

Denaturalizing the Deep Dilemma: An Episodic Analysis of Partial/Non-Cooperation Discourses in Turkey's Iraq Policy

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Abstract

Full rather than partial cooperation seems to be the more desirable, if not natural, option for foreign policy makers. The current state of Turkey's partial/non-cooperation with Iraq challenges this conventional wisdom. The Turkish Government officials have not yet fully achieved their goal of comprehensive cooperation with their Iraqi counterparts. In the recent years, Ankara and Baghdad have come closer to political confrontation, rather than institutional coordination. International, regional and other external causes could be held accountable for the miring of these relations. Yet, this argument does not help us delineate the deep dilemma still Turkey encounters. Once again, Turkey's vision of long-term strategic partnership with Iraq dissolved in less than five years. It seems that Turkey's discourse of strategic cooperation with Iraq began to lose its ontological meaning and rhetorical power. As Ankara got closer to Erbil, it began to fall apart from Baghdad. The weakening of political co-operation with the Central Iraqi Government might prove to be costly for the Turkish Government. Thus, Ankara would most likely need to coordinate its local and regional policies with Baghdad. Along these lines, the article provides a narrative inquiry into the lingering paradox of partial/non-cooperation discourses in Turkey's Iraq policy. Overall, the paper offers a contextual-discursive explanation to denaturalize partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The episodic analysis is based on three key events, i.e. the re-opening of Turkey's Baghdad Embassy in 1993, the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate in 2011.

Keywords: Turkey's Iraq Policy, Partial/Non-Cooperation, Political Discourse and Context, Political Frames, Episodic Analysis.

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Derin Dilemmanın Doğasını Dönüştürmek: Türkiye'nin Irak ile Kısmi İş Bir(likesiz)liği Söylemlerine İlişkin Dönemsel Bir Analiz

Özet

Dış politika yapıcıları açısından, tam iş birliği kısmi iş birliğine nazaran daha çok istenen, belki de daha doğal görünen, bir opsiyon olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Türkiye'nin Irak ile kısmi iş birliksizliğinin günümüzdeki durumu, bu yaygın kanaate tam olarak uymamaktadır. Türkiye hükûmeti yetkilileri, Iraklı meslektaşlarıyla kapsamlı iş birliği hedeflerini henüz tam olarak gerçekleştirememiştir. Son yıllarda Ankara, Bağdat ile ilişkilerinde kurumsal koordinasyona değil, siyasi gerilime daha fazla yakın hâle gelmiştir. İlişkilerin kötüye gidişi uluslararası, bölgesel veya diğer dışsal sebeplere bağlanabilir. Ancak bu argüman, Türkiye'nin hâlen yaşamakta olduğu derin çelişkinin çerçevesine yardımcı olmaz. Daha önce de olduğu gibi, Türkiye'nin Irak ile uzun erimli stratejik ortaklık vizyonu, beş yıldan daha az bir zaman içinde çözülmeye başlamıştır. Türkiye'nin Irak'a yönelik stratejik iş birliği söylemi, ontolojik anlamını ve retoriksel gücünü kaybetmeye yüz tutmuş görünmektedir. Ankara, Erbil ile yakınlaştıkça, Bağdat'tan ıraklaşmıştır. Merkezî Irak Hükûmeti ile iş birliğinin zayıflaması, Türk Hükûmeti açısından maliyetli olabilecek sonuçlara yol açabilir. Yüksek olasılıkla Ankara, yerel ve bölgesel politikalarını Bağdat ile koordine etme ihtiyacını duyabilir. Anılan bağlamda, bu makale Türkiye'nin Irak ile kısmi iş bir(likesiz)liği söylemlerindeki süregelen karmaşıklığı anlatsal bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Türkiye-Irak ilişkilerinde yaşanan iş bir(likesiz)liği dinamiklerinin doğallaştırılmamasına yönelik bağlamsal-söylemsel bir açıklama sunmaktadır. Dönemsel olarak yapılan analizde, üç önemli olay temel alınmıştır: Türkiye'nin Bağdat Büyükelçiliğinin 1993 yılında tekrar açılması, 2003 yılında Irak'ın ABD tarafından işgal edilmesi ve Türkiye'nin Erbil Başkonsolosluğunun 2011 yılında resmî olarak açılması.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye'nin Irak Politikası, Kısmi İş Bir(likesiz)liği, Siyasi Söylem ve Bağlam, Politik Çerçevesel, Dönemsel Analiz

تحويل طبيعة المعضلة العميقة : التحليل المرهلي للمقولات الخاصة بالتعاون
(عدم تعاون) الجزئي التركي العراقي
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ملخص:

من وجهة نظر واضعي السياسة الخارجية، أن التعاون التام مرجح دائما على التعاون الجزئي ، بل قد يبدو خيارا أكثر طبيعية. إن حالة عدم التعاون الجزئي القائمة بين تركيا العراق اليوم لا تتفق تماما مع هذا الرأي الشائع. إن المسؤولين في الحكومة التركية لم يتمكنوا حتى الآن من تحقيق اهدافهم فيما يتعلق بالتعاون المشترك الشامل مع نظرائهم العراقيين. و في السنوات الأخيرة أن أنقرة اوضحت في علاقاتها مع بغداد تقترب من حالة التوتر السياسي أكثر منها الى التنسيق المؤسساتي معها. ومن الممكن أن يعزى سير العلاقات نحو الأسوأ الى أسباب دولية او إقليمية او الى غيرها من الأسباب الخارجية، غير ان هذا المنطق لا يساعد على تأطير التناقض العميق الذي تعيشه تركيا حاليا. وكما كان الحال في السابق أيضا، فإن رؤى الشراكة الاستراتيجية بعيدة المدى لتركيا مع العراق، بدأت تنهار خلال فترة نقل عن خمس سنوات. ويبدو ان مقولة التعاون الاستراتيجي لتركيا تجاه العراق بدأت تتجه نحو فقدان معناها الوجودي وزخمها البلاغي. وكما تقترب أنقرة مع أربيل، فإنها قد ابتعدت عن بغداد. إن ضعف التعاون مع الحكومة المركزية في العراق قد يؤدي إلى نتائج مكلفة للحكومة التركية. ومن المحتمل جدا أن تشعر أنقرة بالحاجة الى التنسيق مع بغداد في سياساتها المحلية والإقليمية. ومن هذا المنطلق، فإن هذا المقال يعتمد على التحليل السردى للتعقيدات المستمرة في مقولة التعاون (أو عدم التعاون) الجزئي لتركيا مع العراق. والخلاصة إن هذه الدراسة تقدم توضيحا تحليليا سياقيا واستطراديا عن عدم تطبيع ديناميكيات التعاون (أو عدم التعاون) الذي يشهد في العلاقات بين تركيا والعراق. وفي التحليل المرهلي أخذنا ثلاث وقائع كأساس في التحليل وهي : إعادة فتح السفارة التركية في بغداد عام ١٩٩٣، واحتلال العراق من قبل الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية عام ٢٠٠٣، وافتتاح القنصلية العامة التركية في اربيل بشكل رسمي عام ٢٠١١ .

كلمات مفتاحية : سياسة تركيا تجاه العراق، التعاون (عدم التعاون) الجزئي، المقول والسياق السياسي، الإطار السياسي، التحليل الدوري.

Introduction

It is widely accepted that Turkey has always been interconnected to Iraq in many respects. Material (border trade, oil-water exchange) and non-material (socio-cultural interaction) factors establish strong ties between the two countries. Given this interconnectedness, one expects the prevalence and continuity of cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations.¹ On the contrary, the ongoing state of affairs between Ankara and Baghdad does not neatly fit into this picture. Making sense of the recent deterioration in Ankara-Baghdad relations have presented a theoretically puzzling picture, even for the established scholars and experienced observers.²

In recent years, governments in Ankara and Baghdad have come closer to political confrontation, rather than institutional coordination. International, regional and other external causes could be held accountable for the miring of these relations. Yet, a daunting paradox still remains. Despite its growing cooperation with Erbil, Ankara has begun to fall apart from Baghdad, at a time of urgent need. Weakening of political/inter-governmental co-operation (if defined as “policy co-ordination”³) with the Central Iraqi Government (CIG) might prove to be costly for the Turkish Government in its efforts targeted towards disarming of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) militants, including the top cadres located in northern Iraq. In order to better implement its Syrian policy and possibly reach to the desired end state (change of political leadership) in Damascus, Ankara would also need to coordinate its policies with Baghdad.

