



The Concept of Deterrence in Arab and Muslim Thought - Turkey

Working paper

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Executive Summary

Like many states, Turkey is still adapting to the post-Cold War era in many respects. As Turkey tries to assess the changing strategic environment, it also responds to developments concerning Iran's nuclear ambitions. Iranian nuclear advances are currently causing tensions in the Middle East and in the Gulf, which are likely to intensify even further into the future. If Iran continues down the nuclear path and other states in the region like Saudi Arabia follow, Turkey may have to face a decision: will it continue with its Cold War and post-Cold War policies of emphasizing its membership in NATO and the alliance's nuclear guarantees? Or will Turkey move toward a much more independent stance? At some point, Turkey may even consider leaving the alliance and developing its own nuclear capabilities.

In this paper, we present two scenarios. In the first scenario, Turkey maintains its relations with the West and continues to rely on its own strong conventional capabilities and on US-NATO's nuclear guarantee. In the second scenario, Turkey's internal dynamics, a change in the Turkish threat perception, and the weakening of the US-NATO alliance's assurances causes Turkey to choose to develop independent nuclear capabilities. Both scenarios reflect the doctrine of deterrence by punishment; while in the first scenario

Turkey extended deterrence forms a major basis of its strategy, in the second scenario it builds its own nuclear capabilities.

If the first scenario plays out, Turkey's prior emphasis on its Western allies and multilateralism would continue into the future. Moreover, Turkey would find it extremely difficult to forgo its longstanding desire to be seen as an integral part of the West, and thus would probably continue its efforts not to defy specific Western policies dramatically.

Turkey maintains a strategy of deterrence by punishment through its continued reliance on its strong conventional army. Currently, this strategy is not particularly specific (except with regard to the PKK), but it was previously directed against certain states, like Greece and Syria. As Turkey has been mainly a status-quo actor, satisfied with its current borders, this policy of deterrence by punishment seems successful, demonstrated by the absence of unilateral Turkish involvement in war since 1974.

While current tensions in the relationship between the West and Turkey will likely persist, especially surrounding Turkey-EU relations, Turkey has found that the multilateral path of accession to NATO is its best security guarantee. Turkey also sees its membership in NATO, and in the future, in the EU, as a major contribution to its stability.

According to the second scenario, Turkey moves to develop its own nuclear capability. Turkey would likely accomplish this through first building nuclear power plants for civilian usage. It seems less likely that Turkey would be one of the states that would buy "off the shelf" nuclear capabilities.

Turkey's quest for an independent nuclear weapons program would depend upon developments in three main areas. The first area is the evolution in the near future of US-NATO nuclear and conventional assurances, specifically in light of the shift in Turkish foreign policy toward a more independent, unilateral approach. The second is Turkey's ability to further develop its defense industry. The third is whether Turkey would succeed in its plans of the building of nuclear reactors. In each of these areas of action, the Turkish government would face opportunities and challenges regarding the question of whether Turkey should establish its own nuclear weapons program.

While Turkey has not changed its policy towards NATO, it has recently shown a desire to maintain the most independent foreign policy possible. This independent and sometimes bold foreign policy has caused some concern in the West. Whereas the intensity of this independent streak varies during different periods, the overall trend seems rather clear. If this desire for independence is coupled with a serious threat from within the alliance on the future of NATO in its present form, a major change in Turkish security posture could result.

In recent years, there has also been a growing Turkish emphasis on self-procurement. For example, Turkey plans to build by itself, or by collaborating with another country, a fighter jet, an unmanned aerial vehicle, a satellite, long-range ballistic missiles, and an aircraft carrier. While this emphasis on self procurement could be explained as part of Turkey's wish to maintain a strong conventional force within the NATO framework, and a means of taking advantage of the economic potential of its status as a weapons-exporting state, it also symbolizes Turkey's basic mistrust in its traditional allies, as well as anger over some of the past refusals to sell it advanced weapon systems. Another aspect of Turkey's new independent direction is the plan to buy its own missile defense systems, despite being part of NATO's missile defense umbrella.

If Turkey were to decide to embark down the nuclear path, implementing such a decision would take time. At present, Turkey has quite a negligible nuclear infrastructure. This, however, is changing. Turkey plans to build three nuclear reactors by the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic in 2023. The deal to build the

first reactor has already been signed with a Russian governmental firm. As the Turkish economy is strong and has growing energy needs, and as Turkey now enjoys political stability, it appears to fulfill the necessary preconditions for a country to embark on such a project. The path from a civilian nuclear plan to a military one has been the preferred path of recent nuclear proliferating states. The advantage of such a path is that it raises less international objection, and in the Turkish context, will allow it to remain in NATO until it acquires enough expertise in the nuclear realm.

In the second scenario, Turkey, at least with regard to its physical borders, would remain a status-quo actor. However, it would then base its policy of deterrence by punishment not only on its conventional forces, but also on its newly acquired nuclear capacity, moving away from its emphasis on multilateralism.

While both scenarios are logical, in our opinion, Turkey's future path will resemble the first scenario more. Even if the second scenario occurs in the future, the change would happen gradually. Thus, outside actors wishing to dissuade Turkey from such ambitions may have many opportunities to try to convince it that former or new nuclear guarantees might be the better option.

These conclusions are based on several factors. First, there are many indications that Turkey does not want to break from its NATO membership or duties; rather, just the opposite—it desires further integration in NATO and Europe. Second, by maintaining its NATO membership and remaining committed to implementing the necessary changes in order to conform with EU accession criteria, Turkey is able to achieve one of its basic long-term aspirations—to become an active player in the West. Third, NATO's conventional and nuclear military umbrella is sufficient to protect Turkey against the threats that it faces. Fourth, on whole, Turkey prefers multilateral action. Fifth, Turkey does not have the industrial or technological infrastructure required to reach full self-reliability. It would take it a substantial amount of time—if ever—to acquire the means to carry out an independent nuclear strike, and the strategy it would maintain in the meantime would resemble its past strategies.

Introduction

When analyzing Turkey's concept of deterrence, one must consider two basic premises of Turkish political and military thinking. First, the fact that the Turkish Republic views itself as a part of Western society has had a significant effect on its security posture; this attitude will likely continue to have an effect in the near future. Second, although other states also see the defense of national borders as their main obligation, Turkey, due to the national consciousness of the traumatic fall of the Ottoman Empire and memories of foreigners meddling in the former-Ottoman territories, has been especially sensitive to any threat to its territory or character. In addition to these two factors, the continuing problem of Kurdish terror attacks has made it difficult for those trying to advocate that Turkey now faces a less threatening environment than it did during the Cold War.

In Turkish, there are two words for deterrence: *caydırıcılık* and *engelleyicilik*. While these two words both mean deterrence, the verbs *caydırmak* and *engellemek* are not completely synonymous: *caydırmak* is translated as to deter, while *engellemek* is translated as to obstruct or to hinder (thus, it is closer to the concept of deterrence by denial). These variations and the very fact that two words exist show that different meanings of deterrence have been considered and discussed for many years in Turkey. Moreover, the existence of these words enables the Turks to communicate their thoughts on the matter, at least to

one another.¹ However, the deterrence discourse in Turkey is not very rich. This lack of discourse can be explained by several factors. First, for many years, Turkey's worldview was tailored to US and NATO perceptions of threat and their nuclear and conventional deterrence mechanisms. The NATO strategic concepts and its deterrence posture remain an integral part of Turkey's outlook. Second, only in recent years has Turkey started to assess some of the threats it is facing in a different way; however, as this paper will discuss, this thinking has not matured enough to generate a substantial discourse about Turkish strategic posture or perceptions of deterrence. Third, the government and the military still keep this subject under a veil of secrecy.

