

**THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY:
A MODEL PARTNERSHIP**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY: A MODEL PARTNERSHIP

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:19 a.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable Robert Wexler (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. WEXLER. Good morning. The Europe Subcommittee will come to order. I very much apologize for the distorted schedule. Democracy, unfortunately, can be inconvenient at times, but I very much want to express my gratitude to our witnesses for testifying today.

Today's hearing, "The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership," is being held just 1 month after President Obama's historic visit to Turkey where he addressed the Turkish people and Parliament and stated clearly that his administration was prepared to renew the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our peoples.

President Obama's trip to Turkey laid the foundation for enhanced American and Turkish cooperation and dramatically changed the playing field for increased United States-Turkish collaboration in the economic, military, and political spheres. This cooperation is essential to both nations as we face a global financial crisis and are grappling with serious security challenges in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, the Balkans, Black Sea and the Caucasus regions, and the Middle East.

Turkey is the world's seventeenth largest economy, a geo-strategic NATO ally, a member of the G-20 and a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. It is strategically suited, alongside the United States to meet the threats of the 21st century, including nuclear proliferation, countering terrorism, energy security and Middle East peace.

United States-Turkish cooperation and coordination in both Afghanistan and Iraq continues to grow. Since 2002, Turkey has played a leading role in providing humanitarian, economic, military, and security assistance in Afghanistan, has led the International Security Assistance Forces in Kabul on two occasions, and recently hosted a trilateral summit meeting with the Presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Turkey has also played a positive role in efforts to stabilize Iraq through its role in the trilateral Iraq—Turkey—U.S. Commission. Turkey's air base at Incirlik in the Har-

bor Border Gate has been critical to American military operations and logistics in Iraq.

As the Obama administration finalizes its withdrawal plans for Iraq, it is clear that Turkey can play a central role in the administration's plans to withdraw American troops safely, effectively and securely, and will continue to be a leading partner in Iraq's future political, economic and security success.

There are few issues that weigh more heavily on the minds of the Turkish people than the unconscionable death and destruction caused over the past several decades by PKK terrorists. I applaud President Obama's effort to maintain security assistance to the Turkish Government as it combats the PKK.

Today's hearing also comes on the heels of a much anticipated April 22 announcement by the Turkish and Armenian Governments that they have agreed on a comprehensive framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations. This diplomatic effort deserves the highest level of support from the United States and the international community, and I urge my colleagues in Congress to join all of the parties in supporting these governments as they seek to establish diplomatic, political and economic relations. This effort is no small feat, and both governments deserve our full support as they take politically charged decisions.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses who will provide insight into United States-Turkish relations, and offer their suggestions on how we can create and build a model United States-Turkish partnership that will benefit both nations for generations to come.

I would ordinarily turn to the ranking member, Elton Gallegly, but I think he may be here a little bit later. I would like to turn to Mr. Scott if he has any opening remarks, and then Mr. McMahon if he does as well.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wexler follows:]

Congressman Robert Wexler

Opening Statement

Subcommittee on Europe Hearing “The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership”

May 14, 2009

The Europe Subcommittee will come to order.

I want to express my gratitude to our witnesses for testifying. Today’s hearing- “The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership” - is being held a little over one month after President Obama’s historic visit to Turkey, where he addressed the Turkish people and parliament, and stated clearly that his Administration was prepared to “renew the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our people.”

President Obama’s trip to Turkey laid the foundation for enhanced American-Turkish cooperation and dramatically changed the playing field for increased US-Turkish collaboration in the economic, military and political spheres. This cooperation is essential to both nations as we face a global financial crisis and are grappling with serious security challenges in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, the Balkans, Black Sea and Caucasus Region, and Middle East.

Turkey - as the world’s 17th largest economy, a stalwart geo-strategic NATO ally, a member of the G20, and a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council - is strategically suited alongside the U.S. to meet the threats of the 21st century, including nuclear proliferation, countering terrorism, energy security and Middle East peace.

US-Turkish cooperation and coordination in both Afghanistan and Iraq continues to grow. Since 2002, Turkey has played a leading role in providing humanitarian, economic, military and security assistance in Afghanistan, has led the International Security Assistance Forces in Kabul on two occasions and recently hosted a trilateral summit meeting with the Presidents of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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I look forward to hearing from our witnesses who will provide insight into US-Turkish relations and offer their suggestions on how we can create and build a "Model US-Turkish Partnership" that will benefit both nations for generations to come.

I now would like to turn to the ranking member of the Subcommittee, Congressman Elton Gallegly, for his opening statement.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to congratulate you and thank you for holding this very, very important hearing. It is a pleasure to join you with you on the Europe Subcommittee for this Congress and I look forward to working with you.

I really can't think of a more important and timely hearing than that of Turkey. There is no more vital relationship that the United States has in this world, quite honestly, than with Turkey, and that is important because strategically, geographically, as well as geo-politically it is indeed at the crossroads of the world, sitting right at Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and it is seen as certainly the gateway of the Islamic world, but certainly is rich in the heritage and tradition of the foundation of Christianity as well.

Indeed, the United States has engaged Turkey as a strategic partner in its operations in both regions, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as elsewhere. However, Turkey's role with respect to Europe will continue to grow in the near and long term, especially as Europe looks to address its energy security issues. There are certainly challenges that remain in the United States and Turkey relationship. However, I am certain that these challenges can and will be overcome.

I am interested to hear our panelists' perspective on these challenges, and I hope that they will also comment where our future opportunities lie. I have visited Turkey on many occasions. My last visit took me through Istanbul, Ankara, and even into Tarsus. It is a fascinating, fascinating and beautiful, beautiful country with some wonderful, wonderful people.

During his speech before the Turkish Parliament, President Obama reiterated the United States' commitment to partnering with Turkey, and I certainly share his sentiments.

In my participation as a member of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and in my repeated visits to Turkey, and I met with many of our colleagues from this nation, including the President, Prime Minister and others, and I am certain and convinced that the leadership of Turkey share the commitment to building our relationship in a more positive way as well.

So once again, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for holding this hearing. I look forward to more closely examining the cooperation between our two nations, and discussing in detail how we can continue to build a much stronger relationship.

I yield back, and thank you.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. McMahan.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this very important hearing.

Turkey, like the Turkey, contains an incredible fusion of cultures which inevitably has created many similarities between our two countries. The shared values of diversity, distinctiveness in democracy enable the United States and Turkey to have not only a mutual partnership, but an evolving relationship that goes stronger through time.

Turkey has served as a mediator in numerous controversial conflicts throughout the world even when criticized. Through Turkey's promotion of dialogue on shared concerns about terrorism, proliferation, and regional stability, the United States has seen the

various facets of numerous countries in the Middle East and which certainly has added to our national security here at home.

In recent years, Turkey seems to have opened itself up to the rest of the world further through its negotiations with Armenia, as mentioned by the chairman. My hope is that Turkey will continue on this direction and re-evaluate its current position in the Republic of Cyprus as well. I encourage such a move by Turkey as it will clear the way for Turkey's well-deserved place in the European Union.

Once again I would like to emphasize my respect and admiration for Turkey and hope that the panel can shed some light on the situation in Northern Cyprus and Turkey's prospects of joining the EU as well.

Thank you again, Chairman Wexler. I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, gentlemen. As you can see they started another vote. My understanding is it is this vote and then one more, and then we will run back here. I do not in any way want to cut you short, so I think it would be best if we would stop now, we go vote, and then come back. I thank you again for your patience. Take care. Thanks.

[Recess.]

Mr. WEXLER. I would like to call the Europe Subcommittee back into session, and would like now to introduce our witnesses for today's hearing.

Our first witness is Dr. Ian Lesser, senior Transatlantic fellow at The German Marshall Fund of the United States in Washington where he focuses on Mediterranean affairs, Turkey and international security issues. Prior to joining GMF, Dr. Lesser led a major study of United States-Turkish relations as a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center. From 2002 to 2005, Dr. Lesser was vice president and director of studies at the Pacific Council on International Policy. Prior to this he spent over a decade as a senior analyst with RAND Corporation, and from 1994 to 1995, he was a member of the Secretary's policy planning staff at the U.S. Department of State responsible for Turkey, Southern Europe, North Africa, and the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process.

Dr. Lesser is a prolific writer and commentator on international security issues, and we are thrilled that he is joining us.

Our second witness is David Phillips, senior fellow at The Atlantic Council of the United States, and visiting scholar with the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs. He also holds positions at New York University and the National Committee on American Foreign Policy.

Prior to assuming these roles, he was also executive director at the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity; visiting scholar at Harvard University, Center for Middle East Studies; scholar-in-residence at American University, Center for Global Peace; and senior fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations.

Oh, Lord, another vote?

Prior to these, Mr. Phillips worked for the U.S. Department of State as a foreign affairs expert with the Bureau for Near Eastern

Affairs in 2003, and as senior advisor for democracy and regional stability with the Bureau for European and Canadian Affairs. In 2005, Mr. Phillips authored a book on Armenian reconciliation and another on Iraq reconstruction, and in 2008, authored a book on democratization and Islam, and most importantly, his father is a very prominent constituent of mine.

Our third witness is Dr. Stephen Flanagan, senior vice president and Henry A. Kissinger Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, where the past year he has directed the U.S.-Turkey Strategic Initiative. Mr. Flanagan is the co-author of a recently released report, "Turkey's Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations."

Before joining CSIS, he served as director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies and vice president for research at the National Defense University. Dr. Flanagan has also held several senior positions in the U.S. Government, including special assistant to the President and senior director for Central and Eastern Europe at the National Security Council, national intelligence officer for Europe, and associate director and member of the State Department's policy and planning staff.

We would respectfully request that the witnesses limit their opening statements to no more than 5 minutes, and now I will turn to Dr. Lesser for his opening remarks. Please.

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

Mr. LESSER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity to be with you here today to share some thoughts about the state of United States-Turkish relations, in particular, after the President's visit and some next steps.

With your permission, I will offer a brief summary of my testimony. Let me also stress that these are my views and not those of The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

In my view, Mr. Chairman, we face three parallel challenges in managing United States-Turkish relations. First, we need to repair a very badly eroded set of perceptions of the United States among the Turkish public, and also among Turkish policymakers. This is important for many reasons, but it is important not least because public opinion actually counts in today's Turkey. It is very difficult to do things when public opinion is opposed. As polling by my organization, The German Marshall Fund, and others, has suggested the last years have been very, very difficult in terms of public diplomacy in Turkey.

I think President Obama's visit made a very, very good start in repairing this problem. I think it was a success by almost any measure. It was very well received even though the President addressed some tough issues, and we went from single digits in terms of public attitudes toward the United States—positive attitudes toward the United States—to, recent polling suggests, maybe 50 percent positive attitudes. That is a big change.

It also, I think, made a start on repairing our reputation among the Turkish leadership across the political spectrum, which was also very, very badly damaged. So the task now, I would say, is

how we build on this opening in public diplomacy to improve policy coordination, and that is my second point, the second challenge.

I think in the near-term we face a series of specific policy challenges with Ankara. These are really problems of coordination. Turks and Americans would probably produce—do produce—the same agenda in terms of what we should be talking about. The problem is we have some different priorities in key areas, and we need to work on these.

On Iraq, we certainly need to reenforce our cooperation in fighting the PKK, but we also need to make sure that Turkey is on board in terms of supporting our disengagement from Iraq, including predictable access to Incirlik airbase over the coming years. That has always been a problem. It will continue to be a problem. We need to work on that.

On Iran, Turkey is very interested in seeing a United States-Iranian strategic dialogue. They have no interest in seeing the emergency of a nuclear Iran, but on the other hand we will have a key stake in making sure Ankara delivers tough messages to Tehran on that score.

On Turkey and the European Union, I think the President rightly stressed our support for Turkey's EU candidacy when he was in Turkey, but we need to rethink how we make the case, Mr. Chairman, in the face of European ambivalence. This has not been an easy case to make. You can't just make the same simple straightforward geo-political arguments that we made some years ago. We have to go beyond that. I think it is very important that this visit to Turkey came as part of a European tour rather than Middle Eastern one.

On NATO, let me mention this. I think we have a looming challenge in relations with Turkey on NATO. NATO has a strategic concept debate that is just starting. Turkey will have some very specific requirements in that regard because many of the contingencies that NATO will face in the future will be on Turkey's borders. I think that is another area where we can have a more explicit policy discussion.

Third, and finally, I think we need to keep our eyes on some longer term developments that will influence what our relationship with Turkey can look like in the future. Let me just mention two.

The first is what happens in Turkey domestically. When we talk about Turkey as a model partner, I think what is significant about that is what is not there rather than what is. What is not there is the idea that we can somehow shape internal Turkish politics and society, to see Turkey as a model in terms of its internal evolution. I think we ought to be focusing rightly, that is where we have put the focus now, on the strategic relationship with Turkey and how we coordinate our external policies.

I do not believe we are losing Turkey in any way, but there is no question that Turkey has some new priorities and Turkish society has moved in ways in which will make the relationship different. We need to take advantage of that.

