

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

REGIONAL CHALLENGES TO
POST-ELECTION TURKEY

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, October 11, 2007

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. PARRIS: Good afternoon. My name is Mark Parris, and I am the Director of the Turkey 2007 project here at Brookings which as many of you know we are doing in partnership with TUSIAD, the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association. Abdullah Akyuz is here as TUSIAD's Washington representative, and we are delighted that he could join us today.

Our session today represents a bit of a course change for this project. In four panels since February we have focused on the very important things happening inside Turkey, the selection of a new president, general elections that returned Prime Minister Erdogan's AK Party to power with an enhanced mandate, the interplay among various actors in Turkey as these processes have played themselves out.

I do not want to suggest for a moment probably because all of you here know better that we have seen the end of local politics in Turkey in 2007. There are a lot of stories still to be told. But our discussion today is going to focus on a set of issues of growing urgency around Turkey, outside of Turkey, and on the extent to which Turkey's new political landscape will affect Ankara's approach to some of these issues in the months ahead.

It is an understatement to say that this is a timely discussion. Just a month ago some of us in this room were together at the Atlantic Council when Nick Burns gave a speech in which he expressed formally the intention of the

Bush administration, as he put it, "To enter into a new era of our relationship and to commit to the revival of our very close friendship and alliance." He then identified an impressive list of issues on which he anticipated that the United States and Turkey would be able to work together, among them Iraq, Iran, Arab-Israeli peace, and Caspian and Central Asian energy transport. Nick went to Ankara a week later and there he seemed to find based on the press accounts that even on issues where the two sides largely agree on ends, like Iran's nuclear program, it may be a little harder than his speech suggested to find common ground on means. One thing he for sure got right, "One glance at the map demonstrates why it is so important to strengthen ties between our two countries. In an arc of countries where so much of our foreign policy attention, that is, American foreign policy attention, now lies, Turkey is the vital link for the United States and our European allies in addressing common economic, security, and political challenges and opportunities in this critical region."

So the question I think today is with U.S. popularity ratings in Turkey in single digits even before the events of yesterday, how realistic is it to expect a revival in the near future of what we used to call strategic partnership? Nick is right that Washington is going to need Turkey in the days ahead in handling what is a very daunting agenda in its immediate neighborhood. The question is, will Turkey need Washington?

To help us shed some light on these questions, we are fortunate today to have an unusually well-qualified panel of experts. Dr. Bulent Aras at the end is Professor of International Relations at Isik University in Istanbul. In a distinguished academic career that has included work in America, Great Britain, and France, he has written extensively on Turkish foreign policy particularly toward the Middle East and Central Asia. Mustafa Aydin is Professor of International Relations at TOBB University in Ankara and at the Turkish National Security Academy. Like Dr. Aras, he has done research in this country at the JFK School, and in the U.K., France, and Greece. He is the Director of the International Policy Research Institute in Ankara, President of Turkey's International Relations Council, and is the editor of numerous works including an important 2004 analysis of U.S.-Turkish relations. Semih Idiz is a foreign service brat, having grown up in Belgrade, Moscow, and Canberra where his father was a diplomat, he is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, but most importantly, he is among the most perceptive and original of Turkey's foreign affairs columnists, currently writing for "Milliyet" and the "Turkish Daily News," among others.

As usual, I will join this distinguished gathering for a conversation. I will get the ball rolling by posing some questions to them, and then we will welcome questions or short comments from the audience. We are not going to spend a lot of time talking about the resolution up here. I am confident that we

have ample opportunity to do that during the question-and-answer session afterwards.

Mustafa, I think I am going to start with you. I would like to begin the conversation by asking you to expand a little bit on some points that I raised in my opening remarks, taking as a point of departure Nike Burns' speech. He in that speech laid out in some detail how Turkey could be helpful with respect to the agenda that he had laid out. He spent less time dealing with areas that have traditionally been expressed as Turkish concerns, notably things like the PKK, economic isolation of Northern Cyprus, those kinds of issues. He was even less detailed, to the point of vanishing, in terms of what Turkey could expect the United States to do in concrete terms in the near future on some of these questions.

So the question I have for you is as a Turk, as a student of U.S.-Turkish relations, how realistic does it strike you that we could talk about revitalizing this relationship on the terms in which it has been presented by the American side particularly after the rocky relationship over the past 6 years? And what incentive is there for the Turkish political leadership at this point to do so?

MR. AYDIN: I am afraid not much if you put terminology as a strategic partnership because that is dead and gone and many people in both Washington and Ankara have now come to expect that strategic partnership would not be possible even though Burns is still talking about that in traditional

terms because it means a number of things in Turkish-American relations. It means kind of a bilateral relationship which in the post-Cold War era is very difficult to sustain. The relationship became much more multilevel, multidimensional, and a bilateral relationship is very difficult if you are just focusing on that.

It also means that it is preoccupied with security issues, the strategic partnership was based on security issues, and now as we come today it is very difficult to sustain that because Turkish-American relations now involve much more than hard security issues, there are soft issues, soft power issues that we need to relate on.

Finally, the strategic partnership actually is a kind of asymmetric relationship. On the one hand you have old power for the United States, on the other hand you have a regional country and the relationship is not one of balance, so it is very difficult. And what's more, in the post-Cold War era and also after 9/11 and with the Iraq war, Turkey is focusing more and more in its regional environment which the United States is also focusing on. And with the U.S.'s global interests not coinciding with Turkey's regional interests, it is very difficult to make them connect with each other.

MR. PARRIS: And it is your perception that they do not currently coincide?

MR. AYDIN: They don't, but in general terms they do. In Iraq, for example, both countries want a unitary Iraq, a stable Iraq. In Iran nobody wants a nuclear Iran. On energy issues, we all want an East-West energy corridor, but this is on the general level when you look it from a distance. But when you into the details and try to sort out how to achieve these results, these ends, then the connection breaks there. For example, in Iraq, the stability in Iraq is something that we all aim for, the unity of Iraq. However, stability for Turkey would not be preferable if it means breaking up Iraq because if you divide Iraq into three and if everybody is happy, the Kurds, Shiites, and Sunni Arabs are happy, then Iraq will be stable.

MR. PARRIS: But country will not be happy.

MR. AYDIN: But Turkey would not be happy with that. So for Turkey, the unity comes before than the stability of Iraq, but from the U.S. it is the other way.

MR. PARRIS: What about the structures of the relationship? By that I mean more than just having organized bodies, but the human ball bearings on which these things inevitably have to roll. When I was in Ankara I felt that we were especially blessed by having a lot of people on both sides right up and down the ladder of authority who on a routine basis were engaged in the management of the relationship and reflected the multifaceted kind of relationship we had in those days. Do you or your colleagues sense that that exists today in the same respect?

The Burns trip was designed as I understand it to have been the first of a series of significant high-level meetings, the Ankara meetings which took place, and of course, the Prime Minister was supposed to be coming here in November and I do not know if that visit will still take place under the circumstances. But do we have that, and maybe Semih you would like to take a cut at this, that structure, the human resources to carry out the kind of revitalization that we are talking about?

MR. IDIZ: I think we do personally. I know many people on the Turkish side who feel exactly like Ambassador Burns, who feel that there is a need to revive the strategic relationship, but unfortunately, events are overtaking them and the vital interests of the two countries on specific issues do not overlap anymore, for example, Iraq. To put it very bluntly, Turkey would have preferred it if America did not go into Iraq and if we did not have the situation that we have at the moment and that is based on its memory of the first Gulf War and the Iraq crisis when all its fears came to the fore, most notably the fears related to Northern Iraq, but on the other hand, something that was much mentioned prior to the invasion of Iraq which was who is going to compensate for Turkey's losses because the first time around there were quite significant losses and nothing came out of this no matter what Turkey said in the grand remarks that were made in support of Turkey.

So as I say, there are people on both sides who believe in the value and importance of this relationship and they will continue to do so. You will find

them not only in the civilian quarter, you will also find them in the military quarter. But as I say, extraneous and tangential events are just overtaking these people and making it very difficult for them to actually push their agenda for a revitalized strategic relationship or partnership even.

MR. PARRIS: Let's take a specific case here. If you read the Burns speech, the area that he seems to suggest that is ripest for cooperation in the short-term was energy transportation, bringing the energy wealth of Central Asia and the Caspian to world markets other than through Russian-dominated routes. It ought to work. We have a common history of achievements, Baku-Ceyhan being the example of that. Our objectives would seem to coincide almost one-for-one. We would like to see Turkey become a world energy hub. Clearly it is in everybody's interests to diversify the pipelines through which this reaches the world's markets. But the fact is as we sit here today that Gazprom is winning and we have not done much together in this field. In fact, in recent months Turkey has taken steps which suggest that they have given up on the United States getting this right.

Bulent, what went wrong, what does it take to fix it, and is this something that realistically speaking in the final 18 months of this administration we have some prospect of getting on track?