Given these likely prospects for the foreseeable future, it becomes all the more ironic if one revisits ambitious goals of co-operation put forward in the “joint political declaration”⁴ signed on 10 July 2008 by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki. In less than five years, it seemed that Turkey-Iraq “High-Level Cooperation Council” began

1 See for instance, Ramazan Gözen, *İmparatorluktan Küresel Aktörlüğe Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası*, (Ankara: Palme Yayıncılık, 2009), p. 212.

2 Henry Barkey, “Turkey-Iraq Relations Deteriorate with Accusations of Sectarianism,” 30 April 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com> (accessed 11 October 2012).

3 Helen Milner, “International Theories of Cooperation among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses,” *World Politics*, Vol. 44, April 1992, p. 467.

4 “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Hükümetleri Arasında Yüksek Düzeyli İşbirliği Konseyi'nin Kurulmasına İlişkin Ortak Siyasi Bildirge,” <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 24 April 2011.

to lose its *raison d'être*. Why did Turkey's viewing of "long-term strategic partnership" with Iraq die down in such a short time? Is Turkey, entering into another episode of intended but failed cooperation with Iraq? Or is Ankara, once again, moving towards equilibrium of partial/non-cooperation with Baghdad? Time will exactly tell which one of the paths actually holds.

Against the backdrop of these questions, the aim of this article is to critically analyze the recent episode of partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The episodic analysis is based on three key events, i.e. the re-opening of Turkey's Baghdad Embassy in 1993, the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate in 2011. The article is divided into three parts. In part one (episodic beginning), I will lay out the contextual background of partial cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The second part (episodic middle) covers the period between the commencement of US air bombardment on 20 March 2003 and the fall of Baghdad on 9 April 2003. In this section, I analyze political frames that were published in the pro-government daily *Yeni Şafak*.⁵ In addition to official discourses of foreign policy figures—Turkey's Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs—political frames of Fehmi Kuru⁶ (the chief columnist of *Yeni Şafak*) are incorporated into the analysis for complementary purposes. Also using the pen name of Taha Kivanç, Kuru made a considerable discursive contribution to the public construction of Turkey's Iraq policy during the Iraq War. Analysis of political-intellectual framings helps to make better sense of Turkey's ambivalent non-cooperation discourse. Turkey's discursive position during the war implied a mixed reasoning, which attempted to uphold security and economic interests without relinquishing identity matters. It was this sophisticated discourse that provided the conditions of possibility for gradual embracing of northern Iraq in the post-2003 period.

After the episodic middle, contextual dynamics of comprehensive cooperation are examined in part three. The official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate on 29 March 2011 marked the episodic end of Turkey's post-war Iraq policy. In other words, this incident bears sufficient significance to close this episode. In the con-

5 Electronic archive was available at <http://yenisafak.com.tr>, accessed on 1-30 April 2012.

6 Fehmi Kuru has been a close friend of Abdullah Gül. Kuru staunchly defended that Turkey should not get involved in the Iraq War whatsoever. See Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 2004), p. 113.

clusion, episodic findings are presented. Overall the article argues that Turkey's Iraq policy discourse has changed quite dramatically over the recent years. Ankara's cooperative and non-cooperative approaches to Baghdad and Erbil have become more salient than ever before. Finding a reasonable solution to the Kurdish question on both sides of the border has still formed the major predicament for Turkey's discourse of comprehensive cooperation with Iraq.

Part One (Episodic Beginning): Contextual Background of Partial Cooperation

In the post-Gulf War era, implementation of military and economic measures against Baghdad has created severe consequences for Ankara. Governments of Turkey seemed to have almost no choice, but extend their support to the US for the implementation of UN-mandated northern no-fly zone over Iraq. As a result of the Operation Northern Watch (ONW)—initially Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)—launched from the Turkish territories, the Central Iraqi Government (CIG) had to cease its tight military grip over northern Iraq. Regional power vacuum was filled by emergent Kurdish groups. Without further ado, “the embryo of a Kurdish state” has been sown by Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Besides, the region had turned out to be a safe haven for the PKK terrorist activities. Between 1991 and 1993, “the PKK was to find it easier than ever before to operate from northern Iraq.”⁷

Turkey could not break the cross-border impasse by only resorting to military power. As President Turgut Özal saw, the military solution was not in the offing on both sides of the border. Hence he opted for political-economic measures in dealing with northern Iraq.⁸ In February 1993, Turkey's Baghdad Embassy was re-opened. Then, the two capitals were continuously visited by various delegations.⁹ In this period, Turkish-Iraqi relations displayed a return towards the security cooperation discourse.

7 Philip Robins, “The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4, 1993, p. 674.

8 Tarık Oğuzlu, “Turkey's Northern Iraq Policy: Competing Perspectives,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, p. 10.

9 Robert Olson, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995: From the Gulf War to the Incursion into Iraq,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Fall 1995, pp. 13- 14. See also Gül İnanç, *Türk Diplomasisinde Irak (1978-1997)*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), pp. 104-107.

Returning to Security Cooperation Discourse

Özal engaged with the leaders of KDP and PUK, Masoud Barzani and Celal Talabani. By doing so, he attempted to drive the head of PKK Abdullah Öcalan towards a ceasefire, which would be declared as of 20 March 1993. After the sudden death of Özal on 17 April 1993, the ceasefire was put on a backburner. The killing of 33 Turkish army recruits in the PKK ambush broke the ceasefire on 25 May 1993.¹⁰ In almost rest of the 1990's, the Turkish army had sustained its upper hand in national security and foreign policy making processes. Turkey was driven towards more militarily oriented policies, particularly in northern Iraq.¹¹ Consequently, this state of mind led Turkey to enhance its security cooperation with Iran and Syria. After the trilateral meeting held in Damascus, on 23 August 1993, Turkish, Iranian and Syrian foreign ministers “expressed their unalterable opposition to the fragmentation of Iraq”, presumably by the US.¹² The fear of Iraq's partition provoked “the Sèvres syndrome”¹³. This age-old phobia has created havoc in Turkish domestic and foreign policy up until the capturing of Öcalan in 1999.¹⁴

On the other hand, consecutive Turkish governments, including the one led by Necmettin Erbakan in 1996, allowed the US Air Force units—stationed in Turkey—to continue their operation (Northern Watch) over northern Iraq by using the air space of Turkey. The existence of northern-no-fly-zone gave a free hand to the Turkish military to devise intermittent operations against the PKK strongholds in northern Iraq. Paradoxically, however, Iraqi territory in the

10 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, “Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No.1, Winter 1997, pp. 68-72. See also Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, “Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler, 1990-2001,” in Başkin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt II: 1980-2001)*, 10th ed., (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), pp. 557, 558.

11 İlhan Uzgel, “Ordu Dış Politikasının Neresinde?,” in Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu (eds.), *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 311-318. See also Erol Kurubaş, “Etnik Sorun-Dış Politika İlişkisi Bağlamında Kürt Sorununun Türk Dış Politikasına Etkileri,” *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 8, No.1, 2009, pp. 39-69.

12 Olson, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995: From the Gulf War to the Incursion into Iraq”, op.cit., 5.

13 Dietrich Jung, “The Sèvres Syndrome: Turkish Foreign Policy and its Historical Legacies,” in Bjørn Møller (ed.), *Oil & Water: Cooperative Security in the Persian Gulf*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers 2001), pp. 131-159. The republished version of this chapter was accessible http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2003_07-09/jung_sevres/jung_sevres.html (accessed 25 March 2010).