Secondly, and finally, on the global economic crisis—Turkey is being badly affected by this now. Turkey's neighborhood, especially in the Balkans and elsewhere, can be destabilized by the crisis. I think it is also going to complicate something that we need to keep

our eye on finally which we have had a very security-heavy relationship with Turkey over the years. That is a given in a sense, but we need to work on diversifying it—the economic side, the cultural side. Americans do not know enough about Turkey and we need to fix that. The economic crisis makes that a more challenging task, but I think we can get beyond it.

So to conclude, Mr. Chairman, I think we are now on a much more positive path in relations with Turkey. We need to build on this public diplomacy success, recalibrate the relationship and build a broader constituency for relationships on both sides.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lesser follows:]

Dr. Ian O. Lesser

Senior Transatlantic Fellow, the German Marshall Fund of the United States

US-TURKISH RELATIONS: NEW DYNAMICS AND NEXT STEPS

May 14, 2009

**Testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives,
Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats**

The opinions expressed in this statement are the author's and do not represent the views of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, its directors or staff.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and to share some thoughts on the state of US-Turkish relations and next steps.

This discussion takes place at an important moment in a relationship often – and correctly – described as “strategic.” After eight years of pronounced strain in relations with Turkey, President Obama’s April 2009 visit to Ankara and Istanbul has changed the style of our engagement with Turkey. In his speech to the Turkish parliament, and in other settings, the President managed to convey genuine appreciation for Turkey’s regional role, and sensitivity to Turkey’s own national interests. To be sure, the President went to Turkey with a set of requests and preferences, not least on Afghanistan and Iran, and the President’s remarks in Turkey touched on some sensitive issues. But the difficult discourse of the post-2001 period seems to have been set aside in an effort to repair America’s very badly damaged image with the Turkish public and policymakers, and a pervasive climate of mutual suspicion. In the wake of the visit, leaderships on both sides should look to turn this public diplomacy success to operational advantage.

Both sides should have reasonable expectations. Observers sometimes characterize the relationship during the Clinton Administration as a “lost golden age” in US-Turkish relations. Despite the often troubled relations in recent years, and especially since the Iraq War, it is important to recognize that the bilateral relationship has had many periods of real strain, not least in the mid 1990s with frictions over human rights, northern Iraq, strategy against the PKK, Cyprus, Aegean stability and other

issues. In other critical areas, including the Balkans and Afghanistan, cooperation with Ankara has been excellent. On the big picture issues of Turkey-EU relations, energy security, relations with Russia, and stability in the Middle East, bilateral relations continue to be “strategic” in the sense that cooperation between the US and Turkey is essential to the policy objectives of both sides.

The fact that President Obama scheduled a visit to Turkey so early in his Administration is significant. Just as significant is the fact that the visit came as part of a high-profile European tour. Symbolism counts for a good deal in relations with Ankara, and in this case, the geopolitical symbolism of visiting Turkey after the G-20 meeting in London and the NATO Summit in Strasbourg was meaningful. In subtle ways, the nature of the itinerary has shaped interpretations of the visit. Many of the key topics on the bilateral agenda may have been Middle Eastern or Eurasian – Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict – but the policy dialogue in Ankara and Istanbul was a dialogue with a *transatlantic* partner. The importance of this can be demonstrated by a simple thought experiment: imagine the discussion that would have surrounded a presidential visit to Turkey as part of a Middle Eastern tour – Riyadh, Baghdad, Cairo, Jerusalem and Ankara. An itinerary of this kind might be useful at the working level, but it would have sent a very different message about the overall character of US-Turkish relations and Turkey’s place in transatlantic institutions.

The US faces three parallel challenges in managing and recalibrating the relationship with Turkey. First, we must address accumulated problems of style and perception in the relationship. Second, we need to address specific, near-term policy issues where US and Turkish priorities could be more closely aligned. Third, we should understand and anticipate some longer-term, structural issues affecting the relationship, including Turkey’s own trajectory and future dynamics in US-Turkish-EU relations.

The Public Diplomacy Challenge

The German Marshall Fund of the United States and others have charted the marked decline in Turkish public attitudes toward the US in recent years.¹ The scope for revitalizing relations with Ankara will be determined, in large measure, by the new Administration’s ability to encourage and sustain a more positive image with the Turkish public and policymakers. This is especially important because public opinion counts in today’s Turkey, and the Turkish leadership pays careful attention to popular

¹ See *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2008* (Washington: German Marshall Fund of the United States).

attitudes in shaping foreign policy. In this sense, Turkey is very much in the European and Western mainstream. The last few months have seen a marked improvement in Turkish perceptions of American leadership and, to an extent, American policy (polling from March 2009 suggests that around 50 percent of the Turkish public hold positive views of the new US president).² President Obama's visit reinforced this warming trend, and opens the way for efforts to improve cooperation in specific areas of concern. A good deal of public and political-level suspicion has been defused, and this is significant given the stresses of recent years.

Turkish observers, including the AKP government and opposition parties, are interpreting visits by the President, the Secretary of State and other high-level US officials, in light of their own preferences, and to support differing visions of Turkey's role and identity. Turkey's heated debate about secularism and religion, geopolitical priorities and international affinities, can be a minefield for bilateral relations, even under normal conditions. In the context of a high-profile visit—only the second strictly bilateral visit of the Obama presidency—the risk of a serious political misstep was greatly magnified. In recent months, US officials have managed to steer a skillful course between the widely disliked “Turkey as model for the Muslim world” discourse, and the equally unrealistic notion that Turkey's cultural and religious background are irrelevant to the country's international role. Turks across the political spectrum will remain highly sensitive to any sign of American interference in the country's domestic affairs, and US policymakers are well advised to hold Turkey's internal frictions at arms length.

In Turkish perception, the only evident misstep during the visit was the President's reference to Turkey's Kurds as a minority. In Western political vocabulary this is a straightforward observation; not so in Turkey, where the term “minority” has a specific constitutional meaning. On the Armenian issue, the approach was nuanced and non-committal, and therefore open to interpretation by Turks seeking reassurance that the new administration will oppose passage of the Armenian “genocide” resolution now pending in Congress. The President's remarks rightly made the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations the central factor in the American approach. It is worth noting that Turks have reacted more critically to President Obama's carefully worded April 24th statement on Turkish-Armenian relations and the events of 1915. Turks will continue to be especially sensitive to the style of American engagement, and will carefully measure Washington's language and actions where these touch on questions of history and Turkish sovereignty. The key challenge is to prevent the bilateral discourse on the most

² Infakto Research poll, March 2009.

sensitive public diplomacy issues from undermining the basic fabric of US-Turkish relations. Recent interactions with Ankara have made a good start on changing the style, and this can be turned to advantage in improving the substance of the relationship.

The Near-Term Policy Agenda

In broad terms, the US and Turkey share a common policy agenda, but priorities within this agenda continue to differ when seen from Washington and Ankara. On Iraq, Ankara will continue to seek assurances regarding cooperation against the PKK, including the provision of actionable intelligence and renewed pressure on the Kurdish Regional Government to constrain or end PKK activities in Northern Iraq. Turkish officials will seek to build on more extensive intelligence cooperation to acquire new assets for surveillance and counter-insurgency operations against the PKK. As a NATO ally, the US should continue to assist Ankara with this leading challenge to Turkish security. For Washington, the key concern will be Turkish cooperation in support of American disengagement from Iraq over the coming months and years, including contributions to Iraqi political stability and reconstruction, and continued access to Incirlik airbase and Turkish port facilities.

On Iran, Turkey will seek to confirm that the Obama administration is serious about dialogue with Tehran. With its enhanced ties to Iran and close cooperation on energy, the PKK and other issues, Ankara has a tangible stake in the potential for US-Iranian détente. The AKP government has offered to play a role in this process. In reality, it is difficult to imagine the US giving Turkey more than a marginal facilitation role in an initiative of tremendous potential significance to American foreign policy. Seen from Washington, the Iran agenda with Turkey is more narrowly and understandably focused on addressing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Given Turkey's rotating seat on the UN Security Council, US policymakers should give first priority to securing Ankara's support for additional sanctions as required, and to bring Turkey's close relations with Tehran to bear on the problem. Turkish territory is already among the most exposed to proliferation trends in the region, and Ankara has no interest in seeing the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran. But the extent to which the AKP government is willing to deliver tough messages on this score to Tehran is an open question. This may also be a key test of the priorities of Turkey's newly appointed Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, and his ability to balance closer relations in the Middle East with continued strategic solidarity with the US and Europe. Relations with Hamas, and Ankara's overall posture toward the Middle East peace process will be another near-term test.

On Afghanistan, Turkey is no more willing than most of its NATO partners to contribute new forces for combat missions. Turks agree on the importance of the mission but tend to argue that Turkey has already made a strong contribution through its past command of ISAF and its ongoing diplomatic role. Even with a revamped and refocused military strategy, Turkish public opposition to combat operations in Afghanistan will place strict limits on what can be expected in this sphere. This aspect of Turkish policy is very much in the European mainstream, and it is not surprising that President Obama's visit failed to produce any significant new commitments from Ankara. Rightly or wrongly, Turkish policymakers and observers are anticipating a general allied "rush to the exits" in Afghanistan over the coming years.

During his visit, President Obama stressed the importance of Turkey's EU candidacy and left no doubt that the US would continue to be a strong supporter of Turkey's European aspirations. This is an uncontroversial and correct position, very much in line with the policy of successive Administrations. The key question is whether Washington can find new ways of making this case in Europe, and whether any American lobbying on Turkey's behalf can be effective against a backdrop of deepening European ambivalence and waning Turkish patience with the process. An improved climate in transatlantic relations will surely help as the US continues to make strategic arguments about Turkey's importance, and better relations with France can also make a difference. But transatlantic cooperation is likely to be focused heavily on other issues in the years ahead, not least a more concerted approach to economic recovery. How much energy and political capital can be spent on Turkey-EU matters, with a minimum ten or fifteen-year time horizon? President Sarkozy's prompt and critical response to President Obama's comments on Turkey's EU candidacy was consistent with the attitude of many European political leaders. The US simply does not have the standing to press Turkey's case in the way that it could at the start of the accession process. Geopolitical arguments about "anchoring" Turkey can go only so far as the Turkish candidacy moves into a more technical and politicized phase.

After a period of relative neglect, NATO has become more central to US-Turkish relations, and Alliance issues are set to become even more prominent over the next few years. President Obama reportedly played an instrumental role in dissuading the Turkish government from vetoing the candidacy of Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen for NATO's next Secretary General. Turks across the political spectrum were genuinely uncomfortable with Rasmussen as a result of his stance during the Mohammed "cartoon" crisis, and his past opposition to Turkish membership in the EU. In the

wake of a disappointing result in local elections, and pressed by nationalist voices on the right and the left, the AKP government may have felt itself under particular pressure to make Turkish objections clear.

Turkey is among the Alliance members most exposed to the risk of declining political cohesion and strategic drift in NATO. With a critical review of NATO's strategic concept just getting underway, and increasingly heated debates about Alliance posture toward Russia and other issues in which Turkey has a key stake, this is a particularly bad time to squander Turkish credibility and political capital. Turkey's acquiescence in the Rasmussen nomination (and the French return to NATO's integrated military command) are widely understood to have been secured through a series of murky trade-offs on NATO appointments and EU-NATO cooperation. Ankara would be well advised to focus on making its strategic preferences known on questions of nuclear strategy, missile defense and NATO's capacity to act on the myriad, tangible security challenges facing Turkey on its northern, eastern and southern flanks – and the US should take these concerns seriously. Ankara is likely to favor the reinforcement of traditional Article V commitments. Americans and Turks may have some lively differences over the core concepts of territorial defense imbedded in the Turkish vision, versus more global and expeditionary visions for Alliance strategy.

The US and Turkey will benefit from a more explicit discussion about the future uses of Incirlik airbase. This could prove one of the most important areas for dialogue in the wake of President Obama's visit. Both the US and Turkey are quick to point to Incirlik as a badge of strategic cooperation. But a predictable approach to policy planning for Incirlik has eluded successive American administrations and has frustrated defense planners on both sides for decades. Since the days of Operation Provide Comfort (later Northern Watch), an *ad hoc* approach to bilateral uses of the base has prevailed. Neither the Clinton nor the Bush administrations were able to secure Turkish agreement to use the base for offensive air operations in Iraq. The extensive use of Incirlik for logistical support in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot be taken for granted, and could easily be put in jeopardy by future political disagreements. Part of the answer may be to develop new ideas for the use of Incirlik to support a wider range of regional security tasks, from missile defense to maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean – in other words, uses that go beyond the straightforward support of American power projection in Turkey's neighborhood. Better still, many of these uses could be developed in a NATO rather than bilateral context, and linked to new Alliance missions and priorities.