MR. ARAS: It seems to me this U.S.-Turkish cooperation on the energy issue was a little bit an exaggerated one. That was the basis for

cooperation considering carrying this Caspian gas and oil to world markets, but let's look at the other sources of oil and gas that Turkey supposedly will carry to world markets. That is Russian gas and oil, Iranian gas and oil, and less of an alternative is potential Syrian gas. We are going to witness as sort of rapprochement between Russia and Turkey and we have had high-level U.S. officials which consider this as sort of dangerous rapprochement, while considering sanctions on Iran -- problematic and it is on the way.

MR. PARRIS: It could get a lot more problematic.

MR. ARAS: Yes, it seems that it will get more. Considering Syrian gas, that will be another source of contention. And here I think was not a real basis for Turkish-American cooperation in this energy issue.

On the other side of the picture, we have Russia which is sort of the main actor in this issue in the whole of Eurasia and is the strongest bargaining chip in Russian hands. That is why it is jealous to share this bargaining chip especially within the framework of a Turkish-American partnership considering this -- revolution and new expansion toward the East, this new missile system which will be supposedly established in Eastern Europe. And why Russia? What kind of reason will motivate Russia to cooperate with Turkey and also with the United States? It does not want to lose this bargaining chip and considering the E.U.-Russian relations and it seems to me Russia brought the E.U. on the knees on this gas issue. There is this --

MR. PARRIS: But wouldn't that argue that the Americans and the Turks ought to be able to find common ground for pushing back against the Russians? That is essentially what Washington has tried to do.

MR. ARAS: But it cost a lot to Turkey considering this Caspian, Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline, Turkey pursued almost 10 years of regional rivalry with Russia, and Turkey lost almost \$10 billion of trade potential for the sake of a few hundred million -- of course it has helped Turkey to increase its leverage in the area, but considering the regional imbalances and -- approach of these -- to oil and gas issues, Turkey didn't gain much in this sense. And that is why in all this picture Turkey comes to the fore as single-handedly acting.

MR. PARRIS: That is a very important point. I think it would be impossible to say in the late-1990s that Turkey was alone in pursuing its energy agenda. The fact of the matter is, the United States and Turkey were cooperating very effectively. Mustafa, what is different between then and now?

MR. AYDIN: There were much more concentrated efforts on both sides both in Turkey and the United States. You had Ambassador Morningstar.

MR. PARRIS: And John Wolf.

MR. AYDIN: And John Wolf directly dealing with the energy issues and you don't have anybody now, although Matt Prizer is also dealing with this issue. Secondly, you were pushing too hard at the time and Turkey was also

in a kind of rivalry with the Russian Federation so there was much more emphasis put on it.

MR. AYDIN: And now Turkey has kind of got what it wanted, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, it is a little bit let down. Secondly, the problem now currently is not about Turkey which is a trusted country only, the problem is with suppliers and the market. On the supplier side, we could not get agreement from the Kazakhs to give their oil or gas to any kind of pipeline going through Turkey yet. Neither Turkey nor the United States has been able to solve the problem between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan so that Turkmens can sign on to the Trans-Caspian Pipeline which they never did so far. Possible Iraqi gas also is a possibility, but the situation there is -- so we end up with only gas from either Azerbaijan which is not enough to re-export --

MR. PARRIS: And wants to keep it.

MR. AYDIN: -- or Iran. On the market side, there is no comment from the European countries to buy any available gas from the Caspian region although they have been talking about it for a number of years now, although there is -- project which is supported by the commission, but there is not a hard signature on paper and a commitment from the Europeans. That is what they do, they just go with the Russians, and they sign an agreement with Russia. And I've heard a number of European just last week, they were arguing that even during

the Cold War, the Soviet Union did not cheat on the Europeans, they continued to supply gas, and why not now, why suspicious?

MR. PARRIS: You could ask the Ukrainians that question and probably get a different answer. What I do not hear in either of your descriptions of the problem is that these things are happening because the United States is pushing too hard. The United States is missing in action on this.

MR. AYDIN: It is. The U.S. is absent there. The only person I know is Matt Prizer who is coming often to Turkey to talk about these energy issues, and that is it.

MR. PARRIS: Whereas in the 1990s you had Bill Richardson and you had Bill Clinton personally, you had Al Gore, you had the special coordinators.

MR. AYDIN: Bill Clinton was in Istanbul signing the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan as an observer, and we do not see Bush doing that.

MR. PARRIS: That's right.

MR. ARAS: May I add a point?

MR. PARRIS: Yes, please.

MR. ARAS: I think there is a problem with the U.S. approach and this East-West energy corridor. The problem is that this whole approach is to free Caspian oil and gas from Iranian and Russian influence, but those two are the dominant actors in the area.

MR. PARRIS: It does not leave a lot of room.

MR. ARAS: It creates a lot of problems for any potential U.S. ally.

MR. PARRIS: We have a plethora of subjects to cover so I am going to prematurely cut off what could be a very long discussion and move to a core issue that all of you have mentioned in one way or another which is Iraq. Probably there is no country in the world outside of the Iraq that has been affected by our involvement there since 2003 than Turkey. Some of it has been positive, the economy in the southeast as probably benefited, certain companies have probably benefited, but the centrifugal forces that have been released, the resumption of terror by the PKK holed up in northern Iraq, the downward spiral into something approaching civil war, all of these are the stuff of Turkey's worst nightmares.

I cannot imagine it is particularly comforting for Turks to watch the debate here as we figure out what we are going to do about this. On the one hand, I think you can probably be reasonably certain as the debate goes forward that we are not going to pull everybody out prematurely. But the terms under which they will stay in a soft partitioned state, with a redeployment to northern Iraq, cannot give you much comfort.

If Ankara today could with a clean sheet of paper write its script for the next 18 months in Iraq, what would it look like? And do you think there is any chance of coordinating such a script with the United States today?

MR. IDIZ: Probably not, because if there were such a script to be written and there isn't, it would mean that Turkey would rather have somebody like Saddam back in Baghdad who can keep the country together. Whatever negative imagery he may create otherwise, the fact is that it was basically a stable country.

MR. PARRIS: Mustafa's point, stability.

MR. IDIZ: Yes, stability is the prime thing.

MR. PARRIS: Excuse me, unity over stability.

MR. IDIZ: Precisely. As you said, the debate here, this is rather being followed very closely in Turkey by the relevant quarters and it is almost the reflection of the kind of debates we have in Turkey which are generally acrimonious, accusative, and not always to the country's best interests shall we say. So now when we look at Washington we see very different opinions being expressed and at a critical moment. It is almost like there is a ship and the crew are fighting amongst themselves while the ship is in choppy waters, if I could use that kind of imagery. So unless there is a clear vision of what America wants, I think it might be complicated.

We have a Congress where there are people like Senator Biden who has promoted the idea of a soft partition all along, we have others who are opposed to this in the administration saying it will be very destabilizing for the region and it will continue to be unstable for years and years to come. So I think what we see when we look out from Turkey is uncertainty, and when you look at the picture of uncertainty and one that has very significant spillover effects, and of course Turkey has been affected perhaps most in some respects, but there are a million refugees in Syria today, there are hundreds of thousands of refugees in Jordan, and this at the moment is the unspoken and unpronounced problem as far as Iraq and the region is concerned because many of these countries do not want these refugees and this is creating a new kind of instability in the region. So, yes, looked at from all these perspectives and knowing perhaps that the prospect of a Jeffersonian type of democracy is pretty remote not only in the whole of Iraq but also in the components, and I include the north of Iraq. It is a region that I have traveled to and I know quite a significant number of influential people there and they do have problems along those lines internally themselves. And all of this makes for a picture where Turkey does not know how to act because there is something evolving on its borders; it has having spillover effects in terms of terrorism and other causes. There is a need to act as there is now where everybody is on edge to see if the Turks will go in, but the report now is that the Peshmerga have started manning their trenches along the Turkish-Iraqi border or

Turkish-Northern Iraqi border or the Turkish-Kurdistan border, even in terms of that definition we do not know what it is. So what are we headed for and how is this going to affect not just Iraq, not just Turkey, but the whole region?

MR. PARRIS: Is it the case that Turkey's Iraq policy has basically been narrowed to what do you do about the PKK in the short-term?

MR. IDIZ: I think it is more than just the PKK. I think it is what you do with an emerging independent Kurdish state. We have to name the baby and we have to put that very clearly. There is a de facto situation there that cannot be denied. The emergence of that de facto situation was partly due to Turkey because of the cover it helped provide after the first Gulf War so that this region could more or less get a sense of security in itself. Yet on the other hand there was this fear that if we have an independent Kurdistan, what is this going to mean for us? So the PKK is only an added dimension to this whole problem. But if you read between the lines of what some senior military officials are saying, and unfortunately, much of our Northern Iraq policy is seen through military eyes, a lot of it, perhaps 99 percent of it, but looking at it from that perspective, it seems that the PKK is perhaps the least important of these elements; when it comes to issues like the emergence of an independent Kurdistan, what happens if Kirkuk goes to the Kurds, do they become a new power in the region, and how will this affect our own Kurdish elements in the Southeast?