14 Başkin Oran, “Dönemin Bilançosu, 1990-2001,” in *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II)*, p. 219, 235, 236.

north of the thirty sixth parallel, which was dominated by the Kurdish population, became more autonomous. The autonomy might be regarded as a step towards federal status.¹⁵

By 1996, the Turkish General Staff (TGS) was designated as the coordinating institution for Turkey's northern Iraq policy.¹⁶ In the same year, the former Chief of TGS retired General Necip Torumtay argued that the PKK presence and the proto-federation of Kurds in northern Iraq would create serious security problems and social repercussions for Turkey. In this regard, Torumtay proposed a three-fold strategy: elimination of the PKK, protection of the Iraqi territorial integrity, normalization of political-economic relations.¹⁷ This three-tiered strategy more or less defined the parameters of Turkey's Iraq policy up until the US invasion. It seems that the so-called 'red lines', outlined by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) long before the Iraq war, was an extension of this strategy. The red lines were about the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq,¹⁸ the status of Kirkuk and Mosul and the safety of Turkmen population living in Iraq.

Moving towards the Invasion

When the Justice and Development Party (AKP/AK PARTİ¹⁹) came to power on 3 November 2002, Iraq war was still at the top of US foreign policy agenda.²⁰ As of 3 December 2002, the US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. and Under Secretary of State

15 İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II)*, p. 265, 266. See also Michael Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 53.

16 İlhan Uzgel, "Dış Politikada AKP: Stratejik Konumdan Stratejik Modele", in İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru, (eds.), *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2009), p. 373. Uzgel cites Fikret Bila, "Özel Siyaset Belgesi ve Rumsfeld," *Milliyet*, 20 July 2003. See also Uzgel, "Ordu Dış Politikanın Neresinde?", p. 314.

17 Necip Torumtay, *Değişen Stratejilerin Odağında Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1996), pp. 58-60, 226-232, 242-251.

18 Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği," in Baskın Oran, (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt I: 1919-1980)*, 14th ed., (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009), p. 26. Oran quotes from an official MFA report, which was leaked to *Cumhuriyet* on 13 May 2001.

19 Throughout the article, AKP (common scholarly reference) and AK PARTİ (institutional reference) are taken as co-acronyms of the Justice and Development Party. For the institutional reference, see "AK PARTİ Kurum Kimliği Klavuzu (2006)," <http://www.akparti.org.tr/AKPARTI%20Kurumsal.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2008).

20 Raymond Hinnebusch and Rick Fawn (eds.), *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006).

Marc Grossman were in Ankara. They had talks with Prime Minister Abdullah Gül. This was the first official meeting when the US side offered a military cooperation plan, which involved three incremental stages, i.e. “site inspection, site preparation and actual operation.” Both sides agreed to go with the plan.²¹ On 10 December 2002, AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited the White House. During the visit, Erdoğan hinted the serious predicament for the US coalition building efforts. Participation of regional (Arab-Muslim) countries, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, was deemed important by Erdoğan.²²

While AKP officials went on negotiating with the US, Turkish people, by and large, were getting wary about the situation. Almost 90 percent of Turkish public was opposing to any kind of war against Iraq. AKP was wedged between enormous US pressure and rising popular opposition. For AKP, US political and economic support was crucial. Total debt was around 250 billion dollars. International Monetary Fund (IMF) program had to be sustained. AKP government needed US financial and diplomatic support. Therefore, it could not reject US war demands in an open and more direct way. Ignoring domestic public opinion would also be too costly.²³

Thus, AKP opted for continuation of status quo and buy some time. Prime Minister Abdullah Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yaşar Yakış and their adviser Ahmet Davutoğlu sought for diplomatic solutions. In this regard, Turkish government led the formation of “Iraq’s Neighbors Group” in order to prevent invasion and/or protect territorial integrity of Iraq. On 23 January 2003, Turkey hosted the first of these regional diplomatic consultations in İstanbul.²⁴ The chief

21 Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 87, 88. See also Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, pp.,99-105.

22 Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, p. 109.

23 Meliha Altunışık, “Turkey’s Iraq Policy: The War and Beyond,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, August 2006, pp. 187-189. Altunışık provides a long list including Washington’s overtly ambitious demands from Ankara. Among those demands most significant were opening of several air bases and seaports without any notification requirement, deployment of 120,000 US and British combat troops, troop contribution of around 35,000 to 40,000. In exchange, the US offered six billion dollars in aid, in addition to some 26 billion dollars in loan guarantees.

24 Nuri Yeşilyurt, “Orta Doğu’yla İlişkiler,” in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt III: 2001-2012)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013), pp. 405, 406.

columnist of pro-government daily *Yeni Şafak* Fehmi Kuru was also supportive of policies directed towards the prevention of war.²⁵

Given his intellectual credentials²⁶, Davutoğlu could well be regarded as the master mind, who had been trying to orchestrate AKP's foreign policy making process behind the scenes. Davutoğlu strongly opposed Turkey's concrete contribution to and direct involvement into the war. The US war against Iraq could not serve Turkey's own interests.²⁷ Nonetheless, AKP government did not have the wherewithal to thwart war ambitions of the Bush administration against the Saddam regime. The unfolding of events also reiterated the fact that Ankara could not prevent the war between Washington and Baghdad. Therefore, Turkey's state (political-military) bureaucracy sided with the idea of opening the northern front. Their decision was based on security reasons, like eliminating the PKK threat and balancing the Kurdish ambitions in northern Iraq.²⁸ However, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer took a normative stance and argued for a multilateral military action only if it is based on international legitimacy. TGS also would have preferred to act on the basis of a UN mandate or some kind of a NATO umbrella or even a regional initiative. These options waned by the end of January 2003, when significant amount of US and British troops completed their deployment into the Persian Gulf.²⁹

To a certain extent, it was security interests that had driven AKP towards cooperation with the US for pre-war arrangements, i.e. site survey and base modernization. On 6 February 2003, the first motion was passed with a 308 to 193 margin. AKP suffered 53 against

25 Yetkin, *Tezkereler: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, 113.

26 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

27 Gürkan Zengin, *Hoca: Türk Dış Politikası'nda "Davutoğlu Etkisi"*, (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitapevi, 2010), p. 142, 143. Gürkan Zengin, *Editör Programı*, CNN Türk, 12 February 2002. This interview was reprinted in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Küresel Bunalım: 11 Eylül Konuşmaları*, ed. Faruk Deniz, 14th ed., (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), pp. 197-207. See also Derya Sazak, "Sohbet Odası," *Milliyet*, 13 January 2003. This interview is reprinted in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, eds. Semih Atiş-Sevinç Alkan Özcan, 2nd ed., (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), pp. 89-94.

28 Fikret Bilâ, *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları: Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerle 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, (İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 2007), pp. 160-165, 277-279, 283-307. Deniz Bölükbaşı, *1 Mart Vakası: Irak Tezkeresi ve Sonrası*, (İstanbul: Doğan Yayıncılık), pp. 36-51.

29 Mim Kemal Öke, *Derviş ve Komutan: Özgürlük-Güvenlik Sarkacındaki Türkiye'nin Kimlik Sorunsalı*, (İstanbul: Alfa, 2004), pp. 360-369.

votes from its own ranks.³⁰ Despite strategic interests and military considerations, the situation in northern Iraq was also a matter of identity for AKP officials. As the leader of AKP, Erdoğan articulated a dual position in mid-February 2003. Even though he was morally against the war, the government would do whatever necessary in order to protect Turkey's interests. While dealing with the issue of war in Iraq, he opted for a mixed approach in order to achieve economic and security interests without frustrating socio-political and ethno-religious concerns.³¹

President Sezer's normative attitude became influential during the National Security Council (NSC) meetings, including the last one on 28 February 2003. NSC did not take any binding decision and did not recommend any specific course of action either. The second motion, which would virtually open up the northern front, was voted on 1 March 2003. Of 533 parliamentarians in that session, 19 abstained and 250 voted against the motion. The number of advocates reached 264 but fell short of meeting the constitutional requirement of 268. In a sense, the motion crisis marked the key moment after which Turkey's discursive framings began to shape the episodic middle. The next part helps substantiating this point.

Part Two (Episodic Middle): Discursive Framings of Non-Cooperation

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan read his government program on 19 March 2003. The program stipulated that Turkey's policy towards the Iraqi problem was rationalized around political, military and economic interests. Protection of interests was the most salient political frame. At this point, the new government was ready, if not eager, to renew the second motion. No sooner had the US President George W. Bush declared 48 hours ultimatum—for Saddam Hussein and his sons Uday and Kusay to leave Iraq—the Istanbul stock-exchange faced a sharp decline. Financial collapse of 17 March 2003 was called as “the Black Monday.”³² In order to eliminate the volatility in domestic market, the third motion had to be passed, even before the new government would seek the vote of

30 Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, pp. 116-119, 128-130, 149. See also Öke, *Derviş ve Komutan*, pp. 187-189.