Ankara and Washington have made energy security a key feature of arguments about the strategic importance of Turkey. Turkey can certainly play a role in diversifying Europe's gas transport

routes, and in bringing Eurasian oil supplies to global consumers. Turkey is also a leading conduit for the transport of Iraqi oil, and is part of an increasingly important and well-integrated Mediterranean energy market. That said, it is important to recognize Turkey's own complicated interests in this sphere. These interests include continued access to Russian oil and especially gas – a critical part of Turkey's own energy security equation. Turkey's interests looking north also include a much broader commercial and political stake in relations with Russia. Despite historic sensitivities to Russia as a geopolitical competitor, Ankara will be wary of a more assertive posture toward Moscow, and reluctant to embrace US and NATO initiatives perceived as impinging on Turkish sovereignty and freedom of action in the Black Sea region. To the extent that US relations with Russia become more competitive and contentious, this could well emerge as a source of growing friction between Washington and Ankara.

Longer-Term Questions

Beyond the immediate policy agenda, US policymakers will need to understand and anticipate some longer-term structural issues affecting Turkey, its international role, and relations with the US.

First, the consequences of the global economic crisis need to be taken into account. The crisis is now being felt strongly in Turkey with its export driven economy. This is troubling for Turkey's own development, but it is also a potentially complicating factor in US-Turkish relations. In recent years, Turkey's economic dynamism has broadened the scope for economic engagement with Turkey, and has also allowed Ankara to deploy its "soft power" effectively in neighboring regions. With export markets contracting, and the general flight from risk in emerging markets, Turkey will be a less obvious partner for American business. As European markets weaken, developing markets in Iraq, Syria and Iran may become an important hedge for Turkey, with implications for the balance of Turkish international policy. At the same time, economic stringency could destabilize societies on Turkey's Balkan and Eurasian flanks. The US and Turkey will need new vehicles for regional cooperation in energy, infrastructure and other sectors to counter these troubling risks.

Second, extending and diversifying the constituency for US-Turkish relations should be a key facet of a recalibrated relationship. Turkey's strategic location continues to drive the logic and substance of the bilateral relationship. But this alone is an inadequate basis for strategic partnership. Diversification will be critical to the future of a relationship that has been focused overwhelmingly on geopolitics and security cooperation. The global economic crisis complicates the task of expanding the

relatively underdeveloped economic, cultural, and “people-to-people” dimensions of the relationship. Over the longer-term, a more diverse relationship, with a broader constituency on all sides, is an essential objective. It may also foster greater predictability in cooperation on core regional security issues.

Third, the US should recognize that it has limited leverage over the evolution of Turkish society and politics. That said, US-Turkish relations will be influenced by Turkey’s political trajectory and evolving foreign policy interests. The AKP government is pursuing a more active policy in the Middle East and elsewhere, driven by commercial interests, and a more explicit sense of affinity with the Muslim world. These changing dynamics were clearly displayed in the strong Turkish reaction to events in Gaza. In some spheres, the “new look” in Turkish foreign policy has paid dividends in terms of US interests. Turkey’s role in Israeli-Syrian dialogue, and the deepening détente with Greece are key examples. The rapprochement with Athens is a transforming development, and American policy in the region is no longer driven by the demands of crisis management in the Aegean. Cyprus remains on the agenda, of course, but this is now a political rather than a security dispute – essential to Turkey’s EU candidacy, but no longer a flashpoint for armed conflict. Turkey’s activism in the Middle East and Eurasia is unlikely to be a strategic alternative to relations with Europe and the US. At the same time, Washington will need to think more carefully about the potential costs and benefits of Turkey’s evolving international posture.

Finally, the transatlantic, “trilateral” aspect of relations with Turkey is likely to become more prominent, and this trend should be encouraged. This can be a positive development for US interests, lending greater predictability to cooperation on issues that have traditionally been contentious in a bilateral frame. The progressive “Europeanization” of policies elsewhere across southern Europe has paid dividends in terms of political and security cooperation with Washington. A more positive climate in transatlantic relations, coupled with a reinvigorated Turkish policy toward Europe, would improve the prospects for cooperation with Ankara in many areas of importance to the US. Not least, a trilateral approach will allow American policymakers to support Turkey’s EU aspirations in new and more practical ways.

In sum, President Obama’s visit and recent policy initiatives have managed to dispel some of the pervasive suspicion in US-Turkish relations – no small accomplishment. Much remains to be done, both bilaterally and in a transatlantic setting, to give these public diplomacy gains operational meaning. At the same time, the US will need to keep an eye on longer trends affecting the relationship and Turkey’s role in transatlantic cooperation.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. Phillips, please.

STATEMENT OF MR. DAVID L. PHILLIPS, SENIOR FELLOW, THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES (VISITING SCHOLAR, CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY)

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for inviting me to present before the subcommittee today. I associate myself fully with all of the remarks earlier that you made about the strategic importance of Turkey, so let me just turn myself to the task at hand, which is to address the matter of Turkish-Armenian relations. I will refer to my work in the past as chairman of the Turkish Army and Reconciliation Commission, and focus on the announced agreement of April 22, try to critique it, and talk about some pitfalls going forward.

United States-Turkey relations are impacted by what happens between Turkey and Armenia. Reconciliation between Turks and Armenians is important. It is also extremely difficult and sensitive. These difficulties are exacerbated by taboos and deeply divergent historical narratives.

While Turkey is vitally important to the United States, the United States also has an important relationship with Armenia. Both Turkey and Armenia are allies of the United States. Both contribute to efforts countering global extremism. Armenia has uniquely good relations with both the United States and Russia. The framework agreement and the roadmap that was announced on April 22 for normalizing relations is potentially an historic breakthrough, but we need to measure progress not by words but by actions.

With the help of United States mediation, a finalized text was initialed by Turkish and Armenian officials on April 2. There is a protocol on recognition and one on normalization. It also creates some subcommissions and provides a timetable for implementation. The full text has not been released. There has been a lot of speculation as to the reason for that. Getting from initials to signatures and then to implementation is going to be torturous. The longer it takes, the harder it gets.

My question is does anyone believe that the AKP government will go forward implementing the agreement without progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh?

Last Friday President Gul said the normalization would proceed without preconditions. The next day Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey “could open its border of Armenia lifts its occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

When President Obama met with Turkish and Armenian officials in Istanbul on April 7, he was assured that there were no preconditions to the agreement. As a practical matter, however, Nagorno-Karabakh is a deal-breaker.

There is a strong Azeri lobby that opposes normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. President Ilham Aliyev has been active in criticizing the agreement, though there has been some progress on core basic idea on NK. The same deal there has been on the table with the Minsk group since 2007. There has not been any progress over the past 17 years.

Turkey's national interests cannot be held hostage by Azerbaijan. The United States should reaffirm President Obama's understanding that there is no linkage between normalizing Turkey-Armenian relations and the Minsk Group process.

If the agreement is actually moved from initials to signatures, what are the chances that the Turkish Parliament will actually approve it? The AKP has failed to muster votes on important initiatives in the past, which we need to recall. And, why did it take so long to announce the agreement that was initiated on April 2? Critics maintain that announcing it on the eve of Armenian Remembrance Day Genocide was just a cynical effort to dissuade President Obama from characterizing the events as "genocide."

The timing raises serious questions about Turkey's resolve and self-confidence. It has also rallied opposition. The Dashnaktsutyuns have pulled out of the coalition government. Former President Ter-Petrosian called it the deal a "sell-out." Just as there should be no linkage between normalization and Nagorno-Karabakh, there must be no linkage between normalization and genocide recognition.

Normalization is forward looking. However, reconciliation is a process, not an event. There is an abundance of track two activities involving civil society, many of which were initiated by TARC. One way to support track two would be to create a fund so that civil society groups could apply jointly for financing. This could be done in the memory of Hrant Dink, the ethnic Armenian editor who was assassinated.

I also want to refer you to the findings of the legal analysis by TARC which determined that the Genocide Convention cannot be applied retroactively. Turkey has no risk of liability under the convention. At the same time it looked at the definition of genocide, and determined that had the convention been in force at the time of the events, that those events would have met the definition of genocide, and therefore scholars and others would write and would be correct in referring to those events as genocide.

There needs to be a historical process. However, the commission that is proposed is likely to polarize rather than foster consensus. I have some recommendations on this matter that are elaborated in my full testimony. I hope that we can get into it during the question period.

I am also happy to talk about Turkey and Iraqi Kurd relations as I am heading a high-level study group on that subject as well.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Phillips follows:]

Testimony by:

DAVID L. PHILLIPS

Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States

Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University

to:

U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe

May 14, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to appear before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe.

It is a testament to the importance of US-Turkish relations that President Barack Obama chose to visit Turkey just 77 days after his election as President of the United States. The visit was a truly an historic opportunity to enhance the US-Turkey strategic partnership that has benefited both nations for more than five decades.

Turkey is one of America's strongest and most reliable allies. Straddling Europe and Asia, it played a critical role containing the Soviet Union during the Cold War. As a secular Muslim democracy, Turkey serves as a model to other Muslim-majority countries. After 9/11, Turkey was a critical staging area for operations in Afghanistan. Two times it led the International Stabilization Force for Afghanistan and remains today critical to NATO's activities in Afghanistan. Turkey is a pivotal partner in the fight against al-Qaeda, despite attacks by radical Islamists at home. Turkey's cooperation is also critical to other U.S. strategic interests: redeploying troops from Iraq, constraining Iran's nuclear development, enhancing energy security through the development of sources in the Caspian and via transport in the

Caucasus. Turkey is a leader of the G-20 with a vital role to play in the global economic recovery.

As a Senior Adviser to the State Department's European Bureau, I have worked on Cyprus, Turkish-Greek relations, Turkey's relations with Iraqi Kurds, and on human rights in Turkey. Between 2001 and 2004, I also served as Chairman of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC). Its work is recounted in *Unsilencing the Past: Track Two Diplomacy and Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation*. (Note: TARC information available at <http://www1.american.edu/cgp/track2/home.htm>).

As requested, my statement will focus on Turkish-Armenian issues, which have a significant bearing on US-Turkish relations. Reconciliation is extremely difficult and sensitive. Difficulties are exacerbated by taboos and divergent historical narratives.

Despite obstacles, Turkish-Armenian reconciliation is very important work. Both Turkey and Armenia are allies of the United States; both contribute to our efforts countering global extremism; Armenia has uniquely good relations with both the United States and Russia. The important Armenian-American community ensures that U.S.-Armenia ties are permanent. Just as ties to Turkey are pivotal, Secretary Clinton affirms: "The Obama Administration is committed to broadening [U.S.-Armenian relations], deepening it, and working with Armenia to assist them in their continued development and aspirations."

I welcome the "framework agreement" and "roadmap" for normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia announced on April 23. It is potentially an historic breakthrough. However, progress will be measured by actions not words.

With the help of U.S. mediation and the Swiss authorities, a finalized text was initialed by Turkish and Armenian officials on April 2. Reportedly the text has two protocols: one on recognition and the other on normalization. A third document establishes a bi-national commission, a series of sub-commissions, and specifies a timetable for implementation once the agreement is signed.

The full text has not yet been released at the request of Turkey and Armenia. This has heightened speculation and galvanized opposition. Getting from initials to signatures, and from signatures to implementation, will be a torturous process. There is no schedule to seal the deal. The longer it takes, the harder it gets.

Does anyone believe that the AKP government will go forward without progress on Nagorno-Karabakh? On Friday last week, President Abdullah Gul said that normalization would proceed “without preconditions.” During an interview with TRT Turk the next day, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey “could open its border if Armenia lifts its occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.” Turkish officials told President Obama that resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh’s status was not a formal precondition when they met in Istanbul on April 7. As a practical matter, however, it is a deal-breaker.

Azerbaijan strongly opposes normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations. President Ilham Aliev raised the stakes by threatening to hike the price of gas it sells to Turkey and canceling its support for the Nabucco pipeline. President Aliyev also went to Moscow to discuss arrangements shifting the balance of power in the strategically important South Caucasus. He subsequently backed off his threatened reprisals and agreed with Armenia’s President Serge Sarkissian on

“basic ideas” for resolving NK’s status, but a lot of work is still needed before the parties sign the draft accord that has been on the table since November 2007.

Turkey’s national interests cannot be held hostage by Azerbaijan. Progress on one makes possible progress on the other, but the United States should reaffirm President Obama’s understanding: there is no linkage between normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations and the Minsk Group process, which has been underway for 17 years.

If the normalization agreement is signed, what are the chances that the Turkish parliament will ratify it especially if Nagorno-Karabakh’s status is still unresolved? Turkey’s large Azeri minority opposes normalization. Also opposed are the Republican People’s Party (CHP), which holds 98 seats in the Turkish parliament and the National Action Party (MHP) with 69 seats. Though the AKP holds 338 seats, we recall that it has failed to muster support for important votes in the past.

Why did it take so long to announce the agreement if it was initialed on April 2? Critics maintain that announcing the agreement just 24 hours before Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day was a cynical attempt to dissuade President Obama from characterizing the Events of 1915-1923 as “Genocide.”

The timing raises questions about Turkey’s resolve and self-confidence. It has rallied opposition among Armenians. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) pulled out of Armenia’s coalition government last week to protest the deal. Opposition leader and former President Levon Ter-Petrosian called it a “sell-out.” Just as there should be no linkage between normalization and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, there must be no linkage between normalization and genocide recognition.

