TURKEY'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.–TURKISH RELATIONS

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TURKEY'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.–TURKISH RELATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2010

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard L. Berman (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman BERMAN. The committee will come to order. In a moment, I am going to recognize myself and the ranking member for up to 7 minutes each for purposes of making an opening statement. I will then recognize the chairman and ranking member of the Europe Subcommittee, if they wish, for 3 minutes each to make opening remarks. All other members will then have the opportunity to make 1-minute opening statements if they wish to do so. Without objection, members may also place written statements in the record.

The purpose of this hearing is to gain insight into the changes in the foreign-policy direction of our long-time ally Turkey. Now the sixteenth-largest economy in the world, Turkey is a complex country, endowed by geography with circumstances that connect it to developments in at least a half-dozen regions and sub-regions.

Turkish foreign policy is also complex. Turkey is an important ally to the United States in NATO and now particularly so in Afghanistan, where it has 1,700 troops, heads the Kabul Regional Command, and makes other important contributions. Turkey is also a critical transit point for provisions for our troops in Iraq.

But it is Turkey's recent and worrisome policy turns regarding Iran, Israel, and the Palestinians, and the larger implications of those policies, that are likely to form the basis for much of today's discussion.

One State Department official recently put it this way: "There is a lot of questioning going on about Turkey's orientation and its ongoing commitment to strategic partnership with the United States."

I am among those that have such concerns, and that is why we are holding the first full committee hearing devoted exclusively to Turkey within my memory.

For some people, concerns about Turkey's direction first came to the fore almost immediately in November 2002, when the religiously-oriented AK Party won a powerful parliamentary majority. For others it was in March 2003, when the Turkish Parliament voted down the U.S. request to allow the U.S. Fourth Infantry Division to cross Turkish territory as part of the Iraq war.

I was not in either of those groups. After the AK Party was elected, I was encouraged by their focus on internal reform and the European Union, as well as by the hopeful prospect that AK would be a model for a moderate Islam that would inspire others throughout the Islamic world. I have also been encouraged by what has, at times, been a foreign policy less rigid and less nationalistic than traditional Turkish policy.

But for me the evidence of a negative foreign-policy shift by the AK Party government has been clear at least since February 2006, when Turkey invited Hamas leader Khaled Mashal for a visit. Until then, Turkey had seemed as solidly anti-terrorist as any country in the world. At the time, the Turks indicated they merely hoped to moderate Hamas, but now, with the passage of well over 4 years of regular contacts between Hamas and Turkey, it is clear that Hamas has not changed at all—but Turkey has. And the contacts continue more intensively than ever.

The intensity of Prime Minister Erdogan's anger at Israel became clear for all to see at Davos in February 2009. Since that time Turkey's growing closeness with Iran has added, for many of us, a new dimension of outrage and concern.

Concerns about Turkey hit a new peak with the flotilla incident, the apparent ties of some AK Party and the Hamas-associated nongovernmental organization IHH, and the Turkish vote against U.N. Security Council resolution 1929, the historic sanctions resolution aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program. Earlier this week Turkey's Finance Minister asserted that his nation would boost trade with Iran, while ignoring all non-U.N. sanctions. That is an upsetting position when Russia takes it, but it is appalling when it comes from an ally.

All of these developments raise many questions.

Is Turkey moving away from the West? Or is it merely taking independent positions regarding the Palestinians and Iran, however objectionable to us, while otherwise remaining committed to the Western alliance?

Is the AK Party government seeking a greater leadership role in the Middle East, and, if so, what does that mean?

What is the AK Party's vision for Turkey? Is it committed to democracy? To European Union membership?

And how crucial is Turkey to us as an ally? How important is the United States to Turkey's interest? How does Turkey view its alliance with the United States?

Certain points are beyond dispute: First, Turkey is indeed seeking to enhance its standing in the Middle East—some say, it is seeking to leave the Middle East—and it is using criticism of Israel and backing for Hamas to support that bid.

Second, Turkish contacts with Hamas are deeply offensive. They undermine the pro-peace Palestinian Authority and therefore they ultimately undermine prospects for peace. And, although we can't compel Turkey to view Hamas as a terrorist group—Prime Minister Erdogan has labeled it a "resistance" group—we should expect Ankara to at least respect the terrorism list of an important ally, namely, the United States.

This is particularly true when the United States is actively aiding Turkey in its fight against the Kurdish separatist terrorist

group known as PKK. The U.S. has been providing Turkey real-time, "actionable" intelligence against the PKK since December 2007 in response to a direct appeal from Prime Minister Erdogan.

Third, it is critical that Turkey acknowledge the genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people during World War I. That is why this committee has repeatedly passed measures recognizing the genocide and calling on the President to do likewise. I believe the Turks, once they come to terms with their past, will discover that they have relieved themselves and their children of an immense moral burden.

Fourth, we also want to see more movement on the Cyprus issue. We want to make sure that the new Turkish Cypriot leader, who has always opposed a solution, negotiates in the spirit of the U.N. resolutions and inter-communal agreements that require a solution. It is time for Turkey to draw down its absurdly high troop level in northern Cyprus. And Turkey should cease settling Turkish citizens in northern Cyprus. Northern Cyprus is not sovereign Turkish territory.

Fifth, we want to see true press freedom in Turkey. Press intimidation has no place in democracies.

We also want full freedom for religious minorities in Turkey. It is time for Turkey to recognize the ecumenical nature of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and it is certainly time for Turkey to allow its Greek Orthodox citizens to reopen the Halki Seminary.

Not all of these problems began with AK Party control of government. But the AK Party government has brought to the fore new issues of concern. I am eager to hear our witnesses' views as to just how concerned we should be, what course Turkey is likely to take in the future, and what, if anything, our Government should be doing differently in its policy toward Turkey.

Let me now turn to the ranking member, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for any opening remarks that she might like to make.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Berman follows:]

Wednesday, July 28, 2010

Verbatim, as delivered

Chairman Howard L. Berman's opening statement at hearing, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations"

The purpose of this hearing is to gain insight into the changes in the foreign-policy direction of our long-time ally Turkey. Now the sixteenth-largest economy in the world, Turkey is a complex country, endowed by geography with circumstances that connect Turkey to developments in at least a half-dozen regions and sub-regions.

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But for me the evidence of a negative foreign-policy shift by the AK Party government has been clear at least since February 2006, when Turkey invited Hamas leader Khaled Meshal for a visit. Until then, Turkey has seemed as solidly anti-terrorist as any country in the world. At the time, the Turks indicated that they merely hoped to moderate Hamas, but now, with the passage of well over four years of regular contacts between Hamas and Turkey, it is clear that Hamas hasn't changed at all – but Turkey has. And the contacts continue, more intensively than ever.

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–Second, Turkish contacts with Hamas are deeply offensive.They undermine the pro-peace Palestinian Authority g and ultimately, they undermine prospects for peace.

And, although we can't compel Turkey to view Hamas as a terrorist group – Prime Minister Erdogan has labeled it a "resistance" group – we should expect Ankara to respect the terrorism list of an important ally, namely, the United States.

This is particularly true when the U.S. is actively aiding Turkey in its fight against the Kurdish separatist terrorist group known as PKK. The US has been providing Turkey real-time, "actionable" intelligence against the PKK since December 2007 in response to a direct appeal from Prime Minister Erdogan.

–Third, it is critical that Turkey acknowledge the genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people during World War I. That's why this Committee has repeatedly passed measures recognizing the Genocide and calling on the President to do likewise. I believe that Turks, once they come to terms with their past, will discover that they have relieved themselves and their children of an immense moral burden.

–Fourth, we also want to see more movement on the Cyprus issue. We want to make sure that the new Turkish Cypriot leader, who has always opposed a solution, negotiates in the spirit of the UN resolutions and inter-communal agreements that require a solution. It's time for Turkey to draw down its absurdly high troop level in northern Cyprus. And Turkey should cease settling Turkish citizens in northern Cyprus. Northern Cyprus is not sovereign Turkish territory.

–Fifth, we want to see true press freedom in Turkey. It is certainly not acceptable to manipulate the tax-system to force a newspaper publisher to temper his criticism of the government. And it is not acceptable for the prime minister to call for a boycott of newspapers he doesn't like. We think of Turkey as a democracy, and these practices of press intimidation have no place in democracies.

We also want full freedom for religious minorities in Turkey. It is time for Turkey to recognize the ecumenical nature of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and it is certainly time for Turkey to allow its Greek Orthodox citizens to re-open Halki Seminary.

Not all of these problems began with AK Party control of government. In fact, Turkish positions regarding Cyprus, the Ecumenical patriarchate, and the Armenian Genocide reflect longstanding Turkish government positions. But the AK Party government has brought to the fore new issues of concern. I am eager to hear our witnesses' views as to just how concerned we should be, what course Turkey is likely to take in the future, and what, if anything, our government should be doing differently in its policy toward Turkey.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for this hearing. Since the days of the Truman Doctrine in the late 1940s, the United States and Turkey have had a strong relationship that has served both countries' interests. This is not to say that there have not been serious disagreements. We have long called on Turkey to end its illegal occupation of the northern portion of the Cyprus and to implement more appropriate policies toward the Greek Orthodox ecumenical patriarchate in Istanbul. Still there continue to be areas in which our two countries reap significant benefits from this relationship. Although the Soviet Union is long gone as a NATO ally, Turkey still has U.S. guarantee of support if it is threatened militarily.

As part of NATO, Turkey has the opportunity to participate with the United States and other member states in the area of missile defense. As Turkey's ally, the United States, in turn is allowed to use Turkey's Incirlik Air Base to support the military operations that we have in Afghanistan, and has Turkey's active support in that operation. Both countries also actively cooperate with each other in fighting extremism, and that is extremely important both because our nations have been targets of horrible attacks and continue to face a threat of future very serious attacks.

The U.S. and Turkey are significant partners in trade and commerce which is obviously an important fact in this kind of increasing global economic uncertainty. This hearing today however reflects a fact that we may be at a turning point in U.S.-Turkish relations. The policy disagreements that have emerged in recent years pose serious challenges to the bilateral relationship. These include Turkey's opposition to the sanctions on Iran that have been sought by the United States and its other NATO allies in Europe. Turkey's move instead to rapidly increase its commercial relations with Iran. I note this in regard that just this week it, was reported that Turkey and Iran have signed a new agreement on natural gas pipeline from Iran to Turkey in defiance of U.S.-led efforts to cut off energy investment development and trade with Iran.

The Turkish Government's provocation in supporting the May 31st violation of the naval blockade on shipments to the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip. Turkish authorities then encouraged efforts at the United Nations to demonize and condemn our democratic ally, Israel. And that current Turkish Government verbal attacks on Israel and the Turkish Government support for Hamas, which is designated by the United States as a terrorist organization.

No country has a foreign policy that is completely divorced from its domestic political affairs, and Turkey's ongoing internal changes and their impact on its foreign policy are no exception to that rule. The relationship between Turkey's internal developments and its foreign policy is, in fact, a subject of debate that makes this hearing today very timely. Everyone seems to agree that this is not your grandfather's Turkey anymore.

But the fundamental question for Turkey's future foreign policy is how great a change in Turkey's internal political government—governance, and social and cultural practices does the current Turkish Government intend to seek. The majority justice and development are AK Party and Turkey is clearly an Islamic party. What is being debated is how far will it try to go in breaking down

the separation of state and religion that has been the hallmark of Turkish governance since the Mustafa Kemal Ataturk ended the Islamic caliphate in Turkey in the 1920s.

The ability of the Turkish military, a bastion of secularism to fend off the rise of dedicated Islamists, within its officer core, appears to be weakening. The manner in which the current Turkish Government has conducted its investigation into an alleged military plot to insight a coup has reportedly involved questionable tactics, including extensive wiretapping, alleged illegalities and the collection of evidence and lengthy indictments. There have been serious allegations of pressure by the current government on media organizations that do not support its policies.

The government proposed constitutional reforms, if adopted, would appear to greatly increase its control over the Turkish judiciary, another traditional bastion of secularism. In fact, some observers say that the Turkish Prime Minister may be following the pattern of the current Russian Prime Minister in the past decade. That is steadily putting in place the building blocks for an authoritarian regime that would perpetuate the AKP's hold on power. Is the AKP government seeking to be a more active party in Middle Eastern affairs? A more Islamic voice in world affairs, a stronger voice in global economic affairs in the G–20 group of nations, or a partner with Russia, China, India and Brazil in the so-called BRIC group.

Ultimately, we need to ask, what does this mean for U.S.-Turkish relationships? In our committee's hearing on trans-Atlantic security in March, I noticed some concern over the positions of several leading NATO allies in Europe in dealing with Russia's aggression and corruption in contributing to the NATO operations in Afghanistan, in sharing with the United States the cost of fighting Islamic militants and maintaining global security. I said at that time Europe remains important to the United States, but our calls for support must not go unheeded. I suggest that that applies to our relationship with Turkey today as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this timely hearing.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you very much, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen. And now I am pleased to recognize the chair of the Europe Subcommittee of our committee, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. Delahunt.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We hear a lot these days about Turkey's so-called drift. Drift from the West, drift from democracy, drift from secularism. But that is not surprising because there are multiple agendas at play in the world today. Some raise fears about the so-called Islamist influences. They speak of losing Turkey as if Turkey were about to spawn a new Calafat and destroy the Christian West. How absurd. The fact is that the United States and Turkey have cultivated a long-term, solid relationship, that has been critical in support of American national interests, as well as Turkey's. That relationship is persevered and has been sustained in war. They fought at our side during the Korean War. During the Cold War, they were NATO's southeastern flank against the former Soviet Union, and now they are playing a critical role in Afghanistan. And it continues in peace with efforts

on both sides to increase the commercial relationship between the United States and Turkey.

And importantly, it serves as a countervailing force to Iran in this volatile region. Absent Turkey, Iran would be a hegemon in a region where the United States has vital national interest. The alliance will persist because it is in our interest and it is also in Turkey's interest. Of course, there are changes ongoing in Turkey and in its relationship with its neighbors. But today's Turkey remains essentially as it was in the days of Ataturk, a secular Nation with a Muslim majority.

What is changing is that Turkey's becoming more democratic. Let's not forget that the Turkish military regularly overthrew and manipulated elected governments. The most recent coup was less than 13 years ago. Under the current government, Turkey has brought more civilian control over the military and increased the participation of its citizens in the democratic processes. This government has made significant efforts to bring Turkey in line with the democratic standards of the European Union. So if you have a problem with changes in Turkey, while maybe you have a problem with democracy and the democratic processes.

I noted that one of today's witnesses suggests that we encourage the political opposition in Turkey, presumably we should choose sides. Well, we tried that in Latin America and it didn't work very well. I suggest that we let the Turks decide what is in their best interest. It will work to our advantage in the long term. Ironically Turkey's—I would ask the chair to indulge me for another minute.

Chairman BERMAN. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 1 additional minute.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Ironically Turkey's democratic improvements come at a time when the EU is divided over Turkey's accession. I agree with Secretary Gates who believes that this is one of the factors driving Turkey to expand its diplomatic and economic ties else somewhere. Just yesterday, the new conservative British Prime Minister, David Cameron, said that while advocating, he was advocating for full Turkish membership in the EU. Here is what he had to say, some people seem to oppose Turkey joining the European block because they willfully misunderstand Islam. Simple fact, the alliance between America and Turkey has served our national interest for over 60 years, let's not delude ourselves, we need Turkey and Turkey needs us, and with that, I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman has yielded back his time. And do any members wish to make opening statements? The gentleman from New York—oh.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. No.

Mr. ROYCE. I will just——

Chairman BERMAN. No, the gentleman from California is recognized in place of the other person from California for 3 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason I think I will make a few remarks here is because for those of us who are concerned about Turkey, I think we should recognize some of the recent events that have really called into question the intentions of the Turkish Government, and not to do so, I think, would be a mistake. I think for us to remain silent on the issue of dissidents in

Iran pushing for democracy and there has been no outcry from the Turkish Government in order to try to show solidarity in any way with democracy in Iran with an election which was undermined. To me, this is hard to equate with the thought that what we are seeing in Turkey is more democracy. I don't think that is necessarily true.

When we see the Turkish Government show solidarity with Islamist states like Sudan, for those of us who have worked on the Sudan problem, it is hard to figure out why the ruling party in Turkey would embrace that position while it takes shots at more moderate secular governments like Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. I remember a piece in The Wall Street Journal entitled "Turkey's Decline Into Madness." It may be overstated, but it points out all the conspiracy theories bouncing around within the ruling party in Turkey. Our own Ambassador to Turkey had to bring in the Turkish media to explain that the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 was not caused by the United States setting off a nuclear blast under the sea. Is the government in Turkey really trying to put these rumors to bed or are they feeding these rumors, and why do they do so?

I spoke a little bit about the embrace of the position of Sudan in states like that. On the other hand, the Turkish Government refers to some of the actions of Israel as being driven by a terrorist state. This does not show balance or an attempt to help resolve problems in the regions.

Chairman BERMAN. Does the gentleman—recognized for 1 additional minute.

Mr. ROYCE. I appreciate that.

On top of that, relations with Armenia and Greece are very frayed. If Turkey wanted to resolve some of these problems, it could put forth their best effort and move its foreign policy forward, but there is no rapprochement there that I see. Turkey's blockade of Armenia remains intact. You still have 40,000 of its soldiers embedded in Cyprus.

Clearly they could work out some kind of an arrangement where they could take a lot of those soldiers back into Turkey. And yet you have these policies that create plenty of problems for Turkey. And for us not to point these out and not try to encourage Turkey to take positions, which I think are in the long-term interests of peace and stability in that region, would be a mistake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from New York, the chairman of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee. For purposes of our committee's jurisdiction, Turkey is in Europe. You are recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Turkey's foreign policy over the past few months has been a considerable disappointment. Turkey's vote against U.N. sanctions on Iran, demagoguery over the Gaza flotilla, and President Erdogan's embrace of the dictator from Syria and Iran and the terrorists from Hamas are all deplorable and grossly irresponsible. But I can understand Turkey wants good relations with its neighbors and hopes to play some sort of a mediating role.

On Monday, however, the Financial Times quoted Turkey's Finance Minister as saying with regards to Iran, "[t]he facilitation of trade that is not prohibited under U.N. resolution should and will continue," he said. I want to be blunt, preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons is an absolutely vital U.S. national security interest, and any effort to undermine, undercut or circumvent or bypass U.S. or other international sanctions against Iran will have grave consequences for our bilateral relations, no exception, no excuses. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Smith, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this very important and timely hearing. The Turkish Government's foreign policy raises serious human rights concerns regarding Cyprus; its military occupies and promotes illegal migration into the northern part of the island where it destroys churches. Regarding Armenia Ankara has a policy of aggressive genocide denial. Ethnic Kurds are subject to assimilation pressures and the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Halki Seminary as well as Syrian Orthodox monasteries are under relentless pressure.

Now the Turkish Government further realigning its foreign policy toward Iran. It has become openly hostile to Israel, broadcasting anti-Semitic programming on state-sponsored television. Prime Minister Erdogan's statements just recently in June professing "understanding" for those who compare the Star of David to the swastika was deeply troubling, and hopefully did not represent further deterioration of his view and his country's view toward Israel. And we are very—I am very—concerned as he is pursuing closer ties to Hamas. Again, I look forward to comments from our witnesses.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. For purposes of these 1-minute statements, we go in seniority order, and for the purposes of 5-minute question periods we go based on when members arrive, and therefore I recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, for 1 minute.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much. I think this is a very timely hearing. I have been one who has been very critical of Turkey's occupation of northern Cyprus, I do believe that they should bring their troops out of Cyprus, although things have eased there, it is far from a settlement. So I agree that Turkey certainly needs to reveal its Cyprus policies. There is no question that Turkey is starting to flex its muscles. You may recall the Ottoman Empire controlled half of the known world at one time. I think Turkey is starting to reemerge as a power. We need to remind ourselves that they are very good friends of the United States, and we need to ensure that we continue to have that friendship; however, we do need to work on them to understand and the Sudan situation. Although, each Egypt also is not very supportive of south Sudan, so I think we need to work there too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Arizona, Mr. Flake. Do you seek recognition?