Like other states, Turkey is still adapting to the post-Cold War era in many respects. As Turkey tries to assess the changing strategic environment, it also responds to developments concerning Iran's nuclear ambitions. Iranian nuclear advances are currently causing tensions in the Middle East and in the Gulf, which are likely to intensify even further into the future. If Iran continues down the nuclear path and other states in the region like Saudi Arabia follow, Turkey may have to face a decision: will it continue with its Cold War and post-Cold War policies of emphasizing its membership in NATO and the alliance's nuclear guarantees? Or will Turkey move toward a much more independent stance? At some point, Turkey may even consider leaving the alliance and developing its own nuclear capabilities.

Predicting any country's future decisions and strategic concepts is a very difficult task; however, the Office of the President of the Republic of Turkey made this slightly easier. In 2008, under the auspices of President Abdullah Gül, the panel that would define Turkey's goals for the 100th anniversary of the Republic (2023) met for the first time. Among the participants were government officials, members of political parties, military personnel, civil servants, university professors, and representatives from NGOs and the economic sector. This panel published its first and second draft for the *2023 Vision*, which has served as a tool to help us understand how the Turkish government and broader segments of Turkish society envision the state's future. The documents are public and fully accessible. This is a clear advantage since there are only a few newspaper reports regarding Turkey's white (or red) books that directly address Turkey's threat assessment, and the documents themselves are classified. Of course, one must exercise caution when dealing with a public document with overly ambitious goals. Still, it does provide a sense regarding the general direction toward which Turkey sees itself heading.²

In this paper, we present two scenarios. In the first scenario, Turkey maintains its relations with the West and continues to rely on its own strong conventional capabilities and on US-NATO's nuclear guarantee. In the second scenario, Turkey's internal dynamics, a change in the Turkish threat perception, and the weakening of the US-NATO alliance's assurances causes Turkey to choose to develop independent nuclear capabilities. Both scenarios reflect the doctrine of deterrence by punishment; while in the first scenario Turkey extended deterrence forms a major basis of its strategy, in the second scenario it builds its own nuclear capabilities.

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we will provide a brief background on the Turkish army, on Turkey's security establishment, and on Turkey's threat assessment mechanism. Second, we will discuss Turkey's threat perceptions. Third, we will present the two scenarios regarding the future direction Turkey's security practices might take. We will conclude the paper with a discussion of which of the two scenarios is more

¹ Turkey does face a problem when it is issuing messages in Arabic and Farsi, because there is a shortage of people who know these languages in the executive branch. The Turks are aware of this problem and lately there has been a greater emphasis at least on the study of Arabic.

² See the project web site: <http://www.tsv2023.org/>.

probable; we will present the reasons why we believe that the first scenario—that Turkey's future policies will very much resemble the current ones—is more likely.

Chapter One: Background

The Turkish Army

One of the cornerstones of Turkey's deterrence practices is its strong conventional army. Currently, this strategy is general—it is only specific against the PKK—but in the past, it was directed against certain states, like Greece and Syria. As Turkey has been mainly a status-quo actor, satisfied with its current borders,³ this policy of deterrence seems to have been successful in contributing to the lack of unilateral Turkish involvement in war since 1974.

According to the Turkish constitution, the commander in chief of the Turkish army (TSK, Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri) is the President of the Republic. He also carries the responsibility of appointing high-ranking military officers (based upon the advice of the cabinet) and of preparing the TSK for war. In case of war, the General Chief of Staff (Genelkurmay Başkanı or GCS) is the commander on behalf of the President, who remains the overall commander in chief. The GCS is also responsible to the Prime Minister.⁴ The TSK can consist, when fully mobilized, of around 800,000 men. The TSK's main strength is its ground forces, maintaining a reputation, especially inside Turkey, as an unbeatable army and as the strongest in the region. Turkey has the second largest army in NATO after the US, and the Turkish navy (Türk Deniz Kuvvetleri or TDK) is the largest navy in the Middle East.⁵ However, The TSK has relatively few sophisticated capabilities mainly because Turkey does not have a highly developed defense industry. The Turkish government is aware of this problem and set a goal, according to *2023 Vision*, to develop a defense industry that could improve the country's strategic posture in both the region and the world.

The TSK has 72 short-range (J-600T Yıldırım) ballistic missiles. The Turkish Air Force (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri or THK) relies on US-manufactured or designed fighter jets. The Turkish fighter jets, especially the F-16 C/D and F-4e 2000, are the only armament in Turkey that can carry nuclear bombs, and only as part of a NATO mission. However, these jets and their pilots have not been trained for these types of missions in recent years.

To increase the future capabilities of the THK, the Turkish government is planning to purchase 100 F-35 jets and has started a process of R&D for a Turkish-based fighter jet. However, in March 2012, the Turkish government announced that it is putting the order on hold because of the unwillingness of the US government and the Pentagon to share the software source codes.⁶ Currently, this subject is under negotiation between the two governments.

Over the years, Turkey has spent more on defense than the average NATO member. However, much of the defense budget is used for importing weapons systems. This dependency on imports is now declining. One of the indications of this change is articulated in the *2023 Vision*, which highlights Turkey's defense industry

³ Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkey's Security Culture and Policy towards Iraq," *Perceptions* vol. 12, no. 1, (2007), p. 69

⁴ See article 117 in the new Turkish constitution in : <http://anayasa.hurriyet.com.tr/AnayasaMain.aspx?kn=3&p=5>

⁵ To put things in perspective, Turkey has more than four times the number of Israeli naval combat vessels.

⁶ Ümit Enginsoy, "Top Defense Panel to meet for Fighter, Chopper Moves," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 5.1.2012; "Turkey plans on buying 100 F-35," *Hürriyet Daily News*, February 24, 2012 "Turkey reduces direct defense imports to 10 percent in 2011," *Today's Zaman*, March 5, 2012; "Turkey puts F-35 order on hold over US refusal to share technology," *Today's Zaman*, March 24, 2012.

capabilities as a factor that will affect Turkey's defense and international posture; it also relates this to its growing economic capabilities. More so, the local defense industries are viewed as a vital part of the modernization process of the TSK.⁷

Turkey's Security Establishment

In addition to the army, Turkey's security establishment also includes the National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı or MİT), the police, the Gendarmerie, and the Village Guard. The Kurdish issue has predominately occupied these organizations' agendas, and some, like the Gendarmerie and the Village Guard, are exclusively devoted to dealing with the Kurds. The Turkish National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu or MGK) is also very influential. The National Security Council was established after the military coup in 1960. The basic idea behind the establishment of the Council was to create an institution that will help elected officials with issues concerning the security of the Republic. However, the MGK mainly has been used by the army command as an instrument that allows the army, after they widened the concept of "national security," to supervise the elected government and to intervene, if necessary, with its actions and decisions on all subjects. In 1962, the power of the MGK was further increased by making the GCS responsible to the Prime Minister and not to the Minister of Defense.⁸ After the military coup in 1980, the MGK, under the leadership of the Chief General Staff, and later President, Kenan Evran, functioned more or less as the government of the Republic. The 1982 constitution, written under the supervision of the MGK, gave the Council, which was composed of only army officers, further power by making it an advisory council for the President. Therefore, the Council had more power than the Prime Minister in the Turkish political and executive structure. In 1997, the MGK issued an ultimatum that led the Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, to resign.⁹ After the election of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet Kalkınma Partisi or AKP) in 2002, the balance of power between the military and the civilian administration began to change. This process was enhanced by the revolutionary reform package of 2003 that augmented the civilian influence over the MGK. The civilian control over the MGK is manifested in its participants: the Council is chaired by the President and includes the civilian Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign, and Internal, National Defense, and Justice Ministers. The General Chief of Staff and the commanders of the Army, the Navy, and the Gendarmerie represent the armed forces.¹⁰ Thus, the civilian administration can use the Council for its own needs. Further, there has been a decrease in the Council's ability to intervene with the decisions of the government.