Normalization is inherently a forward looking process. However, reconciliation cannot occur without an honest rendering of what happened to the Armenians of Anatolia between 1915 and 1923. I do not believe that the proposed historical commission will foster consensus.

TARC concluded that historians would bring to the table stacks of documents validating their existing positions. Instead it sought a legal analysis from independent counsel on “The applicability of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide to events that occurred in the early twentieth century.”

The analysis determined that: “International law prohibits the retroactive application of treaties. In fact, the Genocide Convention was intended to impose prospective obligations on State signatories. Therefore, no legal or financial claim arising out of the events could successfully be made against any individual or State under the Convention.” The analysis did not address rights established elsewhere in international law.

The analysis also found that the crime of genocide has four elements: (i) the perpetrator killed one or more persons; (ii) such person or persons belonged to a particular national, racial or religious group; (iii) the perpetrator intended to destroy in whole or in part that group, as such; and, (iv) the conduct took place in the context of a manifest pattern of similar conduct directed against the group. Of the criteria, “intent” is the only one disputed when it comes to the Events. The analysis concluded that “At least some of the Ottoman figures who ordered the deportation of ethnic Armenians knew that the consequence of their actions would be the destruction in whole or in part of the Armenians of eastern Anatolia, as

such, or acted purposefully towards this goal, and therefore possessed the requisite genocidal intent.”

The analysis emphasized the benefits of open discussion between Turks and Armenians. It is by no means definitive, but it did give something to both peoples that can help advance the goal of reconciliation.

TARC broke the ice and catalyzed a myriad of collaborative activities. Contact, communication and cooperation are critical to fostering reconciliation between Turkish and Armenian civil society representatives. Track two creates a context for civil society to develop mutual understanding with the goal of transferring their insights to decision-makers and shaping public opinion. Track two can propel progress in the event of an official agreement. It also serves as a safety net in case negotiations flounder.

TARC was years ahead of the curve. Its final recommendations called for:

- Accelerating diplomatic contacts, devising new frameworks for consultation, and consolidating relations through additional treaty arrangements.
- Opening of the Turkish-Armenian border to enable unhampered transportation and trade aimed at improving the economic condition of people living on both sides of the border.
- Enhancing security/anti-terrorism and confidence building measures between Turkey and Armenia.
- Issuing official statements supporting civil society programs focused on education, science, culture, and tourism.
- Establishing standing mechanisms for cooperation on humanitarian disaster assistance and health care.

- Fostering religious understanding via the restoration of religious sites and supporting the rights and functioning of religious foundations.
- Taking steps to show the Turkish and Armenian people that their governments are working to surmount difficulties related to the past.

Progress on normalization requires the United States to stay engaged.

Implementing the agreement will require skilled and focused diplomacy. A “Coordinator for Turkish-Armenian Normalization” could usefully help raise the profile of issues and streamline the inter-agency process. Alternatively, the State Department’s European Bureau needs to appoint someone to work on it full-time.

One way to honor the memory of Hrant Dink, the ethnic Armenian editor of *Agos* who was assassinated for his views, would be to expand his work in support of track two activities. It would be useful to convene leading Turkish and Armenian groups to discuss lessons learned and the way forward. Congress should capitalize a special projects fund to which Turkish and Armenian groups could jointly apply for project financing. The fund should be administered by a U.S. organization to ensure transparency and objectivity. (Note: American University’s Center for Global Peace, which was previously involved, and/or the Atlantic Council would be suitable coordinators).

There is cause for optimism. Turks and Armenians are trading, interacting, and exchanging views about their shared history. I am convinced that the proponents of reconciliation are on the right side of history.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to raise Turkey’s relations with Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan and its affect on U.S.-Turkish relations. “Responsible redeployment” from Iraq will require an end-state that is stable, able to govern itself, and at peace

with its neighbors. Despite the positive trend established via recent contact between Turkish officials and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Iraqi Kurdistan is potentially volatile. Kirkuk's status and disputed internal boundaries are flashpoints. Turkey's concern about the emergence of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan is exacerbated by the PKK's presence in northern Iraq. Conflict escalation within Iraq or between Iraq and its neighbors would be a serious setback to both regional and U.S. interests. I would also be pleased to discuss this topic during the question period.

Thank you.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much. Dr. Flanagan.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN FLANAGAN, PH.D., SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND HENRY A. KISSINGER CHAIR, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Mr. FLANAGAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to be here before you today to discuss the development of relations between the United States and Turkey during the Obama administration, and how the Congress can play a role in building this relationship into the model partnership that the President envisions.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to summarize my full statement for the record and just offer, first of all, some perspectives on what the elements of this partnership might be, and also what some of the key opportunities and challenges are to its realization. My comments, as you noted, draw on a report, a year-long effort that colleagues and I at the Center for Strategic and International Studies developed. It is a comprehensive assessment of Turkey's changing internal dynamics and its relations with all of its neighbors, and we advance some policy recommendations and ideas for enhancing the bilateral relationship and multilateral cooperation. While I draw on this report my views today are my own.

Mr. Chairman, our key conclusion was very much in keeping with your opening remarks about the idea that United States-Turkish strategic interests remain largely convergent. However, mistrust and suspicion in recent years, much of it related to the war in Iraq and its aftermath, have clouded this convergence and complicated cooperation.

President Obama's very successful trip to Turkey last month recognized the importance of the relationship and established the foundation for restoring the trust and confidence essential to orchestrating effective cooperation on mutual, regional and global interests.

That said, differing political and geo-strategic situations of our two countries will on occasion lead Turkey and the United States to pursue distinct and sometimes divergent policies that could cause disruptive disagreements that would once again undermine the pursuit of these over-arching interests.

So, realizing President Obama's vision of a model partnership will require a sustained engagement and careful management by senior levels of both governments, and I think Congress can play a very valuable supporting role in this effort.

President Obama's speech to the Grand National Assembly in Turkey articulated a positive and realistic agenda for strategic cooperation with Turkey in the coming years, and it also encouraged the pursuit of Turkish internal reforms and foreign policy initiatives that could both enhance bilateral partnership and advance Turkey's bid for EU membership. This agenda builds on the shared vision and structured dialogue that was developed actually at the end of the Bush administration, in 2006, and reaffirmed by Secretary Clinton during her visit to Ankara. I think this was a wise move because that process did yield some valuable benefits.

In my view, this agenda, the partnership, breaks down into three sets of issues of ascending degree of difficulty, you could say. The

main elements, the leading elements of this positive agenda, I think, should be our areas where the two countries have very clearly convergent interests and a general agreement on the requisite policy approaches. These include: Long-term stabilization and development of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan; expansion of bilateral trade and investment; military-to-military cooperation; and promotion of Turkey's EU membership.

There is a second set of issues where the two governments broadly have the same assessment but there are still important policy differences, and that are sometimes exacerbated by difficult domestic political considerations in both countries. These include: Relations with Russia, Armenia, and Greece; the development of the Southern Corridor Route for Caspian Energy; fostering Israeli-Palestinian settlement; and dealing with some of the frozen conflicts both in the Caucasus and Cyprus.

There is a third set of issues where there are really fundamental or potentially quite significant policy differences that will have to be carefully managed including dealing with aspects of Russian assertiveness in the Black Sea and the Caucasus; energy and trade relationship with Iran; and also dealing with Iran's nuclear program.

So one of the key points that I would argue, Mr. Chairman, is that to ensure the advancement of this broad and very complicated agenda it is important that the Obama administration work with the Turkish Government to establish a regular high-level policy dialogue, and an agenda for joint action with time lines to advance specific initiatives supported perhaps by bilateral working groups charged with monitoring the implementation.

This is a structure that has been pursued to advance U.S. relations with a number of new and long-time allies. I saw this work in aspects of our work with Southeastern Europe in the Clinton administration. The United States-Israeli relationship has had similar kinds of structures to help manage the cooperation, and there are other examples. But I think this is the kind of sustained effort that is going to be required.

Cooperation with the economic development of the relationship I think is another one that could be further enhanced. The European Union countries and Russia will remain Turkey's natural and leading trading partners, but I think there could be some efforts undertaken to expand United States-Turkish trade and investment, and Turkey could be an important staging ground for United States investment, including with firms partnering with Turkish counterparts to move into new markets in the Caucasus and the Greater Middle East.

Lastly, let me just say a few words about things Congress could do to play a valuable role. First of all, I think there is a scope for a robust smart power initiative to expand person-to-person cultural and educational exchanges between the United States and Turkey. Secretary Clinton and Former Minister Babacan have initiated a youth exchange in their visit in March, but I think Congress should treat Turkey as a priority country in some of these areas to expand cultural exchanges and to help overcome misunderstanding about the United States and Turkey where public opinion has really plummeted in recent years.

I think also mutual understanding between our two legislatures, and here I know that with the busy schedule you all lead there is reluctance to take on new commitments like this, but I do think some more formal and regular exchanges with the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the U.S. Congress would be helpful to understanding and advancing a depth of contacts that give substance to this alliance.

Lastly, with all due respect to the many co-sponsors of H. Res. 252, rather than seek to legislate history, I think Congress and the administration should continue to provide encouragement as you said yourself, Mr. Chairman, to the efforts by the Government of Turkey and Armenia to realize this framework and roadmap for normalization of their relations, and to this framework that was agreed last month and which obviously faces a number of impediments, but I do think that this process can move forward, and I think also over time the creation of a joint historical commission could be very helpful to continue to help Turkey come to grips with this legacy of its past, and also to promote further understanding of those tragic events of 1915.

So, in closing, Mr. Chairman, I think we have a great opportunity here to build on a wider cooperation with Turkey in a number of different areas, but it will require a process that is carefully managed by the leadership of the two governments. So thank you for the opportunity this morning and for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Flanagan follows:]

Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Subcommittee on European Affairs

***“THE UNITED STATES AND TURKEY:
A MODEL PARTNERSHIP”***

A Statement by

Dr. Stephen J. Flanagan, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President & Henry A. Kissinger Chair
Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

May 14, 2009

2172 Rayburn House Office Building

Prepared Statement

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of the Subcommittee on European Affairs, I am honored to appear before you today to discuss the development of relations between the United States and Turkey during the Obama administration and how the Congress could help build this relationship into the model partnership that the President envisions.

My comments today draw on the findings of the final report of the U.S.-Turkey Strategic Initiative, a year-long interdisciplinary research project that I led, involving a team of scholars at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and two other institutions with expertise on Turkey, Europe, Russia/Eurasia, the Middle East, energy, and international security. My colleagues and I completed a comprehensive assessment of Turkey's internal dynamics and changing relations with its neighbors and the United States and then advanced recommendations for renewal and long-term management of the U.S.-Turkish relationship—many of which I'm pleased to report the Obama administration is pursuing.

Elements of a Model Partnership

Our key conclusion was that U.S. and Turkish strategic interests remain largely convergent. Both countries have enduring interests in stability in the Middle East, countering terrorism and extremism, sustaining an open global economy, securing energy flows, advancing the stability and sovereignty of the states in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and maintaining productive relations with Europe. However, mistrust and suspicion in recent years, much of it related to the war in Iraq and its aftermath, have clouded this convergence and complicated cooperation.

President Obama's highly successful visit to Turkey last month recognized the importance of this relationship and established the foundation for restoring the trust and confidence essential to orchestrating effective cooperation on mutual regional and global interests. That said, differing political and geostrategic situations will, on occasion, lead Turkey and the United States to pursue distinct and sometimes divergent policies that could cause disruptive disagreements that would undermine pursuit of these overarching interests. Realizing President Obama's vision of a model partnership will require sustained engagement and careful management by senior levels of both governments. The Congress can play a valuable supporting role.

President Obama's speech to the Grand National Assembly in Ankara articulated a positive and realistic agenda for strategic cooperation with Turkey in the coming years and also encouraged the pursuit of Turkish internal reforms and foreign policy initiatives that could both enhance our bilateral partnership and advance Turkey's bid for EU membership. This agenda builds on the "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue" that was developed by the two governments in 2006 and reaffirmed during Secretary Clinton's March 2009 visit to Ankara. That effort yielded some progress in policy coordination and fostering a mutual understanding of evolving common interests. The Obama administration was wise to build on this Bush administration initiative.

In my view, the U.S.-Turkish agenda over the coming years breaks down into three categories:

- The leading elements of this positive agenda are issues where the two countries have clearly convergent interests and general agreement on the requisite policy approaches. These include: long-term stabilization and development of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; expansion of bilateral trade and investment; military-to-military cooperation; and promotion of Turkey's EU membership.
- There is a second set of issues where the interests of the two governments are broadly similar but important policy differences persist, sometimes exacerbated by difficult domestic political

- There is a third set of issues where there are fundamental or potentially significant policy differences that will need to be carefully managed including: dealing with Russian assertiveness in the Black Sea and the Caucasus; energy and trade relations with Iran; and halting Iran's nuclear program.
- To ensure advancement of this broad and complicated agenda and manage policy differences, I recommend that the Obama administration work with the Turkish government to establish a regular, high-level policy dialogue and an agenda for joint action with timelines to advance specific initiatives, supported by bilateral working groups charged with monitoring implementation. This is a structure that has been pursued to advance U.S. relations with a number of new and longtime allies.