MR. PARRIS: So it has to do with coming to terms with an Iraq-Kurdish reality?

MR. IDIZ: Yes, I think that is what is at the bottom of this all, yes.

MR. PARRIS: Bulent, do you think there is any likelihood of Ankara, I will just put it in those terms, being ready for that kind of an adjustment in Turkish policy? Turkish policy to date has been, no, no, a thousand times, no. We will not talk to them, we will not acknowledge them. Are we reaching a point in Ankara or are we likely to reach a point in Ankara where that kind of a discussion is possible even among yourselves?

MR. ARAS: I think we are talking about some processes. We do not know where Iraq is going, and also we do not know governors around Iraq are going to do vis-à-vis this change in Iraq. But here I think we have to look from a different angle. There are two Turkey in Iraq. The one is what Semih just presented, but the other Turkey in Iraq is the one which is called constructing Northern Iraq. You see the Turkish companies, construction companies, Turkish goods. And also we see a Turkey who is the major supplier of U.S. needs, U.S. requirements in Iraq of the U.S. military units in Iraq. Also we have a Turkey which brings to -- this major problematic element which brings Sunnis and the United States together which even influence on their entrance into elections which is very important for the future of Iraq. Not maybe a close Jefferson kind of democracy, but some sort of political participation based regime in Iraq.

We also have this kind of Turkey which is a civil economic power which really contributes to the future Iraq. Also in regional terms, look at Iraq's neighbors. Who supported much? Or who is the only country supporting building a stable and democratic, whatever you call it, Iraq? Turkey just initiated this Iraqi Neighborhood Forum which brought neighboring countries and some other interested parties nine times, officially three times.

MR. PARRIS: You are suggesting that one can identify areas where the U.S. and Iraq and country not only can but are fruitfully collaborating to keep Iraq --

MR. ARAS: Yes. It's just a matter of differentiating the issues.

MR. PARRIS: But will the PKK issue get in the way of that particularly if Turkey goes on?

MR. ARAS: But after the Cold War we are living in a new world and we have to live with the problems. We can cooperate while disagreeing in some issues. Here Turkey may broadly contribute to the future of Iraq, but also we are involved in other means to sort of preempt any kind of problem that can explode into Turkey.

MR. PARRIS: I am going to move on to Iran, but I will give you a chance to comment on Iraq if you have any points.

SPEAKER: The discussion in Turkey is taking -- recently I was involved with a group of people and we prepared a report on Iraq and the future of

Iraq and what Turkey could do there. One of the suggestions that we put forward was the fact on the ground is that Iraq is a federal country now because of its constitution and it is there. So we have to accept that and act accordingly. What will be in the near future is Iraq might either be divided into three states or would be a loose confederation which again might lead to division. We got lots of press coverage so the discussion continued, but we got also reactions from the official Ankara saying that although this might be true, we do not discuss these issues.

Of course, our reaction was that that ostrich-like attitude does not help the situation there. We have to discuss and we have to be ready. If we are even opposing the division of Iraq, we have to be discussing and we have to be ready. But in Turkey it is rather difficult to discuss the specifics of the issues not because of the pressure from official Ankara, but because of how people are much more preoccupied with current affairs. They do not look into the strategies, they do not look into the long-term perspectives, they look for daily issues like the PKK attacking and killing.

MR. PARRIS: This week it's the PKK.

SPEAKER: So it creates kind of a pressure on the government and because of the relationship within Turkey between the government and other sources of power, everything gets more overdimensionalized or they become much bigger and create pressure on the government to do something. So the

recent decision to pass a new resolution in maybe -- is kind of a result of that I think.

MR. PARRIS: Last word on Iraq?

SPEAKER: Well, what I want to basically say is that after the elections there was every prospect for some kind of a dialogue being started between the government in Ankara and the Iraqi-Kurdish leadership in Northern Iraq plus the President of Iraq who also happens to be Kurdish. This is why one wonders whether the PKK is pursuing some kind of a strategy to spoil this because it is a known fact that the military is against this dialogue. On the other hand, both President Gul, Prime Minister Erdogan, and Foreign Minister Babacan have said realistically that this is part of the equation, we have to be realistic and we have to approach that.

But given what has happened not just the recent attack, not just the attack a few days ago where 15 Turkish soldiers were killed, but about a week before that, 12 civilians, all of them Kurdish, were gunned down and one assumes that this will continue unfortunately, so there must be some kind of a counterforce on the other side also working to spoil this potentiality that is there and that will make a breakthrough if it can be achieved. I do know that on the civilian side both in the foreign ministry and within government circles there is a very strong lobby for a dialogue with the Iraqi-Kurdish leadership with which we have a very complex relationship. As was mentioned, Turks are building Northern Iraq. I

travel freely in Northern Iraq speaking Turkish as the lingua franca. Literally, Turkish is the lingua franca in Northern Iraq. Northern Iraqis are watching Turkish television, they are getting inspired by Turkish fashion, and they are using Turkish commodities and all this. So this for me is a potential that should be utilized. Turkish companies are prospecting for oil in the region much to the annoyance of some other countries.

MR. PARRIS: And not just Turkish.

SPEAKER: Yes, precisely. But if this potentiality is being disrupted, there must be an agenda on the Kurdish side also which does not want this kind of dialogue and we do know that there is such a position in Turkey. The chief of general staff, Yaser Buyukanit, said it openly in April during a press conference, he said, who are you going to talk to, the people who are supporting the PKK. So from both sides it is interesting to see that this potential is disturbing to certain elements.

MR. PARRIS: If 2007 has been for Americans at least the year of Iraq, that is, the year we figure out where we are going, maybe, 2008 will probably be the year of Iran. By the end of 2008, George Bush is going to have either by one means or another stopped the Iranian nuclear program or will leave office not having done so. It is pretty clear that as the administration moves toward this year of decision, it has a fairly clear strategy of its own which is ramp

up pressure on the Iranians through diplomatic means and with other means not by any means taken off the table.

It looked pretty clear in terms of the exchange that Nick Burns had in Ankara, exchanges that even at the lower end of the scale, that is, ramping up economic sanctions or creating difficulties for certain Iranians to travel, it is going to be tough to find common ground with Ankara. Is there any way as this year goes ahead, assuming there is no change in the American strategy of tightening it down, that we can stay on the same page on this issue or is it going to yawn wider as we go along? And is there any way that a Turkish government or even say Turkey more generally would be able to acquiesce or accommodate or even help an American military strike against Iran should it come to that?

SPEAKER: Let me mention at the beginning, let me challenge the view that Turkey is kind of taking the side of Iran against the United States.

MR. PARRIS: I didn't mean to suggest that necessarily.

SPEAKER: I didn't mean you did, but there are people in Washington who have said so openly. Turkey is afraid of Iran having nuclear weapons as the United States is threatened. And I am sure Turkey is as opposed to Iran having nuclear weapons as the United States, definitely, and it will affect Turkey's standing in the Middle East. We are afraid that Turkey will be a target of an Iranian first attack, but definitely Iran with a nuclear weapon would be a

much more powerful state in the Middle East to play -- and which Turkey wouldn't like it.

However, how to prevent that? Again, we are coming into the specifics, and Turkey would not be very happy to see a neighboring country being attacked from Turkey. That will be the problem in Iran. There is an unless. Unless there is a clear-cut decision by the United Nations Security Council to allow the use of force. That was the case in Iraq even though the country's population it was said 90 percent was opposing the war, if there was a decision by the United Nations, Turkey would have cooperated. That has always been the case for Turkish foreign policy for years. This is not new.

Failing that, Turkey would cooperate I believe if most of the Western countries united behind the United States on this. If there is no division within the Western camp, then Turkey would follow the Western camp. But if there is a division, let's say some of the Europeans, the more powerful of them and more importantly are opposing to this, then Turkey would find the ground to divert from U.S. pressure. Again, it depends on what the United States is going to ask from Turkey. If the U.S. is going to ask from Turkey tightening of economic sanctions and which is not going to produce any result, if let's say Turkey is cooperating with the U.S. to put economic pressure and Russia and China is not, then it doesn't do any good. It just hurts Turkish interests, that's it. It doesn't do any good on American policy in --

MR. PARRIS: And Ankara is not going to do that.

SPEAKER: I think Ankara would not do that. But when things come to the end, when there is a question whether to allow some of the U.S. air forces to pass through Turkish airspace, I think that would be allowed.

MR. PARRIS: You think it would?

SPEAKER: But what would not be allowed is operating U.S. air forces from Incirlik Air Base because this is a fine-tuning of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East for more than three or four decades that we don't allow our territory to be used against neighbors, but we will overlook passing through Turkish airspace. That was the case in 1991.