Mr. FLAKE. No.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Mack, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. MACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, we keep hearing about the relationship with Turkey and the United States and how important it is, but I need to remind people of the current actions and the recent actions Turkey has taken, whether it is in support of Hamas, opposition to sanctions with Iran and the role it played in the flotilla. These things we can't ignore, we just can't decide that we are going to continue to support a country that is working against our own interests. And I—you know, I can't help but to think only in Washington can you look at a series of actions like this and turn around and say, oh, but we can try to work through these. I would say this to Turkey. The relationship with Turkey is hanging by a thread. If Turkey wants to have a relationship with the United States, then Turkey needs to change the course in which it is heading.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. And the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Sires is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Start, thank you very much for holding today's hearing over U.S.-Turkey relation.

Chairman BERMAN. You are welcome.

Mr. SIRES. During its nearly century of existence, the Republic of Turkey and the United States have had their ups and downs, but in recent years, Turkey has proven to be an important strategic partner to our country as a NATO ally contributing to operations in Afghanistan and serving as an important bridge between Europe and the Middle East.

However, I believe in recent foreign policy decisions made by the Turks such as voting against the U.N.'s sanctions on Iran are rightfully called for us to address the direction of our relation. While I do not think we should overlook the severity of these actions, I believe there must be—that we must approach the issue in such a way that will not isolate Turkey, our critical ally in the region. As we have seen, Turkey is more capable of acting independently on the world stage—okay, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman BERMAN. Finish the sentence.

Mr. SIRES. Critical relations between Turkey and the United States, but I am very concerned, I was going to get into Cyprus, but forget it.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from New York, Mr. McMahon.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Turkey and historical allies realigning its foreign policy goals, expanding trade relationships and redefining a strictly secular identity to domestic reform. These are, of course, seemingly positive moves for Turkey's economy, populace and future. As a matter of fact, these moves were accepted and even encouraged by Western allies. But today we find that one ambitious goal after another is moving at an unexpectedly rapid, even unsteady pace. And perhaps what is even more perplexing is that even Turks within Turkey can identify multiple discrepancies in the policies of Prime Minister Erdogan and his government.

After years of surprises, I believe that next year's elections will be revealing to the United States, to Israel and the West as to Tur-

key's new direction. In the meantime, I hope that Turkish officials pay greater attention to messaging. Furthermore, assurances that any gains made in the Middle East will not be exchanged with traditional alliances would be welcome. And finally, Turkey will only prosper further if encouraged to solve disputes closer to home first, like Cyprus. I look forward to our distinguished witnesses' assessments and yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. And the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, is recognized for 1 minute.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me add my accolades to you for having a timely and instructive hearing along with the ranking member. I have always said that this foreign affairs committee has taken its responsibility to the highest level. We are engaged in the foreign policy definition of the United States. Turkey has been an enormously strong ally of this Nation, and particularly as a Muslim country. We are concerned, though, as a sovereign Nation the detour that Turkey has begun to take.

And I think it is important in this hearing to recognize that our mutual interests are interrelated. Strong Muslim, a democratic nation with a Nation as the United States is that believes in humanitarian involvement. We want to solve some of the problems that Turkey considers problems. We want them to be a good neighbor in the region, and I believe that we can have this common ground and common good if we look at each other with mutual respect and continued interest in our working relationship. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired. The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Miller. Do you seek recognition? No. The gentleman from Georgia Mr. Scott is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, this is indeed a timely hearing and I think it is very important that we set the conversation on its proper axis from the very beginning. Number one, Turkey is an important ally to the United States, its role in Afghanistan, the role is plays on the war on terror, they have troops over in Afghanistan, they allow us to fly over, supply our troops is very important. Thirdly, their work in terms of making sure that they have pipelines that will eventually be able to get energy into Europe without being dependent on Russia. However, the people of Turkey and the leadership of Turkey are going to have to face a serious question at some point, and this is when it comes to Iran and Israel and the United States. The course they are headed on is a face-to-face showdown with the question whose side are you on. Iran cannot and must not have nuclear weapons, and hopefully the people of Turkey will reassess that. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Burton, is recognized.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All I want to say is, I think Turkey has been a great ally of the United States, we have NATO bases there and we need to keep that relationship strong. And at the same time, we need to make sure that we support Israel which has been one of the stalwarts and one of our best friends in the Middle East for a long, long time. That is why I had an oppor-

tunity to talk to the leaders from Israel and the Turkish Ambassador, and I urged them to take the time to sit down and try to work out their differences, especially because of the problem that occurred in the Mediterranean.

But we support and really care about Israel and the stability of that country. We don't want to see weapons going into Hamas through the Mediterranean. And at the same time, we want to make sure that our relationship with Turkey remains strong. So I would hope some kind of rapprochement can be worked out, so that our good friends, Israel and Turkey, can come to an agreeable solution so that we don't have further problems in the Middle East, and we want to be sure weapons stay out of Hamas' hands.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Costa.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the ranking member for—everyone has acknowledged a timely hearing. I am looking forward to hearing the witnesses this morning as to the current status of our relations with Turkey. It truly has been noted by the various comments. We are talking about two sides of the coin here today, the one side, of course, being the reliable strong ally and NATO partner where we have done actions over the years, I think with some success, a relationship that I think we both support. On the other hand, concerns with the involvement in Cyprus, for me, the inability to resolve the situation with Armenia, their lack of willingness to allow us to participate on the northern border of Iraq and the previous involvement, the blockade in Hamas, the U.N. sanctions and their limited willingness to portray Iran for the nuclear threat that it is I think causes us all concern. This moving eastward, the problems with less secular governing is something that I want to hear the witness talk about this morning.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. Does anyone else seek recognition? The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding a hearing today, I want to welcome our panel. For decades the Republic of Turkey has been one of the Nation's strongest and most important allies and friends. Strategically located between Europe and the Middle East, Russia, Turkey has been a linchpin with many of our Nation's foreign policy initiatives going back to the Truman Doctrine and Turkey's entrance into the NATO in 1952.

More recently, Turkey has been very helpful on fronts of U.S. policy, including its assistance with Iraq's transition including its improved relations with the Kurdish regional government, and Turkey has been helpful in Afghanistan contributing troops, the allied forces and allowing resupplying and deployment through their country. Turkey has been a great friend of Israel; Turkey was the first Muslim majority country to recognize the state of Israel in 1949. Over the past 2 decades, Israel has been a major supplier of arms to Turkey. Until very recently, Israel and Turkey's militaries worked closely together, best shown through their numerous joint military exercises. Mr. Chairman, I have some concern about—my concern today at this hearing hopefully will learn that you can be friends with your neighbors whether they are Jewish, Christian or

Muslim, and hopefully Turkey do well with that, I would like my full statement placed in the record. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Full statements will be included in the record. The time of the gentleman has expired, and now we will hear from our witnesses. Our first witness will be Ross Wilson. Ambassador Wilson is the director of the Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center at the Atlantic Council of the United States. He completed nearly three decades in the U.S. Foreign Service in December 2008. Serving as U.S. Ambassador to Turkey from 2005 to 2008 and Azerbaijan from 2000 to 2003. In previous assignments, he served at the U.S. Embassies in Moscow and Prague and was American Consul-General in Melbourne, Australia.

Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, senior lecturer at the Naval Post Graduate School Center for Civil-Military Relations, lecturer on national security studies at Johns Hopkins University, and a senior editor of the Middle East Quarterly. Between 2002 and 2004, he worked as a staff advisor on Iran and Iraq at the Pentagon. Dr. Rubin currently provides academic instruction on regional issues, including Turkey, for senior U.S. Army and Marine officers deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan, and also lectures on Iran, Israel, and North Korea in supplementary classes to the U.S. intelligence community.

Ian Lesser is senior Transatlantic Fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Washington where he heads GMF's work on the Mediterranean, Turkish, and wider Atlantic security issues. Prior to joining GMF, Dr. Lesser was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and vice president and director of studies at the Pacific Council on International Policy. A frequent commentator for international media, he has written extensively on international security issues. Dr. Lesser is also a former official in the State Department's Policy Planning Bureau.

Soner Cagaptay is a senior fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He has written extensively on U.S.-Turkish relations, Turkish domestic politics, Turkish identity, and Turkish nationalism, publishing both in scholarly journals and major international print media.

Dr. Cagaptay has guest-taught at several major universities, including Princeton, and currently teaches the Area Studies course on Turkey for our Turkey-bound diplomats at the Foreign Service Institute.

We are very pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses.

Ambassador Wilson, why don't you start off? All of your statements will be included in their entirety in the record, and if you care to summarize them, we look forward to hearing from you and then engaging with you.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROSS WILSON, DIRECTOR, DINU PATRICIU EURASIA CENTER, THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL (FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN)

Ambassador WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the honor of being included in this hearing today. I have had the honor of testifying before your counterpart committee in the Senate being with

the Senate House Armed Services Committee with the Congressional CSE Commission under Mr. Smith, and it is a pleasure to be here under your leadership today.

I am also honored to be part of this panel. Ian Lesser, and Soner Cagaptay are, I think two of our country's leading experts on Turkey. Michael Rubin is a scholar who has also written extensively on the Middle East and Turkish issues. I am very new to their world of think tanks, having joined The Atlantic Council just a few months ago. What I hope I add there and can add here is little bit of the practitioner's perspective based, as you noted, on 30 years service as an American diplomat, including the last 3 as American Ambassador to Turkey in 2005 to 2008.

When I arrived in Turkey, our relations were poor. My Embassy, my U.S. Government colleagues pushed a number of initiatives and efforts to work through some tough issues. Iraq was the most important that—to us given that it was the source of our biggest problems in Turkey and given the stakes for our country in Iraq. We made it, we transformed it into a source of agreement rather than disagreement. At least with the government and Turkey became an important and positive employer in Iraq as a result.

Iran was also a poor picture. On arrival, I was struck by three things, how limited our information sharing was on Turkey with Iran's nuclear program, how little we engaged with them on what to do about it and how much Washington complained about Turkey's lack of support. That didn't strike me as much of a strategy. And instead, we engaged in detailed, high level intelligence exchanges, consulted extensively on what to do, and got strong Turkish support for the approach taken by the United States and the other permanent members of Security Council especially in the years 2006 and 2007.

On the Middle East, we got a dialogue going despite some ups and downs, and you noted some of them. We were kept fully informed on the mediation efforts with Syria and Israel. We managed our way through the 2006 Hezbollah war. Turkey helped with the evacuation of American citizens from Beirut. It joined the United Nations. It joined the United Nations interim force in Lebanon, the first deployment of Turkish forces to the Middle East since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

The caucuses were a bigger problem. I know that you, Mr. Chairman, others on this committee and many Americans have strong views about the Turkey Armenia peace and about history that has not entirely been accommodated. I share some of those views. For that reason, I thought it was very significant in 2007 when Turkey and Armenia themselves initiated discussions about normalizing their relations and opening the border.

As you are aware, that process now has stalled. If it moves forward before long, it can still help to build the confidence that is necessary to resolve the Nagorno Karabakh problem between Turkey—between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and to help Turks and Armenians deal more effectively with their past, their present, and their future in a forthright manner, and I hope Congress can support that effort.

Mr. Chairman, I have a longer statement that goes over these and other issues, I would like to see that entered into the record. Let just make 5 points.

First, I think it is important not to over interpret recent events. I would not quibble with any of the negative images that you and that other members of this committee have highlighted. There have always been, as I think a couple members noted, ups and downs in U.S.-Turkish relations. Those who think they remember the halcyon days when everything with Turkey was easy and fine should probably reread their history. Turks have their own history, and I think we need to bear that in mind too. The idea that U.S.-Turkish relations is in great difficulty or is at a great turning point, frankly I don't agree with.

Second, I think it is important to fill out what is sometimes a simplistic picture about Turkey. Despite harsh rhetoric, Turkey does support Israel's right to exist, it supports the goal of two democratic states living side and side in peace and security, and it supports negotiations to bring that about. On a wide range of other issues around Turkish periphery, in Afghanistan, and the Balkans and regarding terrorism, energy and other issues, Turkey's policies and its work remain consistent with the goals and objections of the United States. We should not lose sight of that.

Third, on Iran, Turkish leaders seem almost desperate to me to keep negotiations going because they fear a headlong rush to war, that their people will not support and that they believe will inflame the region in highly unpredictable ways.

Stated another way, I believe that Iran is one issue on which are we must have the support of Turkey probably for our diplomacy to succeed, definitely if it does not. Figuring out how to restore our unity on this matter is, I think, one of our most important tasks. The dire political defense and security implications of Iran's efforts under almost any likely scenario demand no less.

Fourth, Turkey's very success over the last several decades has had important consequences that, generally speaking, are a good thing. As others have noted, it has prospered, it has a vibrant urban middle class and its people no longer want their country to be a bystander or the object of others diplomacy, they want to see their country act, they expect their government to do so. This is new and in this new environment we will have to have more effective ways of engaging public opinion and Turkish opinion shapers. Having had some experience at this, I can assure you it will not be easy, but in the long run, it will be better for our interests.

Finally, I will repeat an exchange had I with a senior military officer who asked me recently with some exasperation what in the world are we going to do with Turkey? My answer to him was that we have no choice but to work with it and work with it and work with it. It is hard, it is frustrating and it is messy. I know that U.S. officials, including President Obama just a month ago with Prime Minister Erdogan in Toronto, has made this a priority including with some very direct words. These efforts will have to continue, we will have a strategic partnership, we will have a problematic partnership. I think it is going to continue to be one of our most important time consuming relationships over the next couple

of years and I am sure this committee will be discussing it regularly. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. Well, thank you very much, Ambassador Wilson.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wilson follows:]

Turkey and the United States: How To Go Forward (and Not Back)

Statement for the Record

Ross Wilson
Director, Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center
Atlantic Council of the United States

July 28, 2010

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the honor of being invited to speak at this hearing on Turkey and U.S. Turkish relations.

Turkey is a fascinating, sometimes frustrating, often confusing and very important country in a key part of the world for the United States. Figuring it out is a challenge. It is tempting, but always misleading, to see black and white where grays are the dominant colors. One of the most useful observations I heard while I had the honor to serve as American ambassador in Ankara came from a colleague who had been there many years and left shortly after I arrived. He said, "Turkey is one of those countries where the more you know, the less you understand." I hope that today's discussions will give me, and maybe others, more knowledge *and* understanding.

The reasons for this hearing are self-evident. Questions are being asked about whether Turkey has changed its axis and reoriented its priorities, about whether it remains a friend and ally of the United States or is becoming, as Steven Cook of the Council on Foreign Relations recently suggested, a competitor or possibly a "frenemy." That this debate is happening ought to be disconcerting to Turks who argue – as many in the military, foreign ministry and government did to me – that the United States is Turkey's most important and only strategic partner. It frustrates the Obama Administration, which has invested heavily in U.S.-Turkish relations, including when the President visited Ankara in April 2009, when Prime Minister Erdogan came to Washington last December, and at the nuclear security summit here several months ago.

Of course, there have always been ups and downs in U.S.-Turkish relations. Those who think they remember the halcyon days of yore should read their history. Looking at reports in the U.S. embassy's files put my problems into perspective while I was working there. Or consider a Turk's point of view. He or she might have thought the word frenemy (if it really is a word) applied to the United States when in 2003-2007 we barred cross-border pursuits of terrorists fleeing back into northern Iraq after attacking police stations and school buses, or when the United States imposed an arms embargo after Turkish forces intervened in Cyprus in 1974, or when we accepted the brutal overthrow of Turkey's civilian government in 1980.

But to stick with our own perceptions and priorities, a lot of mainstream observers think that it is different this time. Whether fair or not, or correct or not – and I think this is not an accurate image, Turkey's picture in many circles here is monochromatic in unflattering ways: friend to

Ahmadinejad and supporter of Iran, friend to HAMAS, shrill critic of Israel, and defender of Sudan's Bashir. The flotilla incident and Turkey's no vote on UN sanctions against Iran sharpened the issue. Several weeks ago, a senior U.S. military officer and great friend of Turkey confided to me with exasperation, "What in the world are we going to do with Turkey?" Uncertainty about Turkey and how to proceed with it is widespread. And that is at least as much a problem for Turkey – for Turks who value its five decade-old alliance with the United States, to which I believe Turkey is committed – as it is for anyone here.

One thing we have to do about our exasperation is fill out the picture. How Turkey does see things, and what are its leaders responding to and trying to accomplish? Picture Turkey on a map and go around it.

Iran

Turkey borders on Iran. For Ankara, it is a problematic country, a rival for hundreds of years. Most Turks I talked to believe the recent rise of Tehran's influence has been fueled in part by the U.S. invasion of Iraq and its consequences and by the unresolved Israel-Palestinian conflict. They regard Iranian actions as inconsistent with Turkey's interest in a stable, peaceful region, and I think their local geopolitical contest for influence is one we underestimate. But Turks also have to live next to Iran and do not want its enmity. So Ankara's approach has been non-confrontational and continues to be so. It has worked indirectly to advance Turkey's interests, including by developing non-Iranian Caspian energy export routes, deploying troops to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, supporting such moderates as Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri and Iraqi leader Ayad Allawi, and engaging Syrian President Asad, whom it apparently hopes to moderate by lessening his dependence upon – or prying him away from – Iran.

Turkey does not want a nuclear-armed Iran. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and others worked in 2006-2007 to get Turkish buy-in for the approach taken by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany – the P5+1. They were successful. I believe that Turkish leaders took a tough line on Tehran's need to reassure the world by complying with its Non-Proliferation Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency obligations. But the legacy of the Iraq weapons of mass destruction intelligence failures was that most Turks, including in the military and throughout the political elite, doubt the accuracy of Western intelligence on Iran's nuclear efforts and fear the implications of war more than they fear the *possibility* of an Iranian bomb. Hence the Turks insistence on negotiations – an insistence on which the Turks are not alone, including among our allies.

Administration officials can speak more authoritatively than I can about how we came to cross-purposes on the Iran nuclear issue this spring. Suffice it for me to say that at the outset Ankara believed, with good reason, that the Obama Administration shared its objectives on the uranium swap proposal and backed its efforts. There were problems of timing, delivery and coordination, but this was not a rogue Turkey heading off in a new foreign policy direction with which the United States disagreed.

Obviously, Turkey's no vote in the UN Security Council was unhelpful. In figuring out how we proceed on Iran with Turkey now, my overriding priority would be to comport ourselves in such

a way as to *ensure* Ankara is with us in the next acts of the drama. I think the political, defense and security implications of what Iran is doing are very serious. Whatever the future brings, the situation *requires* us to have the fullest possible support of all our NATO allies, and geography puts Turkey at the top of that of that list. We can accomplish this through the fullest possible information sharing on what we know (and don't know) and involving Ankara in the diplomacy – not as mediator probably, but also not as a bystander. It is a partner; we expect it to act like one, and we should treat it as one.

Iraq

Turkey borders on Iraq, where we have poured so much treasure and youth. Over 90 percent of the Turkish public opposed the U.S. invasion in 2003, and a greater percentage opposes our presence there now. Despite this, Turkish authorities want us to stay. They fear, and I think the public at some level shares this fear, that we will walk away too early and then Turkey will face a chronic crisis. Or, worse, that Iraq might be taken over by some dangerous new tyrant, fall under the control of another neighboring power, break up, or become a home to anti-Turkish terrorists. The PKK problem along the northern Iraq border is especially serious, but at least 2-3 years ago, so were anti-Turkish al-Qaeda elements in Iraq. Since 2005 and especially after March 2008, Turkey has been a constructive player on Iraq. We asked it to help draw Sunni rejectionists out of violence and into politics, and it did. At our request, Turkey helped facilitate the U.S. engagement with Iraq's neighbors that the Baker-Hamilton Commission recommended. We asked it to deal with Kurdistan Regional Government leader Masoud Barzani. It has done so, getting help on the PKK problem and making itself a more effective player in supporting the Iraqi political process, which will be important as our own role declines.