The European Union countries, Russia, and other neighbors will remain Turkey's natural and leading trade and investment partners. However, trade with the United States accounted for less than 5 percent of total Turkish trade in 2008, and many experts agree there is still unrealized potential for two-way trade and U.S. investment in Turkey. Turkey could also become a stable staging ground for U.S. firms, possibly together with Turkish partners, to expand into emerging markets in Eurasia and the Greater Middle East. Creation of a Turkish-American Business Dialogue, akin to the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, could help bring together private companies and business associations interested in promoting lagging bilateral trade and investment. This could build on existing official efforts such as the Economic Cooperation Partnership Council (ECPC), the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), and the U.S.-Turkey Economic Partnership Commission (EPC).

Bilateral defense relations, which have been managed through the annual High Level Defense Group (HLDG), have generally focused on near term-procurement and defense cooperation issues. The HLDG could be given a more strategic agenda and discussion of the future of Iraq and plans for U.S. military disengagement would be a good way to raise the level of this engagement. The quality of military-to-military interactions with Turkey varies by service. Cooperation with the Turkish Air Force has generally received the highest marks. Valuable interaction between the two navies takes place in the context of NATO operations and exercises. However, there has been very little interaction between the U.S. Army and the Turkish Land Forces, even though the Land Forces are the biggest component of the Turkish military and dominate the General Staff (TGS). There has been some progress recently in cooperation between the two armies—the first-ever talks between the U.S. Army Staff and the TGS took place in January 2009, leading to a plan of future command post exercises and unit-level exchanges. Cooperation in the special operations forces (SOF) area is also improving, and SOF exercises resumed in 2008 after a 6-year hiatus. But there is certainly room for improvement in military-to-military relations.

Congress could play a valuable role in advancing the U.S.-Turkish partnership.

- There is scope for more robust U.S. "smart power" initiatives to expand person-to-person, cultural, and educational exchanges with Turkey. In March, Secretary of State Clinton and then Foreign Minister Babacan launched a new exchange program between Turkish and American young people. Congress should treat Turkey—a population with traditionally pro-American sentiment that has plummeted in recent years—as a priority country for these programs.
- Mutual understanding and strengthened domestic support for the alliance could also be bolstered by more regular exchanges between the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the U.S. Congress.

- With all due respect to the many co-sponsors of H. Res.252, rather than seek to legislate history, Congress and the administration should provide encouragement and support to efforts by the governments of Turkey and Armenia, under Swiss auspices, to realize the framework and roadmap for normalization of their relations that was agreed to last month, as well as other efforts to promote regional cooperation in the Caucasus. Creation of a joint Turkish-Armenian commission to explore this painful chapter in history and its continued legacy could also be helpful to that process. President Obama's April 24th statement on these issues struck just the right balance in promoting our principles and strategic interests. Passage of H.Res. 252 would trigger harsh and prolonged breach in U.S.- Turkish relations.

Challenges and Opportunities for Future Cooperation

After a relatively long period of comparative stability, Turkish politics may be entering one of its transitional phases of uncertainty that may make Ankara's policies somewhat unpredictable. The governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) suffered a significant setback in the March 29th local elections as a result of the economic downturn and its inability to advance key elements of its agenda. AKP remains the most popular political party in Turkey; but under pressure from opponents, it is adopting increasingly nationalist and less tolerant positions, particularly with respect to the Kurdish question. Prime Minister Erdoğan's May 1 cabinet reshuffle suggests that he will continue his balancing act among different constituencies within AKP and society as a whole, which will make it more difficult to move ahead on contentious internal reforms and foreign policy initiatives, including Armenia and Cyprus. The military appears to have concluded that its reentry into a direct role in politics would involve a risky, challenge to a ruling party which still enjoys the support of a plurality of the population. The TGS has opted for a strategy of tempering what it sees as the most troubling elements of AKP's agenda.

Following six years of exceptional performance and growth, Turkey's economy is in for a very difficult period, with several estimates now forecasting a 4.5 percent drop in GDP this year. The official unemployment rate has reached 12 percent in urban areas, the stock market has lost half its value, and short-term funds fell to levels that make it difficult to cover the deficit. A critical step for Turkey will be conclusion of a new standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund to bolster investor confidence.

The EU and Turkey currently stand at a critical juncture. While the two sides have reaffirmed their commitment to the accession process, progress has been fitful. Enlargement fatigue and concerns about Turkey's political and social direction have deepened an abiding reticence among key European leaders and publics to press much further with negotiations. Growing frustration with the pace of the talks and doubts about Europe's willingness to ultimately offer EU membership have led to a diminished commitment by Turkish leaders and the public to undertake the necessary reforms. Turkey is facing an EU deadline in late 2009 to open its airports and ports to the Republic of Cyprus in accordance with the 2005 Ankara Protocol. As Ankara has yet to indicate a new approach to Cyprus, it is possible some EU governments will push to suspend accession talks. This development would erode Turkey's commitment to deepening its democracy and completing the process of institutional integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

The current leadership of the two Cypriot communities offers the best prospect for a settlement since the failure of the Annan Plan in 2004. However, after several months of talks, significant differences over power-sharing, property rights, and other issues persist. The current favorable climate is unlikely to persist indefinitely and the potential for re-nationalization of perspectives was evident in the growth of support for the hard-line National Unity Party in the April 19th parliamentary elections in northern Cyprus. If the prevailing rapprochement with Greece were to erode—and there are still lingering territorial and maritime disputes and periodic Turkish overflights that could lead to an incident that would

set back the normalization process—there is some potential for Cyprus to reemerge as an element in the regional military balance with Athens, as an asset for Turkish power projection in the Aegean, or as a liability in a future conflict.

- Quiet but consistent U.S. diplomacy with European governments is the most effective way for Washington to support Turkey's accession discussions on EU membership.
- The most helpful near-term step Washington could take to bolster stability in the Aegean, advance Turkey's EU prospects, and overcome differences over the modalities of NATO-EU cooperation would be to lend its diplomatic resources and influence to help achieve a settlement of the Cyprus issue, including committing a senior official to work with the UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer.

As the United States rethinks its own approach to the Middle East, it needs to make space for an increasingly activist Turkish diplomacy in the region. The United States could benefit from Turkey's soft influence and efforts to stabilize the Middle East. How Ankara and Washington shape Turkey's resurgence in the region will likely affect the development of a broad range of common interests including Iraq's stability, Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology, and Arab-Israeli peace efforts. Turkey has shown it can be an effective diplomatic player and has potential to do more. Its mediation of indirect Israel-Syria talks and its work to promote the Iraqi Status of Force Agreement with the United States are important precedents of successful Turkish mediation. However, Turkey has yet to prove that it can play a leading role in regional affairs, and it remains unclear how much influence it actually possesses over a range of actors in the region. Over the past few years, Ankara has played a more active, positive role in Iraq, cultivating growing trade and investment opportunities, as well as a network of political contacts, including tentative steps to increase engagement with the Iraqi Kurds. Turkey and Iran have strengthened political, economic, and counter-terrorism cooperation in recent years. This trend is likely to continue. Ankara sees good relations and increasing trade ties with Iran as necessary to advancing its broader regional strategy, including becoming an energy bridge to Europe and preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

The strategic imperatives of Turkish-Israeli military, defense-industrial, and economic cooperation remain strong, but relations are increasingly strained as Ankara deepens its engagement with Israel's foes—Iran, Syria, and Hamas—and as Turkish public sentiment turns against Israel over the Palestinian issue. The relationship will likely survive, but it will be increasingly complicated if the current and future Turkish governments continue to harshly criticize Israeli policies, emphasize Islamic solidarity, and pursue closer ties with Israel's adversaries.

The growth trade, investment, and energy ties between Russia and Turkey over the past decade have led Ankara to more explicit balancing of relations between Russia and its NATO allies. Turkish officials insist that their cooperation with Russia is being pursued with a proper wariness, and that Turkey remains firmly tied to its Euro-Atlantic moorings. However, a highly unbalanced trade relationship and Turkey's energy dependence enhance Russian leverage. Ankara feels confident that it can work effectively with Russia and other littoral states to promote economic cooperation and security in the Black Sea region. Ankara has resisted expanded NATO operations in the Black Sea arguing that they are unnecessary and will only feed Russian fears of encirclement, with damaging consequences to its regional interests, including stability in the Caucasus.

Ankara's principal interest in the Caucasus/Caspian region is maintaining stability to allow for expansion of regional trade and infrastructure and Turkey's emergence as a key energy hub. Russia's efforts to create an exclusive sphere of influence along its periphery and control energy flows from the Caspian Basin make this a point of friction in Russo-Turkish relations that will temper this rapprochement.

Further Russian pressure could jeopardize the independence and security of Georgia, and threaten oil and gas transit from Azerbaijan and beyond. Turkey has the potential to play a key role in the stabilization and development of the Caucasus and Caspian regions through renewed bilateral ties and its Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform proposal.

Turkey has provided significant military support to the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan along with valuable soft power resources and support to the stabilization and development of Afghanistan. Elites and the general public in Pakistan have high regard for Turkey. Turkey has also undertaken some initiatives to bring together the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to forge a more cooperative, constructive relationship, including dialogues between the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the parliaments of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Turkey is centrally located to play a major role in energy transit. However, Turkey has had mixed success and experience with energy transit in the past, due not only to international factors over which Turkey had little control, but also partly to its own internal energy and policy dynamics. Given its significant but mixed record, Turkey's reputation and investment condition will need to be further enhanced before major oil and gas producers and consumers would commit to using it for additional transit.

Expansion of Turkey's role as a transit route for crude oil rests with restoring volumes for the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline and filling the expandable capacity of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline with additional cross-Caspian oil flows from Kazakhstan. Neither is within Turkey's control or influence, but the long-term trends are promising. As for natural gas, external conditions are much more challenging. In the near term, there is no available upstream production capacity for feeding gas into a major new Southern Corridor pipeline, beyond filling the available capacity in the South Caucasus Gas Pipeline. The longer term future of gas development in Azerbaijan is unclear. Gas from Central Asia, particularly Turkmenistan, is the most promising potential upstream source. Sustained investments of billions of dollars annually over five year or more will be required to develop Turkmen gas resources into commercial gas reserves.

As with the case of the BTC pipeline, diplomacy can play a vital role in aligning the interests of regional governments and in making sure that investment conditions are provided to allow a pipeline project to go forward. The commercial champion of a project is the best indicator for the likelihood of its success and it is rarely, if ever, transit countries alone. In the case of BTC, it was Western oil producing companies that were the major promoters, owners and operators of the project and it was their credit capacity that funded it.

Rising gas demand in Turkey and enhancing Turkey's reputation as a transit country can both help accelerate gas development in the Caspian region and promote the flow of additional supply westward. Incremental development of short, economically-viable pipeline connections can also demonstrate the viability of the Southern Corridor route and lead to the realization of more ambitious projects.

- The first priority has to be to increasing upstream production capacity, particularly of gas from Central Asia. Quiet diplomacy in Central Asia and the Caspian is needed to align various state and commercial interests and in order not to provoke potential competitors into early action in opposition.
- The Obama administration appointment of a Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy can enhance interagency policy coordination and orchestrate U.S. engagement with foreign governments and the energy industry.

- A sustainable and effective U.S. strategy would be to support incremental development of short, economically-viable pipeline projects that might over time be linked together, such as the gas pipeline connections between Turkey, Greece, and Italy. Commercial success of these connections could demonstrate the viability of the Southern Corridor.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee for this opportunity to present these views.

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Mr. WEXLER. Thank you very much. Thank you to all three witnesses for their excellent statements.

I would like to begin. I have got a number of specific questions regarding the obvious topics of the EU, Cyprus, energy, and several others. But what I would like to start with, if I could, is just to ask you to provide an analysis in a more general sense, and what I am referring to is in my last trip to Turkey, which was in February, it was in the middle of what was inflamed relations between Turkey and Israel, and I was struck to a degree by the contrast in that when I arrived and talked with the American personnel at the American Embassy in Ankara the presentation essentially was that American-Turkish cooperation was at an all-time high. Whether we were talking about the PKK, whether we were talking about Iraq, Afghanistan, energy, the potential for engagement between Turkey and Armenia, all signs were relatively positive, particularly compared to where we were.

When you get down to the specifics what I find is—generally speaking, but also when you apply it to the specific issues—the objectives and the goals by and large of the American Government and the Turkish Government essentially match.

Now in some instances there are tactical differences. The one area that I think the tactical difference is most significant, possibly, is with respect to how to engage or not engage Hamas, how to bolster up the moderate Palestinians, and what role the Turkish Government believes it ought to play in that process.

So in that context, I would respectfully ask if maybe you could frame an analysis of a Turkey that wants to pursue its regional interests. I know there are some in Washington that fret that Turkey may wish to do that, but I happen to believe that it is in Turkey's interest and in America's interest. If we are going to make any progress in the region, it would seem to me one of the foundations of that process is that ultimately it needs to be Turkey that is influencing Syria, Turkey that is influencing Iran, Turkey that is influencing Iraq.