MR. PARRIS: If someone suggested that if for example Natams were to disappear tomorrow and no one knew who did it, the Arab world would sort of look the other way and say isn't this too bad, but who knows, and you're suggesting Turkey might do the same thing so long as there was a plausible --

SPEAKER: Exactly. Yes, Turkey would be saying that we are sorry, this shouldn't be happening in the normal working ways of international politics, but --

MR. PARRIS: Some here, and perhaps the people you were referring to at the beginning of our comments, have suggested in order to ensure that it doesn't come to that which would be messy for everybody, it behooves everybody who has influence on Iran to do what they can to convince them that

they are on a losing track. One way to do that would be either not to sign new energy contracts with Iran, or to shall we say the implementation of those that have sort of popped onto the horizon. Is there any chance of that happening in the short-term or is this going forward?

SPEAKER: Sure. I am not even sure that there will be signing of an energy deal. In Turkey I was of the opinion that this is a kind of political show inside the country, first of all. And secondly, it is a kind of bargaining chip with relations against the United States.

MR. PARRIS: To what purpose?

SPEAKER: Because when you look at Turkish-American relations as it stands today, Turkey doesn't have much cards playing against the United States, so Iran could be one of the bargaining chips: if you want us to excuse Iran, why don't you give us something in return, that kind of a bargaining tool.

MR. PARRIS: Does this tie back into our earlier discussion on energy?

SPEAKER: Exactly. Not only on energy, but the Iraqi-Kurdish issue and everything.

SPEAKER: The Kurdish issue is the lowest common denominator here in relations with Syria.

MR. PARRIS: So you are not listening to us on the PKK-Kurdish issue, we can get your attention.

SPEAKER: If necessary we can get together and make sure --

MR. PARRIS: But we shouldn't take too seriously, you're both suggesting the fact that these MOUs are out there.

SPEAKER: What Mustafa said is absolutely true. There is no love lost between Iran and Turkey. The 1990s were spent with animosity. The president foreign minister of Iran was expelled from Turkey. He was well nigh pronounced persona non grata, but just to save the indignity of this, there was a situation engineered where like I understand our ambassador now is being recalled back to Ankara, the Turkish ambassador in Tehran was recalled to Ankara -- had to respond and when he was in Tehran through diplomatic channels Tehran was informed that it would be better if he didn't come back because this guy was interfering in the Turkish domestic political situation. Your fear is of a nuclear Iran, our fear is of an Islamic Iran, and the whole of the 1990s was spent with arguments about Iran exporting its fundamentalism to Turkey and this foreign minister, he was ambassador in Ankara, he was seen rallying with fundamentalists in Turkey.

On the broader agenda, there is much reason for competing with Iran. Iran is a close ally of Armenia's, for example. Turkey is a close ally of Azerbaijan. Iran has not always come through on its deals with Turkey. We had

a GSM operator deal that went on for years and years and it became a big issue in the Iranian parliament where there were people standing up and saying do we want to give this strategic asset to the Turks. We had problems with building their airport. One of our leading airport constructing companies -- they weren't allowed. As you have suggested earlier on, last winter they cut their gas in the middle of winter and this sort of thing. So it's not as if there is this wonderful love affairs between Iran and Turkey as it may seem from here. But for pragmatic political reasons, maybe a little to show the Americans how angry the Turks are, but also given the fact that Iran also has its own PKK problem with -- in the same region and this sort of thing. So the convergences along there, it's a purely pragmatic convergence not based on love or adoration.

SPEAKER: Let me add to that. Not everything Turkey does relates to the United States. What this means is look at the timing of Turkish-Iranian so-called deals. It came just after Putin signed similar deals with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Right after, about a week after he signed these agreements, the Turkish energy minister went to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan trying to get the same kind of deal and he failed. He came back to Turkey and after 2 weeks after that or 3 weeks after that he went to Iran trying to get this deal and he got some sort of a declaration which says that Turkey and Iran will in the future sign some sort of a cooperation agreement, and this was just before the elections as well.

So it has an energy dimension trying to convince Europe that Turkey would have some sort of enough natural gas to sell Europe first. Second, I think it was also kind of a personal play for the energy minister just before the elections that he wants to keep his portfolio.

MR. PARRIS: And it worked.

SPEAKER: It worked.

MR. PARRIS: And third, I think it highlights that to the extent that there is a meaningful U.S.-Turkish strategic dialogue on energy transportation issues, it wasn't working that day.

SPEAKER: The new suggestion is that you had some very senior energy department officials in Istanbul 2 weeks ago just here from Washington, and one argument is that we need this cooperation with Iran because Nabuko is going to need that extra gas to be able -- the U.S. officials quoted by oil industry and gas industry magazines including Bloomberg that I saw suggested that they may drop their objection to Russia joining the Nabuko project. If Turkey is playing we need the gas card, then you choose the lesser of two evils as America and perhaps you include Gazprom in this deal which already is in Turkey -- the Russians are on that side and we are on this side, we have a massive amount of cooperation. It's a complex issue that doesn't fit into very set molds and predefined perceptions. It is an ongoing situation and if the Iranian-Turkish thing matures is an open question as Mustafa suggested, they are supposed to be signing

a deal this month, we'll see if that goes through. If they go through and Turkey does do the exploration in the Parsa oil field, if I'm not mistaken, then there is going to be a lot of capital input that is going to have to be put in there. Already there are suggestions that international finances will not do this. Senior Turkish officials are suggesting that we can come up with this money. How that money is going to be allocated, who is going to allow for it, and whether this will be extremely popular in Turkey is an open question. And not being longwinded, a final reminder, the Pew research that indicated that Turks don't like Americans also came up with the fact that they do not like Iranians either.

SPEAKER: And they have problems with Turks.

SPEAKER: They have problems with Turks because they have problems with the Azeris.

MR. PARRIS: Let's go on to something simple, Arab-Israeli peace.

SPEAKER: We'll continue for the next 2,000 years.

MR. PARRIS: The Bush administration seems to have discovered this issue after a prolonged period of study and it appears we will try to hold a conference later this fall. Whether it will actually occur is a matter of some spirited debate in the region of course.

If you listen to the things that Americans officials were saying about Turkey in connection with the resolution this week, they emphasized over

and over again the important role that Turkey can play in this process among other things. So clearly Washington views Turkey as being a player, clearly Turkey views itself as being a player. The Turkish foreign minister is making I think his first overseas trip through the Middle East, his first stop with Syria.

SPEAKER: We consider Cyprus overseas. He went there first.

MR. PARRIS: I think it is far to say that viewed from Washington, Turkish policy toward this region over the last 5 years or so has undergone some significant adjustment. There is a different kind of relationship with Israel, there has been a search for what was described as strategic depth among other countries in the region. At a time when most Americans when they think of Syria think of people who are letting al-Qaeda into Iraq to kill Americans, people who are helping Iran expand its influence in the region, people who are murdering Lebanese politicians who don't agree with them, people who may be trying to build a bomb, Turkey has just invited Bashar al-Assad to come to Turkey on an official visit next week.

Here's my question. Given these adjustments which have taken place and given some of the things that the minister has said during his trip to the region, if Turkey plays a big role in the diplomacy on Middle East peace from this point on, is it going to be an asset or a liability for the United States? Bulent, you've spent a lot of time in the region.

MR. ARAS: Actually I spent the summer in Syria -- I can not suggest that I am on the main diplomatic -- believe me or not, there is a lot of progress in Syria. And when you talk to the people, lots of things change. People are speaking more freely, they can discuss political issues, et cetera. And here the point on this new Middle East peace process and I think it will not mean anything without Syria.

MR. PARRIS: The conference?

MR. ARAS: Yes, the conference. Let's go back to 1991 -- what made it valuable was the inclusion of Syria. It doesn't mean much to just have Jordan and to have some small regional countries. The main bulk of the problem is between Syria and Israel. Without even Syria it will not go anywhere. It is not certain that it will not anywhere, but at least there is a chance.

From that perspective, Turkey is certainly an asset since Turkey is the only country which has good relations with Syria, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinians. And considering this change of Turkish foreign policy toward the area, I think --

MR. PARRIS: You acknowledge that there has been a change?

MR. ARAS: Yes, there has been a change. Turkey is more of an active country in the area. If you go back to the 1990s or earlier periods, Turkey was following a course of conscious alienation not to interfere in Arab businesses. But when you look today, Turkey is -- it is proposing ideas for the future of Iraq,

it will intervene in these Syrian-Israeli problems, and offering itself as a facilitator for Syrian-Israeli peace, for Palestinian-Israeli peace. And if you look at the size in this picture, there is more or less a receptive audience even in Israel that Turkey can help in this regard. I think from that angle Turkey is an asset and can contribute to the conference.

MR. PARRIS: Would you guys agree with that statement?