Turkey's role in Iraq is important and positive. To be frank, it got to be that way because American and Turkish leaders decided to overlook the March 1, 2003 disagreement at the start of the war and found common ground in helping Iraq stand back up. While it did not seem so simple at the time, in effect we dusted ourselves off and moved on. That is not a bad model for policymakers now.

Middle East

Turkey borders on Syria and the Middle East. Even before I left for Turkey, I heard people wonder what it was doing mucking about in Middle Eastern affairs. In the U.S. government, the people dealing with the Middle East are generally not responsible for Turkey, which is handled out of offices dealing with European affairs. But Ankara is far closer to Jerusalem than Riyadh is. (For comparison, Ankara is only a little farther from Jerusalem than Washington is from Atlanta.) There is Ottoman baggage with Arab populations that modern-day Turks do not talk much about, but Turkey *is* a Middle Eastern country. It is not surprising that Prime Minister Erdogan is popular there – of course, his populist rhetoric adds to that, as he intends. In any case, we should forgive Turks for thinking that they have a role there or that they are entitled to their own perspective. This seems especially the case when on the most important issues – Israel's right to exist, the goal of two democratic states, Israeli and Palestinian, living side by side in peace and security, and the need for a negotiated (not imposed) solution – Turkey's perspective is the same as ours.

Within Turkey, in Israel and in the West, Prime Minister Erdogan has been criticized for his shrill rhetoric toward Israel, especially on Gaza. Turks do not, of course, universally support his government, but they do almost universally share his underlying view that Israeli-Palestinian stalemate has persisted too long, that what is happening to Palestinians is unfair, and that they need help. I was in Turkey shortly after the "flotilla incident." I heard many views about whether the government's backing of the *Mavi Marmara* was wise, properly done or in Turkey's interest; no one I talked to, and as far as I could tell none of the people they talked with, thought that it was wrong.

I don't know what the way forward on Middle East peace issues is. Clearly, Turkey's estrangement from Israel limits any role it can play for the foreseeable future. At no time soon will Ankara again be able to mediate between Syria and Israel –an effort that showed its value in keeping channels open after Israel's September 2007 destruction of the Deir ez-Zor nuclear site in Syria. It is constructive that Senator Mitchell has included Turkey among the regional powers that he consults with from time to time, and I hope that continues.

Caucasus

Turkey borders on the Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. I know that you, Mr. Chairman, other members of this committee and many Americans have strong views about the Turkey-Armenia piece and about history that has not been entirely accommodated. The South Caucasus is a volatile and fragile part of the world, as Georgia 2008 reminded us. That conflict gave impetus to reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia. When President Sarksian and President Gul stood together in Yerevan a month after the Russian invasion of Georgia, the two leaders seemed symbolically to say, 'we have a vision of the Caucasus, it's not what just happened in Georgia, and we're determined to take on the most difficult issues between us to try to achieve it.' Unfortunately, Armenian and Turkish leaders concluded that they could not go forward now to ratify the protocols that called for normalizing relations and opening the border. I think doing so can still build the confidence needed for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and for Turks and Armenians to deal with their past, present and future together in a forthright manner. I hope that Congress can support that effort.

In the interest of brevity, I have omitted mention of Cyprus, Greece, the Balkans and the Black Sea, and such other active items in U.S.-Turkish relations as energy, terrorism, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Suffice it to say that, in my view, on each of these we want fundamentally the same things, there are of course differences of view, and the United States and Turkey cooperate pretty well.

Change in Turkey

I noted earlier the rhetorical question of what other American ally borders on so many problems of such high priority to U.S. foreign policy. Looked at another way, is there another ally that has such a large stake in how so many problems that are so important to us get addressed?

A Turkey that is stronger than at any time in a couple hundred years is now inclined to try to influence events on its periphery in ways that it was not in the past. It does so partly because it can, but also because it is good politics. This reflects important and positive changes in Turkey. When it comes to foreign policy, public opinion matters in a way it did not even just a few years ago. Decades of pro-market policies have made Turkey's the 16th largest economy in the world. Migration from rural areas to the cities and an expanding middle class are two other trends with huge political implications. In this more prosperous and confident Turkey, voters do not want their country to be a subject of others' diplomacy or a bystander on regional issues. They want to see their country acting. They expect their government to do so. They expect it to act wisely, and I think one of our jobs is to help it do so.

My answer to my military friend's exasperated question, "what in the world are we going to do with Turkey," is that we have no choice but to work with it and work with it and work with it. It is hard, it is frustrating, and maybe it is messy. It is harder now with a democratic ally in which power resides in several places – and that is in general a good thing. It is the only way to go forward and the only way not to go back into recrimination and anger that ultimately could put American interests in the region at risk. It requires steady senior-level engagement, visits to Turkey by members of Congress such as you, Mr. Chairman, and not letting differences that are mostly tactical overwhelm our strategic interests. I thought it was highly important that President Obama met with Prime Minister Erdogan on the margins of the recent G-20 Summit in Toronto a month ago. According to the account I heard, the meeting was long, and the President was very direct, tough and critical. That is what it will take.

Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Dr. Rubin.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL RUBIN, PH.D., RESIDENT SCHOLAR, AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Mr. RUBIN. Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, honorable members, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I have gone into detail about how Turkey has changed my written testimony, but for the sake of time, let me highlight just three points. The AKP government has reoriented Turkey toward more extreme elements in the Middle East. Turkey's change is not reactive but deliberate. The AKP has made changes which will be difficult to reverse, even under new Turkish leadership. And for too long American officials have embraced Turkey as they wished it to be, rather than calibrate policy to what Turkey has become. The alliance with Turkey has become an article of faith.

Despite growing evidence, Turkey is neither a reliable ally nor a force always for moderation. Trusting Turkey is not the basis of sound foreign policy. None of this means that the United States should dispense with its partnership. Turkey remains a member of NATO and conducts some heavy lifting in Afghan. Still, the U.S. Government should consider several issues relative to its future relationship with Turkey. Precisely because the F–35 will be the fighter the U.S. Air Force will most depend on to maintain air superiority in the coming decades. The decision to sell F–35s to Turkey whose future foreign policy orientation is in question, should be reviewed by appropriate Defense Department elements to assess possible loss of critical technology to states of concern. Congress

should mandate that review, specify that it be completed within the year, and then make it available to appropriate committees.

Second, while Incirlik remains a key regional base, Ankara's enthusiasm to seek unrelated concessions and to micromanage missions flown from Incirlik, suggests a lack of ideological affinity on some security concerns. It is a strategic malpractice not to advance contingency plans for the day when Turkey no longer allows the U.S. Air Force to us Incirlik or seeks to extract too high a price. The United States should develop contingency plans in NATO member Romania or develop another plan B.

Third, while the United States welcomes Turkish involvement in the fight to stabilize Afghanistan, the current Turkish Government has not done enough to stop Turkish Jihadists from traveling to Afghanistan to fight for the wrong side, nor has it ceased providing safe havens to catch militants.

Fourth, the United States should continue to support Turkey's fight against Kurdish terrorism, but simultaneously must pressure Ankara to acknowledge that its willingness to legitimize foreign terrorist groups based on the AKP's ideological affinity, hampers Turkey's own fight against terrorism, and could ultimately undercut Turkey's territorial integrity.

Lastly, the Armenian genocide issue remains a hot button issue. Within the scholarly community, there is not consensus. While genocide study scholars say that the Ottomans committed deliberate genocide against Armenians, many Middle East scholars and military historians do not quite go that far. Congress should not silence debate among historians, rather, it should seek to facilitate it and demand that Turkey make its Ottoman archives open to all scholars, regardless of ethnicity or perspective, and also advocate that Armenia open its archives in the same manner.

Thank you for your attention, I look forward to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rubin follows:]

"Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations"

Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee

Michael Rubin, Ph.D.
Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
Senior Lecturer, Naval Postgraduate School

July 28, 2010

Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, Honorable Members. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Prime Minister Erdoğan, and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) have changed Turkey fundamentally. They do not simply seek good relations with their Arab neighbors and Iran. Instead, they favor the most radical elements in regional struggles, hence their embrace of Syria over Lebanon and of Hamas over Fatah, and their endorsement Iran's nuclear program.

Over the last 8 years, the AKP government has reoriented Turkey toward the Arab and Iranian Middle East, not to facilitate bridge-building to the West, but in an effort to play a leadership role not only in the Middle East but also among Islamic countries more broadly. Unfortunately, that leadership is increasingly oriented around the most extreme elements, including Iran, Syria and the terrorist Hamas leadership of Gaza.

In addition, Erdoğan has defended Sudan's Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who had been indicted on charges of genocide by the International Criminal Court, and personally vouched for Yasin al-Qadi, whom the U.S. Treasury department has labeled a "specially designated global terrorist" for his support of al-Qaeda.

For too long, American diplomats and officials in both the Barack Obama and George W. Bush administrations have been in denial: They have embraced Turkey as they wished it to be rather than calibrate policy to the reality of what Turkey has become. This is neither realism nor the basis of sound foreign policy.

Some see Erdoğan's motive in Turkish reaction to European slights and anger at the Iraq war. However, Turkey's radical turn is not reactive. Neither Iraq nor failure to gain acceptance to the European Union explain Erdoğan's personal endorsement of al-Qaeda financiers, or his government's support for crude anti-American and anti-Semitic propaganda, nor his own rejection of Western liberalism, all of which have led Turkey to become and, according to the 2010 Pew Global Attitudes survey, remain among the world's most anti-American countries.

Evidence is insurmountable that Erdoğan has implemented a deliberate plan to send Turkey on a fundamentally different trajectory, both in foreign policy and in domestic order. He tells Western diplomats he is aggrieved by the European Union's refusal to admit Turkey, but then chides

the European Court of Human Rights for its failure to consult Islamic scholars prior to ruling. Turkish journalists and economists say privately that the AKP has used control of the national banking board to channel foreign money to party coffers and has used the security services to harass and leak with impunity illegal tapes of private conversations.

Despite the fact that Turkey remains a nominal democracy, hope in a revitalized opposition is misplaced. While recent polls suggest that opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is running even with Erdoğan, the changes the AKP have made in Turkey over the past eight years cannot easily be undone: The AKP has undermined the secular nature of education at all levels, undercut the independence of the judiciary, used security forces to eavesdrop on domestic political opponents, and constrained the independence of the press. Indeed, Prime Minister Erdoğan's harassment of journalists and editors in Turkey is reminiscent of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's treatment of the press.

Even if the opposition forces Erdoğan into a coalition, the AKP's behavior over the past eight years should raise long-term concerns about rapid shifts in Turkey's orientation. The alliance with Turkey, NATO's southern and only Muslim bulwark, has become an article of faith despite growing evidence Turkey is neither a consistently reliable ally nor a force of moderation among Muslims.

That does not mean that the United States should dispense with its partnership with Turkey. Turkey remains a

member of NATO and conducts more heavy lifting in Afghanistan than many of our European allies. Incirlik Air Base provides key logistic support for U.S. forces both in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Certainly, Turkey's residual military assistance is helpful, and the United States should not hasten its end. At the same time, U.S. policymakers should no longer assume Turkish goodwill.

Accordingly, the U.S. government should consider several issues relative to its relationship with Turkey:

- Precisely because the F-35 will be the fighter the U.S. Air Force will most depend on to maintain air superiority in the decades ahead, the decision to sell F-35s to Turkey, whose future foreign policy orientation is in question, should be reviewed by appropriate Defense Department elements to assess possible loss of critical technology to states of concern. Congress should mandate that review, specify that it be completed within the year, and then make it available to the appropriate committees of Congress.

- While Incirlik remains a key regional base, the Turkish government likes to make its use contingent upon the U.S. Congress not passing an Armenian Genocide Resolution. When the Pentagon renegotiates its lease, Ankara's enthusiasm to seek unrelated concessions and to micromanage the missions flown from Incirlik suggests a lack of

ideological affinity on security concerns. It is strategic malpractice not to advance contingency plans for the day when Turkey no longer allows the U.S. Air Force to use Incirlik or seeks to extract too high a price. The United States should develop contingency facilities in NATO member Romania and perhaps Georgia and Azerbaijan. At the very least, developing the U.S. presence at the Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base near Constanza will enhance the U.S. position during the next round of lease renewal negotiations.

- While the United States welcomes Turkish involvement in the fight to stabilize Afghanistan, the current Turkish government has not done enough to stop Turkish jihadists from traveling to Afghanistan to fight for the wrong side. Taifetul Mansura, a Turkish Islamist group, has been increasingly active in its support for the Taliban, as have Chechen Jihadists who receive safe-haven in Turkey.

- The United States should continue to support Turkey's fight against Kurdish terrorism but, simultaneously, must pressure Ankara to acknowledge that its willingness to legitimize foreign terrorist groups based on the AKP's ideological affinity hampers Turkey's own fight against terrorism and could ultimately undercut Turkey's territorial integrity.

- The Armenian Genocide issue remains a hot-button issue in Turkey and among Armenian-Americans. Within the scholarly community, there is no

consensus: Most genocide studies scholars say that the Ottomans committed deliberate genocide against the Armenian community, but many Middle East scholars—Bernard Lewis, Andrew Mango—and military historians like Eric Erickson find the events a tragic outgrowth of fighting in World War I rather than genocide. Congress should not silence debate among historians; rather it should seek to facilitate it and demand that Turkey make its Ottoman archives open to all scholars, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or political perspective.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Chairman BERMAN. Dr. Lesser.

STATEMENT OF IAN LESSER, PH.D., SENIOR TRANSATLANTIC FELLOW, THE GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LESSER. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to share some perspectives on Turkey's evolving foreign policy and its implications for the United States and U.S. policy. With your permission, I will offer a brief summary of my remarks. I would also like to note that these remarks are my own views, not those of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Let me make just three points to you. First, I believe that these changes—and we have heard about some of these dimensions already—these changes in Turkey foreign policy are durable, they are the products of significant forces in Turkish society, particularly the affinities and concerns of Turkey's political leadership today and the rise of public opinion which counts in Turkish foreign policy today. All are playing a role. They have all played a role in where Turkey is going and they played a role in the flotilla crisis, and also Turkey's no vote on U.N. sanctions.

There is an important commercial dimension to this activism which I think we should recall. It is fueled by impressive economic growth in Turkey on the order of 7 percent annually, 11 percent in the last quarter, in the midst of a global economic crisis. This has fueled the confidence of the country and the political leadership, but it also is important to note that a lot of the growth in Turkey's economy, the investment, the new export markets, are not in traditional Western places, they are in the Middle East, they are

in Eurasia. So to reverse a famous formulation, I think this is a case of "the flag following trade."

Second, I think there is no doubt Turkey's current leadership is much more comfortable than its predecessors in conducting an active diplomacy across the Arab and Muslim world. Turkish public opinion, which does count today, increasingly reflects this. GMF's Trans-Atlantic Trends project is an annual survey of opinion on both sides of the Atlantic. The data for this year, which will be formalized in September, found the percentage of those in Turkey who say on international matters, Turkey should act in closest cooperation with the countries of the Middle East roughly doubled this year; roughly doubled this year since last year.

But I would stress to you that this attention to the Middle East and Turkish policy is not the only element in a changing Turkey. Increasingly AKP leaders and their foreign policy advisors talk in terms strongly reminiscent of other emerging economic and political actors, including India. South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil. There is this non aligned aspect to Turkish policy, even as Turkey remains a NATO member, obviously, but also a conservative actor in its views about NATO strategy.

Third, these changes which we are discussing will be very consequential for U.S. interests across a wide area; from European security, to relations with Russia, from energy geopolitics to missile defense. And they are also going to have an effect on our interests in relation to key issues in the Middle East, including Iran and the Middle East peace process.

Let me just underscore, though, that this new look in Turkish foreign policy is a mix of positive and negative elements. Some of the negative elements have been mentioned. Let me just mention on the positive side from our interest perspective, Turkey appears to be committed to the consolidation of detente with Greece, which is very important; stability in the Aegean, which is very important; a multilateral policy in the Balkans, which is very important to us and has been mentioned. It has contributed to operations in Afghanistan and has quietly allowed us to use Incirlik airbase for very extensive airlift operations to support our coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Less positively, there has clearly been a decline in the weight of the trans-Atlantic flywheel, if I can put it that way, that is consequential for our interests. And particularly in the Middle East, although we share some basic interests and stability, we are clearly not on the same page when it comes to some key questions, including Iran and peace process diplomacy.

Let me stress that Turkey itself has a very strong interest in preventing the emergence of a nuclear Iran, or even a nuclear-izing Iran, or a nuclear-ready Iran. This would have very negative consequences for Turkish security. That said, the AKP government clearly has a different view of how to deal with this problem. Against this background, it was not surprising that Turkey voted "no" on the U.N. Security Council resolution on sanctions on Iran.

Again, on the Gaza flotilla incident, I think this underscores another shift in Turkish perceptions. My own view is that the strategic relationship between Turkey and Israel was the product of very distinctive circumstances in the 1990s, including a shared in-

terest in the containment of Syria and Iran, and a public opinion that didn't count very much in those days, and was not very positive about Israel. All those conditions have changed.

I think in some respect, these changes in Turkish-Israeli relations were inevitable, but clearly when it comes to the question of whether Hamas is a legitimate interlocutor, the peace process and other issues, we are simply not going to be on the same page.

Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by noting some specific implications for U.S. policy. First, let me just support very strongly something that Ambassador Wilson said earlier. There really was no golden age in U.S.-Turkish relations, this has always been a tough relationship to manage, and will continue to be so. As I look ahead, I think we will see a relationship that is much more ala carte, if I can put it that way, than automatic, but there are some things that we can do, and things that we can avoid doing. First, I think with Ankara on Iran, we need to shift the debate from the political to defense requirements. I mean, Turkey has an interest in preventing the emergence of a nuclear Iran.

As we look toward the NATO summit in November in Lisbon, I think we need to secure Turkish cooperation for the next steps in a ballistic missile defense architecture, which will cover them among others.

Second, we need to rethink and possibly reinforce our cooperation in fighting the PKK and its bases of operation across the border in Iraq. We may even need to adjust to a situation in which PKK terrorism is not the only problem Turkey is facing in this quarter. The Kurdish issue is the biggest public policy challenge Turkey faces today, and it is developing a very troubling urban terrorism dimension. This is something I think we will be called upon to respond to, and will be a key test for the relationship in the future. It will affect our intelligence sharing and other things.

Finally, a last point. The U.S. remains a very critical stakeholder in Turkey's European Union candidacy. I think it is far too simple to blame a lack of progress in Turkey's candidacy for Ankara's growing interest in the Middle East. But if Turkey's candidacy proves hollow, this could well interrupt or reverse Turkey's convergence with the West, further complicating an already complicated relationship with the United States.

