

Turkey-US Relations in Justice and Development Party's Era*

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Abstract: *Emergence of the new dynamics that has come out along with the changes in the international system has affected the relations between The United States and Turkey. Emerging developments in international relations after the September 11 attacks and Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power in 2002 was a turning point in Turkish-foreign policy. In this paper, the Turkey- US relations during the period of JDP after 2002 was explored in two chapters entitled as periods of Bush and Obama, and analyzed in the framework of two concepts " strategic partnership and model partnership."*

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, Justice and Development Party, Turkey –USA relations

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Introduction

The issues that affected the relations between USA and Turkey have been the regional and international conflicts and problems rather than the bilateral ones. The factors affecting the Turkish-American relations are studied in two groups in literature. The first group is structural and institutional factors and the second is the ever-changing conjuncture since 1940. The position of Turkey in NATO which both countries are of members and the relations of Turkey with global economic and financial institutions (e.g. WB and IMF) are the factors that have the institutional effect on the relations. On the other hand the region in which Turkey is located is within the zone of influence / domination / power / interest of USA dramatically, a situation which confronts us as a continuously effective structural factor. Though new outcomes and crisis occasionally arise between Turkey and USA this structural and institutional dimension in bilateral relations has been effective in keeping / continuing the relations¹. Turkey was in league with USA in the bipolar international system that had shown up after 1940. Turkey had close relations with USA during the period which is known as Cold War era. Especially the Adnan Menderes period was the golden years of the bilateral relations. However, after 1960, especially due the Cyprus conflict, serious problems were experienced. For example the Johnson's letter (1964) and the military embargo imposed in 1975 by USA against Turkey due to the Cyprus Peace Operation (1974) showed us the years in which the relations would nearly broke away. We see the reoccurrence of the same situation in 01 March 2003, a few months after JDP came to power. With no doubt that the terrorist attack occurred in USA on September 11, 2001 had a great effect on the nature of the relations at that time. After the attacks USA invaded Iraq and Afghanistan. The great impact of these invasions have been seen on Turkish foreign policy

After 9/11 Washington considered Turkey as a natural ally, in Global War Against Terrorism, to support US military operations in the region. For US, the secular and democratic structure of Turkey was a symbol that should be protected against the despotic regimes of the region. However the outcomes were not in line with Washington's expectations². As a matter of fact the March 1st (2003) bill was rejected in Turkish parliament. After that date the Turkey-USA relations were exacerbated.

In this study the relations between USA and Turkey after 2002 JDP period were discussed under two topics as Bush Period and Obama Period. The conditions and the factors that have affected the Turkish foreign policy in both periods were studied with a historical dimension.

Bush Period

On September 11, 2001, shortly after the election of George Bush Jr. as the US President on November 7th of 2000, the WTC buildings in New York and the Pentagon building in Washington D.C. were attacked and many people lost their lives in those attacks. This incident of 9/11 caused a significant change in US foreign policy. In his speech made immediately after 9/11 Bush declared The National Security Strategy, which is known as Bush Doctrine. This doctrine has a crucial place in identifying the new US foreign policy. The doctrine refers to a new threat against USA and Europe³. The elements of this threat were described as radicalism and the technology that will be used to produce the weapons of mass destruction that might be used against them. Besides, the doctrine points out the terrorist organizations having global networks and the weak states and rogue states supporting those terror organizations as the abetting / deploying / instigating actors of those elements⁴. Nevertheless the doctrine indicates that the peace will be defended by fighting against the terrorists and the dictators. The peace will be spread by supporting free and open societies on every continent. In line with this approach, USA, by the support of UN and NATO, conducted a military operation called "Operation Enduring Freedom" against Afghanistan where Osama Bin-Laden and Al-Kaide, who were held responsible for 9/11 attacks by USA, were located (Global Security). The