31 Altunışık, “Turkey's Iraq Policy: The War and Beyond”, p. 189, 195.

32 “Küresel Kriz Çıkar,” “Piyasalar Sakin,” “Borsa Normale Döndü,” <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

confidence on 23 March 2003. Notwithstanding the domestic public opinion,³³ the AKP officials were certain that this time the motion, with the minor changes only in its wording, could be approved by the majority of AKP deputies.³⁴ Staying out of the game in northern Iraq seemed to be too risky for Ankara. Hence, the Turkish diplomacy kept open its contact channels, with almost all players of the coming war in Iraq. In this regard, the indispensability of Turkey for the US war effort was one of the major frames deployed by Turkish policy and opinion makers.

Deployment of Indispensability Theses

Fehmi Kuru (Taha Kıvanç) argued that “all of the US war plans depend on the opening of a front in the north (i.e. in Turkey); Washington does not have a Plan B; if it does, Plan B as well as Plan C included Turkey”. As Ankara took a tougher line against joining the war, diplomatic position of the US, especially in the UN platform, had been weakened. In fact, this was the second thesis of Kıvanç. The third thesis was built on the first and the second. Without the UN blessing and the Turkish support, “the US could do nothing” to instigate an illegitimate war.³⁵

Like Kıvanç, Turkey’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Yakış formidably believed in the indispensability thesis: “I think that the US has not given up stationing of soldiers in Turkey’s lands. In case this happens, a new motion might come to the agenda.”³⁶ By the beginning of war, Turkey’s foreign policy discourse was primarily imprisoned by a pervasive geopolitical vision that is predetermined by the indispensability assumption: without Turkey’s indispensable support, the US could not instigate the war on Iraq. As a political frame, the indispensability thesis largely rested on Turkey’s geopolitical position.

33 “Halk, Irak’a Saldırısında ABD ile İşbirliği İstemiyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/e4.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

34 Nevzat Demirkol-Bilal Çetin, “Hükümet Tezkereden Emin”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p5.html>; Veli Toprak, “ABD’nin ‘Mali’ Baskısı Tezkereyi Erkene Aldırdı”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p7.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

35 Taha Kıvanç, “Savaş Üzerine Tezler”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/tkivanc.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

36 “Kuzey Cephesiz Olmaz”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/22/>; “ABD Kuzeye Mahkum”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/22/p2.html> (accessed on 26 March 2012).

Kıvanç also reiterated that economic downturn could not provide a good excuse for the AKP government to incline towards a pro-war stance. Turkey should not be a country that appeared to “count money as a cause of war.”³⁷ Kıvanç’s negative framing of US economic assistance was almost echoed by Prime Minister Erdoğan. At his first in-country visit in Çorum, he asserted that they did not “speak [in terms of financial] numbers” with the US. “Now, all of our calculation is political and military.” With regard to the new motion, there is no “uncertainty.” Two things have been clarified. First and foremost, the motion would allow “the entry of Turkish military into northern Iraq.” Secondly, “the air corridor (over flights)” would be opened for the US war planes.³⁸ In a sense, framing of the third motion demonstrated Ankara’s discursive desire to construct reasons for re-entering into northern Iraq.

Constructing Reasons for Re-Entering into Northern Iraq

Gül and the US Secretary of State Colin Powell made it clear that economic dimension of the Turkish-US bilateral negotiations almost collapsed. On the other hand, the US government remained quite conducive to Ankara’s political-military demands, i.e. the stationing of Turkish troops in northern Iraq and the acceptance of Turkmen as constituent elements of Iraq. Turkish soldiers were expected to “enter into Iraq as part of international coalition” under the leadership of “Turkish commander.” In exchange, the Turkish government agreed to provide air access for transit purposes.³⁹ According to Turkey’s President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the “process” at the UN Security Council had to be finalized. Without the conclusion of that process, the US took a “unilateral” action. He reasserted that the US decision to wage war against Iraq was not “right.”⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the motion that handed authority to the government for six months was accepted by the Parliament. The motion included the opening of Turkish airspace to the foreign (read US) military forces and the sending of Turkish troops to contingencies in abroad (read

37 Taha Kıvanç, “Savaşa Yuvarlanıyor muyuz?”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/tkivanc.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

38 “Erdoğan: ABD ile Para Konuşmuyoruz”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/politika.html>; Veli Toprak, “ABD ile Anlaşma Sadece Siyasî ve Askerî”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

39 “Powell’dan Çirkin Oyun”, “Powell’den Çirkin Diplomasi”, “Tezkere Genişleyebilir”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

40 “ABD’nin Savaş Kararı Doğru Değil”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

northern Iraq). Among the present 535 deputies, 1 abstained and 202 voted against. The motion passed with 302 votes. The number of defectors among the AKP was around 15. Both Erdoğan and Gül put personal pressure on their own ranks to keep the impact of defections at a marginal level. This time, their arguments might have seemed to be more convincing. Erdoğan asserted that Turkey had done its best for peace. As he put, the acceptance of motion was a requirement with regard to enhancement of border security by the Turkish Armed Forces and sustenance of good relations with the US.⁴¹ The US support for the economy was still critical, especially in terms of managing the IMF program. Due to the Iraqi crisis, additional economic measures had to be taken.⁴²

The motion had passed even before the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted. The first MoU for the site surveys and base modernizations was signed and put into effect. Based on a full-scale military cooperation, including the use of Turkish air space, the second MoU was drafted and negotiated. Nevertheless, it was not signed due to the rejection of the second motion. To delineate new modalities of cooperation, Robert Pearson, the US Ambassador in Ankara, and Uğur Ziyal, Undersecretary of the Turkish MFA, started a new round of talks.⁴³

In stark contrast to the Gulf War, Turkey decided not to close the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline, so long as it remains unharmed. Interestingly enough, Turkey sought assurances from the US in order to increase the capacity for oil flow.⁴⁴ Unlike the oil issue, the Kurdish question proved to be a major predicament for Turkey's cooperation with the US. Kurdish groups in northern Iraq have pledged full and unconditional support to the Coalition Forces. Under this pretext, primarily KDP, and to a lesser extent PUK, was against any Turkish military involvement into the war.⁴⁵

41 "Tezkere Kabul Edildi", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/politika.html>; Bilal Çetin-Veli Toprak, "1 Milyar Dolarlık Teklif", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p2.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

42 "Milli Direniş", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/e2.html>; Hüseyin Özyay, "Ek Tedbirler Alacağız", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/ekonomi.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

43 Kaan İpekçioğlu, "Mutabakat Sözde Kaldı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p4.html>; "İngiliz 'Hava' Peşinde", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p5.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

44 "Yumurtalık'tan Petrol Sevkiyatı Devam Ediyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/e7.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

45 "Türkiye'yle Dostuz Ama...", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p6.html>; Kaan İpekçioğlu, "Ankara'da Türkmen ve Asker Pazarlığı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p6.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

As of 23 March 2003, the status of Turkey's military involvement in northern Iraq has yet to be coordinated with the US.⁴⁶ For the US side, the picture was slightly different. The US President Bush acknowledged that "currently, Turks had no reason to enter into northern Iraq. We are keeping up constant contact with the Turkish army as well as the Turkish politicians. They know our policy. This is a strict policy. We have told clearly that we expected them not to enter into northern Iraq. They know that we work together with the Kurds in order to prevent any incident that would create a pretext for [the Turkish] entry into northern Iraq."⁴⁷

Turkey's insistence on re-entry into northern Iraq brought serious ramifications. An intense international pressure has been mounted against Turkey's entry into northern Iraq, not only by the US but also by the EU. In order to address the disinformation in the international media, TGS issued a public statement to explain the reality on the ground. The international news that claimed around one thousand Turkish soldiers' entry into northern Iraq was farfetched.⁴⁸

In addition to the rising of international tensions, Ankara's relations with Baghdad were also at risk. The Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Naci Sabri stated that "Turkey's assistance to the US-led war would give a great damage to the [bilateral] relations...We hope that our Turkish neighbors would realize what their real interests are. Whoever attempts to give damage to Iraq, would [inadvertently] incur a huge damage on itself."⁴⁹

