded the framework of the 1<sup>st</sup> Motion. That matter had still not been debated politically. At this point, following the completion of the missing election Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had just taken office as the Prime Minister. The government that he had hurriedly formed, which had only been operating for a week, had not even received a vote of confidence from Parliament. The US announced that it was in urgent need of an immediate decision. A decision was made to submit the 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion to the Turkish Parliament General Assembly on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

In a glimpse, on that day, AKP was a party that was very recently formed and had come to power with an unexpected victory, but could not yet find the time to hold even its first Party Congress. The impression that the US wanted to take advantage of this high pressure situation and from inexperience made parliamentarians uncomfortable. Almost all of its parliamentarians were new and did not completely understand all the issues yet, but felt responsible towards their electorate to meticulously discharge their first duty. Justifiably, they wanted to know what it was they were signing. We at the Turkish Parliament Commissions worked hard day and night to provide them the information that they demanded. During the last two months, reports were heard that the technical work carried out with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had stopped. The details of what was being signed

were not to be known. Upto that point, no mutual agreement had been made with any authority in Turkey regarding the role Turkey was to take. Tension rose and the “Right to be informed” debate flared up. A question was being asked: “Are the US and Turkey really allies?” If so, it was said, the right to be informed should be adhered to, for this is the basis of such a relationship. Previous to Iraq, this approach to Turkey caused much disappointment. As one whose personal duty has been to work so that parliamentary representatives could discuss the topic in more detail or at least come to an agreement on certain new principles, I must confess that great difficulties have been experienced in the process simply due to points that have been left unclear by the US.

The government was trying to make its statements to the members of parliament as broad as possible. Due to the fact that we were a new party group, certain precedents had not been established, yet. The party group was having very serious debates in itself. In order to reach the number required to call the General Assembly to meet, it was resolved for each to vote according to his conscience. The General Assembly assembled, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion was rejected by a small margin of votes.

That was how the crisis over the motion in parliament happened. Following this decision, the US became angry at Turkey. Formerly, US used to say, “Turkey is a good model for democracy,” but then it got offended because it did not like the decision that the Parliament made. Turkey was disappointed by this attitude, again.

It is not easy to answer the questions that arise regarding the events that occurred in the approximately three months between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Motions, the true nature of the things the US requested from Turkey, and in what manner mutual negotiations regarding these issues took place. I concur with the evaluation of Mr. Pearson, US Ambassador to Turkey at that time, when he personally related to me that they were “events that would be best if forgotten.”

This did not mean that Turkey was withdrawing its support for stability and peace in the world. After 1990, Turkey sent troops to more than 30 points on the globe to help to restore peace and stability. The responsibility of the ISAF command in Afghanistan is currently being conducted by Turkey.

America insisted that its need for troops in Iraq continued. The Turkish Parliament made two more decisions on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003 to provide this support. Notwithstanding, the US changed its mind later and decided that it did not need troops.

No one will benefit from tactics that prolong the tension. It is natural that the US has certain problems in Iraq, but to associate them with the Turkish Parliament decision would be a superficial evaluation. There is definitely a difference between a satellite view from space and plans laid out on the table versus events that occur on location. Now is the time to evaluate the events on ground and deal with them justly.

Let us not forget that Iraq is Assyria’s successor. It comes from a Mesopotamian history that is full of strife. Things that we belittle can teach us many things. I have the following recollection that taught me a lesson: I went to Kirkuk in 1974 with then President of Turkey, Süleyman Demirel, for the opening ceremony for the Kirkuk-Iskenderun Oil Pipeline. Iraq’s Secretary of State also came. We were to go to the pipeline valve location by helicopter, but there was no operational helicopter. We boarded one of those available;

a soldier came and squatted down inside the helicopter. With two hands he held two wires so they touched the engine and the motor started. The helicopter took off in this fashion with a Secretary of State and a President in it. If the soldier had sneezed, we would have all crashed to the ground. We arrived at the location of the ceremony. The Ceremonial Guard was present for inspection. I walked slowly, looking into the soldiers' faces and greeting them. My eye caught one of the soldier's shoes. He had different rubber boots on each foot, and the other soldiers' boots were not much different than his. When he saw that I had noticed, he murmured some words. I asked the translator what he had said. He was saying, "The oil is ours. That which will flow down the pipe is ours too, but there is no money for soldiers' shoes. Americans are using this oil without paying any taxes." We will only be successful in Iraq if we are able to place a higher value on these people who have only seen exploitation for the past century.

***An Explanation: the Paradigm Shifts Occurring both in the US and in Turkey***

Politics undeniably carries traces of the events and needs that society has experienced. The approach to the parliament motion must be explained in this manner. I believe that it is necessary to take a careful behind-the-scenes look at the cyclical tensions brought about by ambiguity and perform a deeper socio-political analysis.