In order to declare war and authorize the use of force abroad, the Parliament must give its approval, or if there is an immediate necessity, the President of the Republic can order the army to start a war.¹¹ While this has not usually been a serious restraint on Turkey's use of force, it is notable that the Parliament did not approve the use of Turkish territory for the 2003 US actions in Iraq. Whether the Parliament didn't approve the US request because Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan didn't want the resolution to pass, or because of his inexperience at the time is debatable. Later on however, Turkey did allow the use of the Incirlik base for some logistical support of US actions in Iraq.

⁷ Taken from the first draft of : "Güvenlik Savunma ve Savunma Sanayii,"

TSV 2023, <http://www.tsv2023.org/>.

⁸ Feroz Ahmet, *Turkey Quest for Identity*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003, pp. 123.

⁹ Ibid, pp. 149-172

¹⁰ See article 118 in the new Turkish constitution in : <http://anayasa.hurriyet.com.tr/AnayasaMain.aspx?kn=3&p=5>

¹¹ See Article 87 and 92 <http://anayasa.hurriyet.com.tr/AnayasaMain.aspx?kn=3&p=2>

Turkey's Threat Assessment Mechanism

Turkey's threat assessment mechanism is based upon the recommendation of the MGK and approval by the government. Until recently, the TSK perception on the threats facing the Republic was the dominant factor in Turkish national threat assessments. Therefore, Turkey's views and perceptions were militaristic and narrowly focused. In recent years however, there has been a change with regard to this point of view. For example, in an article titled, *How Should the Turkish National Security Strategy Document of Turkey be Prepared?*, the writers argue that the national threat assessments should be written while increasing the number of relevant organizations that are defined as "security actors," even non-traditional ones like the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (Türkiye Radyo and Televizyon Kurumu or TRT), and that the MGK under the supervision of the government should refer to the combined assessments of all the security actors. They further argue that the MGK should assign each security actor a different threat assessment mission and coordinate between them.¹² An indication of the change in the threat assessment process can also be viewed through Aras and Karakya Polat's article from 2007 in which they argue that:

"Turkey's national security is beginning to be debated by a broader segment of society with increasing input from civilians...Civil society groups' entry into foreign policy making process has been supported by political and legal reforms within the context of EU membership. Opposition to official policies by civil society groups started to be tolerated, which eventually led to more open debates..."¹³

The official document concerning Turkey's threat assessment is called the "Red Book" (Kırmızı Kitabı). The "Red Book" is a secret document, and is usually not discussed in Turkey. In 2010, however, Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek announced some parts of the "Red Book," to the Turkish Parliament, which were then publicized and debated in the Turkish and the international media. This act was the first time that the government opened the core of the "Red Book" for public debate.¹⁴ Moreover, the government sent a draft of the document to research institutes to receive their feedback. One of these institutes, Turkey Economic and Social Research Vakfı, or TESEV, reports that such a process is one of the steps Turkey needs to take to become more democratic.¹⁵ Another novelty in the 2010 "Red Book" was that the countries in the close vicinity to Turkey were not defined as a security threat. As was mentioned by several journalists and researchers, and as will be elaborated in the next section, there has been a shift towards the Foreign Office and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's "Zero Problem" strategy,¹⁶ as the primary prism for Turkey's threat assessment.¹⁷

¹² Ahmet Küçükşahin; Önder E. Uyar; Erçin Tahminciler ve Duygu Dinçe, "Türkiye'nin Güvenlik Strateji Belgesi Nasıl Hazırlanmalıdır?" *Güvenlik Stratejileri dergisi*, 2008, pp. 7-38.

¹³ Bulent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the New Geographic Imagination," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* vol. 61, no. 4 (2007), pp. 475.

¹⁴ see: Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi kabul edildi" *Yeni Şafak*, November 22, 2010.

¹⁵ see: Mustafa Erdoğan and Serap Yazıcı, *Türkiye'nin Yeni Anayasa Doğru*, pp. 28-31

¹⁶ The Zero Problems policy is aimed to decrease Turkey's points of contention with its territorially adjunct neighbors. Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey's foreign policy in turbulent times," *Chaillot Paper* no. 92 (September 2006), pp. 50-51.

¹⁷ "Turkey to Alter National Security Strategy," *UPI* August 25, 2010; Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak, "The Red Book: the Bible of Turkish Foreign Policy," *Tel Aviv Notes* October 10, 2010; Elnur İsmayilov, "Türkiye'nin değişen dış politikası ve Kırmızı Kitap" *Focushaber*, November 7, 2010.

Chapter Two: Turkey's Threat Perceptions

When analyzing Turkey's threat perceptions one must first refer to the Sèvres syndrome—the fear that if Turkey isn't strong, an unfavorable redrawing of borders will take place, as was averted during the late days of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸ This exaggerated sense of threat from malicious intentions of outside powers has hindered Turkey's understanding of certain situations and, at times, caused Turkey to overreact. As will be elaborated below, this syndrome currently causes Turkey the greatest problems in its dealings regarding the Kurdish issue.

Whereas it would be problematic to claim that Turkey has managed to overcome this tendency for paranoia about the intentions of outside actors, it is possible to argue that since Turkey has moved towards a more active foreign policy in recent times, it feels that it does have a bit more control of developments in the international arena. However, the dramatic events of the Arab Spring have shaken this newly acquired self-confidence.

Below, we discuss specific threats that Turkey has faced in the past that still have influence on its policies, and some of the new threats it faces. We will especially elaborate on the threat from Iran, as many estimate that it will heavily preoccupy Turkey in the future. It should be mentioned that most of these threats couldn't be seen as existential. Hence, if and when Turkey has to deal with them in the future, it will probably do so with direct and specific threats and rely less on its general deterrence, because while it remains an important part of Turkish strategic thinking, it is less relevant to these threats.