Afghan war started on October 7, 2001. Turkey gave full support to US in this war. After Afghanistan, USA invaded Iraq by the allegation of having weapons of mass destruction and threatened Iran by use of force in case Iran continues its nuclear program. Thus, in a way, US, in its national security strategy, preferred the use of force instead of the diplomatic ways and dialogue for the resolution of international conflicts.

| 3

During the period of JDP, which came into power with a significant vote share after 2002 general elections, Turkish foreign policy had a great development and alteration. JDP came into power with 34% of the votes on November 3, 2002 and formed the government alone⁵. After forming the government under the leadership of Abdullah Gul, the president Mr Gul tried to solve the Iraq Crisis through peaceful means e.g. initiatives like “Regional Initiative on Iraq – Summit of Foreign Ministers” on January 23, 2003 and meeting up with the states neighboring to Iraq between 4 and 11 January 2003⁶. Unfortunately this kind of efforts failed to produce any positive result. After this initiative the office of prime Minister delivered a bill to the Turkish Parliament. According to the bill which was adopted on February 6, 2003⁷ “the sea-ports of Iskenderun and Mersin and the airports in Incirlik, Diyarbakir, Afyon, Corlu, Sabiha Gokcen and Batman will be modernized and in case of necessity other air bases and seaports will be included in the modernization as well”. After this bill a new bill named “Deployment of Turkish Armed Forces Abroad and Deployment of Foreign Forces in Turkey”, upon the demand of USA regarding the deployment of soldiers, was delivered to the Parliament in February. The resolution was voted on 1st of March and rejected. Not only many parties were disappointed with the rejection but also it led a crisis for the Turkish – American relations. Mark Parris, then-ambassador of USA, depicted the situation as follows:

“The rejection of the bill, which would permit the deployment of USA to Iraq through Turkish border, on 1st of March 2003 is the failure point of the relations. Though it loses its effect, ‘strategic partnership’ is not uttered any more. Surely we do not hold Turkey responsible for it but - given the fact that the war is still on and 3000 US citizen have been killed, it would be unrealistic to say that March 1st rejection was forgotten totally. During this long process that is called ‘Iraq War’ the only thing that is remembered about Turkey on USA side is the rejection of the bill. Nobody knows that Turkey let USA to use its air corridor, Incirlik air base and provided other valuable supports. What they – Americans – read are the reports delivered about the novels like “Metal Storm”. It is certain that these things do not reflect the real tendencies of Turkish public. However they had more influence than they should have. That situation affected the views about Turkey negatively”⁸.

This incident of 2003 affected Turkish – American relations for long years. The nuisances of the rejection were voiced by the government officials in the subsequent years. Stating his disagreement with the situation Mr. Erdogan said that: “If the March 1st bill hadn’t been rejected neither the terrorist organization (PKK) would have been there nor we would have heard what is heard nowadays. When asked, some of our high rank military commanders utter the same opinion; they say ‘we should have been there’”⁹. Shortly after the rejection of the bill Mr. Erdogan became Prime Minister and proposed a new bill to the Parliament on March 20, 2003 to ease the relations with USA. Upon voting, the bill passed. This bill had permitted the followings: For the subsequent duration of six month period as per the article 92 of the Constitution the Government will organize the required deeds – the necessity, scope, limit and time of which will be determined by the Government who is responsible for preparing the Military Forces to defend the homeland and maintaining the national security as per article 117 of the Constitution – to deploy the Turkish Military Forces to northern Iraq, to operate these deployed forces in northern Iraq as per the principles, that will be determined when

required, in order to sustain an efficient deterrence, and, in case of a military operation to let the air elements of foreign military forces to use the Turkish airspace in accordance with the principles and rules that will be determined by Turkish authorities¹⁰. USA released a credit of 8.5 billion US\$ to Turkey after this bill¹¹. USA attacked Iraq on March 20, 2003 and asked Turkey to participate the war with an active role by letting the USA troops use its soil. As it is seen Turkey did not provide the expected support to USA in Iraq War like it did in Afghan war. Iraq War caused a problem for the relations between two countries.¹²