SPEAKER: More or less. Maybe Turkey -- a qualified position there. It is accepted by the Israelis and the Palestinians and Arabs in general that Turkey is now in a much better position than let's say 10 years ago to be a go-between between Israel and --

MR. PARRIS: Why is that?

SPEAKER: Why is we are more active, definitely. The second is I think Turkey is foreseeing kind of a more balanced policy. Throughout the Cold War years Turkey was either pro-Arab or pro-Israeli in the 1990s, so we were just ignoring the other side. This time it seems that we are commanding much more respect from both sides because Turkey is continuing with its relationship with Israel not maybe in as strategic what it was in the 1990s, but still continues, but at the same time criticizing Israeli action when it doesn't agree and this gets kind of a respect from Arab streets. On the other side, Turkey I think, I feel has been instrumental in kind of conveying Israelis views to at least the Syrians. This is my feeling that that Turkey has been doing that, but what we need is more fine-

turning. For example, opening a channel with Hamas was something that I would agree, but inviting them into Turkey just right after the elections without having any consultations with the United States or Israel was a mistake. And inviting a guy who was residing in Damascus and who was actually the leader of the military link of Hamas was a mistake. The political link was in Palestine.

SPEAKER: -- he was head of --

SPEAKER: He was from Damascus.

MR. PARRIS: He was a problematic figure.

SPEAKER: We could have invited the Prime Minister of Palestine and that would have got a much better reception from the U.S. because it was the U.S. who agreed for elections in Palestine. So what we need is much more fine-tuning in our relations and giving more consideration maybe to Israeli concerns and talking to them. Because I find out that it's easier to get an understanding if you talk to them, that we should be doing much more of that.

SPEAKER: Just a short comment. The world Turkish image has been improved among Arabs. I think Turkey caught the psychological mood of the Arabs. That means if you ask the man in the Arab street, there are two wars against Arabs. One is the Palestinian problem, the other is Iraq, and Turkey is taking side with the Arabs in the eyes and minds of Arabs and the tradition is that Turkish is taking distance with the United States. That increases Turkish credibility.

MR. PARRIS: That's what we're talking about today isn't it?

SPEAKER: Yes, whether we like it or not.

MR. PARRIS: Do you have the sense that Turkey has gotten better at fine-tuning its discussions, its coordination with the United States on issues like Hamas and talking to problematic parties?

SPEAKER: Hamas was -- here, I think it was recognized all around, and it was something that was sprung on the government by certain advisers or elements within the government. The foreign minister knew only the day before that Nasha was coming and in private conversation he admitted it and he admitted that it was wrong. But once the thing had been set into motion, once the arrow had left the bow as they say in Turkish, there was little to do but to go along with it. In retrospect, everybody agrees that this was a disastrous thing to do. Let them inform the government, let them inform their government program forward, let's see what they are, and then it could be even desirable. I have had senior Israeli diplomats tell me that under those circumstances, once they surface and we know what they are, then it could even be as I say desirable to have this contact -- though its own Islamic fundamentalist elements -- there is that dimension.

MR. PARRIS: Do you think the machinery is working now to keep those kinds of surprises from happening in the new 18 months?

SPEAKER: Yes, I think so very much.

MR. PARRIS: Even with a new foreign minister?

SPEAKER: The new foreign minister is a new foreign minister. He hasn't much experience in foreign policy apart from the E.U. He was an IMF man. He is a very astute and some say brilliant economist. How that will translate into the subtleties of foreign policy remains to be seen. I don't know if his visit to Syria and some of the remarks he made and then following on to that and going to Israel, if all of that created much pleasure in Washington, sources tell me that there are people who are not too satisfied with it, but he is an unknown quantity in that respect at the moment.

Just a very brief thing on Syria. I haven't lived in Syria -- but I have been there quite a lot of times and it is a country I know. I find the Syrians to be pragmatic. I don't think that they will go out of their way on a jihad for Palestinians as such. I think that the sticking point for the Syrians is Golan. If something can be started on Golan and if the Syrians can somehow get Golan back, you could even considerably in my mind find them to be very close allies of America. This sounds very strange today, but I would like to remind you that America never severed its diplomatic ties with Syria. It has an ongoing embassy in Syria at the moment and foreign ministers have visited this country which is certainly not the case with Iran say for example since 1979. So the Syrians are a very pragmatic people and their problems are clear. And again as with Iran, there

is this relationship evolving with Syria and we are quite pleased with that, but again, when we look at the past there is not much love lost.

MR. PARRIS: You are pleased that Syrian-Iranian relations are getting better?

SPEAKER: No, the relations we have with Syria. After all, Israel may not have solved this problem with Syria, but we did Erdogan was in Damascus. And as far as we are concerned, we solved that problem, and to a large extent we had to do it ourselves. It was a little threatening at the time, but we did, but after that Syria came into line so to speak. But it has irredentist claims to portions of Turkey. If you go to Syria, you won't find Israel anywhere on Syrian maps, but you will also find the province of Hasa in Turkey as being part of the Syrian geography shall we say. So it's not as if there's a great amount of trust and confidence in this relationship either. The PKK was lodged -- I myself interviewed with three other friends Erdogan in the heart of Damascus for 4 hours. So that also is a relationship that has to be seen against the broader background and in terms of what the Syrians are. As the man said, they have made a great leap forward. If you went to Syria in the 1980s and 1990s, it was a police state, it still is, but not the way it was then. You see satellite dishes now, you see mobile phones, you see the Internet, and most Syrians see this as a product of Bashar al-Assad and they fight him for it. But the old guard is still there from the father's time, it's a very complex country based on ethnicity,

regionalism, and sectarianism, and therefore it's a country that has to be managed very well. I think Tom Friedman is somebody who knows Syria pretty well and understands what happens if you pull the lynchpin and how the society can collapse even worse than Iran and Iraq perhaps.

MR. PARRIS: I want to ask one more question because I want to leave time for people.

SPEAKER: May I just have a short one for Syria?

MR. PARRIS: Very short.

SPEAKER: There is a lot of criticism of Turkish-Syrian relations -
- but in Syria you see not only North Korea -- North Korea and Turkey are different, you see Japan, you see all areas in Syria. And they are investing over there and they are -- a lot of money. What keeps Europeans and Americans is this rhetoric of international -- I think a better rhetoric may help Europe and the United States with Syria, it can help more in that direction.

MR. PARRIS: Thank you. The question I want to conclude here with has to do with, I think this discussion has suggested, whether the subject is Syria or whether it's Iran or whether it's much of the Iraq agenda or whether it's even energy transport where we are convergent in terms of basic interests, there is a lot of daylight in terms of at least the tactics and short- to mid-term approach that the United States administration is advocating with dealing with some of these issues that would be politically sellable in country today. The question I

want to ask is, is it politically not sellable in Turkey? Is that a function of the kind of government that you've had for the 4-1/2 to 5 years or does it reflect deeper consensual views of the Turkish public that is really not a function of AKP or not AKP? The reason I ask the question is that there have been analyses here that the Muslimization, the Arabization, the shifts that we've been talking about in Turkish regional police, are a function of a government that wants to create among Turks a stronger Muslim regional identity at the expense of its Western identity. I welcome your sense as to whether or not, A, that analysis is valid, and B, exactly to what extent AKP itself lies behind some of the views that you've described as Turkish policy or whether or not this is something that Turks in general are comfortable with. Semih, why don't you start?

MR. IDIZ: First of all, let's look at the pro-E.U. stance. That would appear to belie what is being suggested here. And after their election in his victory speech on July 22 in the evening, Erdogan, one of the major things that he underlined was that we are on course for the E.U. and the government is committed to this. Whether he did this for ulterior reasons time will tell.

President Gul, when he was announcing his candidacy, he also underlined the phrase strongly. Babacan who is also an E.U. man anyway has been referring to this. So I don't think that there is such a drive by the AKP to pull Turkey away from Europe as such. In fact, I think that they feel that perhaps the freedoms of conscience that you have in Europe and America, they love

America. If you had the American system here where you open your Congress every year with a prayer, they would love that, but that doesn't work that way.

MR. PARRIS: But I'm really asking a slightly different question. To be more precise, if there were a different government, would the policy toward Iran as we have heard it described, would the policy toward the Middle East peace process, would the policy toward Iraq and the PKK, be significantly different?

MR. IDIZ: I think it would be the traditional policy. I think that they have changed the general mood. They have changed the general mood in the country. Before, foreign policy was considered to be a domain above domestic politics in Turkey. It was for the high priests of the foreign ministry to conduct -- was involved so he didn't get bogged down in politics. That has all changed now, you see. So in that sense I think that the AKP has brought a new approach to many things and with this comes of course a new opening up to the Islamic world but not in the hurried way that the previous pro-Islamic government did. I don't know if you were in Turkey then. Just the way he rushed immediately to Libya and got scolded by Qaddafi in the process, he went to -- and they started talking about Islamic NATOs, Islamic views, pie in the sky things. This government is much more realistic in that respect. It is obviously Islamic, it obviously has some kind of an Islamic agenda, but it is one that I think is going to be pursued within the framework of a democratic parliamentary and in the long run, secular mode because there is no other way that you can run Turkey and I think that they are

realizing that too. So I think perhaps that this Islamization of Turkey is only a surfacing of what was there already, Anatolia coming on into its own so to speak. It has changed the general climate, but will it alter the country's direction radically? I don't think so.