Now there are some people that fear it is going to be the other way around, but I guess I would ask if you could comment in that regard, Dr. Lesser, and just go across.

Mr. LESSER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I think this really gets to the heart of it. I think there are a couple of things happening which will be evident when you go there and you have the kind of conversations that you described. At the level between government of coordination on things like the PKK, it is not surprising that you would get very positive readouts about the state of cooperation because there has been a lot of very close cooperation on some of those kinds of issues.

But there are some other things going on. There is public opinion, as I say, which counts heavily now, and the AKP government is a populist government. It pays a lot of attention to this. So on the question of Gaza, for example, or approaches to the Middle East peace process, or even the sustainability of relations between Turkey and Israel, you know, I do fear that there is a certain tension there which you will feel when you go and you have these kinds of conversations.

I think it is also the case that Turkish policymakers across the political spectrum are very sovereignty conscious, pretty nationalistic regardless of where they fall on this secular-religious debate in Turkey. All very nationalistic, I think, and therefore all very sensitive to the kind of role that we play in the region and whether we are willing to let Turkey play a leadership role.

I think, as you say, there are a lot of advantages to us for Turkey playing that active role. Mostly it is a soft power role, mostly it is commercial, but this is a different Turkey from 10 years ago. It is not necessarily a bad thing for American interests, but we need to have a different kind of discourse to take advantage of it.

Iran is a perfect example. This is a Turkish Government that is much more comfortable than its predecessors in going to Iran, going to the Gulf, talking to Syria, et cetera. How do we make sure that Turkey's relations with NATO and the European Union, and with us, still retain their priority in that kind of an atmosphere? It is not impossible at all. We are not losing Turkey in that sense, but I think it requires a different kind of discourse.

The final point is that this is not a new problem. There is a tendency to talk in terms of Golden Ages and lost Golden Ages and are we entering a new Golden Age with Turkey. I think that is in some ways a risky kind of analogy to use because in fact even at times when we thought the relation was very, very positive, in the late nineties, in the latter part of the Clinton administration, for example, it was still very tough and very often on some of the same issues. So I think we need to be a bit realistic about that, and see where we go, but I don't think it is a question of Turkey having drifted off into an orientation that we can't work with. I think on Iran and some other issues Turkey can indeed be very helpful, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. Phillips.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Well, I for one was shocked by the events in Davos. I thought that the conduct of Prime Minister Erdogan was rather infantile and reprehensible. My bigger concern is whether or not it reveals his true character and the character of his government, and I think these are unanswered questions that can effect the strategic cooperation between the United States and Turkey in a broad range of areas.

Certainly the Davos incident didn't help Turkey's future role in the Middle East. Turkey had been playing a very constructive role mediating between Israel and Syria up to that point. Questions about Turkey's future role there certainly have arisen. Will Turkey be able to play a constructive role in comprehensive Middle East peace issues, particularly given the new government in Israel? There is real concern amongst the Israelis about whether Erdogan is a suitable mediator.

I think that we also have to ask ourselves the question is the AKP actually a Trojan horse for an Islamist agenda in Turkey. There has been speculation about that throughout. Other than the March 1, 2003, vote barring the passage of the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division through Turkey to Iraq, Turkey has been a predictable and steady ally. What kind of ally is Turkey going to be going forward, especially now that Turkey is focusing more on a Eurasia strategy that diminishes the importance of the West?

And I think a litmus test for this will be whether or not Turkey is sincere about moving its agreement with Armenia forward. After having raised such high expectations, and knowing the import of this issue in the United States if that deal falls through, it will have serious repercussions in United States-Turkish relations.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, and I will turn to Dr. Flanagan, but if maybe I can just ask a follow up to you, Dr. Flanagan, in the context of Mr. Phillips' remarks. In the analysis of any nation, but applying it to Turkey, why is it that we should conclude that a view by another nation that isn't traditionally just westward—a view that is both westward and eastward—why do we view that as somehow a negative or a loss to America? Why isn't that, potentially in the case of a NATO ally with incredibly strong relations, military, strategic and otherwise for decades, why isn't that viewed here as a positive? Please, Dr. Flanagan.

Mr. FLANAGAN. Yes, I have an answer for that, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Gallegly, welcome.

I think you are absolutely right, Mr. Chairman. I think it is not a net negative that Turkey has this position, and now with the move of Dr. Davutoglu into the foreign ministry, he is the architect of this strategy, of zero problems, of Turkey's engagement with all of its neighbors in an effective way and this approach will continue. I think there is utility to the fact that Turkey has tried to pursue through both its soft power influences Dr. Lesser alluded to, and other aspects of its really remarkable diplomatic engagement in the region. I think Turkey has been trying to show that it can be a conduit and be helpful to us, and its ability to talk to some parties, including Hamas, including Syria, and even Iran, the countries that we can't and don't want to talk to directly. I accept the notion that Turkey could be an intermediary in developing U.S. engagement with these countries. I think it has proven its value in brokering the Syria-Israel indirect talks. Indeed a lot of Prime Minister Erdogan's discontent and dismay with Israel related to the fact that they themselves, the Turkish Government, and I have talked to a number of senior officials, felt that they were really on the verge of moving those to direct talks on the eve of the Gaza war. It was really partly dismay and disappointment that they felt they were so close that led to some of Erdogan's behavior which certainly was disappointing at Davos. But I think it reflected the sense that Turkey felt that they could be an effective interlocutor and help advance the process.

Now, I think it is also possible to overstate Turkey's influence in the region. It has shown its ability to open some doors to begin a quiet dialogue. We saw, even at the end of the last administration, Under Secretary Burns was beginning to look at further discussions with Iran about both the nuclear question and perhaps establishment of an interest section. Turkey was engaged, I think, again, Turkey could play a role in part of this opening to Iran. But I think it is a part of this effort that will have to be carefully managed to be sure that we don't have conflicting strategies. I think it is more about tactics and sequencing, about how can we effectively channel Turkish engagement and relationships into supporting our broader interests and to working also, obviously, when we get to the peace

process with the EU Quartet and others working to advance these interests in the Middle East.

But I think that Turkey's value in its ability to be an interlocutor is something that we should take and move forward in utilizing in advancing our own interests.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. At this time I would recognize the ranking member, Congressman Elton Gallegly of California. I believe Mr. Gallegly is going to submit his statement for the record, and I will allow him to do as he chooses.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and with the interest in time I would ask unanimous consent to submit my opening statement for the record, and I apologize for being a little late today. It has been kind of a challenging day with the floor votes and other committee markups and so on.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gallegly follows:]

Statement of Representative Elton Gallegly

Europe Subcommittee Hearing

The United States and Turkey: A Model Relationship

May 14, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing. I have only a short statement and then I will follow up with a series of questions for our witnesses.

It has long been my view that a close bi-lateral relationship between our country and Turkey, despite some differences over the past five or six years on a number of important matters, is in the national interests of both nations.

There are many issues that I would like to see discussed in the hearing, including the view of the Ankara with respect to Iran's nuclear program, the prospect of real improvement in Turkish-Armenian relations, the situation in northern Iraq, Turkey's military contribution in Afghanistan and, of course, Turkey's role in the ongoing negotiations regarding the reunification of Cyprus.

I am looking forward to hearing the views of our witnesses on these and other issues. Again Mr. Chairman, thank you for scheduling this important and timely hearing.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Phillips, could you kind of give us an assessment of how you would describe the current relations today between Turkey and Iran at this time?

Mr. PHILLIPS. To second Dr. Flanagan's remarks?

Mr. GALLEGLY. Yes.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Turkey has an important role to play through its Eurasia strategy when Turkey's national interests and United

States national interests overlap. We should emphasize cooperation with Turkey, but we have to recognize that that overlap will not be consistent or occur at all times. So our own interests and our own dialogue with Iran, either directly or through intermediaries, have to be based on decisions that are made in Washington with guidance from allies like Turkey, but we should not subcontract our rapprochement to other countries, to Turkey or any other nation.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Can you give us with any level of specificity the efforts Turkey is making to encourage Iran to comply with the IAEA and to abandon their uranium enrichment programs?

Mr. PHILLIPS. I am not privileged to the details of those discussions, but I think that the strategy that has been articulated is the right strategy. Iran needs to understand that there are rewards if it complies with the Security Council's will on these matters. If it does not comply, it equally needs to know that there are strong penalties. If Turkey wants to carry that message to Iran, it certainly would be a suitable interlocutor. There are other countries that can do that as well, but I think the important point here is that we need to stick to an approach that involves carrots and sticks, and the Iranians need to know very clearly where they stand, what kinds of penalties will be incurred, and what kinds of rewards they might benefit from if they comply with the Security Council's resolutions.

Mr. GALLEGLY. How does Turkey view the prospect of their neighbor being a nuclear-armed country?

Mr. PHILLIPS. With deep trepidation and fear. I would say that across the Sunni Muslim world the concern about an ascendant Shia crescent is a serious one. The idea that Iran would cross the nuclear threshold and weaponize its nuclear program has to be of enormous concern to the United States, to Israel, and to all of our allies in the Middle East, including Turkey.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Dr. Flanagan, on another issue, what has Turkey's approach been to the renewed talks on Cyprus?

Mr. FLANAGAN. Well, Mr. Gallegly, we have yet to see truly a new approach or a fresh approach from Ankara on the Cyprus issue. I think really the weight of activity is between the two communities right now, and my general assessment is that the prospects are as good as they have been really since the 2004 Annan Plan. The relationship between President Christofias and Mr. Talat in the north are very good. They are kindred spirits ideologically. They have had a good dynamic personally, but yet it is disappointing that after several months of discussions there are important differences that still remain over power sharing and property rights which is a particularly difficult issue.

So I do think that we are at an important stage in these discussions. I think where both the United States and the European Union could be helpful to the two communities on the island is working with the U.N. Special Envoy Alexander Downer. I had the opportunity to participate in a round table with him in New York 1½ weeks ago, and I do think that we are at a critical stage particularly in regard to the EU timetable where there will be a review of commitments that Turkey has made to move toward normalization of relations with the Republic of Cyprus, opening its

ports and airports under the so-called Ankara Protocol, that will come up during the Swedish Presidency later this year.

So I think it will be an important test case for Turkey and this government in Turkey which has recently lost some support in their municipal elections. I think it is going to be a hard issue for them to take on. However, it will be a test of their good faith and commitment to the U.S. process to show that they are willing to move forward on this commitment. But I think they are in close consultation with Mr. Talat from what I can see on the outside, that Ankara is working closely with him. However, Mr. Talat has his own constituency, and the Turkish Cypriots recently had local elections where the nationalist party has gained strength. He is still the key interlocutor with the Greek Cypriots, President Talat of the Northern Republic of Cyprus. It is still going to be a difficult set of negotiations, but I do think that it would be helpful if both the United States and the EU could work with the parties and to provide some ideas and perspectives that might help them move forward on some of the issues that have been so vexing over the years between the two communities.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Well, I spent several days in Nicosia a little over a year ago and one of the things that I came away from—I am not sure I was quite as encouraged although I heard all of the same things basically that you are saying.

One thing that I would say, Mr. Chairman, is that Nicosia and Cyprus is not one of the normal code hotspots for us to travel to, and I think it is a little off the beaten path—not too many of our folks travel there, and I would encourage our folks to do that. I think it sends a message that we have not forgotten its importance and the strategic aspect. And I hope I will become more encouraged as time moves on, but I am not yet. If any of you would like to follow up.

Mr. FLANAGAN. I did not mean to suggest that I was overly optimistic, and Dr. Lesser has looked at this very closely as well, so he may want to comment on this. I think that the correlation of political forces are generally positive, but there are still some hard issues. But, I do think that the hope is perhaps some of this pressure, particularly with the EU deadline approaching, that could provide some incentives.

I think that external parties could also provide some additional incentives to both communities on the island to move forward. One thing that we haven't mentioned is this issue is really impeding important elements of not only Turkey's advancement of its engagement and integration into the European Union, but also, and more importantly from United States interests, it is really holding up the development of NATO–EU cooperation. Because Turkey is using this as a lever. The fact that as NATO tries to develop, and this relates to activities in Afghanistan and the Balkans, Turkey has held up aspects of NATO–EU cooperation because it is the one lever that it has to express its concern that Cyprus shouldn't have sort of a back door to NATO assets and NATO cooperation until Turkey is allowed to have a fuller relationship with the EU, and also to move forward on some of its other engagement with Europe.

So, it is a complicated web of relations, but it has some real impact on important security interest in the United States as well.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Chairman, I know my time has expired but maybe we could have a response from Dr. Lesser on that and get his perspective.

Mr. LESSER. Congressman Gallegly, Mr. Chairman, actually I agree very much with my colleague, Dr. Flanagan, about this. I think his comments are exactly right. I would just add that from an American interest point of view we need to keep in mind the extent to which our stake in the unresolved Cyprus question has changed in the past years.

Ten years ago, this would have been a discussion about security and crisis management. Now it is a discussion about an unresolved political dispute. That is a big difference, but I think, as Dr. Flanagan rightly says, that unresolved political dispute has some real strategic meaning for us because it impedes where Turkey can go with the European Union, not just in the near-term, but also ultimately. Ultimately Turkey is going to have to recognize all the members to join the EU. I mean, at the end of the day that is going to have to happen, so there has to be some resolution if Turkey's candidacy is going to be put back on track. It is meaningful to us from the NATO perspective as well, as has been mentioned.