The second crisis with USA after March 1st bill is the one in the city of Suleymaniye on northern Iraq on 4th of July 2003. Relying on a so-called intelligence tip, US troops of 173th airborne brigade raided the Turkoman Front building in Suleymaniye and arrested the Turkish soldiers there placing hoods over their heads. According to the so-called intelligence tip 11 Turkish soldiers including one colonel and two majors allegedly had several explosives and ammunition to assassinate a local Kurdish leader¹³. The allegation was rejected by Turkish authorities¹⁴. The detained Turkish soldiers were transported to Baghdad and were released 60 hours later. The incident was covered in Turkish media as US revenge for the rejection of March 1st bill. It was interpreted as an insult to national pride¹⁵. This incident together with March 1st bill harmed the confidence between two countries, and, the Anti-Americanism in Turkish society soared so much so that some people considered US as the biggest threat for Turkey at that time.

George Bush won the Presidency election on November 4, 2004 second time. The most prominent event of Bush's second term took place between Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on July 5, 2006. They signed Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue¹⁶. As the name indicates both countries pledge themselves to work together on all issues of common concern, including promoting peace and stability in the broader Middle East through democracy; supporting international efforts towards a permanent settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including international efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a two-state solution; fostering stability, democracy and prosperity in a unified Iraq; supporting the achievement of a just and lasting, comprehensive and mutually-acceptable settlement of the Cyprus question under the auspices of the UN and in this context ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots; enhancing energy security through diversification of routes and sources, including from the Caspian basin; countering terrorism, including the fight against the PKK and its affiliates. Besides, the document emphasizes that US will strongly support Turkey's accession to the European Union. Under the title of "Structured Dialogue" it is also anticipated that Turkey and the United States will make use of several consultation channels at various levels. This section mentions of "strategic partnership" between Turkey and US and indicates that it is high time to develop a structured framework to make the strategic partnership more effective and result-oriented. In this regards the following consultation bodies haven established: High-Level Defense Group (HLDG), Economic Cooperation Partnership Council (ECPC), Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). According to Fuller, this is the first important document confessing that USA realized that the course of events in Turkey changed and it was necessary to provide greater freedom to Turkey to conduct the primary negotiator role in the region. It also indicates an acceptance that, in times of crisis, it would be beneficial, from time to time, Turkey be able to contact with all the parties in the region (e.g. countries like Syria and Iran with which US experiences problems), and, it would be preferable to have Turkey interfere when compared with possible interferences of Russia, China and even Europe¹⁷. Relying on this document it is deducible that in spite of the several problems experienced between two states, US apprehended the strategic importance of Turkey in the region, and therefore, wanted to repair the relation and keep it on a strategic partnership level. However USA betrayed all his commitments in the document. The best example of the betrayal occurred in 2007. On October 7, 2007, 13 troops of Turkey were martyred in an attack of PKK in Sirmak city and after that Turkish Parliament passed a government bill, with 19 con and 507 pro votes, permitting the Turkish Army to conduct cross-border operation in northern Iraq¹⁸. But after the passage of the bill from Turkish

Parliament, the spokesman of United States National Security Council Gordon Johndroe said that "It is a common interest of all to keep Iraq in a stable state. It is our desire to bring PKK to justice. However we want Turkey keep the negotiations with Iraqi authorities and us and hold itself back from any action that will harm Iraq's stability"¹⁹. This statement, in a way, means that USA objected a cross-border incursion of Turkey. USA did not deem a cross-border operation of Turkey suitable US interests. Eventually "Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue" document failed in its first test.