MR. PARRIS: As a practical matter, is there anybody in Turkey pushing back against the policies that the AKP government has been pursuing in Iran and all these other areas that we've described or are these policies that enjoy a generally broad consensus within the country?

SPEAKER: I conducted a survey among the Turkish international academics between April and June in this year. One of the questions was who conducts foreign policy in Turkey, who makes foreign policy in Turkey, and 60 percent of them said that it's the foreign minister meaning the -- foreign ministry. Only 12 percent said it's the government. And even the military had 18 percent. This is a perception from the people who work and study in the government in foreign policy and international relations of Turkey. I think it reflects the reality in a sense that Turkey's traditional foreign policy and the traditions of the foreign ministry are still there even though the government is trying to shape and trying to give a new dimension, et cetera. The idea of strategic depth, opening up the Middle East, was certainly this government's idea, but this is not the first time. From the 1960s when we had a problem related with Cyprus, a problem with the

West, and it was the opening to the Third World at the time. In the 1970s it was the Turk way. Now again this is not a new idea, maybe more vigor.

All these problems with U.S.-Turkish relations started with Iraq. Iraq was mismanaged. It has something to do with the AKP government but it's only to do with its inexperience. Iraq came at the moment when this government came to power.

SPEAKER: Everything came at that moment.

SPEAKER: It was not only Iraq, Cyprus and the relations with the European Union and Iraq, the three most important issues on Turkish foreign policy, they all came together and it was the time that Erdogan had just become prime minister.

MR. PARRIS: Before he became prime minister.

SPEAKER: Before.

SPEAKER: When his party became --

SPEAKER: And most of the cabinet didn't have any experience on governing. And also it was the time there was a problem within the country accepting the legitimacy of the AKP government. And there was even in March 2003 when we had voting in the parliament, I believe that most of it was -- there was related to domestic politics then to U.S.-Turkish relations. The people who voted against were actually trying to get the AKP government down and the prime minister almost went out actually that day.

SPEAKER: I personally know at least three deputies in -- the opposition who said that if there wasn't a group vote decision that they would have voted -- and only needed one vote, so that was the problem.

SPEAKER: Sorry, let me finish. The mismanagement of Iraq and the loss of trust between Turkey and the United States related to Iraq brought all the other problems. So whether there is an AKP government in Turkey or any other, nothing would ever change. I argued in 2003, to recover the relationship we need a change of two governments, one in Washington and one in Ankara. That didn't happen.

MR. PARRIS: I bet it was real popular in both capitals.

SPEAKER: Yes, that was not very popular.

SPEAKER: I think I have a different perspective. What happened in Turkey, there has been a domestic transformation in Turkey legally, politically, economically, and it has created a sort of self-confidence in the country. This progress with the E.U. membership process has created a tremendous impact for this new self-confidence, and this is not something specific to Turkey. Look at Greece. If you are looking to Turkish-American relations, just check the Greek-American relations, how it has evolved, when Greece became a member of the European Union. It is probably one of the strongest anti-American states within the E.U. This self-confidence is not wholly dependent on the AKP Party. I think

even without the AKP Party, we would have expected such self-confidence which wants to be active in regional affairs, in international affairs.

If you look at strategic depth, of course there are some nuances that we can discuss, but just if you check the European Union neighborhood and if you look at Turkey's new neighborhood approach, a zero policy, et cetera, it is almost identical. Another measure is the international environment and the regional environment. Under -- and other parties Turkey will be forced to develop -- with Russia, with Syria, with Iran. What is wrong with developing good relations with your neighbors? Also I think about Turkey's mismanagement of Iraq. Who is managing well this Iraq issue?

SPEAKER: May I add something? Turkish-American relations have past different phases in the last 200 years. Many people think that it started in 1945, but it started in the 1800s. But every stage has one legal document negotiated between two sides. After 1945 we had the Truman Doctrine and then the Marshall Plan and the negotiations in NATO, et cetera. In the 1960s we had bilateral agreements. After what happened in Cyprus in 1974 and the 1975 embargo on Turkey, there was another agreement negotiated between diplomats. And in 1991 after the end of the Cold War there was another agreement when the system has changed and it was signed. 9/11 and Iraq has changed the international paradigm again and the system has changed, so we needed a new

document to suit the new relationship between the United States and Turkey but we couldn't have until today negotiated that agreement yet.

MR. PARRIS: You're saying the new -- statement wasn't it.

SPEAKER: No, of course not. It was just a way trying to save the way and it didn't produce anything.

SPEAKER: I disagree. I think the -- speech was the most eloquent one.

MR. PARRIS: The statement of summer --

SPEAKER: I think -- speech was the most eloquent one.

SPEAKER: What I was saying is we needed to discuss this but we couldn't because of Iraq. Iraq is mother of all the problems in Turkish-American relations.

MR. PARRIS: Last word. I would like to invite comments or questions from the audience. Please wait to the microphone comes, and identify yourself. Right in front.

QUESTION: I am -- you had mentioned that 2008 is the year for Iran and nobody from the guests had a clear objection about this. Given the fact that the United States has a very bad consequence of the invasion of Iraq, do you really believe that the United States will go to Iran in 2008?

MR. PARRIS: That's one for me. That's not fair. You have to ask these guys.

QUESTION: Since there are no clear objections from the guests, I am very much surprised actually because there is a very bad consequence for the invasion of Iraq and I think the United States cannot manage to go to Iran in 2008. Is this your point of view or the administration of the United States?

MR. PARRIS: It should be more than evident that I don't speak for the administration of the United States at this point.

SPEAKER: Not in this institution.

MR. PARRIS: Certainly not in this institute, and certainly not in view of some of the stuff that I've said earlier in this discussion. I think it is simply impossible to tell now whether or not military force will be used against Iran before January 20, 2009. I think there is a chance. I can envision scenarios where it could occur. For example, if the Iranians made a mistake, do a test or claim that they've done a test, otherwise do something so provocative that it creates the kind of atmosphere that you have in Turkey now after the killing of these 15 soldiers.

I can envision other scenarios where force could be used. I personally am not convinced that this is a great idea, and I know that there are a lot of other people in this town who share that view both inside and out of government. So the American debate is going to continue. It's going to continue in a spirited fashion both inside and outside of government. I think as we get deeper into next year before or after our national elections, someone is going to

have to make a decision on this matter. But I don't think we're there yet and I don't think there is a policy to do that. Back, this fellow in the blue shirt.

QUESTION: I'm -- from Germany. Currently I work as a trainee at CSIS, and first of all I want to say thank you to the whole panel. Actually, I would like to start a Ph.D. exactly on that topic and you gave me pretty much new insights.

You finished your introducing speech at the desk with the words the United States needs Turkey, the question is will Turkey need the United States as well. Under this context, I didn't hear anyone mention the crucial issue of European membership. And actually coming back to the whole topic of the conference on regional challenges, the European Union is part of the Turkish neighborhood region apparently and it is also a challenge. My question is, if the United States ever pushed full-fledged Turkish membership in the European Union, Turkey also needs the United States in this regard. Let's look back to the enlargement process which took place in 2004. The Eastern enlargement was pushed by Germany, the Southern enlargement of the 1970s was pushed by countries like Italy and France, and who is the caretaker of the Turkish call for membership right now, it's the United States, of course. So your question is replied, of course Turkey needs the United States in the future.

MR. PARRIS: No, the question is, is there a role for the United States in helping with the E.U.?

SPEAKER: No, not much.

SPEAKER: Let's put it this way, no, I do think there is and I do think that the Europeans listen to the United States even though they say they don't on this issue. But of course, having a sponsor like the United States in Europe is not the same as having a sponsor like Germany or Italy or France which is not only not a sponsor, it is quite opposed to the idea of Turkey. The E.U. concept in Turkey is a very relative one. I think that we generally feel in Turkey that we have been mistreated by the European Union. I think one of the major turning points was the Cyprus-Annan Plan process. Here was a plan that many in Turkey had to bite the bullet to accept, but nevertheless, the powers that be -- they considered that this was a plan that had to go with, that with this plan its path to Europe would be eased. It would also have the byproduct of helping solve the Cyprus problem. So it got rid of its "sacred cow" -- it took the people to the water, the horse to the water, and it also made them drink it. And when everybody was expecting this to translate into something positive vis-à-vis Turkish-European Union relations, it didn't. Even though the referenda was for the plan, the Greek Cypriots, they rejected it to the tune of 70 percent and they still became members of the European Union enjoying the benefits of full membership with veto power and indirectly become the instrument for countries that do not want to have Turkey in Europe because if those countries did have a vision for Turkey, nobody would go along the Greek Cypriots, they would be out

on their own isolated. They are an instrument at the moment. So in that respect there is a lot of skepticism about the E.U.