This has been the big project for Turkey and Europe, and Turkey in the West, and without it I think there is a heightened risk of Turkey's strategic decoupling from the trans-Atlantic community. And a lot of things, a lot of issues we would like to resolve, whether Cyprus, rapprochement with Armenia, closer NATO–EU cooperation, all will depend on progress in that area. So I think it is very, very important that our support for that process, Turkey's EU candidacy, is not diminished or weakened by the recent and very real differences with Ankara over the Middle East. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lesser follows:]

Dr. Ian Lesser

Senior Transatlantic Fellow

The German Marshall Fund of the United States

July 28, 2010

House Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to share my views on Turkey's evolving foreign policy and the implications for American interests and strategy. With your permission, I will offer a brief summary of my remarks. Let me also note that these are my personal views and not those of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Significant and Durable Policy Shifts

First, I believe that the changes in Turkish foreign policy are the product of long simmering forces in Turkish society, the particular affinities and concerns of Turkey's political leadership, and the rise of public opinion as a factor in Turkish policymaking. All of these elements have been at play in Ankara's recent and controversial actions, including the Gaza "flotilla crisis" and Turkey's "no" vote on Iran sanctions in the UN Security Council. Today, Turkey's international policy is more active and diverse, and much of this new activity is focused on the Middle East and Eurasia. There is an important commercial dimension to this activism, fueled by impressive economic growth (around 7 percent) even in the midst of a global crisis. All of this has contributed to the self-confidence of the AKP leadership. It has also produced a relative decline in Turkish interest in and attention to the EU, NATO and the strategic partnership with the US. In my judgment, these are durable rather than transient developments.

Second, there is no doubt that Turkey's current leadership is much more comfortable than its predecessors in conducting an active diplomacy across the Arab and Muslim worlds. This is new, and represents a move away from the arms length policy toward its eastern and southern neighborhood that characterized Turkish policy since the end of the Ottoman Empire. Turkish public opinion increasingly reflects this new interest in the Middle East. Based on a preliminary analysis of this year's GMF *Transatlantic Trends* survey data, we found that the percentage of those in Turkey who say that on international matters Turkey should act in

closest cooperation with the countries of the Middle East has roughly doubled since last year. [1]

But attention to the Middle East is not the only element in a changing Turkish foreign policy. Increasingly, AKP leaders and their foreign policy advisors talk in terms strongly reminiscent of other emerging economic and political actors, including India, South Africa, Indonesia and Brazil. In this context, Turkish-Brazilian diplomatic cooperation on Iran has not been so surprising. This new tendency, not so much neo-Ottoman as non-aligned, reflects a strong sense of skepticism in many Turkish quarters about foreign and defense policies "made in the West." On balance, Turkey remains a cautious and status quo actor in international affairs – this is most evident in Ankara's conservative approach to change in NATO – but the trend is clearly toward a more assertive policy across Turkey's neighborhood.

The New Turkey and American Interests

Third, these shifts will be consequential for US interests across a wide area, from European security to relations with Russia, from energy geopolitics to missile defense. They will also affect Turkey's future role in relation to core regional concerns, above all the containment of Iran's nuclear ambitions and the Middle East peace process. But it is important to recognize that the new look in Turkish policy has had some positive dimensions from the point of view of American interests, alongside some more troubling aspects. On the positive side, Turkey appears committed to the consolidation of détente with Greece and stability in the Aegean. Disputes in the Aegean and over Cyprus have not been resolved, yet today, they are largely political rather than security challenges for the US and our European allies. In the Balkans, Turkey has pursued a constructive and multilateral policy. Turkey has been an important part of coalition operations in Afghanistan, and led the ISAF mission in its early days. On Iraq, Ankara might not have been willing to allow a second front to be opened through its territory in 2003.

[1] GMF's *Transatlantic Trends* is an annual survey of public opinion conducted in the US and twelve European countries, including Turkey. *Transatlantic Trends* 2010 findings will be released on September 15, 2010. www.transatlantictrends.org

But Turkey has quietly allowed the US to use Incirlik airbase for airlift to Iraq and Afghanistan. In northern Iraq, Ankara has been playing a positive role, and cooperation in this sphere will be even more important as Turkey seeks to contain a resurgence of violence by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party).

To be sure, there has been a steady decline in the weight of traditional Atlantic ties in Turkish policy – and the flywheel of transatlantic partnership as a source of predictability in Turkish-US relations. At the same time, there has been a rise in Turkish nationalism across the political spectrum, and this has reinforced a sovereignty-conscious approach in key areas, including security in the Black Sea, where Ankara is wary of an enhanced US and NATO role. In the Middle East, the US and Turkey share a basic interest in stability, but we are clearly not on the same page when it comes to the key questions of Iran policy and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Turkey has a strong interest in preventing the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran and the rise of new nuclear arsenals in its neighborhood. Even a "nuclearizing" or near-nuclear Iran would have negative consequences for Turkish security. Turkish policymakers may have strong energy security and commercial interests in cooperation with Tehran, but they remain wary of Iran's potential as a regional competitor. That said, the AKP leadership does not seem to share the prevailing US and European assessment of Iran's intentions, and Turks across the spectrum are opposed to economic sanctions which they are convinced will harm Turkey's economic interests. Despite Turkey's own direct exposure to Iranian (and Syrian) weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery at longer ranges, the Turkish debate on these questions tends to be political rather than strategic in nature. Turkey's leaders argue for a nuclear-free Middle East, and point to Israel's undeclared nuclear capability as part of the problem. These perspectives are clearly out of step with the views of transatlantic partners. Short of an overt Iranian threat to Turkish security, US and Turkish views on the Iran nuclear issue are unlikely to converge. Against this background, Turkey's "no" vote on Iran sanctions in the UN Security Council was not surprising.

The Gaza flotilla incident underscored another important shift in Turkish perceptions and policy. A crisis of this kind would have been unthinkable ten years ago, when Turkish-Israeli relations were far closer and the Turkish military held sway over the country's foreign and security policy. In my judgment, the erosion of Turkish-Israeli strategic cooperation was inevitable. The "strategic partnership" was a product of distinctive circumstances in the 1990s, including a shared interest in the containment of Syria and Iran, and a setting in which Turkish public opinion – never very positive about relations with Israel – did not really count. Today, all of these conditions have changed, and the basis for Turkish-Israeli cooperation is much narrower. Above all, the Palestinian issue is a highly emotive one for Turkey's current political leadership, and especially for Prime Minister Erdogan. His strong views on the subject are essentially in tune with Turkish public opinion. AKP leaders refer openly to Hamas as a legitimate interlocutor. The Turkish position on Hamas and other aspects of the Middle East peace process is unlikely to change anytime soon. In this, as in some other key areas, the US and Turkey are simply unlikely to agree.

Policy Implications

Taken together, these developments will pose continued challenges for American policy. We are used to viewing Turkey from a NATO-centric, European security perspective, and while these aspects remain relevant, they are only part of the Turkish policy picture. What Turkey does or does not do in the Middle East and Eurasia will be just as important for US interests in the years ahead.

It is important to remember that US-Turkish relations have never been easy to manage, and have experienced repeated periods of stress, alongside periods of close cooperation. US-Turkish relations have always suffered from their geopolitical, security-heavy content, in which the economic, scientific, cultural and other dimensions have been relatively weak. This is a structural problem, difficult to correct, and a particular liability as Turkey's international activism is increasingly driven by commercial factors. Almost certainly, we are moving into a

period of declining predictability in relations with Ankara, with *ala carte* rather than automatic cooperation as the norm.

Let me conclude by noting some critical priorities for US policy. First, with Ankara, we need to shift the debate on Iran (and the Middle East generally) from politics to defense, where Turkey has its own exposure and concerns. Looking toward the NATO summit in Lisbon in November, it will be important to secure Turkish cooperation for the next steps in a ballistic missile defense architecture covering southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean.

Second, we need to rethink and possibly reinforce our cooperation with Turkey against the PKK and its bases of operation across the border in Iraq. In the absence of close coordination, there is a real possibility of larger-scale independent Turkish operations in northern Iraq, a development which could derail Turkish-Iraqi relations and complicate the outlook for stability in Iraq as a whole. More significantly, our policy may need to respond to a potential expansion of PKK-inspired urban terrorism inside Turkey. This could imply very different kinds of intelligence sharing and other forms of cooperation with Turkish agencies. The Kurdish issue is the leading policy challenge facing Turkey today, and US and European policies in this sphere will be key tests for Turkey in its relations with Western partners.

Finally, the US remains a key stakeholder in Turkey's European Union candidacy. This process is increasingly troubled, with growing ambivalence and opposition on all sides. It is too simple to blame the lack of progress in Turkey's European project for Ankara's growing focus on the Middle East. But if Turkey's candidacy proves hollow, this could well interrupt or reverse Turkey's longstanding convergence with the West, further complicating an already strained relationship with the US. Full membership in Europe has been the leading "big project" in Turkish policy. Without this goal, there will be a heightened risk of Turkey's strategic decoupling from the transatlantic community. Our support for Turkey's European trajectory – critical to the resolution of the Cyprus dispute, closer NATO-EU cooperation, and Turkish-Armenian rapprochement, among other issues -- should not be diminished by recent US-Turkish differences over Iran and Israel.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you, Dr. Lesser.

Dr. Cagaptay.

STATEMENT OF SONER CAGAPTAY, PH.D., DIRECTOR, TURKISH RESEARCH PROGRAM, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Congressman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, and honorable members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify at this very important hearing today. I will present here a summary of my prepared remarks.

Much has been said earlier in this town in the last few years about how Washington is losing Turkey and Turkey is drifting away from the West. Today I would like to provide an alternative analysis, and also come up with some suggestions for what that means for U.S. policy.

So let's take a different view, and the view should be in 2002 when the AKP came to power, the party promised to make Turkey a country fitting EU accession, a liberal democracy that is suitable for EU accession. To this end, the AKP would jettison Turkey's traditional role as the voice of the West in the region, instead making Turkey a center country, a regional power that can talk to the West and all of the Middle Eastern states at the same time.

Has this happened? The answer is no. Turkey has become neither more liberal as a democracy nor has it become a truly central power in the region that can talk to the West and the regional countries at the same time.

Here is what happened, and I will finish that up with some suggestions. When it came to power in 2002, the AKP promoted, at first, close ties with the West, although at the same time it openly bashed the United States and other Western countries. Some people looked at this and dismissed the rhetoric as domestic politicking; others did not. Now that rhetoric has shaped the minds of many Turks. Over 90 percent of the Turks do not read or write languages other than Turkish, so they see the world as reported to them and debated by their government. Rhetoric matters.

In fact, I would say anti-Western rhetoric has been the periscope of the AKP's foreign policy thinking, a vision that does not consider Turkey a member of the transatlantic community.

After reining in domestic checks and balances, for instance, slapping politically motivated fines on media, using wiretaps to intimidate its opponents, the AKP now feels comfortable in power, and this is why the party's foreign policy follows its previous anti-Western rhetoric. In other words, what happens in Ankara and Istanbul does not stay in Ankara and Istanbul. As the AKP has become more emboldened at home, it has felt freer to follow the foreign policy that it always desired.

Now, there is good news. We have to start with the Turkish contribution to the United States on Iraq and Afghanistan. Without Turkey, operations in both places would be very difficult.

Also good news on Cyprus. The AKP government aggressively pushed for a settlement of the Cyprus conflict, but that failed when the Greek Cypriots voted no.

There is also a bunch of bad news. One of them is on the EU accession front. Turkey's EU accession is not in the making. I am

a strong supporter of this process, and I think it is time for me to admit that that process is not moving ahead, not so much because of the EU objections but predominantly because the AKP does not share the dream of the liberal western Turkey.

Despite its branding as a pro-Western political force when it came to power in 2002, the AKP never had a strategic view of EU accession; rather, it had a tactical view of this process, where it viewed accession to shed its Islamist image, gain legitimacy in Western capitals, and curb the power of the secular military. Having thus made itself palatable for Brussel bureaucrats and liberal Turks alike, in 2005, just as Turkey was supposed to start implementing hard reform towards accession talks, the AKP dropped the EU process.

In a public demonstration of its lack of interest in Europe, the AKP declared 2005 the "Africa Year." Now, if I was getting into the European Union, I would declare the decade the "decade of Europe," to focus my energies on that.

As a result, Turkey's reform process did not stop; it deteriorated. As the government resorted to jailing critical journalists under the pretext that they were planning a coup, Turkey dropped 20 spots in the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index in 2008. Moreover, the government has used plot allegations, most infamously in the so-called Ergenekon case, to target its political opponents in the media, military, and academia.

The AKP has especially gone after independent media, slapping media groups that are critical of its policies with politically motivated tax fines. Under the AKP, I would say Turkey has become more like Russia than Europe in terms of government-media relations.

Has Turkey become more democratic under the AKP? Turkey did not become a democracy in 2002. Turkey was a democracy, has been a democracy since 1946. In fact, it has had more democratic transitions of government than some West European countries, such as Spain. The question is, Has Turkey become more of a liberal democracy under the AKP? The answer is no. Not in terms of media freedoms, not in terms of Internet freedoms, and not in terms of gender equality.

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, now to turn to the Middle East for at the same time the AKP dropped the EU process, it engrossed itself in regional conflicts in the Middle East, and this is where I think the problem lies. There is an incongruity between the idea that Turkey can get involved in all conflicts in the Middle East and the party's alleged commitment to EU accession. When everything is a priority, nothing is; and no country has ever gotten into the EU without making membership a tough domestic and foreign policy priority. The AKP has instead made a 180-degree turn in Turkey's Middle East policy, moving closer to Iran and its proxies, Syria and Sudan, cooling off toward Israel.

This was followed with the recent flotilla incident where ties with Israel hit an all-time low after the unfortunate incident in which the Israelis killed nine Turkish citizens. I would say this very sad act will not be forgotten in the Turkish national psyche for a long time.

Problems have continued. On the other hand, I think because the AKP's foreign policy is guided—not because of religious sympathies, and there is often confusion on this in this town; this is not a party guided by Islam, it is a party guided by Islamism, an ideological view of the world. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government believe that Samuel Huntington was right; that there is a clash of civilizations, except they are on the other side of the Islamists and not with the West.

Therefore, since 2002, the AKP has routinely taken steps that conflict with U.S. policy. Many distinguished members of the panel have mentioned that, as well as many members of the distinguished committee. And I think, suffice it to say, that the AKP has damaged many of the anchors that tie Turkey to the United States and to the West, from energy and pipeline politics to EU accession, to Turkey's traditionally pro-Western foreign policy toward the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, there is very little Washington can do to change the AKP's foreign policy outlook. It is what it is. But we can at least start by recognizing the following: In 2002, a lot of people celebrated the idea that the AKP would be a tribune of the West to the Muslim world. Now it appears that the AKP is a tribune of a politically charged and, by fiat, anti-Western Muslim world to the United States. So it is really the other way around.

Allowing such an Islamist view as a catalyst into Middle East conflicts has produced and will continue to produce negative results. Because the AKP sees a clash of civilizations everywhere it looks, it cannot be an impartial mediator.

For example, when the AKP was allowed to inject itself between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, or the United States and Iran, it quickly became an ombudsman for the Islamist side, rising in their defense. What is more, after 8 years of dominant and increasingly authoritarian AKP rule at home—and remember, what happens in Istanbul and Ankara does not stay there—many Turks now see the world through the Islamist eyes of a civilizational clash. It is very unfortunate.

As a result, I would say the AKP foreign policy vision of making Turkey a center country which bridges the East and West, that can talk to Israelis and Palestinians, garners the trust of both Iran and the West, has failed as well as Turkey's ambitions to become more of a liberal democracy.

In order to contain the AKP Islamist influence, I would say not only in Turkey, but in the region, the West must deny the AKP, first, the influence and the prestige which comes with being promoted as a regional mediator.

There is a way forward, Mr. Chairman. Turkey remains a multiparty democracy, and only one-third of Turkey's population supports the AKP. Since the opposition Republican Peoples Party, CHP, elected a new, charismatic social democrat leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the AKP has been sliding in the polls. As a result, the party has been using foreign policy more and more as a punching bag, creating vehement anti-Western rhetoric to boost its popularity. The elections are in Turkey next year. I would expect that the AKP will continue to use populist, anti-Western foreign policy and rhetoric to boost its standing in the run-up to those elections.

This suggests that the United States must develop a nuanced policy toward Turkey because Turkey itself is a nuanced country. It is the only Muslim country that is part of the West; and the question is, how do you scale back the AKP's policies while developing a real defense against its influence, and that would go through engaging the Turks?

The alternative, a policy that targets the whole of Turkey, such as by passing the Armenian resolution or blocking military sales or other resolutions that would be seen as critical, would only push the Turks into the Islamists' arms, fulfilling the AKP's objective.

In fact, what to do with Turkey first begs the question of what not to do with Turkey. In light of the AKP's campaign of rallying Turkish public opinion behind its anti-Western foreign policy, I would say the cardinal rule of the new era is simple: Do not offend the Turks. In other words, do no harm to Turkey.

Then it is time to signal to the AKP that its anti-Western policies have a cost. To this end, Washington should deny the AKP political access. This will cost the party prestige that matters greatly in Turkish politics. So far, the AKP has been invited to Washington even as it transgresses U.S. policy in multiple areas, creating the impression that either Washington approves of its policies or considers the party indispensable to U.S. foreign policy. That is why a new thinking on access is to be considered.

Mr. Chairman, a final part of this new U.S. policy is engaging the Turks. This can be done through initiatives that target the media, NGOs, political parties and business lobbies. It requires close contact between U.S. officials and these various institutions.

This policy should also build around a major charm offensive by the United States Government in hopes of winning over the hearts and minds of individual Turks. This is the only way Turkey stays with the United States. Washington should consider launching massive exchange programs for journalists, scholars, rising politicians, opinion makers, and students, as well as increase its public diplomacy presence in Turkey, all the while confronting the AKP's policies and speaking up to ensure continued liberal democracy in Turkey. This can be done by focusing on press and Internet freedoms and continued gender equality, two sine qua nons of the future of Turkish democracy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to testify.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cagaptay follows:]

Statement of Soner Cagaptay, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow/Director, Turkish Research Program
Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Before the
House Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives
Hearing on
"Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations"
July 28, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for inviting me to this timely and important hearing on Turkey at this crucial juncture in U.S.-Turkish relations. I will present to you a summary of my prepared remarks.

Where do U.S.-Turkish relations and Turkey's ties with the West stand today, almost eight years after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) took power in Ankara? The *AKP* government recently *voted against sanctions on Iran* at the UN Security Council, and has *established intimate links with Hamas* to the detriment of the Palestinian Authority. Ties with Israel are now at an all time low, after the unfortunate flotilla incident in which the Israelis killed nine Turkish citizens—this very sad act will not be forgotten in the Turkish psyche for a long time.

At the same time, *Turkey's accession into the European Union (EU)*, an anchor that ties the country to the West, *is stalled* for reasons having to do as much with French objections to Ankara's EU membership as with the *AKP's lack of commitment to European values*. On this side of the Atlantic, opinion polls show that since 2002, the United States has become one of the most hated countries in Turkey. And in practical terms, although Ankara and Washington continue to cooperate on Iraq and Afghanistan, *the AKP government and the Obama administration are at odds over key issues such as countering Iran's nuclearization and the Arab-Israeli peace process*. Finally, Turkey has yet to fully cooperate on *Eurasian pipeline politics* — financial interests and a model friendship between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian leader Vladimir Putin have driven a wedge between Ankara and Washington.

After it came to power in 2002, the AKP promoted EU accession and pragmatic ties with the United States and Israel, while at the same time suggesting that Turkey had become a *"center country," a regional power*. In due course, the AKP *jettisoned Turkey's traditional role as the voice of the West in the region*. Turkey indeed deserves to be a regional power; it has NATO's second largest army and is a G20 nation. *But, have*

AKP's policies really made Turkey a regional power, the "center country," that can talk to the West <u>*and all*</u> *the Middle Eastern states at the same time? The answer is no.*

Here is what happened: In 2002, just as it promoted close ties with the West, the party openly bashed the United States and other Western countries. Some dismissed such AKP rhetoric as domestic politicking, while others did not. Now, this rhetoric has shaped the minds of a majority of Turks — around 95 percent of Turks do not read or write languages other than Turkish. Many see the world as reported to them and debated by their government. In fact, anti-Western rhetoric has been the periscope of the *AKP's foreign policy vision, a vision that does not consider Turkey a member of the Transatlantic community.*

After reining in democratic checks and balances, for instance slapping politically motivated tax-fines on the media and using illegal wiretaps to intimidate its opponents, the AKP now feels comfortable in power, which is why the party's foreign policy now follows its erstwhile anti-Western rhetoric. *In other words, what happens in Ankara and Istanbul does not stay in Ankara and Istanbul.* As the AKP has become more emboldened at home, it has felt freer to follow the foreign policy it always desired.