In the general election on July 22, 2007 the seats were shared as follows: JDP 341, CHP 112, MHP 71 and independents 26. Accordingly, after 2002 election, JDP came into power again by increasing its vote to 47%²⁰. The increase of JDP's votes, comparing to 2002 elections, had made US change the view about JDP and Turkey. On November 5, 2007, Mr. Erdogan made a visit to White House under that very political atmosphere. The meeting between Erdogan and Bush concluded that Turkey and USA would act together against terrorist organization PKK. In this regard USA pledged to open the Iraqi airspace for Turkey and provide intelligence²¹. Though the results of the summit satisfied both countries, a different path was followed to refresh the alliance. As of that date USA abandoned strategic partnership framework and rather preferred to negotiate execution of specific goals.

At this summit USA posed itself as the superior party of the negotiation but it was conducted as collaboration / partnership around the table and a relation close to model partnership (a status where both parties are considered equal) was established. However neither a conceptual framework nor a new designation was imposed. Though one of the reasons of this situation seems like domestic political strife within Turkey and therefore a relatively weaker image of Turkey, another reason is that Bush administration lacked a foreign policy percept appropriate for an equal agreement base. Therefore, though the content was very close to a model partnership level, a denomination was avoided. However a mutual cooperation atmosphere preparing a process that would lead to model partnership was established²².

One of the subjects that affected Turkish-American relations has been Armenian question. The Armenian lobby in US runs after official resolutions recognizing genocide against Turkey in local and national councils. However Bush never used the term "genocide". On October 5, 2005 the US House of Representatives' International Relations Committee passed Armenian Genocide legislation (H. Con. Res. 195 and H. Res. 316, with 11 cons vs. 35 pros and 7 cons vs. 40 pros respectively) to recognize the allegations and reflect them in US foreign policy²³. Another resolution was delivered to US Congress on January 30, 2007. Four representatives of House led by Adam Schiff and George Radanovich from California, where Armenians have considerable population, declared in a press meeting that they had more than 160 supports to propose Armenian Genocide Resolution in the House. The normal process was the discussion in the House Foreign Affairs Committee and voting in the House. A previous proposal had passed subcommittee but been withdrawn by the Speaker Dennis Hastert in the House. But this time the Speaker changed and Nancy Pelosi who supported Armenians was elected as the Speaker of the House. Under these circumstances Turkey declared that in case of the passage of the proposal the Turkish-American relations, especially in Iraq, will be put into trouble and the relations will be damaged permanently²⁴. Besides, the Speaker of Turkish Parliament Koksal Toptan sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi about 1915 events. In his letter Mr. Toptan stated that the move would harm bilateral ties, and if it passed "it will not serve to the needs of Turkish and American peoples", "the US-Turkey relation will suffer an undesired lien" and "the struggle to normalize the relations between Turkey and Armenia will harm too"²⁵.

Apart from 9/11, another important fact that affected Turkey-USA relations is the "Greater Middle East Initiative" which was developed by USA. This project aimed to re-shape ME in accordance with the interests of USA. The basics of the project were suggested by Bush 41 in his "New World Order" speech done in US Congress on March 6, 1991. In his speech he suggested that

the WoMD in Arabian countries was a threat to the peace oriented new world order and proposed a four-phased program to re-structure the region in order to prevent the threat. The program was consist of controlling WoMD in the region, democratization of the political systems, foster economic development and deployment of a collective military power in the region under the roof of NATO in order to rebuild the security there.²⁶

Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor of President George Bush, Jr., in her article “Transforming The Middle East” published in Washington Post on August 7, 2003 stated the goal of Greater ME project as; “political and economic transformation of 22 countries - combined population of 300 million, which has a combined GDP less than that of Spain, population 40 million -, satisfy the freedom deficit and provide more democracy, tolerance and welfare”. Turkey had a crucial status in the Greater ME project due to its strategic - geographical - location. As Turkey is both a Muslim and secular country, USA considered it a model country for ME countries.