On the other hand, there is no alternative to that either for the European side or for the Turkish side so they have to maintain this affair going on. If you look at the recent statements coming out of the European Union even from France, Koucher was in Ankara just a few days ago, there is a growing perception in Europe that we must not let Turkey go because of the consequences, very dire consequences, strategic, economic, and otherwise.

But nevertheless, the relationship with the E.U. has to be reinvigorated like the relationship with America perhaps. America can help as an influential force over Europeans, but it is open and direct intervention on behalf of Turkey does not always produce the expected result. It has to be diplomatic channels and by other means. But when senior America officials at critical moments in Europe when there is a significant conference going on or there's an interesting and important summit going on, when America comes down and says Turkey must be in the European Iran, then Chirac immediately jumps up or now I suppose Sarkozy and says what do the Americans get? If they're so happy, they should take in the Mexicans. And the whole thing becomes reduced to reduction ad absurdum.

MR. PARRIS: You have a strong no. Do you want to comment on this as well?

SPEAKER: Turkish-European relations are now taking their course. It's ups and down, but they're taking their course. American intervention at the moment is not helpful as Semih has finished in a way that if they do it publicly. But I do also recognize that Sarkozy, the French President, started talking about moving the referendum clause from the constitution just after his visit to the United States. So this is maybe coincidence, but in international relations, coincidence does not occur much. So there is a place for the U.S. to play, but quite diplomacy, not very openly.

And the role for the U.S. I think is trying to prevent a total break in Turkish-E.U. relations. Otherwise, they cannot get involved into the negotiations which is kind of a very private affair within the club, and Turkey is now trying to -- at last halfway into the club so we should not in Turkey also invite U.S. involvement. This is not perceived very well in Europe either.

MR. PARRIS: Over there in the back?

MR. STEWART: Ed Stewart with the MITA Group, business consultancy here in town. Expand a bit more on the Turkish relationship with Northern Iraq, the Kurdish regions. You mentioned some of the commercial interests that are engaged there. Toward the end of your remarks you were talking about some of the domestic political constituencies within Turkey. I am wondering at the commercial and business interests, the Turkish interests that are doing business in Northern Iraq, to what extent are they starting to influence or

are they influencing Turkish relations with Northern Iraq and the Kurdistan regional government there?

MR. PARRIS: You've spent a lot of time there.

SPEAKER: There is this notion that if you develop the joint interests, the economic interests, that this will smooth the path to political amity, shall we say, and we for a long time believed that. The interest in Northern Iraq is massive. It's to the tune of \$10 billion which in terms of a global perspective may not be much, but in terms of a tiny place like Northern Iraq it is.

But on the other hand, we haven't been able to actualize this notion that greater economic interests bring automatically greater political togetherness shall we say. In fact, the latest news from Northern Iraq is that the Turkish companies have actually started leaving the place because it's not going anywhere, the political environment adds to the uncertainty of what's going to happen, because initially there was this notion that as our interests become deeper and more entrenched, then the government will have to come along with us. But because the military dimension is so much up front, that dictates an uncertainty that even a Turkish investor now in the region is having doubts as to whether there is a future there.

In addition to that, there is also reportedly a change in attitude in the Northern Iraqi leadership toward the Turkish presence in Northern Iraq. I suppose that also goes along the logic that looking from their perspective as more

companies come here from Turkey the government will eventually have to talk to us. But with that not happening, I think that the Iraqi Kurds may also be losing interest.

Losing interest, do they have an alternative? This is the big million dollar question. I personally think that to a very significant extent, the Northern Iraqi Kurds are condemned to cooperating with Turkey. In addition to that, I also think that Turkey has to out of vital necessity cooperate with the Iraqi Kurds. I have been for this dialogue all along and to see this thing going down now as it is is saddening for somebody like me. But at the moment we do not see that dialogue process evolving out of this economic process and, again, at the root of it is perhaps the PKK issue, the Kurdistan independence issue, Kirkuk, Kurdish pretensions over Kirkuk and whatever.

MR. PARRIS: And has all that boiled essentially to the attitude of Barzani?

SPEAKER: Let's just say, and I think even that -- has admitted this privately, that the attitude of Mr. Barzani is not always helpful, saying the wrong things at the wrong time. Turks have to be managed. They're a complicated people, and he doesn't always do that.

MR. PARRIS: You've got some experience with that.

SPEAKER: There was a time when he was beholden to the Turks.

MR. PARRIS: I know.

SPEAKER: He was traveling the world with a Turkish diplomatic passport. He was coming to Ankara when he was fighting with Talabani so that the Turks would separate them, and he was actively fighting the PKK at the time.

MR. PARRIS: Are there embellishments?

SPEAKER: One reason of the decrease of Turkish business order is that there are not many new contracts. The early boom is over and what is one reason. I just talked with a group who invests over there, but it's a fact that from the earlier Barzani -- has changed. This is visibly seen by the investors and businessmen over there.

MR. PARRIS: Back with the green tie?

QUESTION: -- from the American-Turkish Council. My question is how likely do you see a military intervention into Northern Iraq? And if it is the case, how it would affect the coming Iraq conference scheduled for November?

SPEAKER: What kind of a military operation? That's a big question. If you are meaning that Turkish military is going into Northern Iraq with 20,000 soldiers and stay there, personally I don't think that's going to happen. This is too recent a discussion in Turkey, it has not ended yet, but my perception, my feeling is that we will have a resolution in the parliament about 10 days at the most giving the government power to do whatever it wants to do in Iraq. This will take off some of the steam from the public. And by then the time will be

November, it will be very difficult for ground operations. It's not unheard of. If I'm not mistaken, in 1996 and 1997, Turkey went into Iraq with big operations in December. So it could be done, but nevertheless it would be late in the season. And also it's not only late for the Turkish military, it's also late in the season for the Kurdish terrorists on the mountains. So they would have to stop their attacks against Turkish interests. So this kills the public enthusiasm. I was looking at the Turkish newspapers yesterday and today and they are much more cautious let's say about 10 days ago. After the killings of 13 soldiers, 22 Turkish newspapers had the similar headline, let's go into Iraq and teach them their -- but today most of the journalists are writing about being cautious. And also who is going to pressure the government now to go into Iraq? Before the elections it was the military, it was the opposition parties, but CHP lost ground, they don't have much power now on the Turkish public to force the government to do anything, and without military criticism, this doesn't mean anything either CHP or the Nationalist Action Party.

And now the government finds their ground I would say almost for the first time next to the military, so they are now talking. So the government would not want to lose that good connection so they will try to manage this without going into it. What I would suspect if things go worse which means if we have a couple of bombings in Ankara let's say or Istanbul or Southeast Turkey and killing many people, I would expect some sort of air strike either in the

mountains in Northern Iraq or somewhere else, but not ground operations. That's my feeling.

SPEAKER: I think the operative question there was what will it do to the conference?

SPEAKER: If there is no operation, nothing will happen.

SPEAKER: But if there is a significant operation that riles everybody in Iraq because it's not just the Kurds who are saying we are against this, Muqtada al-Sadr has come out even though he is having problems with the Kurds now because -- it could bring serious problems, then of course the question arises how can Turkey be an honest broker or whatever. I suppose if that happens then we can kiss good-bye to that conference.

MR. PARRIS: In front here?

QUESTION: -- from American Enterprise Institute. I have a question for Turkey's military and politics. Where do you see military and Turkish politics in the near future considering Turkey's bid on the E.U. and reforms that it needs to take on military intervention in politics? On the other hand, Islamization at the moment in Turkey, do you think there should be special treatment for Turkey from the E.U. for military's favor for controlling the politics?

MR. PARRIS: Let me go ahead and get the last couple of questions. Right here and then right there, and I think we're going to have to conclude with that.

QUESTION: -- my question was you know the resolution passed the other day, the Armenian resolution through the Foreign Relations Committee meeting, and if it goes to the House with Nancy Pelosi's decision, a lot of members said yesterday actually Turkey will just get mad, they will say a couple of words, and it will pass. What do you think about that, how easy it will be for the Turkish government?

MR. PARRIS: And the last question right here.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm Gary Mitchell from "The Mitchell Report." A piece of it relates to the question that was just asked, but in simple terms, reference was made earlier about the Pew poll that demonstrates that popular support in Turkey for the U.S. has plummeted from 60 to single digits. Recognizing that you've talked much about the influences there, I'm interested to know what you think the real drivers of that drastic change in public opinion are really about, and are we missing something that isn't on the obvious agenda?