On 22 March 2003, the US began to use the Turkish airspace in order to transport troops into northern Iraq.⁵⁰ Turkey's permission was quite important for the US war effort.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the US

46 "Gül: ABD ile Görüşmeler Sürüyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/p3.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

47 "Bush: Türkiye'nin K.Irak'a Girmesi İçin Bir Gerekçe Yok", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/dunya.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

48 "Dünya ABD'yi Bıraktı Türkiye'yi Tartışıyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/23/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

49 "Irak: Türkiye'nin ABD'ye Desteği İlişkileri Zedeler", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

50 "Türkiye'nin Zaten K.Irak'ta Askeri Var", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/p3.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

51 "B Planı Bozgunu Bush'u Madara Etti", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/29/politika.html> (accessed 15 April 2012); "Ensar'a İki Cepheden Saldırı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/dunya.html> (accessed 14 April 2012); "Amerika ve Kürtler Ensar'a Saldırıyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/d3.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

side was against Turkey's unilateral military actions in northern Iraq. These actions should not give the "impression of occupation."⁵² This was the crucial predicament causing ambiguity in Ankara. More than anything, the discursive ambivalence reflected the liminal meaning of Coalition for Turkey.

Discursive Meaning of the Coalition

Ambivalent public statements on the issue of entering into northern Iraq began to challenge the credibility of the AKP government. Thus, Gül had felt the need to acknowledge that their public explanations were true and "all of them have to be believed. On this issue [of entering into northern Iraq], of course Turkey will itself take the decision it needs. Within war conditions, it is only natural that we have been in coordination with our allies." The opening of Turkish airspace was aimed to "build peace, provide security and prevent threatening postures." Based on three intentions, i.e. border security against terrorist infiltrations, control of mass migration and humanitarian assistance, Turkey might decide to enter into northern Iraq. Ankara had no desire for annexation. According to Gül, the Government had been pursuing an active policy in line with "national interests", rather than passively watching the developments unfolded in the region and the globe. With this policy, Turkey assumed "a central position."⁵³

In fact, Turkey had wanted to reinforce its military presence already existing in northern Iraq,⁵⁴ under the pretext of the prevention of terror and the control of mass migration. Nevertheless, Ankara's intentions towards northern Iraq have been targeted by the international media. Cornered by international media allegations and political pressure, the Turkish MFA assured the EU, NATO and Arab League members that Turkey has "no intention of military interference" or intervention into northern Iraq "other than the aims of prevention of humanitarian disaster[s] and humanitarian assistance."⁵⁵

52 "ABD: Girin Ama İşgal Görüntüsü Vermeyin", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/politika.html>; "Kuzey İçin Pazarlık", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/index.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

53 "Gül: K.Irak Kararını Türkiye Verir", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/p8.html> (accessed 14 April 2012); "Gül: Gayet Açık Söyledik", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/p2.html>; "Gül'den AB'ye: Niye Heyecanlanıyorsunuz?", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/29/p4.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

54 See İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası III*, p. 277.

55 "AB'nin Kriterler[i] Türkiye İçin Geçerli", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/p6.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

For either security or humanitarian reasons, the Turkish side wanted to preserve, reinforce military presence in northern Iraq. At the same time, Ankara insisted that their units remain outside of Coalition control and hence had to be commanded by a Turkish general. In order to address the disinformation campaign in the US media, the Turkish side assured that the Turkish military would not be a force of occupation in northern Iraq and stay there until the completion of their designated mission.⁵⁶

Nonetheless, the Turkish government remained cautious in order not to give the impression of an opportunist country. Gül acknowledged that “on the issue of protecting Iraq’s territorial integrity” Turkey has been “the most sensitive country.” From the very outset, Ankara has pursued a clear policy towards northern Iraq. Two conditions—the development of mass migration and the rise of PKK terrorist activities in cross-border areas—were set to assess the need for Turkish military intervention. As of that day, the government was in a better position to look after three major priorities. Contrary to the general presumptions, relations with the US were developing. Secondly, Turkey managed to remain out of the war. Most importantly, the Turkish economy was kept to float on a right track.⁵⁷

Like Gül, Erdoğan expressed his content with Turkey’s Iraq policy. Despite all governmental efforts, Ankara could not prevent the onset of war. Nonetheless, the three motions were not issued to give support to the initiation of war. Those motions were requirements emanating from “the alliance relations of our state and our [national] security.” In this regard, the AKP government did not fall into a dual trap. On one side, it did not accept to take a pro-war stance just for the sake of money. On the other side, it did not act against the world realities. Faced with this double-sided trap, the government was driven towards political and military, rather than economic, priorities. As envisioned by Erdoğan, Turkey’s approach to the Iraq problem was multi-dimensional. Turkey has not had an intention to

56 “Mehmetçiğin Komutası Görüşmeleri Kilitledi”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/politika.html> (accessed 14 April 2012). See also “Zalmay Halilzad Kürt Grupları İkna Edecek”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/p7.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

57 Mustafa Karaalioğlu, “AB Bize Söylüyor ABD’ye İştiriyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/30/p2.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

occupy or annex northern Iraq.⁵⁸ Turkey's military goal could only be threat prevention not occupation. As for the post-war Iraq, Erdoğan disclosed Turkey's desire for "building of peace and free and democratic government." He seemed wishful to restore good economic relations with Turkey's longtime, second largest trading partner.⁵⁹

By helping to end the war, the AKP government would contribute to prevent more bloodletting and hence more losses in human lives.⁶⁰ Prime Minister Erdoğan succinctly framed Turkey's precarious straddle between war and peace: "Turkey, together with the US—its strategic partner and more than fifty years old ally—is determined to maintain close cooperation in order to provide peace and durable stability in the region. Yet, at the same time, we hope and pray for the sooner end of humanitarian disaster in Iraq."⁶¹

Gül (and Powell) reverberated: "Turkey has been in the Coalition." All of the logistical aid would be provided under "the guise of humanitarian assistance." Erdoğan publicly explained that arms and ammunition could not be included into the logistical support.⁶² Gül explained that "Turkey is not a belligerent country which had entered, [and] has been actively contributing to the war. Turkey is not in the war. Turkey does not give active support to the war."⁶³

Koru argued that the emphasis on Turkey's being in the Coalition implied AKP government's inclination for finding a better place in post-Saddam regional designs. In his wording, "the concept of 'Coalition' carries this kind of meaning." Another strong signal of being inside the Coalition was the government's latest decision

58 "Tuzaklara Düşmedik", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/30/politika.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

59 "Avrupa'ya K.Irak Mesajı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/31/politika.html> (accessed on 15 April 2012). See also "Erdoğan Wall Street Journal'e Makale Yazdı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p8.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

60 Fehmi Koru, "Savaş Üzerine Düşünceler..." <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/fkoru.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

61 "Erdoğan Wall Street Journal'e Makale Yazdı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p8.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

62 Veli Toprak-Bilal Çetin, "Musul ve Kerkük'e Kimse Göz Dikmesin" <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/03/p2.html>; "Halilzad'ın Görevi Ankara'yı Oyalamak" <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p7.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

63 "Savaşın İçinde Değiliz", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/05/p4.html> (accessed 20 April 2012).

to deport three Iraqi diplomats from Turkey.⁶⁴ This event almost came towards the fall of Baghdad.⁶⁵ On 9 April 2003, the US forces “reached Firdos (Paradise) Square, dominated by one of the many statues of Saddam Hussein...The fall of the Saddam statue on 9 April, televised across the world, was taken by its media to mark the fall of the Saddam régime.”⁶⁶ The repercussions of Saddam’s fall for Turkey’s Iraq policy discourse are analyzed in part three.