USA and Turkey have, at least in principle, theoretical common interests in ME. Those interests are: a peaceful Iraq under a central government, non-militant and non-nuclear Iran, settlement of Arab-Israel conflict, end of terrorism in the region especially because Turkey suffers with it, end of spread and development of radical Islam, continuation of good relations with Israel especially on commercial terms, sustaining an extensive stability in ME, advancing the oil pipe lines coming from Caspian and Mid-Asia to Turkey and to make Turkey an energy distributor in the region, maintaining the independency of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Mid-Asia Republics²⁷.

In the meantime Afghan and Iraq wars have been considered as very important opportunities by US government to transform Greater ME. For example it is suggested that a democratic Iraq would be a model that would spread to other countries in the region²⁸. US received Turkey’s support in this sense, e.g. Turkey played a great role to persuade the Sunnis who boycotted the plebiscites for Iraq constitution.

Following is the outlook of Ahmet Davudoglu about ME from his book “Strategic Depth”: “The main reason for failing to transform the great economic raw material potential of ME countries into a strategic power is that either the available human power of those countries is unqualified or the lack of a healthy legitimacy tie between the qualified people and the preferences of the political system”²⁹. Developing his ideas on the subject Davutoglu, referring to Great ME Project of USA, states that

“Realization of democracy in the Greater ME will be a triumph to be shared by all. Millions living under oppression will generate lives full of hope for their families. The governments will be more stable as they will have a wider legitimacy. Countries like Turkey and USA will support them as well. Turkey and USA will be more secure because a ME with hopes will not generate ideologies causing the deaths of our citizens. This transformation is one of the biggest and most difficult missions of the history. We will overcome this mission of history with patience, hard work and earning the trust of ME peoples”³⁰.

Comparing the ideas of Davutoglu with Rice’s considerations in Washington Post article extensive similarities can be seen as; the potential in ME, deficit of democracy, the quality of human capital, the security problems arising from the economic conditions and other social etc. problems and solving all these problems through the Greater ME Project led by USA and thus the possibility of creating democracy, welfare and peace in ME. All these ideas correspond to each other.

When we look to the relations between Turkey and USA during Bush, Jr. period we see that the period's relation went up-and-down sometimes by matching up of interests and sometimes by conflict of interests almost within the same regions. Both countries have common permanent interests in the stability of ME, fight against terrorism, sustaining an open global economy, security of energy streams, increasing the stability and sovereignty of Caspian and Mid-Asia countries, keeping a productive relation with Europe. However, in recent years, the distrustfulness and doubts, rather related with Iraq War and post-war situation, have blurred these mutual interests and the complex cooperation completing those interests³¹. The bilateral relations which were damaged due to March 1st bill during Bush period were partly repaired during the meeting between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Bush in Oval Office on November 5, 2007.

Obama Period

In his speeches done both during the campaign and after the election Barack Obama, who took the presidency from Bush, Jr. in January 2009, had indicated that USA's strategy for security would no longer be conducted as before. For example according to Obama the presence of US troop in Afghanistan would continue to the degree the international consensus allows it and the Iraqi operation was a mistake and the troops in Iraq would withdraw till 2012 and he wanted perform all efforts to conduct friendly relations with Iran³². Besides, like his Russia and Europe visits, his visit to Turkey in April 2009 and his speech in Cairo in June 2009 confirmed that Obama's vision of method and context would clearly differ from that of Bush period³³. However the agenda of Obama's foreign policy was full of conflicts and subjects of Bush term.