Second, related to the resolution, my question is, if this resolution were to pass, and I'm not assuming that it will, but how deep does that influence the people in Turkey? Is this something that's predominantly of interest to the political elites, the chattering class, whatever one wants to call it, or does this

really drill way down into the sort of hearts and souls? I'm just interested to know what the real impact of that could be.

MR. PARRIS: Why don't we divide the labor on this? Why don't you do the military questions, why don't you do the question of are the Turks bluffing, and why don't you take the first cut, and I'm sure your colleagues will have comments as well on the roots of anti-Americanism in Turkey today.

SPEAKER: As far as the military is concerned, it obviously wants to retain its place in the Turkish political domain. It considers itself to be the guardian of the public, of its unity, of its secular system. But it must also have a sense of defeatism especially after the last election because as you recall, just before the elections we had mass demonstrations that were writ large and it was all over your televisions also, the secular masses marching. The first of those was actually known to be organized by ex-military people with the blessing of the military. And so what happened? The party that was supposed to have been buried as a result of these mass demonstrations produced a 47-percent result return. That obviously has heightened the sense of defeatism in the military wing because it means that the public is not listening to them, that something has been shattered, it's not the old Turkey where when a general spoke, that was it, it was like writ, you respected it where we come from a militarist tradition and therefore they must know. That has changed obviously. This does not mean that the military does not want to have its say in matters still. It is still talking here and

there, but nevertheless, when it expresses its position like for example we are opposed to anything that is against secularism and whatever and it comes out with these remarks, it has to say these things with the awareness that its last efforts failed miserably in the last election because if what was being said by the generals prior to the election combined with what these mass demonstrations were indicative of, then we shouldn't have had this result. I personally was expecting 30 to 32 percent. I was totally surprised when it came out to be what it was. It means that one out of every two voters voted for this party so that is a message to that camp.

Do we want a special place in the E.U. that will allow for the military? That always brings to mind the famous Groucho Marx statement, I wouldn't join a club that would have me, so what's the point of the E.U. if that's the case? We want the E.U. for its democracy, for its rights, for its parliamentary system where everything is defined and everybody has their role in society. On the other hand, if as they say in Turkey that we have a special case, then maybe you shouldn't be in that group if you have a special case because there is no such example in that grouping where the chief of staff sits next to the defense minister at official meetings and perhaps has more of a say than the defense minister. So in that sense, no, I don't think that we should get that privilege from the E.U. and if we think that we need that privilege because of elemental vital reasons, then perhaps we should revise what we want in this world.

MR. PARRIS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Difficult to answer. If you look at the past record of course there is much to convince you to say that Turks just talk and they just forget, and this is what happened in the French case. There were people on the street jumping on the French -- and they were discussing, but then they just forget it. However, on those previous occasions, I happen to know that the foreign ministry and the people who were dealing with foreign affairs were very much concerned about public reaction. They were of the opinion that the relations should not be sacrificed because of this. This time I'm not so sure. This time the problem relates to again the general Turkish-American relations. There is a perception in Turkey that the United States disregards Turkish national interests in all of its policies now. Bulent is going to answer most probably about the low public opinion in Turkey, and the Armenian resolution does just that. The discussion is not about what happened 1915, the discussion is not about relations between Armenia and Turkey, the discussion is not about international relations, the discussion is about domestic American politics. It's not even domestic, it's local American politics. This is as it is understood in Turkey so this is creating much more resonance in the general public than the decision makers who would want to try to contain the reaction.

In the end, Turkish decision makers and the politicians might be able to contain the reaction against the United States, but this would reflect very

badly on Turkish-Armenian relations. So if the aim of this resolution is to force Turkey to improve its relations with Armenia, no, this is going to kill it. I am 100-percent certain about that. It would not help Turkish-Armenian relations. Turkey is not going to try to cut its relations with the United States over this.

MR. PARRIS: Does Turkish public opinion at this point expect the government to do something that would create pain, discomfort, which would be taken seriously in America? And can the government ignore that if it does?

SPEAKER: People are already discussing about closing down Incirlik Air Base or preventing the United States supplying American soldiers in Iraq, but up until now these are not mentioned by government sources. These are all private views which I take it is very important because I am quite sure the government would not want to add another layer of problems with the United States. However, if this couples with the PKK and Iraq and everything and this becomes the boiling point, then the pressure on the government might be quite significant to do something. But I don't think that Turkey would go the way of preventing U.S. supplying U.S. soldiers in Iraq because this is an area that keeps Turkish-American relations alive, because if we do that then it will invite American reaction as well. So if we go into the cycle, then we won't be able to recover from it. So Turkish reaction might be directed more toward Armenia than the United States in this case.

SPEAKER: Anti-Americanism?

SPEAKER: Anti-Americanism is a global phenomenon. Nowhere in the world is the American image improving. There is a continuous decrease of support to the United States and even within the United States after this -- in Turkey there was an opinion poll in 2006 and I'll give you some answers to an open-ended question, why you don't like the United States. The one was because of Vietnam, and probably you watched a movie of U.S. soldiers what they did in Vietnam. There was another, because the United States did not prevent hunger and poverty in Africa. It is I think symbolically important since the support to the United States is decreasing not only for what it did, also what it didn't do. There is very strong -- of United States, but there are some problems like these arms deals, the poverty, and it is really complicated. It is not just some simple issues. In Turkey up until his second term, it was more sort of anti-Bushism, but after the elections there were answers to those open-ended questions was because they elected him again, and I think these answers explain to some extent.

MR. PARRIS: Do you want to comment on that piece?

SPEAKER: Anti-Americanism in Turkey has been traditionally part of the left's discourse. What has changed now is that it has become part of the rightwing discourse. In my generation if you said down with American imperialism you would have general come down on you and you've be slapped in prison with the blessings of Washington of course. But now it is very ironic to

see generals themselves saying more or less the same thing, and that I find strange.

The Turkish public can be won over. I believe that there is an international trend of anti-Americanism. I detect it even in Britain, for example, ironically, which is so close to America. But I think that situation can change except that it needs spurs and at the moment we don't have the spurs. At the moment we have the negatives.

MR. PARRIS: Can it change with this administration still in power?

SPEAKER: No. No, I don't it can change with this administration. I'm wondering, as you know, Clinton came to Turkey, he was much loved. He was a man of the people. He went amongst the earthquake survivors and he became the hero of the day. So that to me proved that there wasn't something fundamental and elemental. As the man said, when you go to Greece, it was always ironic for me that Andreas Papandreou was so anti-American because he is not only married to an American, but when the junta was there this is the country that he took refuge in and where he taught and whatever, so I don't think that there is anything fundamental.

But also part of the equation is the part of our broader discussion in the Middle East because from a Turkish perspective, the Palestinians are being wronged by Israel, this is the public perception, and American is the main backer

of Israel. So it can come to a simple argument like that especially given the revival in the Islamic outlook in Turkey.

SPEAKER: For years in the Middle East when you talked to people they blamed the United States for everything, and this was not the case in Turkey, this so-called anti-Americanism, it started that the U.S. is being blamed for everything and there are so many conspiracy theories, that the U.S. is trying to divide Turkey, break up Turkey, et cetera, but all this comes down to one issue and that's the PKK issue in Northern Iraq. The U.S. is in Iraq controlling Iraq and doing nothing about the PKK which is killing Turkish soldiers. That's simple as that.

SPEAKER: And what has complicated the issue is that they are doing with American arms now.

SPEAKER: Now the discussion has shifted to that as well. So if the United States is to do something about the PKK and their presence in Northern Iraq, the opinion would be shifted very fast because it shifted very fast from 1999 to 2005.

SPEAKER: But I beg to differ. There are so many strata, look at Afghanistan, Iraq and other issues.

SPEAKER: If I may very briefly be complimentary in an indirect way, I think anti-Americanism is also a function of America's size and power. In the 19th century it was Perfidious Albion, the 20th century, Perfidious America.

MR. PARRIS: Perfidious Uncle Sam.

SPEAKER: This comes with being strong.

SPEAKER: There was always a certain level of anti-Americanism.

SPEAKER: And also let's qualify that being anti-American, let's be very clear on this, even in the worst times since 2003 there hasn't been any single harassment case against America's business in Turkey

SPEAKER: American people walk freely anywhere they want.

SPEAKER: So anti-Americanism is anti-American administration policies.

MR. PARRIS: That's still true today, 24 hours afterwards?

SPEAKER: I don't think so.

SPEAKER: I don't think so.

MR. PARRIS: The State Department has issued a travel advisory?

SPEAKER: Yes, I know.

SPEAKER: They do it occasionally.

SPEAKER: There was this one incident in Ankara where some guy in a carpet shop had put up a sign saying Americans unwelcome and that was writ large, but that was opposed by the Ankara Chamber of Commerce saying are you crazy, what are you doing, you're tried to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

MR. PARRIS: Let's end on that note. Thank you all for coming.

Thank you panelists for presenting a very stimulating conversation.

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