Briefly, for purposes of this article, I will reflect the perception in Turkey. America has gone to great lengths to create a multicultural democratic point of view based on "love of freedom," which is America's basic paradigm. The already present idea of a New World Order was waiting for an approach to be chosen that would transform it into practice. However, September 11 was an event that compelled implementation of this project to a "security" point of view. From the perspectives of different peoples of the world, what resulted from this process was not very agreeable. Some see in it an undemocratic, authoritarian, restrictive, aggressive style. In Iraq a racist and sectarian mode of operation is observable. This could be termed a temporary paradigm shift. I believe that after the US recovers from the September 11 syndrome, it will return to its primary paradigm and proceed to establish the post-modernist paradigm that is needed along these lines. Otherwise, in the communication-intensive world of today, there is a possible threat that the persistence of the current, what I call, temporary paradigm could have an internal impact on America and shake its peaceable multi-cultural makeup.

Turkey, on the other hand, although it has grown out of a paradigm based on "security," as has been described throughout this article, has experienced a shift toward "liberty and democracy." The libertarian viewpoint that was initially supported by the intellectuals has been interrupted at various instances by bureaucratic tradition. The events of the past 25 years have made it easier for the public to become personally involved in the democratization process. The fact that this tendency is being supported by the process of acquisition of full membership in the EU will have a greater influence in the future to speed up this trend.

At the same time, due to the late paradigm shift in the US from freedom to security, , the intellectuals in Turkey began to view America with suspicion. The incident over the motion in parliament made it evident that the changes in viewpoints in both countries did not match, they clashed. During the last two years, the government and people of Turkey observed this shift in America and tried to understand it. However, if America truly embodies the values that it says it is providing leadership for, I hope, it will soon

redefine its approach and manifest a more unifying role. At that time, there will be no room left for the apprehension among Turkish intelligensia.

In the event that this paradigm shift observed today in America gains sustainability, the value system of the whole world will have to change and that will not take place easily.

### ***How Angry are Turks at the US Administration's Approach?***

It can be said that, had the people been sufficiently informed, Turks might have had a different view regarding contributing to America's invasion of Iraq. In order to not pass judgment on the events with superficial viewpoints, as we have tried not to do in this article, when we are conscious of the causes, effects and reactions that take place behind the scenes, it is evident that the presence of anger is the result of accumulated effects.

It may not quite be possible to achieve the desired results by politically manipulating the press. The press is quite free in Turkey. As has been described above, there are pens which defend the views of foreign entities. Just to give an instant view of today, Turkey is a country where people debate even when they are put under pressure or they are frustrated, ask questions and whose criticisms and self-criticisms are reflected in the press. The world of press and publication has been a battleground of foes and friend and has proven to have more strengths than it does weaknesses. The process by which the people form opinions with their own criteria regarding what is best for the country has become extremely accelerated. The governments will take notice of a society that mixes its message also with humor and wit. One indicator of this is that the public sector is in a process of reform because it feels like it is lagging behind society in general.

Various interpretations were made about a world opinion poll carried out by a British company last month in which the US turned out to be Turkish peoples least favorite country. We have some doubts about whether the sampling done in Turkey was really representative of society. Differences of meaning were apparent in the list of questions and answer choices, etc. There is no concrete basis for the fact that the ratio of those that see America as a threat was higher among Turks than among Arabs. These are a few issues that reduce the reliability of the study.

If we begin to interpret the situation with the knowledge that America's attitude of unilaterally providing order is not accepted anywhere in the world, it is easier for everyone to see where they stand. In addition, the US administration may be able to better analyze the reasons for this loss of trust. If we look at the true nature of the antagonism toward the US in Turkey, my findings show that there is some anger towards the US in Turkey and this is a cyclical anger. There are various reasons for its accumulation, which has been described throughout this article. It is dubious whether there is a tangible basis for it or not. If we are to find a fragment of a tangible basis, we could say that the causes are more economic than political. On the other hand, this anger has historical roots that are based on anti-imperialism. These feelings have grown stronger in Turkey in the two years following the Iraq War. This is one point on which the intelligensia and the masses would unite. For this reason, I am in favor of the US showing in a manner that can be clearly understood throughout the world how it defines the difference between an approach based on imperial force and a hegemonic relationship based on persuasion.

A comparison of the opposition in Turkey with the anti-US sentiment in European Union countries shows that the opposition that exists in most of the countries in the

European Continent has structural characteristics. It is a systemic, organized opposition that emphasizes the differences that exist between the two shores of the Atlantic. It is also possible to observe this at the level of governments and policies. This certainly is not the case in Turkey.

The fact that feelings of antagonism based on anger have increased in Turkey is more due to concrete examples of how the US applies overpowering, divisive force on weak people and twists the truth. For example, neither Turkey nor the Turkish people feel any opposition toward Israel. However, the treatment of the people of Palestine who have been left without a land of their own is incentive for the people to be on the side of the disadvantaged. While the people that have suffered the most massacre and have continually been faced with exile have been the Turkmen, the massacre of the Kurds in Halabja, which we all vilify, has remained in the forefront, and Turkish people are saddened by the fact that the Turkmen people have been subject to massacre while under the administration of our ally, the US, in Iraq. People being held at Guantanamo Bay without evidence or trial and incidents of torture feed the anger.