Mr. Chairman, *anti-Western rhetoric the periscope sticking out of the water should have alerted us to the AKP's submerged foreign policy.* That *foreign policy has now surfaced,* the submarine is out of the water and *it is not taking Turkey into the EU or any closer to the U.S.*

Mr. Chairman, allow me to begin with EU accession, for I think this ought to be the most pressing issue in Turkish foreign policy and U.S.-Turkish ties. If Turkey's EU accession had been stalled in the pre–September 11 world, I would have said that was a real shame. Back then, Turkey had room to be outside the EU but still part of Europe and the West. Now, with the EU pushing its boundaries into the Balkans up to Turkey, and with Al Qaeda pursuing a war between the "Muslim world" and the West, a gray area in which Turkey can position itself no longer exists; it must become an EU member and part of the West, or else fold into the Muslim world, as per Al Qaeda's vision.

I have bad news: Turkey's EU entry is not on the horizon. Last week, President Barack Obama partly blamed the EU for supposedly driving Turkey away from the West by stalling the country's EU membership. However, *the real problem is that the Islamist AKP doesn't share the dream of a liberal, Western Turkey.* While I have always supported Ankara's membership bid, the time has come to admit that the reason Turkey will not join the EU any time soon is not because of European reservations toward a Muslim country, but because of the Turkish government's reservations toward European values.

Things looked much different when Brussels opened membership talks with Ankara in 2005. At the time, the government seemed committed to joining the EU. The AKP, whose predecessor, the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah), was banned in 1998, emerged in 2001 with an avowedly non-Islamist platform. The party jettisoned Refah's anti-European

rhetoric (Refah had dismissed the EU as a "capitalist and Christian club") and instead embraced the accession process.

Despite the AKP's recent re-branding as pro-Western, it has no strategic view of EU membership. It used the EU accession process only as a tactical ploy to shed its Islamist image, gain Western legitimacy, and curb the power of the secular military. Having thus made the AKP palatable for Brussels bureaucrats and liberal Turks alike, in 2005 the AKP dropped the EU process as soon as it was expected to implement tough reforms towards full membership. In a public demonstration of its lack of interest in Europe, the AKP declared 2005 the "Africa Year."

As a result, Turkey's reform process did not just stop, it deteriorated. As the government resorted to jailing critical journalists under the pretext that they were planning a coup, Turkey dropped 20 spots in the Reporters Without Borders' Press Freedom Index. In last year's survey, Turkey ranked only 122 out of 175 countries, compared to 102 in 2008. Moreover, the AKP has used plot allegations — most infamously in the so-called Ergenekon case — to target its political opponents in the media, military and academia.

The AKP has specifically targeted independent media. After Milliyet, a paper owned by Dogan Media, an independent media group, reported alleged AKP links to an Islamist charity in Germany, the government slapped Dogan with a record $3.3 billion tax fine last year, a sum that exceeds the company's worth. *Under the AKP, Turkey is becoming more like Russia than Europe in terms of government-media relations.*

Given these shortcomings, skeptics of Turkey's EU membership, such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy, cannot be simply discarded as prejudiced. The AKP could have responded by adopting a strategic view of EU accession; swift reforms could have embarrassed Mr. Sarkozy into dropping his objections, lest France be seen as an anti-Muslim country. Instead, the AKP dredged out complaints about Europe's anti-Turkish resentments.

Allow me Mr. Chairman, now to *turn to the Middle East*. At the same time that the AKP dropped the EU process, it engrossed itself in regional conflicts in the Middle East. Herein lies the problem with the AKP's foreign policy. There is an incongruity between the AKP's get-involved-in-all-conflicts foreign policy in the Middle East and the party's alleged commitment to EU accession: *When everything is a priority, nothing is, and no country has ever gotten into the EU without making membership a top domestic and foreign policy priority.*

The AKP has made *a 180 degree turn in Turkey's Middle East policy*, moving closer to Iran and its proxies, Syria and Sudan, while cooling off towards Israel. What motivates this policy are not religious sympathies, as some people suggest, but rather an *ideological view of the world. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government believe that Samuel Huntington was right, that there is a clash of civilizations. Only they are on the side of the Islamists, not the West.*

The AKP believes that "Turkey's traditionally strong ties with the West represent a process of alienation." The executive summary of the party's foreign policy is as follows: "Since the end of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims have gotten the short end of the stick, and the AKP is here to correct all that."

The AKP won't correct all wrongs against Muslims, though. This is because Islamism--a political ideology that sees Muslims in perpetual conflict with the West and with "non-believers"--and not Islam, guides the AKP's foreign policy. The party will therefore favor other Islamists over Muslims that don't share their Manichean worldview. Thus, the AKP will forgive and even defend the ills of Islamist regimes against fellow Muslims, such as the Sudanese genocide of Darfuris or Tehran's suppression of its own population. Likewise, it will support Islamist Hamas and its violent goals, but not the secular Palestinian Authority or peaceful Palestinian movements.

This selective solidarity also applies to ills committed against Muslims by non-Muslims, as long as those non-Muslims are anti-American or anti-European. That's because political Islam has made the strategic decision that the enemy of its enemy is its friend. Hence, Russia will get a pass regardless of how many Chechens it kills. Turkish-Russian ties are hence flourishing.

Since 2002, *the AKP has routinely taken foreign policy steps conflicting with U.S. policy*: the party has invited Hamas to Ankara, and sponsored fundraisers for terrorist groups — in the last three years alone, at least seven AKP-backed Hamas conferences and fundraisers were held in Istanbul. In addition, the AKP has pursued rapprochement with Syria, and even defended Tehran's nuclear ambitions while simultaneously whitewashing the Sudanese genocide in Darfur. The party has also bashed Israel in international forums, canceled joint-military exercises with Israel while conducting new exercises with Syria, and has promoted and fanned anti-Semitism at home. Finally, the AKP has surrendered Turkey's EU accession, and has given firm commitments to Russia for pipeline development programs, jettisoning a potential partnership with the United States. In other words, the *AKP has damaged all the anchors that tie Turkey to the West*, acts against U.S. interests, and chooses instead to build close ties with anti-Western regimes.

Mr. Chairman, there is perhaps *little Washington can do to change the AKP's foreign policy outlook*. In fact, thus far, some of Washington's policies have, perhaps unwittingly, helped empower this development in the first place. Believing that the supposedly reformed Islamist AKP could be a bridge-builder between Western and Muslim countries, some have promoted the AKP as a special mediator in the region, while shielding it from those critics who worried early on about the AKP's worldview. In 2002, many people *celebrated the idea that the AKP was the tribune of the West to the Muslim world; now it appears that the AKP is the tribune of a politically charged "Muslim world" to the West.*

Allowing such an Islamist catalyst into the Middle East's conflicts produced and will continue to produce devastating results. *Because the AKP sees a clash of civilizations everywhere it looks, it cannot be an impartial mediator.* For example, when the AKP

was allowed to interject itself between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, or the United States and Iran, it quickly became an ombudsman for the Islamist side, rising in their defense. After eight years of increasingly authoritarian AKP rule at home, many Turks now also see the world through the Islamists' eyes of a civilizational clash.

Here is the conclusion, Mr. Chairman: the AKP's foreign policy vision has failed. Turkey has moved away from Europe, and in doing this, it has not become a regional power for after eight years of AKP rule, Turkey has not become trusted mediator in Middle East issues. Much to the chagrin of those who want to see a powerful Turkey, *Turkey has not become the "center country"* which *bridges the East and the West*, can talk to *both Israelis and Palestinians*, and garners the trust of *both Iran and the West*. Washington needs to face the reality that, despite the country's NATO membership, Turkey can no longer be considered a Western ally under the AKP. *In order to contain the AKP's Islamist influence, not just in Turkey but also in the region, the West must first deny the Erdogan government the influence and prestige that comes with being promoted as a regional mediator.*

Until the Gaza flotilla incident, U.S. administrations mostly ignored Turkey's drift away from the West for a variety of reasons, ranging from denial to hopes of gaining Turkish assistance in Iraq. Washington can no longer afford an ambiguous stance towards Turkey. If Washington does not confront the emboldened AKP, *the party's nuisance value to U.S. interests*, such as on Arab-Israeli peace and Iran's nuclearization, *will exceed its added value*.

Mr. Chairman, there is a way forward: Turkey remains a multi-party democracy, and only one-third of Turkey's population supports the AKP. Since the opposition Republican Peoples Party (CHP) elected a new, charismatic social democrat leader, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the AKP has been sliding in polls. As a result, since the Gaza flotilla incident, the AKP has been employing vehement anti-Western rhetoric, using hysteria to boost its popularity. *The AKP will continue to use populist, anti-Western foreign policy to boost its popularity in the run up to next year's elections.*

This suggests that the U.S. must develop a nuanced policy towards Turkey, which would involve scaling back the AKP and developing a real defense against its policies. The alternative, a policy that targets the whole of Turkey, such as passing the Armenian resolution or blocking military sales, would only push the Turks into the Islamists' arms, fulfilling the AKP's objective. *In fact, what to do with Turkey first begs the question of what not to do with Turkey.* In light of the AKP's campaign of rallying Turkish public opinion behind its anti-Western foreign policy, the cardinal rule of the new era is simple: *do not offend the Turks*, or the Turkish republic, in other words, *do no harm to Turkey.*

Then, it is time to signal to the AKP that its anti-Western policies have a cost. To this end, Washington should deny the AKP political access —this will cost the party prestige that matters greatly in Turkish politics. So far, the AKP has been invited to Washington even as it transgresses U.S. policy in multiple areas, creating the impression that either Washington approves of its policies or considers the party indispensable to U.S. foreign

policy. One component of U.S. power is in granting meetings and face-time to representatives of foreign states and institutions. This can be leveraged by denying the AKP access while maintaining bureaucratic contacts. At the very least this policy might expose the AKP's anti-Western orientation, should the party continue on its current trajectory, while encouraging those Turks in the opposition.

Mr. Chairman, *a final part of this new U.S. policy* is *engaging the Turks* while tackling the AKP's policies. This can be done through initiatives that target the media, NGOs, political parties and business lobbies. This requires close contact between U.S. officials and these various institutions. The policy should also build around a major charm offensive by the U.S. government in hopes of winning over the hearts and minds of the individual Turk. Anti-Americanism in Turkey is becoming a structural problem, and if the U.S. does not win the battle of public opinion, the populace will only grow in support for the AKP's anti-Western foreign policy. In order to win over the individual Turk, Washington should consider launching massive exchange programs for journalists, scholars, rising politicians, opinion-makers, and students, as well as increase its public diplomacy presence in Turkey, all while confronting the AKP's policies and using rhetoric to ensure liberal democracy in Turkey. This can be done by focusing on press and internet freedoms and continued gender equality, *sine qua nons* of the future of Turkish democracy.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to testify in front of the Committee.

Chairman BERMAN. Thank you all very much. The presentations were very interesting and somewhat different from one another, the Ambassador's and the three doctors'.

I yield myself 5 minutes to begin the questioning period.

Several of you said that Turkish public opinion matters these days in the formation of Turkish foreign policy. Sort of the unstated implication of that was that some of current foreign policy is driven by what presumably a majority, a large majority of the Turkish people want the government to be doing on these issues. At least, well, certainly one of you seems to reject that view and say it is the other way around: The party's foreign policy goals have managed to persuade the Turkish people to provide that support. Thinking specifically of the opinion toward the United States, with the ups and downs of the relationship, by and large, it has been a pretty close alliance in many areas over the many years since the end of World War II and the establishment of NATO.

Why is Turkish public opinion—if you measure it, it looks like Turkey's public is perhaps one of the most anti-American of any of the countries of the world. I used to have this formulation that sometimes where the people disliked us the most, it was because we were the closest to the government and they were projecting on us their own hostilities toward their own government.

I am not sure that is the conclusion in this context. But I am curious, if you can elaborate more on your view on the relationship of public opinion to the current Turkish foreign policy direction and the standing of the United States there. At least Dr. Cagaptay actually raised that issue at the end of his comments as something that we could affect by addressing it very directly.

Ambassador WILSON. My colleagues are looking at me, so I will start. Here is the way I looked at it when I was in Turkey. Obviously, this was a very vexing and complicated subject and one that troubled me. I think when I arrived in the United States, one of the organizations used a thermometer to measure positive, warm-versus-cold feelings toward the United States. And the United States was around 8 degrees, which is getting pretty close to zero. And that obviously isn't a positive thing and it is not something that an ambassador wants to see.

After having served there for awhile, I came to the conclusion that anti-Americanism, although I am not sure that is quite the right word, is very, very broad and is very, very shallow. And it has primarily, in my opinion, to do with specific objections to specific policies that either the United States has or is believed to have, in part because of wild, crazy, and idiotic things that one of the members referred to that appear in the Turkish press.

So on the one hand, you have this sort of 8 degrees, or I think when I left we had improved it to 12, so it is a 50 percent improvement, but you also have Turkey, a country that sends more students to the United States to study, more of its young people to the United States to study than any other country in Europe.

It is a country whose young people and large segments of the rest of the population look to the United States. It is where they vacation. It is where they send their children to school. It is where they would like to do business, although they have had difficulty accessing the American market.

They are not sending their children to Iranian schools, and they are not sending their children to Palestinian schools. That Western aspiration that Turkey has had for 80 years, and even before that, and I think a desire and interest in closer ties to the United States remains there, there are serious public objections to a range of policies. Ninety percent of Turks opposed the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and at least as high a percentage oppose our continued presence there now. That is baggage; and there are a number of other elements as well.

Chairman BERMAN. I hate to do it, but I have to cut myself off.

I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the ranking member, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Excellent testimony, gentlemen.

I want to focus on Israel-Turkey and Greece-Turkey relations.

The Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul is facing an existential threat as a result of restrictive policies imposed by the Turkish Government. Gentlemen, what do you think is the likelihood that the AKP government will revise those restrictive policies?

On Israel, it has been reported that the Turkish Government was itself directly involved with the IHH in the mission to smuggle goods into the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip. That was in clear defiance of the naval blockade. Israel rightly defended itself against this provocative and dangerous act, given the IHH ties to violent Islamic militants, and the possibility of weapons being smuggled through this flotilla to Hamas.

So, Dr. Rubin—I know you have touched on this, and I believe this Turkey-supported act is unacceptable—what do you think was the motivation by the Turkish Government? What did Turkey seek to accomplish? Should Israel be concerned that Turkey may be adopting a more direct confrontational approach to Israel that could make the Jewish state a target of a Turkish-sponsored attack?

The first question to all, and then the Israel question to Dr. Rubin. And we will start with the others.

Mr. LESSER. Thank you very much. If you allow me to make a point about the public opinion issue that was raised earlier—and the thermometer, by the way, was the GMF, this poll that I mentioned earlier on transatlantic trends, and it is very striking; it was very low.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. But you can answer the chairman's question another time?

Mr. LESSER. I will come back to it.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I would like to know about the relations with Greece and Israel.

Mr. LESSER. On Greece and Turkey, I think you raise a very important point. I think there are unresolved issues in this relationship between Greece and Turkey which should have been resolved long ago. And you mentioned one of them, and it is a very important one.

I was encouraged to think that this Turkish Government would move forward on the Halki Seminary issue and other things. I am now rather uncertain. I hope that does happen. I think what is important from our interest point of view, a decade ago the risk of an actual military clash between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean was something that we had to worry about on a daily basis. That is really not true anymore. We have unresolved political disputes, but both countries are devoted to tolerance.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. LESSER. And I think that is meaningful.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you.

In Greece, I would say Turkish-Greek relationships are better than they have been in a very long time; although problems remain, that is primarily because both countries now perceive threats from different places. The countries do have to get over some of their differences such as the cultural rights of the Greek minority in Turkey and the Turkish minority in Greece, but I would say that is really not a flaring point.

If I could make a point on Turkish-Israeli ties, I think that is more crucial for our debate today. It appears to me that having a civilizational view of the world, the AKP government regards the Arab-Israeli conflict from the perspective of Hamas versus Israel and not Palestinian versus Israel. That guides the party's policies, which means the AKP has indexed Israel policy to Israel's Hamas policy. So that is really bad news for Turkish-Israeli ties in the midterm, although a lot of people, including able Turkish diplomats, are trying really hard to save that relationship and bring it to where it was. It is going to pick it up and bring it back to where it was.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Dr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. With regard to Greece, we see a pattern that has emerged elsewhere on other Turkish issues where there is a rhetoric of progress but no willingness to make substantive decisions behind the scenes.

With regard to the Israel issue—and this also relates to the chairman's question—there is a chicken-and-egg situation; incitement does matter. It matters in Turkey; it matters in Palestine; it matters in Iran; and it matters in Pakistan. To cite public polling and so forth and not recognize the impact of a constant barrage of government statements is somewhat ridiculous, all the more so when the Turkish Government has made it the forefront of their strategy in absorbing—taking over newspapers and very much reducing the freedom of the press. This is one thing which we very much need to pay attention to if we are going to reverse the rhetoric—the incitement, which leads to Turkish public opinion being what it is.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired.

Chairman BERMAN. We will have a second round for the unanswered part of members' questions.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Ackerman, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

The chairman properly noted in the opening remarks part of the hearing that for purposes of the committee, Turkey was in Europe. The immediate policy ramification of that was that I got 1 minute instead of 3 minutes for jurisdictional purposes. But I think that goes to part of the crux of the issue and the dilemma in which we find ourselves. Where is Turkey? Who is Turkey? Turkey seems to have this benefit as we saw at times as being in both worlds. "Bi" means both. Sometimes people who are bi have to make choices, not always. And sometimes you think being bi means being both so you can have the best of all worlds, if that be the case. But as is the case with people who are, say, biracial, they often have to make a choice of who they are for societal purposes. And as my kids would say, you hang with those with whom you are more comfortable.

Turkey is bi. It is bicontinental. And for purposes of, shall we say, military association, we recognized them as a brother in arms and welcomed them into NATO. But for purposes of joining my European family, you got to be kidding, you ain't marrying my sister, and they were rejected.

So you hang with whom you are more comfortable. I mean, it is okay to have a foot in both worlds, but if suddenly you realize that each of your feet are on different banana peels and they start moving in different directions, you have got a problem. I think that Turkey's identification problem and our relating to it are part of the problem, not the entire problem, but certainly a part of a very complicated formulation.

I would like to get Turkey back. I think they are important for any number of a host of critical reasons. We took great bragging rights on having Turkey as part of the West, and it seems like the dynamic is readily changing. And part, of course, is due to a change

in leadership and its predisposition, I would suppose, but the population seems to be following that direction more than enthusiastically, and that is rather troublesome.

Part of the way to get it back, I guess, is in our hands. What can we do to get Turkey back? How do we make it part of our world without the demand that it completely reject the other world, and, at the same time, insisting on key policy issues that it does not go to the dark side?

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congressman Ackerman. You have given us a lot of food for thought. Turkey has two identities. Let me ask a question: What is it that makes Turkey special?

A lot of people will say because it is a Muslim country.

No. There are 57 other Muslim countries. What makes Turkey special is it is a Muslim country with a Western overlay. It is a liberal democracy, a NATO ally, has good ties with Israel and the United States, and wants to get into the European Union. All of that is what makes Turkey special, not its religion, because there are so many other countries that share that religion, but not its political values.