Turkish-American relation in 2009 was very positive³⁴. Obama' first transoceanic visit was to Turkey on April 6-7, 2009, which shows the importance attributed to the relations. This visit was very constructive in terms of gaining a new dimension in Turkish-American relations. In his speech he stated that his visit was not only emphasizing the importance of Turkey for US but also for the whole world. Beyond designating Turkey a bridge between East and West he described Turkey as a country economically progressed, a member of NATO, respecting law, and harboring old civilizations within a modern nation state. He highlighted the regional and global importance of all these features. Saying that "Establishing a model partnership between Turkey and USA will help to solve the regional and global conflicts", Obama stated that through bilateral relations a trustful and respectful partnership with no intercultural tension would be framed:

"I want to emphasize the importance of Turkey. Turkey is called a country functioning as a bridge between east and west. It has an extraordinary and rich heritage. Old civilizations and a new nation state where rule of law, respect to democracy and an active economy harbor together with NATO membership and Muslim majority of population, Turkey has a unique position. It is very important in terms of regional and strategic issues and consequently we feel great excitement for having cooperation with you. Cooperation will unite Muslim and Western worlds, it will lead us to a road of welfare and security. The success will come by forming a model partnership between Turkey and USA. A dominantly Christian nation will come together with a Muslim nation and two continents will bond to each other. Though we have an enormous Christian population, we consider ourselves as a nation of citizens embracing each other with ideals. Maintaining the commitment to a secular and rule of law country will have an extraordinary effect if we can act together."³⁵.

The aim of Obama in this visit was to re-establish the damaged relations and mutual trust lost during Bush period³⁶. For his first visit Obama preferred a country whose people are Muslim and thus gave a clear message both to Turkey, Muslim countries, and Western countries foremost to EU. Obama's visit had a particular meaning for the Turkish domestic policy as well. First of all, former Secretary of State Powell's depiction of JDP government as "mild Islam", a gesture of praise but misused in a court case to close the Party, had become meaningless by Obama's balanced messages. Obama emphasized that USA was never in fight with Islam and also mentioned his visit to Atatürk's tomb praising his deeds. Obama's visit was successful as it was welcomed by all political parties in Turkey. When Obama's interest for Turkey became obvious, the significance of Turkey in international arena increased which also led to elevation of JDP's position. Besides through this visit USA and Turkey made the first step to model partnership.

In Obama period, a new page opened in Turkish-American relations, from strategic partnership to model partnership. Strategic partnership, as a concept, means a kind of alliance in which two countries act together against a common threat on military and intelligence base³⁷. Model partnership, on the other hand, does not indicate a mutually agreed framework. It only indicates that two countries have a common will to rehabilitate the relations, and that the relations can be depicted in a different way and even they should be depicted differently³⁸. According to Gozen the model partnership can be described as a serious and intensified cooperation (partnership) between USA and Turkey in order to establish a new regional order in the countries and regions around Turkey so that Turkey and USA have an active cooperation for the resolution of the crisis and conflicts related with Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Armenia and Arab-Israel³⁹. What Mr. Davudoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey, stated in Washington is significant in terms of understanding the point where the relations between Turkey and USA reached in Obama period. In his speech Davutoglu stated that "If we (Secretary of State Clinton and Mr. Davudoglu) are asked about the priorities of each country's foreign agenda, a great part of the list will be the same; Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, ME Philistine-Israel issue, Lebanon, Caucasia, Armenia and Cyprus ... Model partnership is not a matter of choice, it is a must"⁴⁰.

Probably the foremost crucial and sensitive issue of Turkish-American model partnership was to stop the nuclear program of Iran or take it under control. Actually the policies of Turkey and USA regarding the nuclear program of Iran are almost identical. Both, in principle, do not oppose Iran's nuclear program with peaceful aims, however, they do not want to allow Iran to produce nuclear weapons⁴¹. Turkey's policy for Iran is based on two aims: to prevent a clash (war) just beside Turkey or the application of sanction due to this problem. While there are security concerns behind these policies, there are also concerns regarding the damage that may occur in commercial relations between Turkey and Iran, as it is a neighbor of Turkey.