Part Three (Episodic End): Contextual Dynamics of Comprehensive Cooperation

In the aftermath of war, regime change did occur in Iraq. Paradoxically however, Iraq turned into a failed state living on the verge of virtual civil war. Particularly central and southern areas of Iraq were drawn into chaos. The complete collapse of security institutions paved the way for sectarian (ethno-religious) strife and hence militant insurgency.⁶⁷

Under chaotic circumstances, PUK and KDP followed a provoking policy. As early as 10 April 2003, the Kurdish militias began looting first in the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and later in Mosul. The alarm bells began to ring for the national security establishment in Turkey. Ankara was utterly disturbed by the enhanced military cooperation between the US and the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq. The “hood incident” of 4 July 2003 has added an insult to the injury.⁶⁸ On the same day, Suleymaniya based Turkmen political and cultural institutions were also targeted. Detained Turkish soldiers were interrogated for fifty five hours in Baghdad. Upon Prime Minister

64 Fehmi Kuru, “Koalisyon Üyesi”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/06/fkoru.html>; “Iraklı 3 Diplomat Sınırdışı Ediliyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/06/p4.html>; “Dışişleri’nde Delil Var!”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/p4.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

65 “Bağdat Boşalıyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/g7.html>; “Bağdat Direniyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/dunya.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

66 John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, (NY: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 201- 202. See also “İşgalciler Bağdat’ta” <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/10/d2.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

67 Keegan, *The Iraq War*, pp. 204-212.

68 As acknowledged by the Chief of TGS General Hilmi Özkök, the “hood incident” constituted an unforgettable event for the Turkish Armed Forces. It was a deliberate act committed by “friendly and allied” US forces against a Turkish military unit stationed in northern Iraq. The incident was provocative since Turkey’s 3 officers and 8 non-commissioned officers were taken into custody just like insurgents. Detention measures were quite unprecedented and disturbing, went as far to put hoods onto the heads of Turkish soldiers. See Bilâ, *Ankara’da Irak Savaşları*, pp. 233-246.

Erdoğan's request from US Vice President Cheney, Turkish soldiers were released.⁶⁹

Since Kurdish aggressions have not been prevented, PUK and KDP came close to annex Kirkuk by the beginning of 2004. "The issue was at the top of Turkey's agenda during the January 2004 high level visit to Washington. Prime Minister Erdoğan warned the Kurds not to play with fire."⁷⁰ Political-military anxiety has risen after 2005, when the PKK terrorist organization began to reinforce its strongholds in northern Iraq and began to target security forces in Turkey. Without local support from the Kurdish authorities, this region could not be a safe haven for the PKK. Between 2005 and 2007, the deepening relationship between PKK, KDP and PUK was perceived as a serious threat for security interests of Turkey. The discursive position of Ankara indicated a dual desire, i.e. conduct of cross-border operations into northern Iraq and (to a lesser extent) gradual renewal of bilateral cooperation with Baghdad.

Cross-Border Operations and Renewal of Bilateral Cooperation

During the political campaign for the general elections of 22 July 2007, the conduct of cross-border operations became a dominant theme. On 13 June 2007, Prime Minister Erdoğan explained that the primacy should be given to military operations inside the borders. The election results showed that AKP read the socio-political circumstances quite well. In eastern and south eastern electoral districts, while the independents supported by DTP (Democratic Society Party) received almost 25 percent of the votes; AKP's percentage was around 55. Behind the electoral success of AKP, Erdoğan's political discourse became quite influential.⁷¹ In this regard, Erdoğan's Diyarbakır speech on 12 August 2005 has to be noted.

Kurdish issue belongs to the whole nation, not only to one part of it. For this reason,...that issue is my problem prior to anyone

69 Uzel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası III*, pp. 277, 278.

70 Bill Park, "Between Europe, the United States and the Middle East: Turkey and European Security in the Wake of the Iraq Crisis", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol .5, No. 3, 2004, p. 502. See also Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending*, pp. 15-16.

71 "AKP'li Kurt: DTP'nin Oy Kaybında Başbakan'ın Konuşması da Etkili Oldu", *Milliyet*, 30 June 2007, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/07/30/son/sonsiy18.asp> (accessed 24 March 2008).

else. We are a great state and we handle each question with more democracy, more law for citizenship, and more well-fare; we will continue to do so. We do not deny any issue of the country, we accept that every question is real and we are ready to face (with these problems).⁷²

By looking at Erdoğan's framing, one could easily realize that Erdoğan first and foremost internalized the Kurdish question, without making any clear reference to the situation in northern Iraq. Erdoğan's discursive stance vis-à-vis the Kurdish question and by extension towards Iraq may further be delineated from his Şemdinli speech on 21 November 2005. In that speech, Erdoğan suggested that Kurdish ethnicity should be recognized as a "sub-identity".

We have three red lines. First we said that there would not be a nationalism based on ethnicity. We will eradicate this...Turks, Kurds,...we are all going to unite under the supra-identity of Turkish Republic citizenship. We will respect the sub-identities as such...a Kurd would be able to say s/he is a Kurd...Anyone should not be offended by this, would not do so, because this is our Constitutional citizenship. It is not possible to act according to ethnic identity within this country.⁷³

Furthermore, AKP government skillfully pursued a comprehensive policy in order to outreach all parts (Baghdad, Mosul, Basra and Erbil) and segments (Sunni/Shi'i Arabs and Kurds) of Iraq. With the personal effort of Davutoğlu, Ankara had managed to integrate the alienated Sunni Arab groups (including Tariq al-Hashimi who would later become Vice President) into the domestic political process in Baghdad. Consequently, the new Iraqi Constitution was promulgated on 15 October 2005 and the Parliamentary elections were held on 15 December 2005.⁷⁴

In addition, low-profile political contacts have been maintained with the local Kurdish authority of northern Iraq, i.e. the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) which was established in May 2006.⁷⁵ By the

72 Cengiz Çandar, "Başbakan ve Diyarbakır, 12 Ağustos 2005-21 Ekim 2008", *Radikal*, 22 October 2008.

73 "Başbakan Şemdinli'de Konuştu", <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20051121/Basbakan-Semdinlide-konustu.php> (accessed 1 January 2009).

74 Zengin, *Hoca: Türk Dış Politikası'nda "Davutoğlu Etkisi"*, pp. 265-271.

75 Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending*, pp. 17- 18.

same month, Baghdad had a new central government too. Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'i Arab, was chosen as prime minister and Kurdish (PUK) leader Talabani emerged as the president. While cautiously watching the Kurdish ascendance in the CIG and the federalization of relations between Erbil and Baghdad, Ankara has kept military pressure over the PKK strongholds in northern Iraq.⁷⁶

In the economic front, Turkey's ties with the KRG began to develop in 2006. "Turkish trade and [other] economic relations with the KRG were expected to reach \$3 billion in 2006."⁷⁷ In spite of the economic developments, the relations between Ankara and Erbil remained under the dusk of uncertainty emanating from the future status of Kirkuk. The new Constitution "provided that a referendum be held by the end of 2007." In this regard, "al-Maliki promised that Baghdad would accept the outcome of the referendum to be held before the end of December 2007." By the end of 2006, none of the Iraqi groups demonstrated "willingness to compromise on their maximal demands." Under those circumstances, the "Baker-Hamilton" report "recommended that the referendum be postponed in order to prevent further conflict."⁷⁸

In spite of the Kirkuk stalemate, Ankara did not hesitate to pursue its comprehensive policy towards Iraq. Turkey's Mosul General Consulate was re-opened in February 2007.⁷⁹ Within the same month, the US sent extra combat troops to Iraq to implement the surge security strategy in Baghdad. After the surge became successful, the US and Iraq signed an agreement that pledged the withdrawal of US combat forces from Iraq between June 2009 and December 2011.

In this period, the first Turkish high-level visit to Baghdad was paid by Gül on 23 October 2007. During Maliki's Ankara visit on 7 August 2007, the two sides expressed mutual intentions for the opening of their second general consulates in Basra and Gaziantep. In a draft "Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)", both sides agreed to enhance bilateral security cooperation in the fight against terrorist organizations (including the PKK). Pledges for the boosting of

76 Ibid., 54. Gunter cites and quotes "Nechirvan Barzani: Iraq Will Not Be Used as a Base for Attacking Neighboring States," *The Globe*, 22 July 2006.

77 Ibid., 42. Gunter cites the *Turkish Daily News*, 23 January 2006.

78 Ibid., 45, 48. Gunter cites James A. III Baker and Lee H. Hamilton (Co-Chairs), *The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward—A New Approach*, (NY: Vintage Books, 2006).