I very much agree that one of the most encouraging things is that, on the island itself, between the two communities, there really is a much better climate today than there was in past years. You can go back and forth across the green line and make visits. There have been hundreds of thousands, maybe 1 million visits across the green line, I believe without any incident, any violent incident. This is a remarkable thing.

So, we need to keep our eye on the fact that this is something that has gotten better, and it has gotten better in part because there has been European and off again/on again American attention to the problem over the years. Thank you.

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Phillips.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Just as there are opportunities if there is a resolution and settlement in Cyprus, there are also costs if there is no resolution. There will be a year-end review of Turkey's candidacy. We know that there are countries in Europe that strongly oppose Turkey's candidacy and have proposed a special partnership instead. The chapters of the "alcquis" that have not been opened will not be opened anytime soon. However, Turkey's accession prospects can be positively affected if there is movement on Cyprus. Its movement forward can also be stalled if in fact there is a breakdown of talks on Cyprus. The Swedish presidency has an important job ahead of it in these next 6 months.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. McMahan of New York.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to these great witnesses for sharing their insights on these very important issues in and around Turkey.

I want to just pick up a little bit with what the ranking member was talking about, the issue of Cyprus, because as I said in my opening statement it is so important to me, maybe because my last name is McMahan and I am an Irishman, but that we resolve that issue. It is important to the people of Cyprus, and then also is for

Turkey. It is, as you have all noted, a great hindrance in its accession to the EU.

So what I would like to do is talk a little bit more specifically about what you think can be done. I mean, we have a situation now where the troops of Turkey have been there for many years, since 1974, yet across the border crossing as you have mentioned, Doctor, have gone very peacefully.

What role should the United States play to focus attention on this issue? For instance, should we suggest to our friends in Turkey that they draw down the number of troops that are on the island? Would that be a first good step? And what specific steps should we be promoting?

Mr. LESSER. Congressman, shall I—

Mr. MCMAHON. Please.

Mr. LESSER. Thank you for the question. Well, I think there are a number of things that we can do, but I think as a basic principle we ought to bear in mind that whatever we do, on this we ought to view as a transatlantic strategy. We ought to be doing it with Europe. We ought to be doing it with EU leadership, because that is really the key context for resolution.

If Turkey still believed that its prospects for membership in the European Union were positive, I think it would be much easier to do the sort of things you mention, which would be perhaps to draw down some of the military presence on the island, to put new confidence-building measures in place, to have the United States take some actions as the Turks are always pressing us to do, to end or limit, as they see it, the economic isolation of Northern Cyprus.

There are some things we could do. They would be very symbolic because we are not in a position to have heavy trade with Northern Cyprus. But whatever we do, we ought to do it, I think, in full coordination with the European Union because that is really where the leverage is. The action on this is no longer, I would say, in Washington as it might have been in previous decades. It is really in Brussels, it is in the U.N. to an extent, and it is on the island above all.

One thing that I was part of not too long ago, which I thought was enormously useful, which the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia put together, they have a series of activities that they sponsor, inter-communal activities of all kinds. The one I was part of was actually a journalists meeting that included Greeks and Turks from their respective countries, and they were not talking about Cyprus per se. This was the important thing. They were talking about regional issues in the eastern Mediterranean, but leaving aside the Cyprus problem.

I think there is something very useful there, not only because it brings people together, but also because it shifts the whole debate onto bigger issues where Cypriots on both sides of the island have a stake. They were, for example, very heavily affected by the refugee flows after the conflict in Lebanon not long ago.

There are environmental issues, maritime security issues, a whole host of things that we could be working on with both communities on Cyprus that aren't necessarily always about the resolution of their own problem. Thank you.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you. Do you think the drawing down of troops would be a significant step in the right direction?

Mr. LESSER. I do. I am not optimist about the mood to do that in Ankara at the moment, but I do. I would also tell you that there are sectors inside Turkish society, especially the business community, who recognize that there are costs to having the situation unresolved. Thank you.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you. I just want to with my remaining time just sort of follow up regarding the joining of the EU by Turkey. Do any of you think there is credibility to the argument that the EU's hesitancy, other than—and I think Cyprus is clearly a flash point, but also the hesitancy toward Turkey membership may be based on an inherent bias of certain EU countries, and if so, how do we deal with that treatment toward an ally?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Of course, there is an inherent bias. There is also a touch of racism that exists in Europe that we have to acknowledge. The Europeans, particularly the Northern Europeans, talk about the Christian Club of the EU. They are averse to letting Turkey, a majority Muslim country, come in. I think what the Europeans have to recognize is that Europe already has a significant Muslim minority, and if Turkey is treated with disrespect, if the goal posts are shifted, Muslims within those European countries will become increasingly agitated.

Mr. McMahan, if I could return to just your earlier question on Cyprus. We have to acknowledge that Turkey has played such an important role in bridging differences. There was a big surprise that it was the Greek Cypriots who rejected the Annan plan in 2005, but they will be blamed if there is no progress in the next 6 months precisely by those European countries that are looking to find fault with Turkey.

One way to cushion that criticism is for Turkey to move ahead and open its ports to Cypriot flag ships just as a demonstration of goodwill. That will diminish some of the negative blow-back from European countries who would look to blame Turkey for a problem which in fact Turkey is playing a salutatory role in.

Mr. MCMAHON. But certainly even though the role is so important, clearly the fact that their troops remain on the island it makes progress and if I am a Cypriot in an island and someone—there are troops there from what I consider a different nation, that makes it hard to agree to any type of long-term agreement as long as the troops are there.

Mr. PHILLIPS. And that is certainly the case, but as Ian pointed out there is no appetite in Ankara for pulling those troops back. If we could rotate NATO forces in, that would be an option, but NATO is already overstretched. We can agree on the desirability of reducing the troop presence, but we have to live within the realities of what Ankara will bear and what is possible for NATO.

Mr. MCMAHON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. I am going to follow up if I could with Mr. Gallegly's indulgence. First, just an observation, and I don't want to jinx anything, but we have already accomplished a great deal here today in that we have had a subcommittee meeting on Turkey, and we have had a sober, thoughtful, rational, logical discussion, and I am deeply grateful to everyone for that.

One observation with respect to Turkish-Israeli relations, and I certainly have at times expressed my disagreement and dismay, but I think it would be remiss if we allowed the discussion to end without the observation that despite the harsh words and despite the tension, particularly at the beginning of the year, Israeli-Turkish relations remain not only in tact, but strong, and the fundamentals of the relationship appear to be as they were before the Gaza operation. Undoubtedly people are talking and wondering, but the fundamentals and the efforts to which many people in the Turkish Foreign Ministry, the President of Turkey, and others have gone to both secure and maintain that relationship I think is noteworthy, and it would not be a complete record if we did not recognize that.

I would like to just start maybe with Dr. Flanagan and go the other way and ask you to comment on two remaining issues.

The European Union: President Obama made a very strong statement consistent with President Bush and consistent with many Members of Congress in terms of support and encouragement for Turkey's entry into the European Union. What can the United States do now to further advance that cause?

Two, with respect to energy, what role can the United States play in terms of Turkey's pivotal situation as a transit hub for energy resources?

And particularly to you, Dr. Flanagan, if I could just ask you why in your third set of categories, those set of categories where you said there are significant policy differences, why did you list halting Iran's nuclear program in that category?

Mr. FLANAGAN. Thank you. It's a long list but I will try to touch on each of them, and if I could just also make a quick comment on your comment about Turkish-Israeli relations.

I fully agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that I think that actually there is no agreement between Turkey and Israel that has been set aside as a result of the outrage that was being expressed by both the Turkish public and the Turkish leadership about the Gaza operation, and in fact even at the height of it the Turks were quick to point out that the Israeli Air Force was still training in Konya, and the kind of military to military and other official cooperation goes on.

That said, I do think there is some concern growing in Israel and what we found in our investigation in talking with Israeli officials, there is some concern about how as Turkey deepens its ties with some countries that Israel still sees as very hostile to it, will Turkey equivocate on some questions, and will it be quite as strong a supporter of Israel as some tough questions come to the fore, and one of them, to get to your point, is about the whole question of Iranian nuclear weapons, which obviously is seen in Israel as an existential threat to Israel's very existence.

I do not think that is quite the Turkish assessment. I do fully agree with the comments that were made earlier that Turkey does see development of Iranian nuclear capabilities and Iranian homogeneity in the region as inimical to its long-term interests. That said, I think the Turkish leadership very much fears the eruption of a confrontational relationship with Iran. Again in keeping with the zero problems approach, I think they very much are hoping that di-

plomacy and carrots and sticks can still achieve the goal of giving Iran the perspective that by giving up nuclear weapons or at least putting its program under full-scope safeguards that it will achieve some other benefits. And so I think it will be an important bell-weather this year as we watch Turkey as a member of the Security Council if the diplomatic track in Iran slows down a bit, and looks like it is not moving forward, and of course we will see more after the Iranian Presidential elections. What is Turkey willing to do on the stick side of this so-called carrot and sticks approach. That will be, I think, a bell-weather of Turkey's intent.

Moving back then on the energy bridge, I think that the U.S. can do a great deal to help both the government and working with private industry to create the context. Turkey has a major role to play in energy transit, but it has had mixed success and experience, frankly, in dealing with this. Some of this has to do with internal Turkish policies and the way the Turkish energy industry is structured, these para-statal firms like BOTAS and others that have some visions of being both not just a transit route but an accumulator.

So Turkey has to be a bit more transparent and open in the way it conducts the management of its energy programs and capabilities, but it is certainly true that Turkey has committed to advancing a number of these projects that both the so-called—the Nabucco project but other aspects that are part of a southern route to bring Caspian energy from both sides of the Caspian, on the Azari side and on the far side, on the Turkmen side to Europe and other parts of the international market.

I think the administration should work closely with the Turks on energy issues. The appointment of Ambassador Morningstar back to his old position as coordinator for Eurasian Energy was a good move. It will help us to be able to work with some of the European governments and with industry to find a realistic set of goals, and what we recommended in our report was to focus on some short-term and maybe less ambitious projects that can give investors confidence such as moving the Greek-Turkey interconnector in gas and some other shorter pipelines. Such incremental steps can give investors confidence that there is this emerging route, this southern corridor that could be quite productive and valuable to diversification, and giving Europe a route of gas that is independent of Russian transit.

And lastly, on the EU, I think the best thing that the United States can do is quiet diplomacy, continuing to be firm and encouraging the European proponents of Turkish membership to move on, to keep opening, trying to open a couple of chapters each presidency, and to really engage with the EU, as Dr. Lesser suggested, on the Cyprus question. I think in many ways the key to advancing Turkey's membership in the EU is through further progress on Cyprus, and once there is some movement there a number of other things will open.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Turkey's EU prospects will largely be defined by how it deals with the identity of Kurds in Turkey. We should applaud Turkey for having launched 24/7 Turkish language broadcasts on TRT-6. The fact that Tayyip Erdogan opened the station on January 1 with a salutation in Kurdish broke a lot of taboos.

He demonstrated Turkey's commitment toward meeting the Copenhagen criteria.

If there is anything that the United States can do to continue to build on this momentum, it is to make the point very clearly that solving the PKK problem has to be based not only on military action, but also on Turkey's continued democratization and development. There are some specific laws and constitutional measures that Turkey needs to address if it is going to be able to make a compelling and coherent case to the EU.

It needs to eliminate the item in the Constitution that defines citizenship based on Turkishness. It needs to get rid of Article 301 of the penal code which makes it an insult for—which makes it an actionable offense to insult Turkishness, and also Article 8 of the Anti-terror Act which is applied to crack down on free speech. If Turkey were to take steps to address those constitutional and statutory problems, its relations with Europe would be greatly improved. I think we can have the kind of conversation with the Turks that would be important in Ankara.

On the subject of energy, there is a link between Eurasia energy supplies and new energy streams coming online from Iraq. Europe is held hostage by Russian gas. Nabucco moving forward is critically important, but if Nabucco is going to be profitable it needs to be augmented by energy supplies coming from Iraq. There are considerable natural gas fields east of Sulaymania, and bringing those online and involving Turkish enterprises would strengthen Turkey's position. It would enhance Turkey's energy security as well as Europe's. It also speaks to the broader question of relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Over the past year there have been direct contacts between officials from the two. There has been a lot of progress. Heads of government from both have visited. Turkey has initiated this contact and deserves commendation for its leadership, but Northern Iraq still remains very volatile. As we redeploy from Iraq, the likely bump in the road is going to be around Kirkuk and implementation of Article 140 in the Iraqi Constitution. If the Kurds without their protector insists on pushing ahead to have Kirkuk join the KRG, Turkey may react militarily. The PKK may adventure around that, and we could see a conflagration involving Turkish troops coming across the border. There is no bigger deal-breaker in Europe than Turkey getting militarily engaged in Northern Iraq, and crossing swords with the Iraqi Kurds. So United States diplomacy here is especially important, particularly given our strong relationship with the KRG and with Turkey.