In addition, recent events in which the US has attracted anger include the US's unfounded lack of confidence in Turkey, like warning Turkey not to visit Syria, the safeguarding of PKK-Kongra Gel, efforts to obtain concessions via fait accompli, impressions that there were efforts to manipulate the economy, the secret punishments applied on Turkey because the 2<sup>nd</sup> Motion was not approved by Parliament on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, and incidents where sacks were put over the heads of Turkish soldiers in Sulaymaniyah.

Furthermore, the fact that for a period of time, US authorities did not communicate with institutions but with certain individuals that it deemed important also caused dissatisfaction in government institutions. It is evident from some of the actions taken that the information gathering channels that US authorities used in Turkey have been incorrect or intentional.

In order to overcome together these attitudes related to insufficient perception and assumed intentions, there are many opportunities for dialogue and gestures that will increase trust.

### ***Conclusion***

In today's world, every one of us has problems related to the situation we find ourselves in. I don't think we can get anywhere by continuing to accuse each other of not having good intentions. I'm sure we can solve our problems with discussion. We began in tough times, and we must know how to continue in rough times.

Turkey and America do not have a difference of opinion that is based on "essential principles" related to the problematic issues. But Turkey has a significant disagreement on the "methods" used by the US on some issues regarding Turkey. We see that we are not alone. Most of the countries thrive difficulties in comprehending America's "harsh approach."

The US administration will decide what general policies it will apply from this point on. As a starting point, we would be very much relieved by an America that would review

and explain its relationships with its allies, its Iraq policy, its method for dealing with terrorism and its approach to Muslim societies.

There are three parts to Turkey's foreign policy: The US, the EU and Asia. NATO represents two parts because it spans the Atlantic. For this reason, Turkey cannot have an anti-American tendency. The Turkish people consider justice and stability to be important. They approve of alliances built along these lines. They prefer that their own generals be in charge of their army. They support the taking of responsibility on an international level. It is debatable whether Turkey should choose a unilateral alliance with the US, conformity to NATO, or cooperation between the US, EU and Turkey. Solutions can be achieved with dialogue and recognition of the right to be informed. Opportunities for concerted action based on trust and tied to defined commitments can be provided. Excessive pressure on Turkey will not cause Turkey to become isolated but to choose between alliances. This has not been Turkey's choice up until now, and it is still not our preference. If we are forced to, it will become an option.

If America and Turkey have common interests, Turkey has no need to strive to be a regional power. It has good relationships with its neighboring countries. These relationships can serve to help to reach an agreement between Israel and the Arabs, to found democracies in the Middle East and in Central Asia, to support the EU's foreign policy and defense as well as sharing with it its historical experience in forming a multicultural example of society, and to assist in the development of the Caucasus. If America and Turkey decide they do not have common interests, Turkey may be forced to use its accumulated influence to become a regional power. This would be a decision that would be costly for both sides, because whether it is global or regional, the establishment and administration of a relationship based on hegemony will be costly, expensive and unpredictable. In light of the fact that an imperial power relationship requires a form and system of values that is hard to accept as valid in our day and age, I will not address that. Only, I would like to observe that if the US gives a message of war (and as a result, instability) like it did in Iraq to the Middle East and Asia, this may cause a delay in the world's advancement.

By America becoming a stabilizing factor, peace in Israel, democracy in the Middle East and Asia not in form but in essence, and the EU putting into practice a multicultural democratic system will reflect the values system that America has put forth as the basis of its world leadership. I am of the opinion that regional partnerships would be useful in carrying this out. In order to reestablish such partnerships on the basis of mutual trust, it will be beneficial to work on long term partnerships that are real, not a pretense. Turkey could make a significant contribution in this respect.

In order for Turkey to be able to make easy decisions and act in a stable fashion in its foreign policy, it is necessary for business and commercial opportunities to increase and for its EU membership to not be held in limbo. Apparently, no policy can find solid ground to succeed that does not include the goal of real development for small and medium sized businesses and agriculture that will continue into the long run. A productive society with high economic expectations that is expected to operate within narrow confines will be the greatest obstacle to any government, whether democratic or authoritarian, for decision situations and shifting resources to other areas.

In summary:

- Turkey wants a dialogue of equals;
- Turkey is always ready to discuss cooperation based on the “Right to be informed,” which should always exist between allies;
- Turkey can be a natural strategic partner to the extent that its own principles and interests are taken into consideration. Being a business partner would give Turkey incentive. Being a democratic partner would please Turkey;
- Turkey believes that instead of contention, which makes everyone weaker, win-win projects can be carried out, both for those taking action and those involved;
- A bilateral “committee of wise men” could be formed to begin to work on developing common ground and language on even the most pointed topics;
- A new leaf could be turned over in Turkish-American relationships by beginning with points of agreement;
- Transparency will be beneficial in improving relationships: either “yes” or “no,” but clearly and with justification.

I salute all of you with a favorite American saying of mine:

“Coming together is a beginning,  
Staying together is progress,  
And working together is success.”