79 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgeler/>, 30 April 2011.

economic cooperation, particularly in the oil and natural gas sector, have been made. In terms of their planning for regional policies, Ankara and Baghdad have reached an understanding to enhance their joint standing for the “Broadened Neighbors of Iraq.”⁸⁰ Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline was re-opened by the beginning of 2008.⁸¹ These developments were clear signs of comprehensive changes in Turkey’s formulation of Iraq policy.

Policy of Comprehensive Engagement

AKP’s comprehensive engagement policy with northern Iraq had positive repercussions over the Kurds living in Turkey. In parallel, domestic policies based on respect for the socio-cultural significance of Kurdish identity have had a positive impact on Turkey’s northern Iraq policy. As a result of rising economic investment and the boosting of social services available to the local population, ordinary people on the street felt that they were treated decently. As AKP nurtured the feeling of dignity among the Kurds, political fruits naturally ripened. In contrast to AKP’s active policy at the municipal level, the performance of municipalities run by DTP remained quite low. Since they were primarily busy with ethno-nationalist and ideological concerns, they paid the political price heavily within the Kurdish constituency.⁸²

Socio-political cleavage among the Kurdish community has been more apparent in the voting for the motion, which was designed to authorize the Turkish Armed Forces to conduct cross-border operations in northern Iraq for a period of one year. On 17 October 2007, only parliamentarians from the DTP voted against. The motion passed without any significant defection from the AKP.⁸³ Despite the fact that the Parliament had given authority for cross-border operations, the incursion of PKK terrorists into Dağlica province of Hakkari on 20 October 2007 put serious pressure on the AKP government. In response, Erdoğan sealed the military-intelligence

80 [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgelet/](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgelet/,), 30 April 2011.

81 Yeşilyurt, “Orta Doğu’yla İlişkiler”, p. 409.

82 Rabia Karakaya Polat, “The AKP and the Kurdish Issue: What Went Wrong?,” *SETA Policy Brief*, No.14, (Ankara: SETA, May 2008). Mustafa Akyol, *Kürt Sorununu Yeniden Düşünmek: Yanlış Giden Neydi? Bundan Sonra Nereye?*, 5th ed., (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), pp. 14-25. “Erdoğan: Öncelik Yurt İçi Mücadelede,” *Sabah*, 13 June 2007, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr> (accessed 23 June 2008).

83 “AKP Milletvekili Abdurrahman Kurt: Kuzey Irak Bataklığıdır”, <http://www.haber5.com> (accessed 20 April 2008).

cooperation deal with the US on 5 November 2007. Cross-border air strikes started in December 2007. The cross-border land operations proved to be successful in early February 2008.⁸⁴

On 12 March 2008, Erdoğan had disclosed AKP's comprehensive package for the southeast region. He acknowledged that the south-east problem has socio-economic, psychological and cultural dimensions. Therefore, his plan included the opening of a Kurdish broadcasting channel in the official state television, namely TRT. In order to further develop relations with Iraq, opening of a Turkish consulate in Basra was also on AKP's agenda.⁸⁵ Erdoğan went on to follow policy of full cooperation with Iraq. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan reaffirmed that contacts with northern Iraq will be extended and diversified.⁸⁶

On the first of May, Erdoğan's foreign policy advisor Davutoğlu and special representative for Iraq Murat Özçelik were in Baghdad to meet with the Iraqi officials, including the Prime Minister of KRG Nechirvan Barzani. On the same day, Deputy Iraqi President Tariq al-Hashimi flew to Ankara for diplomatic meetings. In exchange, Erdoğan's historic visit to Baghdad on 10 July 2008 proved to be successful. Security, economy and cultural issues were all discussed during the bilateral talks. PKK terrorism, by implication the Kurdish question, dominated the agenda. By reconciling their major differences, Turkey and Iraq signed a "joint political declaration"⁸⁷ to form a "High-Level Cooperation Council," which would be tasked with the improvement of bilateral relations in many respects.⁸⁸

84 "AK Parti ile Ordunun Flörtü", 7 Mart 2008, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/438254.asp> (accessed 24 March 2008).

85 "Erdoğan'ın Yok Dediği Güneydoğu Paketi 12 Milyar" *Milliyet*, 12 March 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com> (accessed on 3 January 2009); "İşte Başbakan'ın NYT'ye Açıkladığı Güneydoğu Paketi," <http://www.nethaber.com> (accessed 3 January 2009).

86 "Babacan: K.Irak'la Temaslar Sıklaşacak", *Milliyet*, 29 April 2008. On 2 January 2009, Babacan was the guest speaker of *Enine Boyuna* at TRT-1. During that program, he declared that Turkey was at the very early stage of security cooperation with the regional administration in northern Iraq. Referring to the report prepared by Sönmez Köksal—who served as the ambassador in Baghdad between 1986 and 1990 and later became the chief of National Intelligence Agency—Babacan stated that there would be a possibility for Turkey to open a consulate in Erbil when political conditions were met.

87 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Hükûmetleri Arasında Yüksek Düzeyli İşbirliği Konseyi'nin Kurulmasına İlişkin Ortak Siyasi Bildirge", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 24 April 2011.

88 "Irak Politikasında Kırmızı Çizgiler Değişti", <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/>, 24 October 2008. Information is based on Devrim Sevimay's interview with Haşim Haşimi in the *Milliyet* daily. "Erdoğan'dan Irak'a Teşekkür", *Milliyet*, 11 July 2008.

In parallel, Turkish air strikes have continued intermittently until PKK's Aktütün incursion on 3 October 2008. The Parliament voted for the motion on 8 October 2008 to extend the authorization for cross-border operations for one year. In order to eliminate PKK militants, Ankara enhanced security cooperation with Erbil.⁸⁹ By then the Turkish domestic political stage has been set for the local election campaigns of 29 March 2009. Erdoğan intensified his vocal bid for winning the election in Diyarbakır municipality, which was held by the DTP. Again, Diyarbakır became a spatial symbol of Kurdish question. The political battle between AKP and DTP over the eastern-southeastern municipalities has created implications for Turkey's Kurdish problem.

In this respect, Erdoğan's controversial speech in Hakkari on 1 November 2008 has to be noted, notwithstanding the fact that its main target audience was domestic. "A Kurd can say that s/he is a Kurd. But we have united under one flag. What we have said is one nation, one flag, one county; one state...There is no place in this country for the one who oppose this (view). S/he may go wherever desired."⁹⁰ Since Erdoğan's discursive frames gave signs of security rationale, he was indirectly accused of accommodating the military bureaucracy.⁹¹ According to the journalistic account of Cengiz Çandar, Erdoğan received a tacit consent from the military, before the opening of TRT-6 (Kurdish broadcasting channel of official state television) on 1 January 2009.⁹² The broadcasts of TRT-6 created important ramifications both internally and externally. The most striking reaction came from the PKK who accused all of the Kurds working either in AKP or in the TRT-6 with betrayal.⁹³

In the post-2003 period, Ankara's particular diplomatic and military moves between 2009 and 2011 gave important signs of a new chapter in Turkey's Iraq policy. After the opening of Basra General

89 "PKK Attacks Prompt Security Cooperation between Turkey and Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government," *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 36, 22 October 2008. (accessed 6 August 2011).

90 "AK PARTİ Genel Başkanı ve Başbakan Erdoğan Hakkari Merkez İlçe Kongresi'nde Konuştu", <http://www.rte.gen.tr/> (accessed 10 January 2009).

91 Mehveş Evin, "AKP'nin Dili Değişti," *Akşam*, 18 November 2008.

92 Cengiz Çandar, *Mezopotamya Ekspresi: Bir Tarih Yolculuğu (Türkiye-Kürtler-Ortadoğu-Batı)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012), pp. 38, 44, 45.

93 Cevdet Aşkın, "TRT 6 DTP'de Kafa Karıştırdı, Kandil'e Askeri Baskı Arttı," *Referans*, 6 January 2009, <http://www.referansgazetesi.com/> (accessed 10 January 2009). "TRT'nin Yeni Kürtçe Kanalı TRT 6, PKK'yı Şişledi," <http://www.ekoayrinti.com/> (accessed 10 January 2009).