Under the AKP, it is those political values that have come under strain, from EU accession to ties with Israel to strong ties with the United States. So a message to get across to the Turkish Government would be what makes Turkey special for members of the United States Government and the Congress is not its religion; we don't care. It is its political values that we care. This is what distinguishes Turkey, its Western overlay.

So how do we get Turkey back? Emphasize its NATO membership and EU accession as key elements of Turkey's new foreign policy direction.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Smith, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to direct my question to Ambassador Wilson. I would love to hear from all of you, but there is not enough time.

Religious freedom is a universally recognized human right enshrined in the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Turkey ratified that in 2003. Article 18 couldn't be clearer on the religious freedom issue; yet the Turkish Government systematically suppresses both the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and especially His Holiness Bartholomew, and has forcibly closed the Halki Seminary. Has the United States, and especially the Human Rights Council, done enough to reverse this religious discrimination?

Secondly, it has been said by George Santayana that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Prime Minister Erdogan's government's denial of the Armenian genocide has been compounded by its denial of the genocide in Darfur. When the ICC indicted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who was scheduled to attend an OIC conference in Istanbul late last year, the Turkish Prime Minister said no Muslim could perpetrate a genocide. What does that say about his judgment?

And, thirdly, very quickly, Natan Sharansky gave a famous speech at the OSCE on anti-Semitism. He said anyone can disagree

with the Knesset, anybody can disagree with the government policies of Israel, but the line is crossed when any one of the three Ds—demonization, delegitimization, or where the double standard is applied. Based on what I would think is a rising tide—and I would appreciate your thoughts on this—is there a rising tide of anti-Semitism by the government in Ankara and by the state media?

Ambassador WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Just to answer your questions briefly in reverse order, Turks that I talk to generally do not talk about a rising tide of anti-Semitism. In the last meeting I had with members of the Istanbul Jewish community, people were quite emphatic that conditions are better now than they have been for a very long time in Turkey. There are problems and they are serious problems, but I think that is noteworthy.

Second, your comments about Turkish policy with respect to Sudan and comments that the Prime Minister has made, I can't try to defend any of that or explain any of that. I thought it was important when Erdogan went to, I think it was an AU or Arab League meeting in Khartoum, probably in 2006. He was the one and only person in that group who went to Darfur, who met with people. He delivered a couple of plane loads of assistance, and Turkey has continued to do that. Those are good things and we should be happy about them, even as we recognize some of the other problems.

Mr. SMITH. What does that say about his judgment? When we look at any leader anywhere in the world, obviously truth-telling has to be a mainstay of that administration or that leadership. What does it say about it?

Ambassador WILSON. I can't really account for that, Mr. Smith. I wish I could.

On the issues related to the Ecumenical Patriarch, has the United States and have other Western countries done enough? If you judge by the results, and I think your question answers itself, no. The situation remains difficult in some respects. Not as bad as it might have been a couple of years ago. I think the government very recently announced actions to confer citizenship on all of the members of the Synod, which addresses an issue of the eventual election of a successor to Bartholomew when he should pass from the scene. That is a positive. It is not a good enough story.

Mr. RUBIN. Before I ever wrote my first article on Turkey, I went out from Iraq through Turkey, and some Turks mentioned to me that my name was in the Turkish newspaper as a Jewish enemy of Islam. It was in the newspaper Yeni Safak, a newspaper that has been endorsed by Prime Minister Erdogan. There was a constant stream of incitement when I met with the Jewish community, not just the leaders but Jewish community activists and so forth, at various trips. People, they don't perhaps share the opinion that the Ambassador just left.

And I should also note, lastly, that in 2005, "Mein Kampf" became a best seller in Turkey. Part of it was because it was cheap. It was subsidized. The Turkish Government never tried to see whom it was subsidized by.

And the last thing is that anti-Semitism and the anti-Americanism have come part and parcel. We have seen this in the "Val-

ley of the Wolves," a film, a vile film that was endorsed by the Prime Minister's wife.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. McMahon.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Cagaptay, could you give us a snapshot or maybe even a little more detailed snapshot of the local political climate in Turkey, some handicapping on the outcome of next year's elections, and more detail, as you mentioned in your testimony, more detail how the foreign policy of the current administration plays into those elections? Sort of give us the "all politics is local" review.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congressman.

Obviously, like in all countries, in Turkey foreign policy matters in domestic politics. But like in all countries, it is really domestic politics that determines the outcome of the elections.

Until recently I would say there were two problems of Turkish politics: An increasingly authoritarian ruling party that goes after checks and balances, media freedom, gender equality, independent courts; and an ineffective opposition on the other hand. So you had two problems.

The second problem now looks like it is being alleviated. The opposition has elected a new, charismatic leader and it is rising in the polls. One poll even shows the opposition party catching up with the AKP and passing it for the first time in 8 years. And so no wonder that before and after the flotilla incident, and since then, the AKP has been using vehement anti-Israeli rhetoric to create hysteria, which I think it will use in the run-up to the election.

So I would say for the next year, unfortunately, although we don't want to see that, we will probably witness strong anti-Western, anti-European, anti-American and anti-Israeli rhetoric coming from the government in an effort to turn politics at home, where it is more competitive now, into a ball game where they can bring foreign policy in with the hope that it will help them.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you.

I was just thinking, I don't know if has ever happened before, where a leader of a democracy would try to use foreign policy to generate support at home and rally patriotic sentiments for the homeland toward outlying enemies. I guess that has never happened before.

Anyway, Dr. Lesser, you mentioned some polling numbers and that you saw an increase in some anti-American or anti-American, anti-Israeli sentiment. You said there was a doubling of the numbers. Can you tell us what those actual numbers were?

Mr. LESSER. We will release the full data in September, but just roughly, as a preliminary analysis, that was referring to a question where we asked Turks who they would like to work most closely with in international affairs, and we give them a range, the United States, Europe, Middle Eastern neighbors, Russia, et cetera. The number for the Middle East, which I know is of a concern to us here, roughly doubled since last year.

So, last year, if I have that correct, it was about 10 percent said we should work most closely with the Middle East on international affairs. This year it was around 20 percent.

I could give you my view, why I think that is. I think the political rhetoric, the fact that a lot of the key developments going on around Turkey have been in that region, it is in the news and everybody is focused on it. There are a lot of different explanations, but those are the numbers.

Mr. MCMAHON. What are the numbers for those who wanted to keep working with the Americans on the foreign policy of the West?

Mr. LESSER. Those are also fairly high. If you look across a lot of these different potential partnerships, it is pretty well distributed. It is not as if we are very low down. Although when you come to ask the kind of thermometer-like questions of "Who do you like out there in the world?," we have not done well. Last year when we did the survey, there was a tremendous Obama bounce across Europe. As you went east, until you got to Turkey, this bounce got lower and lower and lower. And I am afraid to say in Turkey it is essentially nonexistent.

Mr. MCMAHON. I look forward to the release of those numbers. I may have to add that into that basket of questions to be answered later, but it seems that the administration has gotten way too cozy with Ahmadinejad and the Iranian regime.

What is Turkey doing to keep asylum for those who fled the purges after the revolution, and are they working in any way to persecute those who violated human rights in Iran?

Mr. LESSER. Turkey for many, many years had a large number of émigré Iranians living inside the country. Some of them are there for political reasons, some of them are there for economic reasons, and some of them are simply tourists. Of course, it is a visa-free regime now that has been put in place. I don't have the precise number, but there are very large numbers of Iranians who have been living in Turkey for some time. Some number are refugees. There is also a lot of commercial activism—and this is an important point for our policy discussion. One of the problems is that we have had a very security-heavy relationship with Turkey. A lot of the focus these days for Turkey is commercial. We don't play very much in that game, but countries like Syria and Iraq and Iran do.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Mack.

Mr. MACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank the witnesses, the panel, for being here today and giving us their insight.

I would like to start off again by saying, reminding people of the actions that Turkey has taken with the support of Hamas, with the opposition to the sanctions with Iran, and their role in the flotilla. I don't know how anybody on this committee can overlook those things. I don't know how anybody on the panel can overlook those things. I don't know how any American can overlook those things. And I certainly don't see how anyone who believes that freedom is the core of all human progress can overlook those actions.

A minute ago we heard a question: What can we do to get Turkey back? Give me a break. We need a paradigm shift in this committee, in this discussion. We are the United States of America. We are the land of the free and the home of the brave. I believe it is time that the administration take a firm stance on the side of freedom. President Obama's Middle East diplomacy has gone from

weak to dangerous. He has taken our relationship with Israel for granted, and his administration has chosen to hedge its bets with countries not aligned with the United States' principles of freedom and our interests. In a desperate attempt to reach out to the Muslim world, he has turned his back on one of our Nation's most trusted allies. Still, Turkey's flippant behavior has not changed.

Under the Obama administration, our allies have distanced themselves, and our allies have become further entrenched. We cannot continue on this path. Our success lies in our ability to preserve and fight for our freedom and our principles. Countries like Israel have proven that they are truly allies in an unstable Middle East. Turkey's actions, with what I have mentioned earlier, are not forgivable.

If Turkey wants the support of the United States to get into the EU, then it needs to stand on the side of freedom; and for us to support Turkey without them changing their position is a mistake.

So my question to you is: What does Turkey have to do to get America back? That should be the question that we ask in the United States Congress. I look forward to your answers.

Mr. RUBIN. I tend to agree with the Representative from Florida. If I may say, we should then implement is a whole host of Plan B strategies. Turkey has become over confident in its relationship to us. It believes it is more important to us than it actually is. This doesn't mean we should necessarily dispense with partnerships, but if we make alternate arrangements with, for example, air support through Romania and elsewhere, at the very least, even if we do keep our presence in Incirlik Air Base, it makes Turkey all the less able to pursue the slash-and-burn negotiation strategy which it has.

I would also second your cry, if I may, for moral clarity. And this is something that we should hold President Erdogan accountable for. The United States tends to not like to engage in bullhorn diplomacy, but there is no reason why we can't call a toad a toad, and, when it comes to some of Prime Minister Erdogan's more noxious statements, to call him on that, to call the Turkish Ambassador in the United States on that, and use the full force of our diplomacy for U.S. interests and for the interests of our allies.

Mr. MACK. Thank you.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. If I may, Congressman, what can Turkey do to get the United States back? I would say, the chairman mentioned earlier for the purpose of this committee, Turkey is in Europe. Turkey should go back to Europe where it belongs. Both in its domestic politics, the AKP government should be called to judgment on respecting media freedoms. If Turkish media is free, Turkey remains a democracy and it is okay.

And second, it should go back to Europe in its foreign policy. We have to take Turkey out of the Middle East to take the Middle East out of Turkey. That means Turkey's involvement in Middle East conflicts is not good for Turkey and it is not good for the United States, because the AKP government is not an impartial mediator and has failed in producing outcomes.

On Iran or Israeli peace, I would say to bring Turkey back to Europe in domestic policy and foreign policy.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Miller, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like Mr. Mack, I think the United States should be on the side of freedom. But if freedom means democracy and governments reflect the will of their people, that may be part of our problem in Turkey right now. One of the worst parts of democracy is that sometimes elections lead to unpalatable consequences for us, and that may be what we are dealing with in Turkey now. Certainly within our own country, support for secular institutions and separation of church and State waxes and wanes, and it is unrealistic to think that it will not in other parts of the world as well. Certainly throughout the Muslim world, there has been more support for Islamic policies and away from secular policies. So it is not surprising that is affecting Turkey to some extent as well.

There is, in September, a package of constitutional changes on the ballot. The government describes those changes as necessary to meet some of the qualifications for admission to the EU. They include increasing government control over what have traditionally been autonomous institutions: The judiciary and the military. Philosophically we may support an autonomous judiciary, but it certainly is not consistent with American political philosophy to support an autonomous military. In fact, we have traditionally seen autonomous military power, for instance, in Pakistan, as entirely an unwholesome influence. But we probably have benefited from the autonomy of the Turkish military. They seem to be more pro-Western and they seem to be more pro-secular. They have worked closely with Israel's military when probably the people of Turkey are less sympathetic to Israel than their military.

Do you believe that this package of constitutional changes will go through? Do you believe that the stated reason for those changes is the real reason; and what do you think the effect will be, particularly the effect of less autonomy for the military? Dr. Cagaptay, Dr. Lesser?

Mr. LESSER. Just briefly, I do think this question of civil-military relations is absolutely critical for us here. Many of the things we have been discussing would not have happened under the old setup, the old regime. So the change, the shift, is very, very important. I think in September the vote on the referendum, on the constitutional package, is probably likely to go the way the AKP government would like, but it will be a very important test and a harbinger of how a general election in Turkey might go in the future.

One final point. I think we need to be aware that with these changes in civil-military relations, who are we now dealing with when it comes to security and defense issues in Turkey? It is not so simple anymore, and they simply don't have that vibrant debate that we would like to see on things like the consequences of a "nuclear-izing" Iran. So we may be able to do some things to encourage a more vibrant debate about this.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congressman. I would say the question about Turkey is not that Turkey is becoming more democratic and we have to bear the consequences; Turkey has been a democracy since 1946. The question is: Is the AKP a democratic force?

A democratic force is not one that comes to power democratically; it is one that respects democracy after it comes to power, including checks and balances. Just as the party has gone after media, taken ownership of a lot of media in the hands of its supporters, which is creating incitement—and Dr. Rubin noted that—but also the constitutional amendment package which is coming up for a vote is a mixed bag. It has a lot of good things such as gender equality which I would vote for, but also a lot of things that would allow the government to eliminate checks and balances, such as appoint most of the members of the high courts without a confirmation process or other checks and balances. This is a government that already controls the Parliament, the executive branch, and the legislative, and it would give it the third branch of government. After that it is going for control of the media, the fourth estate. That is not good news for the future of a democracy.

So the question is: Is this a party that respects democracy after it comes to power democratically? And I think this is how we should frame it.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, I have so little time I will yield it back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired. I recognize, out of order, for a moment, the ranking member.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to let the witnesses know that our side of the aisle has a special conference right now in the Cannon Caucus Room; and that is why so few, but the brave, are here. Our brothers and sisters are somewhere else.

Chairman BERMAN. How can Turkey get them back?

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Scott, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me put forward a word of caution here that as we make this assessment of Turkey, let us be careful not to rush to judgment.

Secondly, if we are going to measure Turkey, let's make sure that we measure them correctly. With that in mind, Mr. Ambassador, let me ask you your assessment of Turkey's assistance in the war on terror? How would you evaluate that?

Ambassador WILSON. Let me begin by expanding my answer a little bit beyond your question. I think as we assess Turkey, we also need to assess the many ways in which we need its help. On very practical issues where Americans are dying today in Afghanistan and Iraq, we need that help. It is critical to the U.S. national interest. And it is also critical to the national interest that we get Turkey's help on the problem of Iran's nuclear weapons efforts.

So as I said in my prepared remarks, getting them back on board, getting them back, not in line, but together with us ought to be a big priority.

War on terrorism issues is certainly a central part of what I was doing while I was in Ankara. Turkey has been extremely helpful on a range of—frankly, very sensitive on al-Qaeda-related issues. It has been very helpful on a number of other terrorism matters concerning Iraq.

Dr. Lesser noted earlier our work with Turkey—I think it was Dr. Lesser—on PKK. We have few partners who are closer with us and more effective with us on these issues.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much.

Now let me ask each of you to respond to this. Throughout the ages and the centuries, even going back to ancient times in the Middle East, they have often asked the question: Is there no balm in Gilead? Gilead is a land on the east side of the Jordan that produced a particular kind of plant that had extraordinary healing power, and I think that is what we ought to talk about a bit here, and I ask your assessment.

Do you feel that we have healing power? Is there no balm there now that could heal this wound that has ruptured between our two most foremost allies in the region, Israel and Turkey? Could each of you briefly respond to that? Is there balm? Can we do it? What must be done to heal this wound? That is what has to be done.

Mr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. I would say we can't heal until we diagnose and come to agreement on the diagnosis and recognize reality.

Mr. LESSER. I think there has been a very natural recalibration. By healing, if we have in mind something that existed between Turkey and Israel 10 years ago, probably there isn't a route back to that. The question is, How far does this deterioration go, and where will it stop.

I think it needn't go that far, and a lot of this is about the political messaging between both countries, because there still is a core of strategic interest there, and cooperation on many things. Israel and Turkey are cooperating to this day on the PKK in northern Iraq, just as we are.

Mr. SCOTT. So you believe there is balm?

Mr. LESSER. I believe there is balm, but it is balm within reason.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. This is a very important question because the good ties between Turkey and Israel are not just good ties but is something that makes Turkey unique by adding this Western overlay and making it unique among all Muslim nations, together with its NATO membership, liberal democracy, EU accession, good ties with the United States. So the fact that it is becoming undone, it is quite worrisome, because it means something special about Turkey is disappearing.

So is there a balm? I would say because the AKP government's world view has indexed Turkish-Israeli ties to Israel's Hamas policy, and because that is not changing anytime soon, unfortunately in the short term there is no quick fix to this.

Perhaps Turkish diplomats are working really hard to save the relationship. Perhaps we will witness that it won't deteriorate any further, but if it is where it is, for the near future, I would say we should be content with the hope that long term, other Turks who see the world differently decide to build a different relationship, or back on the same relationship of the past with Israel. But short term, I think this government will stay on track with this idea of Israel versus Hamas and Turkey versus Israel.

Ambassador WILSON. Very briefly, I think time heals a lot of wounds. This particular one will require some time.

Second, it was very important that Israeli Minister Ben-Eliezer met with the Turkish Foreign Minister, I think 2 or 3 weeks ago. It ignited a little bit of controversy in Israel, but it was the right thing. That is why that step was taken.

Third, Ambassador Tan, the Turkish Ambassador here, just came from Israel. Israel has fewer better friends in the Turkish system. I think he can be helpful, too.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The chairman of the Europe Subcommittee, Mr. Delahunt, is recognized.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think it is interesting to note that since the flotilla incident, trade has increased between Israel and Jordan, according to media reports, by some 40 percent over the previous year. Forty percent. And that the sale of the aircraft, the Heron, was actually consummated post the flotilla incident. I would suggest that those particular examples state something about the relationship. I think both sides know that they need each other. Much as I said in my opening remarks, we need the Turks, they need us.

But I want to get to the polling data for just a moment. I understand the polling data. I chair the Oversight Subcommittee of this particular committee, and we did a whole bunch of hearings in terms of the image of the United States. I think it is important to note that we weren't doing very well anywhere. It wasn't just Turkey. We weren't doing well with the Brits. We weren't doing well with the French. We weren't even doing well with the Irish.

Now, I think it is important to provide context here. I am not happy with the fact that there is overwhelming sentiment in Turkey regarding the United States. We can do a lot, and I even think that some of the remarks and some of the notes or the insights, rather, recommendations as far as public diplomacy, yes, they exist. I visited Turkey recently, and they want to come here and do business. They are doing business in Tel Aviv right now.

But the issue I really want to address is, and let me address this to Ambassador Wilson, do you view this shift in Turkey foreign policy as pragmatism, nationalism; or as Dr. Cagaptay indicates, generated by the ideology of Islamism?

And can you give us your definition, Ambassador, of Islamism? Is this some nefarious plot that is going on all over the world? I think it is important that we start to be precise about what we mean because multiple interpretations can be drawn.

Ambassador WILSON. I am not sure that I would want to try to define a term that I didn't use. I think that one important thing to remember is that there are a large number of countries with large or overwhelming majority of Muslim populations. They are all different. They all pursue different goals and they pursue them in different ways. And the idea that there is something out there, I think is misleading, and will take U.S. policy in the wrong direction.