Russia

While Russia has been a source of concern for Turkey in the past, and in some respect still is, the two states have enjoyed a more cooperative relationship in recent years. Turkey is heavily dependent on imports of natural gas from Russia (more than 65 percent of its imports),¹⁹ and as will be elaborated in the second scenario, Russia will assist Turkey in building its first nuclear reactor for electricity production. The two states were, however, on opposing sides regarding the situation in Syria after the uprisings began in 2011. In addition, first the USSR and later Russia traditionally supported the Greek-Cypriots. Following the gas discoveries near Cyprus and the uprisings in Syria, Russia and Turkey have both increased their naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (however, Turkey's presence mainly targets Israeli and Cypriot actions in the area).²⁰ Still, these actions by Russia and Turkey were not accompanied by threatening public statements against one another, but rather both sides let their actions speak for themselves. In the conflict over Nagorno Karabakh, the Turks have traditionally supported Azerbaijan, and Russia, while not in an exclusive and a consistent manner, has nonetheless supported the Armenians. The fact that Russia places significance on developments in many of the states neighboring Turkey, and sees the former Soviet territories as its exclusive sphere of influence, makes the possibility of a clash of interests between the two very real. Still, Turkey has in many respects accepted this Russian sphere of influence and the two states have managed to avoid direct confrontation (e.g., Georgia). However, the Turks have put an emphasis on maintaining their strength vis-à-vis Russia. Moreover, one should also take into consideration that Turkey as a member of NATO perceives Russia as a potential threat to the alliance.

¹⁸ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), p. 162; Benli Altunışık, "Turkey's Security Culture and Policy Towards Iraq," p. 71.

¹⁹ Hasan Selim Özertem, "Turkey's Nuclear Ambition in the New Era," *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 29, 2010

²⁰ "Russia Sends Conflicting Signals on Syria Ships," *Reuters* April 13, 2012.

Syria

Syrian-Turkish relations have been quite tense for many years. The first decade of the 21st century is unique in that during this decade there was a significant warming of the relations.²¹ Still, disagreements between the two states over water allocation, over the question of control of Alexandretta/Hatay, and over the PKK finding refuge in Syria might at any point reemerge. In this respect, it should be stressed that Turkey has always seen the PKK actions as mostly driven by outside forces trying to disintegrate Turkey.²²

The recent turmoil in Syria is much debated in the Turkish press from the point of view of regional stability. Most analysts predict that the result of the current turmoil will be long-term instability in Syria. This result will likely have a negative effect on Turkey. Even if the existing or a new regime do not play a role in directly assisting the PKK in reestablishing its operating grounds in Syria, the PKK may use Syrian weakness to do so nonetheless.²³ Thus, most of the achievements in dealing with PKK presence in Syria will be erased.

Iraq

The Second Gulf War has had a transformative effect on the region as a whole and on Turkish-Iraqi relations specifically. However, the imposition of a no-fly zone on Northern Iraq following the First Gulf War, in 1991, already meant the Iraqi central government had less control over developments in the area, and enabled the PKK to find refuge there. This is an ongoing problem for Turkey, and Turkey has chosen to act with its ground forces in a limited manner in Northern Iraq from time to time. Such incursions took place several times in the last three decades.

Although Turkey has long objected to the creation of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, since 2009 there has been a remarkable transformation in the relations between Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG),²⁴ and de-facto recognition of the Kurdish autonomous status. Still, the problem of the PKK finding a refuge and an operating ground in Northern Iraq remains, and there is the danger of Iraq splitting into two or three states. Like Syria, Turkey's growing concerns over developments in Iraq are the result of the weakness of Iraq and the intensifying Iranian influence there. In this regard, the fact that Iraq has no air force makes the possibility of other actors using its airspace very real, for example, as was mentioned with regard to possible scenarios of an Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear infrastructure. As Turkey is a territorially proximate country to Iraq, this overall weakness of the Iraqi state is very worrying.

Armenia

Traditionally, the Turks have seen the Armenians as an internal threat. During the Armenian Genocide, the Turks claimed that the Armenians were cooperating with Russia, thus the external dimension of threat was also strong. The fact that Armenia today is a weak state has erased in some respects part of the external threat element. Still, there are tensions involving the genocide-recognition issue (and a Turkish fear concerning possible Armenian demands for land and/or compensation), the Turkish view of the Armenian Diaspora as a strong and negative force, and the linkage created between the conflict over Nagorno-

²¹ Gokhan Bacik, "Turkey–Syria: A Belated Friendship," *Insight Turkey* vol. 9, no. 3 (2007), p. 67.

²² Asa Lundgren *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), p. 70.

²³ Piotr Zalewski, "How Bashar Assad has come between the Kurds of Turkey and Syria," *Time* April 5, 2012.

²⁴ Henry J. Barkey, "A Transformed Relationship: Turkey and Iraq," In: Henri J. Barkey, Scott B. Lasensky and Phebe Marr (eds.), *Iraq, Its Neighbors, and the United States* (Washington, D.C. : United States Institute of Peace, 2011), p. 53.

Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Turkish-Armenian and Turkish-Azeri relations. As the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide approaches (in 2015), this issue may have an increasing effect on Turkish policies.

Greece

Following the great turbulence in Greek-Turkish relations throughout the 19th century and during the first part of the 20th century, there were a few episodes of near-confrontation during the second half of the 20th century. In fact, the Turkish-Greek rivalry was one of the major threats to the unity of NATO during the Cold War and the consequences still have a lingering effect today, mostly on Turkish-EU relations. During the 1974 Turkish intervention in Cyprus, the ruling Junta in Greece ordered the Greek Army to respond; the army refused to follow orders, and a few days after Turkey's initial actions, the Junta was toppled.²⁵ The new regime in Greece did not follow the former regime's intent to respond and acted with restraint. In general, Ronald Krebs claims that it was the security both Turkey and Greece derived from their membership in NATO that enabled them to clash on issues of less strategic importance than the Soviet threat.²⁶

Cyprus

In the 1950's, and even more so after Cyprus gained independence, the Turks began to emphasize the security risk to Turkey from a possible foreign takeover of Cyprus. Due to the proximity of Cyprus to Turkey, the Turks saw control of Cyprus as a possible "stepping stone" to an attack on their territory. They feared a Greek takeover of the island most, as well as growing Soviet influence on the Greek-Cypriots. Since 1974, these fears have abated as Turkey gained control of almost 40 percent of Cypriot territory, maintains a continuing military presence there. The fact that Turkey supported the unsuccessful Annan plan of 2004 for the unification of the island can also be seen as a proof for the decrease in the perception of threat regarding Cyprus. However, as mentioned, the gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have destabilized this region and fears that were forgotten might reemerge.

Israel

While it would have been quite unthinkable to put Israel on Turkey's list of threats a few years ago, that is probably no longer the case. In fact, it has been claimed that in the 2010 "Red Book," Israel was included for the first time because Israel's policies were seen as undermining the stability of the region.²⁷ While much of Turkey's anti-Israel rhetoric is an outgrowth of Turkey's wish for a greater role in the Middle East, and to enhance its soft power, it also caused the two states to act in ways that might translate into military confrontation in the future. In fact, one could claim that the flotilla event of May 2010 was Turkey and Israel's first direct confrontation. While the killing of eight Turks and one American of Turkish origin was not either side's intended result, further misunderstandings and accidents like this might happen as Turkey

²⁵ Fiona B. Adamson, "Democratization and the Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: Turkey in the 1974 Cyprus Crisis," *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 116, no. 2, (2001), p. 291

²⁶ Robert R. Krebs, "Preverse Institutionalism: NATO and the Greco-Turkish Conflict," *International Organization* vol. 53, no. 2 (Spring 1999), p. 360.