One of the important titles between US-Turkey during Obama period is the so-called genocide allegations raised by Armenian lobby every year. The diplomacy traffic between Turkey and Armenia increased after the visit of Obama to Turkey. President Obama, Foreign Minister Babacan and Armenian Foreign Minister Nalbandian met in Istanbul during the second Alliance of Civilizations Forum held between April 6-7, 2009. Additionally, by the support of EU, Russia and especially USA, and by the mediation of Switzerland, two protocols were signed between Turkey and Armenia in Zurich September 2009. However those protocols were not put into practice. Therefore Turkish-American relations started year 2012 with a crisis – for the same reason. Upon the passage of the draft resolution through Foreign Affairs Committee of Congress, asking US president to recognize the 1915 events as genocide, Turkey recalled Washington ambassador for consultation. While Turkey interpreted the draft incompatible to the spirit of the model partnership, on the other hand, USA interpreted Turkey's reaction as extreme and considered ambassador's presence in Washington as essential. On July 31 USA ambassador to Turkey accredited to Iraq. The new ambassador to Turkey could not get accreditation from Senate till December 30, 2010.⁴²

Another problem between Turkey and USA in 2010 is the Tehran Joint Declaration signed in Tehran by Iran, Turkey and Brazil regarding the swap of the nuclear fuel. This attempt which coincided with the attempt of US to bring the sanctions against Iran to UN Security Council went over as a surprise in USA. According to USA Iran did not allow IAEA audit its nuclear program and therefore violated NPT and enriched uranium out of the control of international institutions - consequently Iran had to be punished by sanctions. Obama administration was subject of great restraints of US domestic politics as well. In those days both, in White Palace and in US Congress, proposals of bills anticipating wide sanctions against Iran were prepared to deliver to Obama⁴³. Turkey believed that to put those sanctions into agenda during the attempts of mediation to find a solution to nuclear problem would harm the process. Therefore it insisted on searching for peaceful settlement ways⁴⁴. In conclusion, Turkey, together with Brazil, vetoed the United Nations Security Council resolution 1929 anticipating sanctions against Iran. No doubt Turkey's veto was placed as another question in bilateral relations with US.

Another incident with a negative effect on relations between Turkey and USA is "Mavi Marmara" attack. A civil fleet of six ships - multi-national and multi-religious - transporting international relief to Gaza Strip with the organization of NGOs, especially of IHH, were attacked by Israel in international waters, 72 nautical miles off Israel, at early hours of May 31, 2010⁴⁵. Nine citizens of Turkey were killed by the attack. The relations between Turkey and Israel literally came to a halt. Collapse of relation between Turkey and Israel affected Turkey-USA relations as well. USA did not provide the support Turkey expected in this incident

Conclusion

The subject matters of Turkey-USA relation are regional and international matters and conflicts that affecting both countries rather than the bilateral matters. It can be said that the relations between Turkey and USA were reshaped after the 9/11 attacks. We clearly see the best examples of this reshaping in the disagreements experienced first in Iraq War and then in matters related with Iran's nuclear program.

Turkey-USA relation during Bush period was a period of up-and-downs sometimes with conflict of interests and sometimes with match of interest almost on the same regions. Both countries get lasting benefit from stability in Middle East, fight against terrorism, maintaining an open global economy, security of energy flow, increasing the stability and sovereignty of Caspian and Mid-Asia countries, keeping a productive relation with Europe. However the distrustfulness and doubts related rather with Iraq War and post-war situation and March 1st bill caused deterioration in bilateral relations. These damaged relations were partly repaired during the meeting between Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Bush in Oval Office on November 5, 2007.

In Barack Obama period, however, the bilateral relations advanced towards a relatively positive direction. President Obama, in his speeches done both during the campaign and after the election, had signaled that USA's strategy for security would no longer be conducted as before. For example he stated that the presence of US troop in Afghanistan would continue to the degree the international consensus allows it and the Iraqi operation was a mistake and the troops in Iraq would withdraw till 2012 and he wanted perform all efforts to conduct friendly relations with Iran. However the agenda of Obama's foreign policy is rather full of conflicts and subjects remained from Bush term.

NOTES

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