To your question, the origins of Turkish foreign policy and changes that we see today, is it pragmatism, is it nationalism or is it ideology; my answer would be yes. All of those things are going on, and there are probably some other things going on.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So it is really not a black-and-white situation, it is much more nuanced than what some might indicate?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir. That is exactly what I believe. There are a number of things going on that motivate the government. It has to do with public opinion and it has to do with pragmatism. It has to do with the pushback from Europe and it has to do with economic opportunities. There are a complex of things there. I don't think that they are seen as intentionally taking Turkey away from NATO and away from a close relationship with the United States, but rather adding things to Turkey's international tool bag.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I found it interesting, and I think Dr. Rubin in fact has written about this, dating back to that March 2003 denial of American deployment through Turkey. Ironically it was Erdogan, the Prime Minister, that seemed to be advocating to allow America to transit Turkey into northern Iraq; am I correct on that, Ambassador Wilson?

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. Can you answer with a "yes" or "no"?

Ambassador WILSON. I can't answer it with a "yes" or "no." Erdogan was not Prime Minister at that time. The Prime Minister at that time, yes, advocated for approval of that measure.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The ranking member of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee, Mr. Burton, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON. Mr. Chairman, I want to apologize. I had another committee hearing and they were having votes and so I had to run back and forth, so I apologize for not being here.

I think one of the things that should be asked is: What should the Obama administration do to engage Turkey and the administration over there to reestablish a closer relationship? I am very concerned that we see Turkey moving maybe closer to countries like Iran, which is a real threat to the entire stability of the Middle East and the administration. And the Secretary of State, it seems to me, should be doing everything that they can to make sure that our NATO ally, Turkey, stays close to the West as much as possible. So what should they be doing in your opinions, and any one of you can answer this, to stabilize and solidify our relationship.

Mr. LESSER. If I may, Congressman, I think that this is a very important question and has a very practical side to it which we should be pursuing. I think the Turks, for all of their engagement with Iran, which troubles us, also at the end of the day view Iran as a troubling strategic competitor in the long term. And they do worry about a nuclear Iran. What are we going to do about it in NATO terms, what are we going to do about it in terms of ballistic missile defense architecture? All of these things that matter very keenly to us matter very keenly to the Turks.

I think that, instead, we move beyond the sanctions issue. The Turks are never going to like sanctions, for a lot of reasons. There are things that we can be doing together in the defense realm which would build a lot of confidence, and show that we are dealing with the issue in a way that makes sense for both of our interests, as a very practical suggestion. Thank you.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. If I may, Congressman, as well thank you for your question. I would say Turkey's AKP government's foreign policy involvement to become a mediator in Middle East conflicts has not produced positive results for Turkey, because the country has not become a regional power, as suggested by the AKP, nor has it produced positive results for the United States. The AKP appears to be a tribune to the Islamist world view to the West. And I would say the Obama administration should take Turkey from the Middle East and put it back in Europe, which is where it belongs both in terms of its foreign policy orientation and liberal democracy. That would mean making EU accession the key driver of U.S.-Turkish relationship, together with Turkey's NATO commitment. Turkey is a NATO ally; we don't ask for them anything that we don't ask from other allies. And I think that is only fair that their commitment should not be withering away.

Mr. BURTON. Anybody else? Yes, sir.

Ambassador WILSON. Congressman, I would echo what my colleagues have said, but in a slightly different way. I think the Obama administration should engage very, very vigorously with the Turks with the problem of Iran and what we are going to do about it.

Some of the ideas put forward here in terms of talking about this as a defense and security issue as opposed to a political issue I think is one useful avenue to explore. The administration should continue to talk very intensively about Iraq: What are our plans there; how do we see things developing; what kind of a role Turkey can play.

Likewise on Afghanistan and, I would add, likewise on the Middle East. Turkey is a Middle Eastern country. To pretend otherwise is misleading and geographically incorrect. So having some of those intense conversations and extended discussions I think is extremely important.

Last part. Tough words are needed when tough words are deserved. And where we see problems, we should talk about them. Primarily we should talk about them in private. There are times and places and ways in which we do this in public as well.

Mr. BURTON. Just one real quick question and it relates to the Mediterranean problem when the ships came in, the Turkish ships came in, and the Israelis, because they were concerned about weapons getting into Hamas, were checking on that flotilla.

We are big supporters, all of us, of Israel. It is our big ally over there. We want to make sure they remain strong and free. What should we do to try to ameliorate the situation that exists currently between Turkey and Israel? What can be done with the United States trying to help put a little oil in the water, pardon the expression—bad choice of words, I guess, but you understand what I mean.

Mr. RUBIN. One thing which we should do is enforce the idea that terrorism and what is a terrorist group is not an ala carte proposition; that Turkey cannot simply legitimize certain groups and expect other groups to be delegitimized. Terrorism is a problem to all democracies and we should work with Turkey for a common definition. Hamas is a terrorist group; so is the PKK.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Sires, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I listened—I listened to the statement that the foreign policy of Turkey is really based on the opinion of the Turkish people. And I was just wondering if the projection that the Turkish people want of Turkey—through my eyes, I see Turkey as the bully in the corner, especially when it comes to Cyprus, when it comes to Armenia, and when it comes to even Greece at times, now even Israel.

This cavalier attitude also—I thought I heard them say that they are not really interested, they don't really care if they get in the European Union or not. Is this the projection that the people of Turkey want the government to project in the world? Can anybody—I just think they are kind of bullish.

I went to Cyprus, they got 43,000 troops in Cyprus. Do they have to go on a mountain and put a Turkish flag the size of this building on that mountain just to show the people of Cyprus like who is boss? I mean, that is what I mean by the bullish attitude of Turkey. Can anybody——

Mr. LESSER. If I could make a comment on that, I think when you ask Turks today whether they still support being a member of the European Union, a majority still say yes. That number has been going down, but a majority still say yes.

If you ask on the issues, for example, one of the ones you mention on Cyprus, whether Turkey—whether they are willing to pay a cost to resolve that—they say no. Eventually those are not reconcilable things. If Turkey is going to become a member of the European Union it is going to have to solve those problems.

I think this is where political leadership comes in, and political rhetoric comes in. I think a lot of what you are seeing today is simply because public opinion is being reinforced in its view that Turkey has "other fish to fry," if I can put it that way, and that the European Union is not as important a project as it used to be. I hope we can change that.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. I would continue, Congressman, along the point that most Turks want EU accession. When opinion-polled, they are asked why they want the process. They say, and I agree, that it is good for Turkey because it will make Turkey more of a liberal democracy and more prosperous and finally they can go to Paris on their honeymoons without visas. It kills the romance when you have to wait on line.

But on top of it, I think Turkey's support for EU remains strong. The Cyprus issue, though, is a highly emotional issue for both people on the island. It really depends on who you ask where history starts. Turkish Cypriots will tell you about the sixties when they were persecuted by Greek Cypriot militia, and Greek Cypriots will tell you about the 1974 war when Turkey landed on the island to end hostilities. And I think the unification of the island will be the best thing, together with EU accession for Cyprus and Turkey; but that failed in 2004 when Greek Cypriots voted against that plan despite the fact the Turkish Government and the Turk Cypriots supported it. So that was a missed opportunity. We may not have that again in the future, unfortunately.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador WILSON. I am not sure that there is a lot that I can add to what has already been said. I hadn't thought about the analogy, bully in the corner. I am not sure I agree with it, although I think I understand where you are coming from.

On Cyprus, which I didn't particularly address in my remarks, my impression certainly in the time I was there was that Turkey was fully supportive of the U.N. negotiating process. It remained very interested in the Annon plan proposals that had been rejected by the Greek Cypriots in 2004; deeply, deeply frustrated about an inability to figure out how to move things forward; frustration that I certainly shared, and I believe the State Department, U.S. Government as a whole, shared in moving this thing forward.

Since then, things have moved forward a little bit in terms of a new U.N. process. But at least there I am not sure that I would be comfortable talking about Turkey's throwing its weight around trying to change things. The status quo, although no one likes it, has served a certain purpose and Turkey is not certainly one of those that is trying particularly to change it.

Mr. SIRES. Dr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Two very quick points. Turkey's narrative is one of foreign powers victimizing them, and historically there is some merit to their argument, although there are two sides. The more important issue is with regard to this Turkish concept of neo-Ottomanism. Turkey believes that surrounding countries have a much different—much more positive opinion of Turkey historically than they actually do.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Costa, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. A lot of questions, little time.

Dr. Rubin, I want to—maybe I did not hear your testimony correctly, but I thought you said the issue of the Armenian genocide was in question. I think there is pretty overwhelming historical consensus that it actually occurred, although that is still a debate within Turkey and among some other scholars, I guess.

Since that is obviously a focus of the issue of Armenian and Turkish relations, what do you think it will take, since the 2009 protocols have been signed, to get that relationship to a stage where they can have the kind of exchanges and country-to-country relations that we would like to see them have.

Mr. RUBIN. There has been progress between Turkey and Armenia on a whole host of issues. Much of that has been because of a very quiet diplomacy and the quiet diplomacy tends to be more fruitful.

With regard to the other issue, it would also be good to have some real reconciliation, which, as I said in my testimony, would involve both sides opening their archives completely, regardless of what they deem to be the ethnicity or political perspective of the historian.

Mr. COSTA. Dr. Lesser, Dr. Cagaptay, do you agree that this quiet diplomacy is making progress on the 2009 protocol?

Mr. LESSER. I would agree that this is certainly the route that it would have to go. I think we are dealing—you heard this in so

many comments today—with a mood of heightened nationalism, not only in Turkey but in the region, and it makes it difficult to do these big projects, like the historic rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia.

My answer to the question of what is necessary to get it moving again is really a significant recommitment by the political leadership in Turkey, but also on both sides I would say, to that rapprochement, without it necessarily being linked to other things. It just complicates matters—it is valid and worth doing in its own right, or it is not. I think it is. I just have to say that.

Mr. COSTA. Is this the Turkish Government that could do that, like Nixon going to China?

Mr. LESSER. Turkey is in a position—Turkey is a very, very powerful actor in the region, and so for Turkey to take that step, as it did at one point, is very significant. To recommit to it would be important.

Mr. COSTA. I have got other questions.

Ambassador Wilson, when I was last in Turkey and seeing the new government come into power, we—I think there is consensus among all of you that the relationship with us and Turkey has always had its ups and downs, but the secular role of the military seems to now come into question.

And what are the internal issues that are taking place, in your view, within Turkey that is causing this change?

Ambassador WILSON. That is causing which change?

Mr. COSTA. Between the secular-military role that has traditionally played with in Turkey and the government.

Ambassador WILSON. Well, clearly one of the important sets of reforms that Turkey had to undertake to make a credible bid to join the European Union was adjusting civil-military relations and really putting the Turkish military in sort of the lane that is normal for I think most Western democracies, where the military works on security and defense matters and has a limited role, if any role at all, in other domestic affairs. The military—that is one point.

I think, second, at least my perception and certainly what people talked about in Turkey while I was there was a significant diminution in the military's role, in the kind of respect that was accorded to the military. That was quite different from what I heard even in 2005, to say nothing of what Turks tell you looking back to the last decade or the period before that.

I think the military interventions have created part of that situation. The military's intervention in 2007 I think was, generally speaking——

Mr. COSTA. Before my time expires, the situation with Iran and them obtaining nuclear weapons—I mean, where does Turkey see this different than we do? I mean, they state openly that they don't want to see them obtain nuclear weapons, but they obviously see it differently.

Ambassador WILSON. Turkey does not want Iran—in my opinion, Turkey does not want Iran to become a nuclear power. There are rivals in the region. They fear the dangers that will produce, and they fear all of the implications that means for the region. They are deeply fearful of war and of conflict, and view the possible acquisi-

tion of an Iranian nuclear weapon—which they don't entirely believe—the legacy of faulty Iraq weapons of mass destruction intelligence affects this here—the possibility of a possible Iranian weapon is not as threatening to them as the prospects of war.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, is recognized.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Again, this is again an important hearing, and I would like, to Ambassador and to Dr. Cagaptay—forgive me, Doctor; I will focus on doctor, but thank you.

Let me focus in on some of the issues mentioned by my colleagues and that I am very interested in. First of all, I would like to think of the relationship between the United States in particular and Turkey as a two-way street. I think we get off kilter if we believe, or if Turkey believes, that we are getting more than we are giving. And we had a pretty good relationship, pre-political changes, and every nation has a right to elect the person of their choice.

But, Ambassador, let's start with you. What role would the United States play in fixing this schism now between Turkey and Israel, which is a key element in terms of where we are as Western allies? And I say that because we advocated for Turkey to be in NATO. It is not all about they have an air base and they are helping us in Iraq. We hope to be out of Iraq in the next couple of months. And so we hope they will be helping us generally keep peace around the world.

The other point that I think is enormously important is, what is the next steps of our relationship? The British Prime Minister, part of Western allies, just rooted for Turkey to be part of the EU. They are getting benefits. And I consider Turkey a friend, but I don't want to be a friend with my hat in hand as if I am begging. In fact, I hate that kind of foreign policy, period. We either work together as equals, we respect the fact that we have individual foreign policies, but we don't try to strangle each other and get mad at every drop of the hat.

So, Ambassador, if you would answer that question and also Doctor, if you would answer that question, I would appreciate it.

Ambassador WILSON. Sure. Thank you very much, Congresswoman.

On Turkey-Israel, I think the administration has already taken some steps to try to ease the tension by facilitating a return of the Turks who were on board these ships, or the Mavi Marmara, back to Turkey, and, I think just in the last few days, to facilitate the return of the ships themselves or at least the Turkish ship back to Turkey. I have also read——

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You know, this is an important point that sort of gets lost and it is an important point that Israel is negotiating. But go right ahead.

Ambassador WILSON. I read in the papers that we also helped to facilitate this meeting between Foreign Minister Davutoglu and Israeli Minister Ben Eliezer.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So we need to be engaged.

Ambassador WILSON. We need to be engaged and help them put this issue behind them. There are issues, fundamental issues, that

Dr. Rubin raised that do need to be addressed and considered, certainly, as we figure out how to go forward. The practical matter.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. If you can go quickly to our next steps—because I want the doctor to be able to respond—the next steps of our relationship between Turkey and the United States.

Ambassador WILSON. As I think I have suggested earlier, I think what is extremely important is for us to engage on the substantive issues and the substantive problems that we have, the substantive problems we have with Turkey and the priority international issues where we need Turkish help and support. You are absolutely right; foreign policy is a two-way street, it is a give and take. We need Turkish assistance in a variety of ways, and we get it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. And they need ours.

Ambassador WILSON. Turkey needs our assistance in a variety of ways, and they get it as well.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Doctor, if you would, two-way street.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. Thank you, Congresswoman. Put this together across the view that they need us as much as we need them. It is a two-way street. And that hasn't really gotten across, I would say, because every time the AKP government transgressed U.S. policy, inviting Hamas, defending Sudanese genocide, establishing contacts with Hezbollah, defending Iran's nukes, it got away with it. And it got the perception, therefore, that it is so indispensable that it can continue.

That is why this hearing is so important, as well as rethinking U.S. policy to say, how do we get across the message that all of these things are not acceptable, but we still keep Turkey as an ally? And I think that would require a tough talk, as Ambassador Wilson mentioned, an honest conversation; but also a pushback on these certain issues, where having witnessed over and over in the last 8 years that AKP's involvement in the Middle Eastern conflicts does not help Turkey or the United States—doesn't get them out of Middle East conflicts—and the role of a mediator, which obviously has not produced results then, I think, bear the consequences. So take Turkey back out of the Middle East in order to take the Middle East out of Turkey.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. My final words in concluding, let it be clear to all of the Turkish people listening, we are your friend. But let us be a friend of equality and let us move forward together on behalf of the Turkish people and the people of the United States of America. And I say that to my friends who are Turkish-Americans as well.

Thank you and I yield back.

Chairman BERMAN. The time of the gentlelady has expired.

The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize for being late, and maybe this question was already asked, but I think it is worth repeating.

For the entire panel, while many EU countries fear Turkey is turning its back on Europe and question Turkey's respect for Europe's democratic culture and Christian heritage, can you discuss whether you believe Turkey understands the concerns in light of how they treat the religious and ethnic minorities in Turkey and northern Cyprus? And are they truly committed to making the nec-

essary reforms to alleviate these fears and show greater respect for the rights of these communities?

Moreover, in light of this question, as the EU Foreign Affairs Chief makes her first visit to Turkey amidst a crumbling bid for membership, can you discuss how realistic Turkey's membership in the EU really is? Thank you.

Mr. LESSER. Well, thank you.

I think this is a critical question for a number of different reasons, in part because we have a very, very strong stake in Turkey's continued convergence with Europe, sector by sector, whether it is foreign policy or the economy or it is human rights. I think if Turkey is off of that path, all of those things will be much tougher to do.

I used to be optimistic about this. I am somewhat less so today, because if I look at the way the debate is going in Turkey, and the way the debate is going in Europe, there is increasing ambivalence on all sides. And I am afraid we may, unfortunately, without a lot of effort, wind up with something that looks like "privileged partnership," as the German Government and the French have been talking about, rather than something that looks like full membership.

Final point. I think it is very important that the Turkey that 10 or 15 years from now could join Europe is not going to be the same Turkey. It is not going to be the same Europe either. We have to take that into account when we think about this problem.

Mr. RUBIN. I would just add that I was once very, very outspoken in favor of Turkey's European Union bid, but I don't think it is, anymore, realistic. If anything, some of the events of the last few years will play to the opponents in Europe who are afraid of Turkey for political or religious reasons.

And as to the British Prime Minister's recent comments, a lot of those comments we hear from Britain and other states are positioning, knowing—the fact that they are made so outspokenly is more a factor of knowing they will never have to pay the consequences for it because Turkey will never join the European Union.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

I have one more question, if I may. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has listed Turkey on its watch list for the past 2 years. In its April 2010 report, they documented the persecution of minority religions in Turkey, including Christians whose churches are not granted legal status. Both the Greek and Armenian churches are prevented from training clergy, as you know, in Turkey.

When will religious tolerance and freedom become a reality in Turkey, in your opinion? For the entire panel.

Mr. RUBIN. Shortly before Saudi Arabia gets religious freedom.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. I am more optimistic than Dr. Rubin, and this why I would say the eye has to stay on the ball on EU accession. If you honestly want Turkey's record as a liberal democracy to improve, you have to make Turkey's EU accession as a strategic goal.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Anybody else?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman has yielded back.

The gentlelady from Nevada, Ms. Berkley, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you for putting together this remarkable panel. As usual, your leadership of this committee is astonishing to behold.

Chairman BERMAN. 7 minutes. Well, 5.

Ms. BERKLEY. Gentlemen, thank you very much. I don't know when I have enjoyed or learned more from a panel than this one, and I appreciate the information. What I would like to do, since I wasn't here for opening statements, let me make a brief opening statement so you know where I am coming from, and then I have some really amazing questions to ask that you will be delighted to answer.

Over the last few years we have seen Turkey turn sharply away from the Western world and carry favor with the Iranians and Hamas, both of whom seek the destruction of our ally, Israel. They voted against the most recent U.N. sanctions against Iran, when even China and Russia, not exactly our NATO allies, voted for them. And Lebanon occupied by Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, abstained.

In May they sent a flotilla to Gaza to break Israel's self-defensive blockade of Hamas, creating an international incident, and, as far as I am concerned, directly caused the death of nine people that were participating in the flotilla. Add that to the refusal to acknowledge Armenian genocide, the continuous and ever more lethal incursions into neighboring Kurdistan, the treatment of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, and the extraordinary gall of criticizing Israel for occupying the Gaza, when they themselves have occupied Cyprus for 36 years.

It is becoming increasingly evident to me that we need to take a hard look at our relationship with Turkey, reassess whether it is in our continuing national security interest to continue it; whether they in fact have our interest in mind, and whether or not they can continue to be thought of as truly reliable allies.

I think you can assess from my statement where I am coming from.