Mr. WEXLER. Dr. Lesser.

Mr. LESSER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On these two issues I would say first on the EU and U.S. policy. You know, we have been such staunch supporters of Turkey's candidacy, and it is absolutely right, and it is right that the President reiterated that on his trip. I would just stress again that I think we need to start making this argument in some different ways.

It is very clear that as Turkey's candidacy has progressed, just making a broad-gauged strategic argument about anchoring Turkey and why it matters, looking at the map, et cetera, it doesn't take us far enough and it does meet European resistance.

Will that resistance be less if transatlantic relations improve in the next years? Possibly. But if you look at President Sarkozy's reaction to President Obama's statements in Ankara, it is not so clear. So I think we need to make the argument in a different way.

I think part of that is talking not so much about geo-politics, but about specific issues where Europe, the United States and Turkey play. It could be energy, it could be environment, it could be responses to the global economic crisis. There are a lot of different areas where we could change the geometry and not just talk about what the EU should be doing with Turkey, or vice-versa, but actually where we have common interests, and it builds a constituency. I think it is valid to approach it that way because this is not something that is going to play out in a year or 2. This is a 10- or 15-year project which I think Turks and Europeans often forget, but it is a 10- or 15-year project, and I think it is as much about not just what Turkey looks like in 10 or 15 years, the foreign issues which are also very important, but also what the EU looks like.

If the EU in 10 or 15 years is a looser place with different speeds and different circles, et cetera, Turkey is obviously going to fit in a different way. So there are a lot of different moving pieces. I think our priority in the meantime ought to be making a much more detailed argument and having a much more detailed dialogue with constituencies with a stake on specific issues, not just the geo-political argument.

On energy, I agree with what has already been said. I would also just add that there are complex cross-cutting interests in Turkey. We would like to think of Turkey as an alternative to over-reliance on Russian routes, and it can be, of course, looking at the map again. But, of course, Turkey has its own complicated debate about this, because there are a lot of commercial interests in Turkey, some in the energy sector, but some in other sectors, bound up in a close relationship with Russia. Russia is now Turkey's largest trading partner, economic partner across the board. So it is complicated when you go and talk to the Turks about this.

It is worth noting that the Iraqi piece of this is just as important as the Eurasian piece. The existing capacity of the pipelines that are longstanding across Turkey to bring Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean are actually twice the capacity of the Baku-Tblisi line, roughly. So this is a big, a big issue and a big contributor to Turkey's own energy security requirements. To the extent that we are an arbiter in terms of Iraqi security so they can actually export these supplies through Turkish pipelines, that is going to be very, very important to Turkey.

I would just finish by saying that for Turks this is very much bound up with their own thinking about the relationship with Russia, which has historically been very wary. But also, this wariness extends to the idea that NATO and the United States are entering a period of increased confrontation, competition with Russia, which also would not serve Turkish interests. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you again to the three witnesses for your exceptionally thoughtful and sober discussion. I want to note that you have been with us for a little bit more than 2½ hours, so you have been extremely generous with your time. I would like to give Mr.

Gallegly or Mr. Boozman the opportunity for the last word if they wish.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the chairman for calling this hearing. Thank you for all your testimony this morning. Of course, I join the chairman in apologizing for the break for an hour plus with voting. Unfortunately, there are certain things around here we don't have a tremendous amount of control over, but we do appreciate and recognize the time that you dedicated while we were off doing other things. But thank you for being here today, and we will stay engaged.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you. Mr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Well, I would just like to thank you and the ranking member for having the hearing. I apologize for not being here except at the last few minutes. Again, the schedule circumstances caused that, so thank you very much, and it is a very, very important subject that we are all very concerned about.

Mr. WEXLER. Thank you, and thank you for your attendance. Gentlemen, thank you very much. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:01 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

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

Subcommittee on Europe
Robert Wexler (D-FL), Chairman

May 7, 2009

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend the following **OPEN** hearing of the Subcommittee on Europe, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building:**

DATE: Thursday, May 14, 2009
TIME: 10:30 a.m.
SUBJECT: The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership
WITNESSES: Ian Lesser, Ph.D.
Senior Transatlantic Fellow
The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Mr. David L. Phillips
Senior Fellow
The Atlantic Council of the United States
*(Visiting Scholar
Center for the Study of Human Rights
Columbia University)*

Stephen Flanagan, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Henry A. Kissinger Chair
Center for Strategic and International Studies

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 as noted above.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Europe MEETING

Day Thursday Date 05/14/09 Room 2172

Starting Time 11:20 a.m. Ending Time 1:02 p.m.

Recesses 1 (11:28 to 11:54)

Presiding Member(s) Chairman Robert Wexler

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.)
The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:
Rep. Scott, Rep. McMahon, Rep. Inglis, Rep. Gallegly, Rep. Boozman

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an * if they are not Members of HIRC.)

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

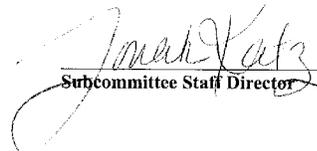
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)
Gallegly opening statement. Wilson question for the record.

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 1:02 p.m.


Subcommittee Staff Director

JIM COSTA
20th District, California

EMAIL: congress@jimcosta@mail.house.gov
WEB PAGE: www.house.gov/jimcosta

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
May 19, 2009

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EUROPE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Honorable Robert Wexler
Chairman
Subcommittee on Europe
H2-257 Ford House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elton Gallegly
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Europe
2309 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wexler and Ranking Member Gallegly:

Thank you for holding a hearing on May 14, 2009 titled "The United States and Turkey: A Model Partnership". Below you will find questions I would like submitted for the record.

1. Another year has passed, the 94th in fact, where the United States has refused to officially acknowledge the Armenian Genocide as such. Rather than go into the history of the genocide and our policy of denial, I would like to know when the thousands of Armenian constituents can be told that America officially recognizes the Armenian Genocide properly. Why must recognition continue to be such a contentious issue? Why is it, in your opinion that our nation refuses to have a foreign policy that accurately reflects history?
2. Dr. Lesser, in your opening remarks you stated that "Ankara has no interest in seeing the emergence of a nuclear-armed Iran." Obviously, a nuclear-free Iran is good for the entire Middle East, Europe, Asia, and the United States. However, didn't Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan host Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on an official state visit in August 2008? Can we work with Turkey on ensuring Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon? Do they understand Iranian stability is in their interest as well?
3. How would you describe the Obama Administration's policy toward Turkey? What does the Administration hope to achieve? What effect has President Obama's visit had on reversing the tide of anti-Americanism in Turkey since the U.S. invasion of Iraq? How has his April 24 statement concerning the "great disaster" that Armenians experienced in 1915 affected the positive impact of his visit?

Thank you for allowing me to submit these questions. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Bret Rumbeck of my staff at 225-3341.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

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The Honorable Jim Costa
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
1314 Longworth House Office Building
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President

June 12, 2009

Dear Congressman Costa,

Thank you for your follow-up question regarding Turkish relations with Iran and the outlook for Turkish cooperation in containing Iran's nuclear ambitions.

You are correct in noting recent high level Iranian visits to Turkey (there have also been a series of visits by Turkish leaders to Iran). Ankara has been clear about its desire to foster closer relations with Tehran, and the government of Prime Minister Erdogan has been far more comfortable than its predecessors in engaging the Iranian leadership.

From an American interests perspective, the key question is whether Turkey can and will use its closer ties with Tehran to deliver tough messages on the nuclear issue. Without question, a nuclear (or even a nuclear "ready") Iran will harm Turkish security interests, and Turkish officials and military planners are increasingly concerned about Turkey's exposure to Iranian nuclear and missile programs. Turkey's current position on the UN Security Council underscores the significance of Turkey's behavior on this question.

In my view, there is now an important opportunity to bring Turkey into the US policy debate on Iran. Turkey is a leading stakeholder in the outlook for conflict or détente with Iran. Ankara deserves a seat at the table as we shape new strategies toward Tehran. But at the same time, we should be clear that the nuclear program is at the center of American and UN concerns, and we will view Turkish cooperation in pressing Iran on this issue as a key facet -- and measure -- of our bilateral relationship.

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I trust these additional points are useful. Please do let me know if I can be of any further assistance on this or other aspects of US-Turkish relations.

With best regards,

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Senior Transatlantic Fellow

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June 08, 2009

The Honorable Jim Costa
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
1314 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Costa:

The Europe Subcommittee forwarded your questions for the record.

Regarding Turkey-Armenia relations, I refer you to my recent op-ed in *The Boston Globe*, "Turkey, Armenia and the Azerbaijan Delay" (May 24, 2009) and my letter in the *International Herald Tribune*, "Reconciliation is a Process" (June 1, 2009).

I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss my role as Chairman of the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (2001-2004) and its legal analysis on the applicability of the Genocide Convention.

Sincerely,

David L. Phillips
Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University
Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States
(917)733-7320

JOE WILSON
2ND DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSISTANT REPUBLICAN WHIP
COMMITTEES
ARMED SERVICES
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS
EDUCATION AND LABOR
HOUSE POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

June 2, 2009

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AND COUNSEL

Ms. Mariana C. Maguire
Europe Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Question for submission from Mr. Wilson (SC-02) in reference to Europe subcommittee hearing (5-14-09)

Q: In 2008, the Government of Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq began direct, bilateral discussions about issues of importance to both sides. The dialogue included a wide range of issues, including border security and economic cooperation. The dialogue culminated most recently in a meeting between the president of Turkey and the prime minister of the KRG, in Baghdad in March of this year. The normalization of relations between the KRG and Turkey is in the U.S. national interest, I believe. In fact, it is my understanding that both the Bush and Obama administration welcome this normalization and support it. It is a win-win-win. Two years ago I visited Erbil in the Kurdistan Region and I was impressed by the number of large construction projects underway by Turkish construction companies. I am grateful now to be co-chair of the Kurdish American Caucus as the KRG is a vital part of a united Iraq. As such, allow me to ask you (1) how you see KRG-Turkey relations progressing in the months ahead and (2) how can the U.S. Government continue facilitating those improved relations?

If I may be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

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The Honorable Joe Wilson
Assistant Republican Whip
U.S. House of Representatives

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President

June 12, 2009

Dear Congressman Wilson,

Thank you for your question regarding the outlook for Turkish relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq, and steps the US can take to encourage closer cooperation.

I agree with your assessment that relations between Ankara and the KRG have improved considerably over the past year. There are strong reasons for this on the Turkish side. Despite periodic frictions and the ongoing conflict with the PKK, Ankara has historically had good knowledge of political forces in northern Iraq, and has cultivated close ties with key factions across the border. In pursuing direct contacts with the KRG, Turkey is in no sense starting from scratch. The AKP government and the Turkish military recognize that continued success in dealing with PKK violence will require a more comprehensive political as well as military strategy. To date, the KRG has been reluctant, or unable to "close down" PKK sanctuaries. But PKK operations appear increasingly constrained, and the PKK is being pressed, operationally and politically, as a result of closer cooperation between Ankara and the KRG (US intelligence assistance has also played a role).

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The resurgence of PKK violence on Turkish soil several years ago dealt a blow to a more expansive Turkish debate about the implications of Kurdish national and regional aspirations, long seen as a threat to Turkish sovereignty and security. The balance may now be shifting back to a more open approach. An independent "Kurdistan" is unlikely to emerge in the near term. But even short of this, a more autonomous and assertive Kurdish region in northern Iraq is likely, and not necessarily incompatible with Turkish interests. Turkey is already a leading economic, political and security actor across the border. More open dialogue and closer cooperation with the KRG is a critical confidence building measure for Ankara. As always, the key test will be the willingness of Kurdish leaders to act against the PKK.





The US can encourage this process of Turkish-KRG “détente” in several ways. First, we can continue to press the KRG on the need to act against the PKK. Second, we can underscore our commitment to the security and territorial integrity of Turkey as a NATO ally, and make clear our unambiguous commitment to a unitary Iraq. Third, and not least, we can and should reinforce our intelligence support to Ankara in its struggle against the PKK, and explore operational cooperation in support of Turkish forces. Ideally, this should be a trilateral strategy pursued with the cooperation of the KRG.

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R. CRAIG KENNEDY
Resident

Please do let me know if I can be of any further assistance on this or other issues related to US-Turkish relations.

With best regards,

Dr. Ian O. Lesser
Senior Transatlantic Fellow

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June 08, 2009

The Honorable Joe Wilson
Assistant Republican Whip
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Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Wilson:

The Europe Subcommittee forwarded your question for the record concerning Turkey-KRG relations.

Attached is my soon to be released report for the Atlantic Council, "Confidence Building between Turks and Iraqi Kurds." It addresses your query.

I would be pleased to meet with you to discuss my recent trip to Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan.

Sincerely,

David L. Phillips
Visiting Scholar, Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University
Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States
(917)733-7320

[NOTE: The additional information submitted for the record, "Confidence Building Between Turks and Iraqi Kurds," dated June 2009 by Mr. David L. Phillips, is not reprinted here but is available in committee records.]