²⁷ Gallia Lindenstrauss, "Changes in the Turkish Threat Perceptions: Strategic Significance for Israel," *INSS Insight*, no. 220, November 8, 2010.

increases, as mentioned, its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, while Erdoğan threatens that Israel could no longer do whatever it wanted there.²⁸ In addition, the fact that Israel has chosen to improve its relations with Greece and the Greek-Cypriots as a way of dealing with the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations has also contributed to heightening tensions. Still, in the past, worsening relations between Turkey and Syria and an escalation in PKK violence have brought Turkey and Israel closer, and this may occur again, although it is highly unlikely Turkey and Israel will reach the level of cooperation they had in the 1990's.

The Western Balkans

Instability in the Western Balkans is also preoccupying Turkey and it has invested efforts in several mediation initiatives in this region.²⁹ Erdoğan has been quoted as saying, "History has showed that it is not possible to establish and maintain global peace without peace and stability in the Balkans and the Middle East. And since Turkey is in the center of this area, it cannot remain indifferent to the developments there."³⁰ While Turkey supported NATO intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later military and policing operations there, the novel development in recent years has been the improving relations between Turkey and Serbia. Such an improvement was deemed necessary by Turkey since it would enhance its capabilities as a mediator in the region.

The Kurdish Issue

The Kurdish struggle in Turkey, which has resulted in more than 40,000 Turkish casualties (the majority of which are Turks of Kurdish origin) unquestionably has been the most pressing, if not the biggest, security threat Turkey has faced since the late 1970's. The Turks have long presented to themselves and to others the claim that this problem persists because outside forces are interested in its continuity. While not a completely unfounded assumption because Syria and Iran have assisted the PKK at times, it has in some respects, blinded the Turks from looking more deeply into the internal dimensions of this problem. Still, this process of internal questioning has begun and will not be easily reversed. While previous governments have mostly tried to deal with the economic dimensions of the relative under-development of the Kurdish-dominated regions, AKP has gone the furthest to try to solve the Kurdish problem politically. It has showed some openness toward recognition of Kurdish cultural rights and has conducted direct, albeit secret, negotiations with the PKK leadership.³¹ However, this process has not been linear and the AKP has reverted from its commitment to a peaceful solution at some points, as has the PKK. It is still an open question as to whether the AKP will succeed in this push toward a solution.

²⁸ "Erdoğan: Warships can be in E. Med at any moment," *Ynet News*, 15 September, 2011.

²⁹ A summary of these initiatives can be found in Zarko Petrovic and Dusan Reljic, "Turkish Interests and Involvement in the Western Balkans: A Score-Card," *Insight Turkey* vol. 13, no. 2, (2011) pp.160-161.

³⁰ Erhan Türbedar, "Turkey's New Activism in the Western Balkans: Ambitions and Obstacles," *Insight Turkey* vol. 13, no. 2 (2011), p. 141.

³¹ International Crisis Group, "Turkey: Ending the PKK Insurgency," *Europe Report* no. 213, 20 September 2011, pp. I, 1.

Iran

Many analysts point to the fact that of all the possible threats to Turkey, the Iranian nuclear ambitions will have the most effect on Turkey's future security concerns. Until now, Turkey has downplayed the threat from Iran. It has officially stressed Iran's right to have a civilian nuclear program, and is still trying to mediate negotiations between the West and Iran about the nuclear issue. This was a vital part of the Foreign Office's policy of "Zero Problems." Turkey does not currently see Iran's nuclear program as a direct threat to its national interests, but instead the Israeli/US reactions as a possible threat to the region's stability. From the Turkish perspective, this problem should be handled by a multilateral effort, reliant on diplomacy alone. For those reasons and others that we will discuss below, Turkey's approach to the crisis with Iran has been, from the start, a diplomatic approach. It should be emphasized that this is not the first time Turkey has downplayed a threat from a neighboring country with non-conventional capabilities. Turkey employed the same policy toward Iraq when Iraq was trying to develop nuclear capabilities.³²

To help achieve a deeper understanding as to why Turkey has thus far downplayed the threat from Iran, we shall examine the discourse in the Turkish press about Iran's nuclear program and its ramifications on Turkey and the region at large. This discourse can be divided along four main themes: Turkey as a mediator, the questionable nature of the Iranian program, the regional ramifications of an Iranian nuclear program, and the impact that tougher sanctions and a US/Israeli attack against Iran will have on Turkey.

The first prevailing theme revolves around Turkey's role as a mediator between the West and Iran. Since the beginning of the nuclear crisis between Iran and the international community, the Turkish government has tried to mediate an agreement that will allow Iran to continue its nuclear program, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), while ensuring that this program will not have a military dimension. This effort had materialized into an agreement, which was known as the "Tehran Declaration," and was signed between Iran, Brazil, and Turkey in 2010, but was not accepted by the US and the EU. As some Western and Turkish analysts claim, "The only available option with at least some chance of success seems to be old-fashioned diplomacy. And there Turkey comes in—at least according to some."³³ In a more recent column, Joost Lagendijk wrote in *Today's Zaman*, "Let's hope that on April 13-14 Erdoğan and Davutoğlu manage to revive the spirit of May 2010 and pave the way for a new deal that, this time around, will be accepted by all countries involved."³⁴ Sami Kohen, a columnist from *Milliyet* wrote: "Turkey does not perceive Iran's attitude as a threat and is favoring the path of a dialog and reconciliation over a policy of oppression."³⁵

A second theme of the Turkish discourse is the attempt to contradict the common assumption that the Iranian program is militaristic in its essence. Prime Minister Erdoğan, in March 2010, while speaking to the BBC declared, "he had full confidence in Iran's guarantees that its nuclear program was for civilian purposes only."³⁶ Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, in an interview with the British newspaper the *Guardian* was quoted as saying, "It is important to put oneself in their shoes and see how they perceive threats."³⁷ This stance is not only a part of the official rhetoric, but is also a popular opinion demonstrated in some newspapers. On November 27, 2011 *Today's Zaman* newspaper interviewed several analysts that argued

³² Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey, Iran and Nuclear Risks," in Henri Sokolski and Patrick Clawson (eds.) *Getting Ready of a Nuclear-Ready Iran* (Washington: D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), p. 103.

³³ Joost Lagendijk, "Using Turkey's Expertise to deal with Iran," *Today's Zaman* February 28, 2012.

³⁴ Joost Lagendijk, "Can Turkey pull off a Second Tehran Declaration? (2)," *Today's Zaman*, April 1, 2012.