Consulate on 18 March 2009, the Turkish-Iraqi bilateral military co-operation (framework) agreement was signed on 9 June 2009.⁹⁴ Erdoğan's official inauguration of Erbil General Consulate on 29 March 2011⁹⁵ marked the episodic end of Turkey's post-war Iraq policy. Given the pre-war historical background and discursive context, occurrence of this event was almost unimaginable. In those days, Turkish foreign policy makers were trying to make reasons for (re)establishing military, rather than diplomatic, presence in northern Iraq. After the war, Ankara began to fully embrace Erbil, despite the dismay of Baghdad.⁹⁶ As a consequence of its official engagement with the KRG, the Turkish Government began to face serious challenges in its relations with the CIG.

Ankara-Baghdad relations have further strained by the beginning of 2012, as the Iraqi body politic had been embroiled with a fierce ethno-sectarian power struggle. Turkey was declared as an "enemy state" by the (Shi'i Arab) Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on 21 April 2012.⁹⁷ This was mainly due to the stepping up of economic cooperation between Ankara and Erbil, especially in the energy (oil) sector. Moreover, the Turkish government did not hesitate to protect their (Sunni Arab) political protégée, Deputy Iraqi President Tariq al-Hashimi, after he had been indicted and sentenced with a capital punishment.

The political rift between Ankara and Baghdad has been further widened by the repercussions of the civil war in Syria. While Ankara opted to side with the (predominantly Sunni-Arab) Free Syrian Army attempting to liberate at least the north of Aleppo from the rest of country, Baghdad fell victim to the Shi'i influence of Tehran and covertly cooperate with the ruling (Alawite/Nusayri) regime in Damascus. In midst of the regional instability aroused by ethnic (Arab-Kurd) and sectarian (Sunni-Shi'i/Nusayri) violence, the KRG could turn into a security partner for the Turkish government.

94 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Genelkurmay Başkanlığı ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Savunma Bakanlığı Arasında Askeri Alanda Eğitim, Teknik ve Bilimsel İş Birliği Mutabakat Muhturası (İmza Tarihi)", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.tr.mfa>, 25 April 2011.

95 "Erdoğan, Erbil Başkonsolosluğu'nu Açtı," 29 March 2011, <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/> (accessed on 25 May 2012).

96 "SC-8, 21 Nisan 2012, Dışişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsünün Irak Başbakanlığı İnternet Sitesinde Ülkemize İlişkin Olarak Yayımlanan Basın Açıklamasına Dair Görüşümüz Hakkındaki Soruya Cevabı", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/> (accessed 4 August 2012).

97 Henry Barkey, "Turkey-Iraq Relations Deteriorate with Accusations of Sectarianism," 30 April 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/> (accessed 11 October 2012).

Partial cooperation, if not non-cooperation, in Ankara-Baghdad relations have become more controversial on 2 August 2012, when the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu paid an unprecedented visit to northern Iraq.⁹⁸ Davutoğlu did not receive diplomatic clearance from the CIG for this visit and did not hesitate to make it with the diplomatic services provided by KRG. Davutoğlu held talks with the President of KRG Masoud Barzani in Erbil. In their joint public statement, dated 1 August 2012, political commitments for the sustenance of bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the energy (oil and natural gas) sector, were highlighted. Both sides declared that emergent “power vacuum”, ensuing of ethnic-sectarian violence and the activities of terrorist groups in Syria posed a “common threat” for Turkey and KRG. Hence they agreed to work together in order to prevent instability emanating mainly from northern Syria.⁹⁹

Conclusion: Episodic Findings

In the post-Gulf War period, Turkey’s discourse of cooperation with Iraq was based on security rationale. This reasoning was largely a response to the dyadic contextual changes that emerged in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The implementation of northern no-fly zone over the thirty sixth parallel and its enforcement by the ONW created a power vacuum in northern Iraq. Since Baghdad lost most of its military control over Erbil, KDP and PUK found more favorable environment to realize their political aspirations. They moved in the direction of achieving federal governance and/or regional autonomy. In addition to dealing with this political challenge, Ankara had to address the military threat posed by the PKK in northern Iraq. Based on the balance of threat rationale, Ankara sided with Baghdad and KDP against the rapprochement between Iran, PUK and PKK. Up until the US invasion in 2003, reshuffling of alliances and contextual moves have marked the logic of cooperation and non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. Yet, security reasoning did not help Turkey to strengthen its cooperation with Iraq. Quite the contrary, it prevented Ankara to take and implement well-coordinated political decisions.

98 “Davutoğlu’s Kirkuk Visit Ignites Rage in Baghdad”, 3 August 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/> (accessed 11 October 2012); “Davutoğlu’dan 75 Yıl Sonra Bir İlk”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/02.08.2012> (accessed 17 September 2012); “75 Yıl Sonra Kerkük’te”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/03.08.2012> (accessed 17 September 2012).

99 “Dışişleri Bakanı Ahmet Davutoğlu ile IKB Başkanı Mesud Barzani Arasındaki Görüşmeye İlişkin Ortak Basın Açıklaması, 1 Ağustos 2012, Erbil”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/> (accessed 4 August 2012).

Before the US invasion, Ankara was mainly concerned about protection of political, military and economic interests. Balancing of the PKK threat and elimination of the Kurdish statehood were two dominant frames that rationalized the utility of cooperating with Washington against Baghdad. To a certain extent, Ankara was also interested in hindering of military cooperation between Washington and Erbil. In this regard, predominantly security rationale has provided the discursive basis for the Gül government to initialize military cooperation (parliamentary approval of the first motion for site survey and base modernization) with the US, notwithstanding the domestic public and political opposition emerged even within their own ranks. In terms of Turkey-US cooperation, the crisis of 1 March 2003 (parliamentary disapproval of the second motion for land-air transit rights) was clearly a bargaining failure. One of the main reasons of this incident was misrepresentation of Turkey's bargaining position. Despite the grave domestic financial problems, discursive framing of economic interests did not constitute a good reason to enter into war together with the US side. That is to say, the motion crisis demonstrated the difficulty of cooperating with Washington against Baghdad. It re-presented the significance of both domestic veto players and audience costs for Turkey's discourse of non-cooperation with Iraq.

By the beginning and in the midst of war, the indispensability frame dominated Turkey's foreign policy discourse and implied geopolitical thinking. This predetermined logic dictated that the opening of northern front was indispensable for the US. In this rationale, it was presumed that support for the US would also alleviate Ankara's security concerns emanating from northern Iraq. In exchange for the opening of its airspace, Turkey would enter into northern Iraq in order to prevent rise of PKK terrorism and mass migration. This could be regarded as a major reason that made the third motion discursively defensible, and perhaps politically possible, for the AKP government. After the third motion, "alliance with the US" and "national security interests" have been re-deployed into the governmental discourse as basic political frames. In this instance, Ankara faced both coordination and credibility problems. On the one hand, the Turkish political-military officials ought to resolve command-control issues with their US counterparts. On the other hand, Turkish military should not give the impression of occupation or annexation by acting alongside the Coalition forces. As framed by Erdoğan, Ankara faced a "dual trap" after the US-led war in Iraq. Turkey could

not take the risk of neither active involvement nor passive non-intervention during the US invasion of Iraq. According to him, Turkish government acted along the realities on the ground. They did not take an opportunistic pro-war stance, but took a position to protect Turkey's security interests. In the end, Turkey's security cooperation with the US and probable entry into northern Iraq was justified by discursive framing of humanitarian reasons. Towards the end of war, the significant frame was "being both in the Coalition and out of the war," which reflected the double-faced nature of Turkey's Iraq policy discourse.

In the post-war period, comprehensive cooperation with Iraq became part of Turkey's governmental discourse. Nonetheless, the implications of this discourse for the dyadic context still remain elusive. That is to say, discursive change has created lingering (both positive and negative) influence on the actual dynamics of Ankara-Baghdad, Ankara-Erbil and Baghdad-Erbil relations. As Ankara got closer to Erbil, it began to fall apart from Baghdad. Primarily due to the uncertain nature of the Kurdish question on both sides of the border, the impasse of partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations might prove to be an enduring and unnatural phenomenon. As Turkey's historical relations with Iraq move towards the first centennial, there is still an unending need for deciphering and denaturalizing the contexts and the discourses of partial/non-cooperation.

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