These are my questions that I would like to ask. One is about EU membership. I chair the Transatlantic Dialogue which is Congress' ongoing relationship with the European Union Parliament. The EU has a set of criteria that has to be met before any country, including Turkey, becomes a member of the EU.

Do you think that is humanly possible, as long as Turkey continues to occupy Cyprus? Whoever would like to answer.

Mr. LESSER. Well, the answer to your last question is no, it is not possible. You know, this is not a negotiation for membership in the European Union that Turkey is conducting. They are joining a club, and one of the rules of the club is that you have to recognize all the members. And this is not going to change. So a settlement of the Cyprus problem has to be there.

But let's remember this is a 10- or 15-year problem for Turkey at best; a lot can happen. But the point you make is absolutely valid. Without progress on that issue, it is just not going to happen.

Ms. BERKLEY. Okay. Another question—this is a very sensitive, ticklish one, and I am hesitant to even bring it up publicly—a number of my constituents during the flotilla crisis came over to me

and they said, well, Turkey is getting signals from the United States that the United States' and Israel's relationship isn't what it once was; that the administration is trying to distance itself from Israel; and consequently there would be no price to pay for Turkey's, I guess, initiating this crisis.

Do you think that has any validity whatsoever? Because I don't know what to tell my constituents that approach me with that, that Turkey kind of felt empowered to do that because they didn't think that the United States would stand by its most reliable ally, Israel.

Mr. RUBIN. We should recognize there is an intrinsic value in and of itself to alliances and standing by friends. However, I would defer to what some of my co-panelists have said; that the flotilla wasn't an item in isolation; it followed, for example, a whole trajectory that began with Prime Minister Erdogan's embrace of Khaled Mashal, the most militant, not just Hamas leader, but the most militant Hamas leader at the time, as well as his embrace of Bashal Asad at a very sensitive time during the revolution.

Mr. CAGAPTAY. If I may, Congresswoman, and this would also allow me to clarify an earlier comment about what Islamism is. I know Congressman Delahunt has left, but he will get a copy of our remarks.

To me the flotilla incident is part of the——

Chairman BERMAN. I am sorry. I'm going to have to interrupt you. The time has expired.

Ms. BERKLEY. That 7 minutes promised didn't mean anything?

Chairman BERMAN. No, that was just a gesture. I took that away really quickly.

Ms. BERKLEY. Oh. Thank you, gentlemen, very much.

Chairman BERMAN. The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Connolly, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, again, welcome to the panel.

You know, listening to some of the rhetoric here, one might forget that this is an important relationship at stake between the United States and Turkey irrespective of what problems there may be. No relationship is problem free. Some of those problems are serious and some are irritants.

Mr. Ambassador, you were the Ambassador to Turkey. Is there a strategic nature to the relationship between Turkey and the United States?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir, I believe that there is. I think that is appreciated in Washington. I believe it is appreciated in Ankara by Turkish officials, certainly, in the Foreign Ministry, in the military and in the government.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Ambassador, do we have a military base in Turkey?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes. Well, we have a presence at Incirlik Air Base and also a smaller presence in Izmir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Ambassador, are there Turkish troops in Afghanistan next to American troops?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir. Approximately 1,700 at present.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is that a new phenomenon? Turkey has never done that before, has it?

Ambassador WILSON. Turkey has been present in Afghanistan——

Mr. CONNOLLY. No, no, no. I am asking a different question. Has Turkey ever placed troops in other conflicts in which the United States found itself?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir. Of course, Korea.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Korea. How many years ago was that?

Ambassador WILSON. 55.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is Turkey a member of NATO?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Was that pretty important during the Cold War to the United States' strategic interest?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, it was.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does Turkey share one of the largest borders with Iran? That is to say, if you look at bordering states, isn't Turkey's largest single border with Iran?

Ambassador WILSON. I would expect that Iraq probably has the longest border. But it is a significant border, yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. A very significant border. So they are neighbors.

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, they are.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So, for example, if there were military incursion, God forbid, involving Iran, Turkey would necessarily, given its proximity to Iran, somehow be—it certainly would not be unaffected?

Ambassador WILSON. Turkey would certainly be on the front lines.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So it might be reasonable to expect Turkey has its own point of view about that relationship and what ought to be done about it, even taking into account your point that they certainly do not want Iran to become a nuclear power?

Ambassador WILSON. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is Turkey a flourishing democracy?

Ambassador WILSON. Turkey is a democracy; like many countries, it is a developing one.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Competitive party situation from an electoral point of view?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Historically, has Turkey had a strategic relationship or what could be viewed as a positive relationship, if not a strategic, within with the state of Israel?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Has it played any kind of role behind the scenes, or more prominently, in trying to possibly affect the peace process since the founding of the State of Israel?

Ambassador WILSON. With respect to the peace process, I don't have personal knowledge. I know that Turkey tried to be helpful in securing the release of Corporal Shalit and on some other detainee or hostage issues.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Historically, has Turkey had diplomatic relationships with the State of Israel?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Has it recognized the right of the State of Israel to exist within peaceful borders?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, it does.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Moving forward, does Turkey still wish to become a member of the European Union?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is it in the United States' interest that that happen?

Ambassador WILSON. I believe it is.

Mr. CONNOLLY. When you were an ambassador, what were your instructions from the State Department with respect to that issue?

Ambassador WILSON. To encourage the Turkish authorities to take all the steps that they needed to, to make a credible bid for EU accession and to encourage the EU governments through their representatives in Ankara to work with Turkey toward that end.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Turkey is a Muslim majority population overwhelmingly; is that correct?

Ambassador WILSON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is there another model in the Muslim world of a secular democratic form of government?

Ambassador WILSON. There is no other country in the Muslim majority world that has a secular democracy.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Indonesia might want to disagree.

Mr. RUBIN. So would Mali, which is ranked above Turkey by Freedom House.

Chairman BERMAN. Mali can't have as many people as Turkey.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, since I have 12 seconds, Mali and Indonesia, the modern State of Turkey was founded how many years ago Mr. Ambassador?

Ambassador WILSON. About 85.

Mr. CONNOLLY. By Ataturk.

Ambassador WILSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. How long have the democracies in Indonesia and Mali been in operation?

Ambassador WILSON. I can't speak to Mali.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Or the secular—I guess I am particularly interested in the secular aspect.

Ambassador WILSON. Can't speak to Mali. Indonesia's current politics I think date somewhere from the late 1980s.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Chairman BERMAN. Time of the gentleman has expired.

And the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Deutch, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for assembling this panel.

I wanted to circle back, Ambassador, to a comment you made about—if I understood correctly—the Turks are more concerned about a possible war with Iran, the nuclear weapons with Iran. And I would like to expand a broader discussion of those relations with Iran and the ultimate goal of the Turkish Government.

How important are the relations? And in light of the broader geopolitical issues surrounding Iran and its quest for nuclear weapons, Turkey having voted against the Security Council resolution because of its relationship with Iran, raises other concerns.

If you could speak—and I actually throw this open to the panel—if you could speak some to the broader implications of that relation-

ship and whether it is merely an attempt to continue to have a safe border; whether there is some greater concern that others might have when Ahmadinejad—given the relationship with Ahmadinejad and others. If you could speak to that relationship, and I then I have a follow-up with the relationship with Mashal and Hamas.

Ambassador WILSON. I think one important thing is Turkey borders on Iran. They are neighbors. They have to cooperate with Iran in a way that a lot of others do not. Turkey regards Iran as a problematic country; they have been rivals in the region for hundreds of years.

They are, I think, concerned about rising Iranian influence in the region which they believe is largely driven by the United States' invasion of Iraq and the events that followed, as well as by the ongoing stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians. They regard that influence and Iranian action as counter to their interest. I think there is a dynamic there that is probably generally underestimated.

As I said earlier, I think their priority with respect to the nuclear issue has obviously been somewhat more tilted to the negotiations track than to anything else. Public opinion plays a factor there. It is a fact that the legacy of the Iraq weapons of mass destruction intelligence failures have an effect in Turkey, both on the public, and also in the military and across the board among Turkey's elite; great doubt about the accuracy of Western information here. That is a problem that one has to work on.

But it leads Turks I think largely to conclude that they fear the consequences of war, which looks to them like the obvious alternative to the possible Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons. They fear that former a lot more, and they are determined to turn over every leaf, obviously going somewhat beyond where American policy would like for them to go, to turn over a leaf to try to make that not happen.

On the Security Council vote——

Mr. DEUTCH. If I may. I just want to follow up on the legacy of weapons of mass destruction argument in Iraq and why—I want to understand the relevancy of that with respect to Iran, given the knowledge that we have about the Iranian nuclear program. Why is that the relative comparison? And I would open this up to others in the panel who might have thoughts.

Ambassador WILSON. I am interpreting Turkish thinking and what Turks tell me. But almost to a man, in officialdom and outside of officialdom, they believe that the intelligence or the information about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction was exaggerated and turned out not to be entirely true.

Mr. DEUTCH. Dr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Yes. With regard to the WMD issue, that is partly a failing of U.S. public diplomacy, because the information coming with regard to Iran is a result of IAEA inspections and Iran declarations, rather than super secret intelligence.

With regard to Turkey and Iran, Turkey cooperates with Iran with far more enthusiasm than any other of Iran's neighbors.

And lastly, with the exception of Iraq—lastly, Ahmadinijad doesn't stand with the Iranian people. He was one—Erdogan was one of the first leaders to recognize Ahmadinijad's reelection back

in June 2009 at a time when Ahmadinijad was massacring the Iranian people. It seems that Erdogan is more pro-Islamic Republic of Iran than he is pro-Iran.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you. I yield back Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BERMAN. All time of all people has expired, and I am going to resist the irresistible urge—well, at the behest of the ranking member, I would just like to raise one issue and if anybody—it is not really a question, it is more of a response to something you just said, Ambassador.

It is hard—I met the Foreign Minister of Turkey several times. This is a very bright and sophisticated guy. I don't know what the people of Turkey think, but I don't—I can't buy that the leadership of Turkey is hugely skeptical of what Iran's intentions are in the wake of Qom, in the wake of how they pulled back from the October 1st deal, in the wake of the IAEA findings and reports, all far more extensive and manifest than was Iraq in the early part of this decade.

This isn't a U.S. play; this is a pretty internationally accepted thing. So I just wanted to—all kinds of reasons, and legitimate ones, they may not like our approach and all that stuff. But I don't buy that they don't think there is a basis for the conclusion Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon.

All right, I guess I had the last word, unless somebody else wants it. Thank you all. This has really been a very interesting panel.

All of you, nothing about my last comment should diminish my appreciation for your testimony and all of your testimonies. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Howard L. Berman (D-CA), Chairman

July 26, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at http://www.hcfa.house.gov)**:

DATE: Wednesday, July 28, 2010

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations

WITNESSES: Soner Cagaptay, Ph.D.
Director, Turkish Research Program
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

The Honorable Ross Wilson
Director, Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center
The Atlantic Council
(Former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and Azerbaijan)

Ian Lesser, Ph.D.
Senior Transatlantic Fellow
The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Michael Rubin, Ph.D.
Resident Scholar
American Enterprise Institute

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* **Date** *7/28/10* **Room** *2172 RHOB*

Starting Time *10:02 A.M.* **Ending Time** *12:44 P.M.*

Recesses [ ] (_____ to _____)

Presiding Member(s) *Howard L. Berman (CA), Chairman*

CHECK ALL OF THE FOLLOWING THAT APPLY:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING or BILLS FOR MARKUP: *(Include bill number(s) and title(s) of legislation.)*
Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

n/a

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE MARKUP: *(Attach copies of legislation and amendments.)*

RECORDED VOTES TAKEN (FOR MARKUP): *(Attach final vote tally sheet listing each member.)*

Subject	Yeas	Nays	Present	Not Voting

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:44 pm*

Doug Campbell

Doug Campbell, Deputy Staff Director

Attendance - HCFA Full Committee Hearing:
Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations
Wednesday, July 28, 2010 @ 10:00 a.m.

Howard L. Berman (CA)
Gary Ackerman (NY)
Eni F.H. Faleomavaega (AS)
Donald Payne (NJ)
Brad Sherman (CA)
William D. Delahunt (MA)
Albio Sires (NJ)
Gerald E. Connolly (VA)
Michael E. McMahon (NY)
Theodore E. Deutch (FL)
John S. Tanner (TN)
Gene Green (TX)
Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX)
Barbara Lee (CA)
Shelley Berkley (NV)
Joseph Crowley (NY)
Brad Miller (NC)
David Scott (GA)
Jim Costa (CA)

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, (FL)
Christopher H. Smith (NJ)
Dan Burton (IN)
Edward R. Royce (CA)
Jeff Flake (AZ)
Connie Mack (FL)
Ted Poe (TX)
Gus Bilirakis (FL)

Committee on Foreign Affairs
Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S. Turkish Relations
Wednesday July 28, 2010

Statement of Representative Mike Pence

Chairman Berman, Ranking Member Ros-Lehtinen, I appreciate you calling this hearing into order, as the once warm relationship the United States enjoyed with the government and people of Turkey, that most, if not all of us on the committee valued, has steadily changed for the worse.

Let me start off by saying that I have been a strong supporter of the U.S.-Turkish alliance. It was a great privilege of mine to travel to Ankara and meet with government officials and the president of Turkey, long before he assumed his current role.

Mr. Chairman, this committee is well aware that Turkey has and continues to be an indispensible partner in our ongoing efforts to defeat radical Islamic terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since 2001, Turkey has shown its commitment to Afghanistan's stability as a member of NATO's International Security Force and they currently have nearly 2,000 troops in country. That assistance, along with the basing and logistical support that Turkey provides through our annual lease of Incirlik Air Base with the Turkish parliament is simply vital to our efforts.

Our alliance is important, both to the United States and Turkey. And at a time of war, we should not take this relationship for granted.

Not too long ago, before this very committee, I opposed H.Res. 252, a resolution affirming the Armenian Genocide in the United States record. My opposition rested not in my belief that no such Genocide occurred during the Ottoman Empire – I believe deaths of more than a million men, women and children constitute exactly that – but that the resolution would not best serve this partnership.

I believed that our over-arching relationship with Turkey must be preserved, because this relationship was worthwhile. Turkey could once be described as a responsible leader in the Middle East, one who could build bridges between the East and West.

You can imagine my dismay, Mr. Chairman, over the recent action by Turkey towards our most cherished ally, Israel. Though the Turkish Ambassador to the United States – with whom I have personally met – has said that this was not a "Turkish convoy", the "Free Gaza" flotilla was sponsored by the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation, an organization with ties to Hamas and links to other terrorist groups.

Prime Minister Erdogan has been outspoken in his criticism of Israel, calling the response of the Israeli soldiers "inhumane" despite the fact that the soldiers were attacked from the very moment they boarded the vessel.

Though we all grieve the tragic loss of life aboard that ship, Turkey must know that the American people and this Congress will stand with Israel as she defends herself from attack. The flotilla was clearly designed to provoke a confrontation with Israel and sadly, nine people lost their lives.

In recent years, we have seen Prime Minister Erdogan increase relations with the oppressive regime in Tehran, even calling Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – a man who has called for the destruction of the United States and Israel – a "good friend." In fact, only weeks ago, when the United Nations brought forth an Iran sanctions resolution designed to deny the Iranian regime the nuclear weapons they have long sought, Turkey was one of the few member nations to vote against it.

In light of recent events in which Turkey aligned itself with Iran and Syria against U.S. interests, the United States must make it known: bullying Israel and currying favor with nuclear weapons proliferators and state sponsors of terror will come at a significant cost.

Turkey must decide whether their present heading is in its long-term best interest. Many Members of this committee and this Congress have supported a partnership with Turkey. As a NATO ally and a tremendous partner in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I continue to value this relationship. But Turkey must choose between their long-standing alliance with the United States or the regimes in Tehran and Damascus.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

STATEMENT OF

THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, PACIFIC AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

before the

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

"Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations"

JULY 28, 2010

Mr. Chairman,

Turkey plays a critical regional and global role given its strategic position in the Middle East and its membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The country has been a strong ally of the United States and, until recently, a partner of Israel.

Since the ruling Justice and Development Party took power in 2007, however, Turkey has been shifting its overall foreign policy toward a pursuit of "zero problems" with its neighbors, including Iran. Indeed, Turkey voted against U.N. Security Resolution 1020 which imposed new sanctions on Teheran for its nuclear program. The country also seems to have abandoned its policy of seeking integration with Europe, and instead, has begun attempting to establish itself as an Islamic power.

Regardless of short-term policy changes, Turkey remains crucial to the achievement of peace in the broader Middle East and to addressing the broader problems posed by Islamic extremism. With Israel's deadly commando raid on a

Turkish flotilla destined for Gaza, however, relations between the two nations have become strained. Fortunately, Turkey has not yet abrogated any of its more than 50 bilateral agreements with Israel.

As we continue to engage Turkey, we must be cognizant of the country's surging nationalism and the changing dynamics of it politics. Turkey is a great country with a proud history and cultures, and it is vital that it remain an ally and friend of the United States.

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

HCFA Full Committee Hearing—Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction
Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations
Wednesday, July 28, 2010
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I am hesitant to attribute a singular state of mind to the people of Turkey or to all components of Turkey's government. Turkey is a multi-faceted country, and it is a fallacy to treat the country as a monolithic entity—to infer statements about the whole country or its citizenry based on the words or actions of some. An examination of the future of the U.S.-Turkey relationship ought to take a nuanced approach and recognize a major challenge of any bilateral relationship—that any two allies ought to have mechanisms in place to address sources of contention.

Recent disagreements regarding the Gaza flotilla incident and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 ought not to derail the bilateral relationship. This is not to say that concerns regarding those incidents are invalid, as there is widespread concern about what some interpret to be Turkey's so-called "turning away" from the West. But those concerns are best addressed within the larger context of the U.S.-Turkish relationship. After all, to thoroughly air and remedy grievances, there must be open dialogue and a relationship in the first place. Recent events underscore an opportunity for the leadership of Turkey to fully define where it sees itself vis-à-vis the rest of the democratic world.

It is harmful for Turkey's international standing to be seen as aligning itself with the leadership of Iran. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad regularly vilifies the United States and its ally Israel. Iran's support of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, along with its nuclear ambitions, are just some of the reasons that the Iranian regime has no credibility or respect among many democratic governments, including those of the United States and Israel. Therefore, it is difficult to pinpoint the foreign policy rationale for Turkey to engage Iran on important international issues with the input of only one other country—Brazil. As Turkey is NATO ally and (non-permanent) member of the U.N. Security Council, it is even more perplexing as to why this approach was favored.

Another recent point of contention is the Gaza flotilla incident. Though all the details have yet to be revealed, the loss of life and injuries stemming from the incident were tragic. The final conclusions stemming from Israel's investigation commission will be useful in discerning the details of the event. Israel's investigation ought to be allowed to move forward and the international community ought to await its findings.

But Turkey has also provided support in Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, 70% of the air cargo for the U.S. mission in Iraq transits Incirlik Air Base. The air base is also a primary refueling stop for flights to Afghanistan. Moreover, Turkey has 1,700 troops serving in the International Security Assistance Force, and has pledged to train 1,500 Afghan Police this year. Turkey has also pledged $300 million for development projects in Afghanistan, ranging from building schools and clinics to supporting the agriculture and textile sectors. A less quantifiable, but still important value that Turkey provides is a cultural understanding of countries like Iraq and Afghanistan. This observation is not meant to be reminiscent of Orientalism, but it is meant to show that Turkey is unique in its modern, secular model of a state that is predominantly Muslim.

There is a lot to examine with regard to the future of the U.S.-Turkish relationship. At this point, it is unclear whether any trends can truly be extrapolated by recent incidents. But any analysis ought to emphasize the importance of the U.S. relationship with a secular, democratic, moderate Turkey. Thank you, I look forward to this hearing.