³⁵ Sami Kohen, "ABD ile Suriye ve İran uyarı," *Milliyet*, April 4, 2012

³⁶ Burak Bekdil, "Going Nuke, Caught Nude," *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 10, 2011,

³⁷ Quoted in: *Today's Zaman*, November 22, 2011.

that there is no indication about the path Iranian nuclear program is taking. Some of the analysts, cited in this article, argue that the West is determined to stop Iranian nuclear program because of their imperialist agenda, and that Iran is the nation who is under a threat because of the massive weapons deals that Saudi Arabia and Israel have recently made.³⁸

A third theme revolves around the ramifications of the Iranian nuclear program for the Middle East and the Caucasus. The fact that Turkey is part of three unstable regions—the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Balkans—with many newly formed states, augments the threat from the weakness dimension of many actors in these regions. According to traditional Turkish views (however, it could be argued that this view persists), other actors could use this weakness to gain strength over Turkey. Hence, Turkish foreign policy has put an emphasis in recent years on encouraging stabilizing steps—be it through Turkish mediation, growing economic interdependence with its neighboring countries, and a push for the Europeanization of the Balkans, or de-facto recognition of Russian dominance in its neighborhood. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu has presented the importance of the regional stability to the Turkish government in statements given on the eve of his visit to Teheran, on January 5, 2012:

"There are some circles who wish to begin a Cold War on the axis of Sunni-Shiite tension whose affects would last for decades. I will raise this issue during my visit [to Tehran].... Turkey is strongly against fresh tensions in the region, be it Sunni-Shiite tension or an anti-Iran campaign or the recent row [between Iran and the United States] in the Gulf...What is important for us is to reduce the tension in the region..."³⁹

This issue was the focus of a conference held in 2008 under the auspices of Turkey GSC. Most of the speakers agreed that a nuclear Iran would change the dynamics of the Middle East.⁴⁰ This fear stems from the perception that an Iranian nuclear bomb will trigger a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The Turkish press has discussed claims that if Iran goes nuclear, Saudi Arabia will also strive to achieve nuclear capabilities.⁴¹ Kadri Gürsel, from the *Milliyet* newspaper, when addressing these fears in his column, stated: "The region is headed on the straight path to a big crash."⁴²

The fourth theme in the Turkish discourse are the ramifications for Turkey of tougher sanctions against Iran, or a future attack on Iran either by the US or Israel. Many emphasize the economic dimensions, and draw comparisons to the negative effects the sanctions on Iraq had on Turkey following the First Gulf War. Turkey is also quite vulnerable because it imports one-third of its oil consumption from Iran.⁴³ In general, however, there is not really a military-centric debate on the possible outcomes of a future attack on Iran and its ramifications for Turkey and the region. As we have shown, the downplaying of Iran as a threat is not only a government-based strategy but also a common perception in the Turkish public and media.

Beyond the evolving discourse today on Iran in Turkey, it should be remembered that the Iranian-Turkish border has remained intact for centuries, and that the two states have no territorial disputes; Turkish policy makers estimate that the chances of a nuclear attack from Iran directed solely at Turkey is rather low. Still,

³⁸ Mahir Zeynalov, "Iran's Nuclear Ambitions an Offence, not Defense," *Today's Zaman*, November 27, 2011.

³⁹ "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu warns of 'Regional Cold War'," *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 5, 2012.

⁴⁰ Genelkurmay Başkanı, *Orta Doğu Belirsizlikler içindeki geleceği ve Güvenlik Sorunları*, Ankara, 2008; see also Zuhar Shiriyeve, "The Iranian crisis: what does this mean for Regional Stability," *Today's Zaman*, March 21, 2012

⁴¹ İpek Yezdani, "Mideast 'risks seeing nuke race'," *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 17, 2011.

⁴² Kadri Gürsel, "İran için vakit çok geç (Davutoğlu için de...)," *Milliyet*, January 8, 2012

⁴³ "Turkey unlikely to cut Iranian Crude, fearing Extra Costs," *Today's Zaman*, January 20, 2012; "Iran Nuke Row nixes Turkey's Oil Efforts," *Hürriyet Daily News*, February 17, 2012; "İran'da kriz olmazsa petrol 110-120 dolar arasında kalır," *Milliyet*, February 29, 2012; "Türkiye'den kritik karar," *Milliyet*, March 30, 2012.

as many other actors in the regional and international system are gravely concerned about the Iranian nuclear development, one could argue that Turkey is still in denial about this threat.

Chapter Three: Scenario I - Turkey decides to continue relying on NATO security guarantees

Turkey and NATO

Following the end of World War II, Turkey chose to emphasize its ties with the Western alliance, and it has been a member of NATO since 1952. Turkish governments have acknowledged that this membership has been beneficial for the country's security posture.⁴⁴ While there were crises, like the withdrawal of Jupiter missiles (as part of the agreements reached with the Soviets during the Cuban Missile Crisis), and the imposition of a US weapons embargo on Turkey following the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974, Turkey has shown its continued commitment to its membership in the alliance, in contrast to France, for example. Whereas it is difficult to contemplate an alternate scenario whereby Erdogan was not forced by the army to resign and had a longer tenure, it should be mentioned that while Erdogan was the only Prime Minister, who prior to his election had declared at times his wish that Turkey withdraw from NATO,⁴⁵ this was not any way near during his reign.

In the past, Turkey has tried to request the invocation of Article 5 of the NATO treaty. Although it did so in during the First Gulf War, it was at first refused; it only received the warning and patriot systems it requested a few weeks later.⁴⁶ There was a similar problem during the Second Gulf War, when NATO members were unenthusiastic about assisting Turkey again.⁴⁷ While these disappointments were formative, it should be mentioned that this has not deterred Turkey from declaring that it was contemplating the invocation of Article 5 during the recent crisis in Syria, after Syrian refugees and Turkish personnel were shot at from Syrian territory.⁴⁸

Contrary to other states in the Middle East, Turkey already has a nuclear guarantee resulting from its membership in NATO. While, as in other cases of extended deterrence, this is seen at times as a limited and problematic guarantee, it does give Turkey some confidence in its ability to deal with existing and future threats. Tactical nuclear weapons are still stationed in Turkey—there are 70 B-61 nuclear bombs at Incirlik Airbase. As mentioned above, most Turkish fighter jets don't have the capability to carry nuclear bombs. However, recently, they have served a vital purpose in escorting US fighter jets during exercises. If Turkey decides to purchase F-35 fighter jets from the US, they will also have the capability of carrying these

⁴⁴ see for example the first draft of "Güvenlik, Savunma ve Savunma Sanayii," TSV 2023, <http://www.tsv2023.org/>.

⁴⁵ Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2008), p. 42.

⁴⁶ Sinan Ülgen, "Turkey and the Bomb," *Carnegie Paper* (February 2012), p. 12.

⁴⁷ Tarık Oğuzlu, "Turkey and the Transformation of NATO," *SETA (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research*, brief no. 33 (July 2009), p.5

⁴⁸ PM: Turkey may invoke NATO's Article 5 over Syrian Border Fire," *Today's Zaman*, April 11, 2012.

bombs. The B-61 bombs are planned to go through a "life extension program" and by 2018, the B-61-12 will have greater accuracy.⁴⁹

Although there have been those in Turkey who have called for the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from Turkish soil, Turkey has been consistent in its demand that these weapons remain, if only as symbols of the US nuclear guarantee and of Turkey's NATO burden-sharing mechanism.⁵⁰ Furthermore, as long as the bombs are in Incirlik Airbase, Turkey has a seat in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group.

In recent years, the question of NATO-EU cooperation has been a serious source of tension between NATO and Turkey. This issue gained significance after the EU's attempts to build its own defense mechanism. It has put strains on Turkey's relations with NATO, both because of the fact that Cyprus became a member of the EU in 2004, and because of the delay in Turkey's EU accession process.⁵¹ Turkey, for example, has insisted that Cyprus and Malta (neither are part of the NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program) do not participate in NATO-EU discussions. However, the EU responded that it could not conduct serious talks without all of its members present. This created an impasse between all sides with regard to formal discussions between them. The problem could be resolved in the future within a greater framework that addresses the core issue of whether Turkey will eventually become an EU member. However, there is a continuing danger that even if a solution is reached at the political level, Turkish resentment, especially amongst the general public, toward the EU will remain and hinder security cooperation. Still, if a threat facing the EU and Turkey is framed successfully as a common and serious danger, the sides will likely be able to overcome some of their differences.

Turkey has agreed to NATO's New Strategic Concept, redefined in 2010 after the Lisbon summit. This new concept calls for the creation of a global security system enabling NATO members to better deal with the threats they are facing. The new concept introduces terror as one of the major threats to members of the alliance. The general threat of terror—aside from the PKK—and cyberterrorism were widely debated in the 2010 "Red Book" and in the second draft of the 2023 *Vision*.⁵² One can also understand Turkey's emphasis on the general problem of terror as part of Turkey's method of adapting to the NATO New Strategic Concept.⁵³

The new NATO deterrence concept calls for a mixture of nuclear capabilities and conventional capabilities, while creating a defensive mechanism that deters counties and terror organizations from attacking the organization's members.⁵⁴ Turkey has also been attentive to NATO's recent emphasis on smart power (to be developed in the 2012 Chicago summit), and has begun integrating such notions in its new military policy announced on April 5, 2012 at the War Academies in Istanbul by President Abdullah Gül. Murat Yetkin from the *Hürriyet Daily News* reported that the main difference lies in President Gül's ambition for Turkey to become a "Virtuous Power" rather than just a "Smart Power."⁵⁵ Still, as NATO recently committed

⁴⁹ Hans M. Kristensen, "The B-61 Life- Extension Program: Increasing NATO Nuclear Capability and Precision Low-Yield Strikes," *Federation of the American Scientists Issue Brief* (June 2011).

⁵⁰ Jessica C. Varnum, "Turkey in Transition: Toward or Away from Nuclear Weapons," in Willaim C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova (eds.), *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century*, vol. 2, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 242.

⁵¹ Petros Vamvakas, "NATO and Turkey in Afghanistan and Central Asia," *Turkish Studies* vol. 10, no. 1 (March 2009), p. 65

⁵² From the second draft: "Uluslararası Güvenlik," *TVS 2023*, pp. 25-28, <http://www.tsv2023.org/>

⁵³ See: "Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi kabul edildi," *Yeni Şafak*, November 22, 2010. <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Politika/?i=289055&t=22.11.2010>; Atilla Sandaklı, "Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi Neden Değişmeli?," http://www.bilgesam.org.tr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1917:milli-guevenlik-siyaset-belgesi-neden-deimeli&catid=181:analizler-guvenlik

⁵⁴ "Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation," pp. 2-6. See <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>

⁵⁵ Murat Yetkin, "Turkey's new Military Policy," *Hürriyet Daily News*, April 6, 2012

its resources in several instances to humanitarian interventions, the difference between positions might be more a matter of nuance. This emphasis on smart power also relates to the discussion in Turkey about whether to continue the current compulsory military service.

A good indication of Turkey's overall loyalty to NATO and its interest in remaining a NATO member is the fact that it is now hosting one of the radar systems of the NATO missile defense shield. While the approval process for the stationing of this system has not been smooth, Turkey eventually agreed. Although Turkey has officially stated that the shield should not be seen as directed against a specific actor, the fact that they are hosting the radar is of major importance. Turkey has also stated that the information gathered from this radar system will not be shared with any country outside the alliance, specifically mentioning Israel. In the future, this may create tension with other NATO members who prioritize cooperation with Israel. Still, it is not clear how strong the Turks' objection will be in the end, especially if Turkey and Israel somehow manage to solve the current crisis between them. Turkey is attempting to balance its security needs and NATO's strategic necessities; on the one hand, Turkey consented to and even wanted one of the NATO radar systems on its territory, but it insisted that this radar wouldn't provide information to Israel. Turkey deemed this caveat necessary both because of the current state of Turkish-Israeli relations, and it makes the system appear less threatening to Iran and Russia.

Another indication of Turkey's loyalty to NATO is demonstrated in its involvement in Afghanistan. Since NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2003, Turkey has led this mission twice.⁵⁶ Again, while it was not an easy decision for Turkey to join this mission—and there is an internal dialogue as to whether Turkey should continue its involvement in this mission,⁵⁷ it sent its forces to Afghanistan. Following US pressures, it increased its forces in Afghanistan, which now numbers around 1800 Turkish soldiers; these soldiers are not involved in combat, but rather in state-building missions. Turkey refuses to allow its troops to participate in battle, because they refuse to be involved in the killing of fellow-Muslims.⁵⁸ While this could be understandable as Turkey is the only Muslim-dominated country in NATO to send troops to Afghanistan, it should be emphasized that the Kurds are also predominantly Muslim (and most are Sunni), which has not seemed to have restrained Turkish actions against them. Some claim that one of the reasons Turkey is hesitant in Afghanistan is its fear of how such involvement would affect its relations with Iran.

While Turkey has put its trust in the extended deterrence guarantees of NATO, it has also maintained a strong army for conventional deterrence. Both point to an emphasis on the deterrence by punishment doctrine. There are also elements of the deterrence by denial doctrine, elements that the maturation of NATO missile defense systems and their deployment will strengthened further. At times, Turkey has also employed a compellence doctrine,⁵⁹ most notably during the 1967 Cyprus crisis. During this crisis, the Greeks withdrew 12,000 men that were illegally stationed in Cyprus after Turkish threats. It also employed compellence during the S-300 crisis in 1997-1998, during which Turkey compelled Cyprus to withdraw the two S-300 air defense missile sites they bought from Russia and to place them in Crete. Additionally, in the 1998 crisis with Syria, Turkey forced Syria to expel PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan from its territory. Turkey has even given its own extended deterrence—particularly notable in the conflict between Armenia and

⁵⁶ Kimberly Zisk Marten, "Defending against Anarchy: From War to Peacekeeping in Afghanistan," *The Washington Quarterly* vol. 26, no. 1 (Winter 2002-3), p. 45.

⁵⁷ Yusuf Kanli, "Why are we in Afghanistan?" *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 21, 2012.

⁵⁸ Vamvakas, "NATO and Turkey in Afghanistan and Central Asia," p. 67.

⁵⁹ As compellence can be at times presented as deterrence (i.e., to cause an actor not do something can be also interpreted as deterring an actor from a certain action), these cases are also highly relevant to understanding Turkey's deterrence practices.

Azerbaijan, whereby Turkish threats succeeded in deterring the Armenians from taking over Nakhichevan, a landlocked exclave with an Azeri majority, bordering Armenian and Turkish territory.⁶⁰

While there are and will probably remain strains in relations between the West and Turkey, especially surrounding Turkish-EU relations, Turkey has found that the multilateral path of membership in NATO is its best security guarantee. We can analyze Turkey's probable future decisions based on two sources: the *2023 Vision* and Turkey's involvement in the Arab Spring. According to the *2023 Vision*, Turkey views itself as a member of the European Union, and an important component of the EU defense mechanism. Furthermore, according to the *2023 Vision*, Turkey's national interests are to adapt to NATO's new strategic concept of security. NATO's new strategic concept is based on the assessment that the chance of a conventional or a nuclear attack on one of NATO's members is low. Thus, the alliance is concentrating on creating a collective defense and a collective security mechanism within the alliance against terrorism and other global security threats. Similar to NATO's new strategic concept, the *2023 Vision* highlights the idea that the future threats facing Turkey are not regional but global. Thus, it prioritizes the integration of Turkish power and needs into global alliances, like the EU and NATO.⁶¹ In addition, according to those who drafted the *2023 Vision*, Turkey's membership in NATO and the EU is a major factor in the stability of the region. Following the 2011 parliamentary elections, Turkey appointed its first Minister for European Affairs. While this does not add much to Turkey's developed structures dealing with the EU accession process, it holds symbolic value.

The second way one could assess Turkey's future actions is through an examination of how the Turkish government has dealt with the Arab Spring thus far. Although it is an ongoing process, the Arab Spring has already had a major impact on the region. In general, the Turkish government has preferred joint action by the international community or regional organizations. The developments related to the Arab Spring, at least until now, have brought Turkey and the West closer. No one is asking: "who lost Turkey" (which was a question posed prior to the Arab Spring, in light of Turkey's warming of relations with Middle Eastern countries) anymore, and US-Turkish relations are now at an all-time high.⁶²

The current state of Turkish-US relations coupled with the nations' strong bilateral cooperation allow one to envision a situation in which—despite a sharp rupture in Turkish-EU relations and the likely repercussions of the weakening of NATO as the preferred joint mechanism—the relationship transforms into one similar in many respects to that existing today between the US and Israel. Turkey will mostly rely on its own abilities, and continue its contribution to US security. The US will give unequivocal bilateral guarantees in case of a nuclear attack on Turkey that will replace the existing NATO guarantees, and thus Turkey will not strive to develop its own nuclear capability. Such bilateral US guarantees are already contemplated with regard to Saudi Arabia and Israel; and in many respects, Turkey is an easier candidate for the US to provide such guarantees. The probability that the US will have to "cash the nuclear check" for Turkey are much lower; contrary to the Saudis, Turkey is much more self-reliant and is closer in its values to the US; and contrary to the Israelis, Turkey's actions in the region enjoy legitimacy and at times, even admiration.

⁶⁰ Gareth M. Winrow, *Turkey and the Caucasus: Domestic Interests and Security Concerns* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), p. 8.

⁶¹ From the second draft: "Usluslararası," *TVS 2023*, pp. 19-24

⁶² Gallia Lindenstrauss, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Embracing People's Power," *Euromesco Paper*, no. 14 (2012), p. 22.

A Non-Threatened Turkey?

While conventional thought holds that albeit variations, many of the current dimensions and level of threat Turkey is presently facing will remain to some degree, it is also possible to imagine a more peaceful future for Turkey. Turkey's future will be dependent on whether Turkey is able to solve at least one of its longstanding problems with Cyprus, Armenia, or the Kurds.

This has actually begun to happen during the AKP's first term in office, and has had a lingering effect on the subsequent terms. As mentioned, the Zero Problems policy was a concentrated attempt, actively trying to solve the issues between Turkey and its adjunct neighbors; an emphasis on increasing Turkey's soft power accompanied it. Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu pushed for the rediscovery of Turkish influence in the former Ottoman territories, and criticized previous governments for rejecting their Ottoman past and neglecting to develop these relationships.⁶³

Turkey's emphasis on developing its soft power in recent times indicates that Turkey might develop a more cooperative and less confrontational approach towards international politics. Beyond the notable efforts dedicated to improving the economic and cultural ties between Turkey and Middle Eastern countries, Turkey has improved relations with many other actors with which it had little or no contact. Turkey has also increased its contributions of foreign aid. For example, it was one of the few state actors who truly showed interest in the renewed worsening of the situation in Somalia.⁶⁴ While the Arab Spring and the resulting instability seems to hinder Turkey's ability to create a non-threatening environment for itself, such a long-term prospect should not be dismissed.

In accordance with its emphasis on multilateral action, and providing Turkey persists in its decision against developing independent nuclear capabilities, it is possible that Turkey will complement or even replace Egypt as the main advocate for the initiative promoting a Weapons of Mass Destruction-Free Zone in the Middle East. In fact, Turkey, which has signed all of the relevant treaties against weapons of mass destruction, can serve as an example for other Middle Eastern states. Although Turkey currently has NATO's tactical weapons on its territory, which could draw criticism, it is not unforeseeable that Turkey would ask for the withdrawal of these weapons from its territory in the unlikely case that this initiative shows serious signs of progress. Meanwhile, Turkey has joined those who condemn the fact that the international community does not exert pressure on Israel to relinquish its nuclear capabilities.⁶⁵

Chapter Four: Scenario II -

Turkey moves to develop its own Nuclear Capability

Turkey's quest for an independent nuclear weapons program would depend upon developments in three main areas. The first area is the evolution in the near future of US-NATO nuclear and conventional assurances, specifically in light of the shift in Turkish foreign policy toward a more independent, unilateral approach. The second is Turkey's ability to further develop its defense industry. The third is whether Turkey would succeed in its plans of the building of nuclear reactors. In each of these areas of action, the Turkish

⁶³ Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 42, no. 6 (November 2006), pp. 947-948. Joshua W. Walker, "'Strategic Depth' and Turkish Foreign Policy," *Insight Turkey* vol. 9, no. 3 (2007), pp. 33-34.

⁶⁴ "Turkey among New Donors shaking up Humanitarian Aid," *Today's Zaman*, January 26, 2012,

⁶⁵ "Turkish President to Urge Mideast Nuclear Free-Zone at UN Summit," *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 21, 2010,

government would face opportunities and challenges regarding the question of whether Turkey should establish its own nuclear weapons program.

Uncertain Future of US-NATO Nuclear and Conventional Assurances

The 2011 US Nuclear Posture Review and NATO's new strategic concept emphasize that the use of nuclear deterrence and nuclear threats will only be employed against a direct nuclear threat, and even in such instances, retaliation with nuclear weapons will only be used in extreme cases. This assurance is a step back from the previous ones that prescribed nuclear deterrence in the case of conventional threats, as well. The new assurance is too vague for some NATO members, especially with regard to Iran or Russia.

Public opinion surveys conducted during the last decade in Turkey show a marked decline in NATO's popularity.⁶⁶ One explanation for this result is that NATO's other member states are unwilling to classify Turkey's fight against the PKK as a NATO interest.⁶⁷ Turks also criticize the fact that the PKK receives funding from the Kurdish Diaspora in the West without consequence. Another explanation for this result is the anti-Americanism prevalent among Turkish citizens, especially following the 2003 war in the Gulf, and anger towards the EU following the many delays and the uncertain future of Turkish EU accession process. The election of Barack Obama as President and the US withdrawal from Iraq has eased some of these anti-American sentiments, although they remain high.

While Turkey has not changed its policy towards NATO, it has recently shown a desire to maintain the most independent foreign policy possible. This independent and sometimes bold foreign policy has caused some concern in the West. Whereas the intensity of this independent streak varies during different periods, the overall trend seems rather clear. If this desire for independence is coupled with a serious threat from within the alliance on the future of NATO in its present form, a major change in Turkish security posture could result.

Bilateral Relations

While Turkey has emphasized its commitment to multilateral institutions in the past, it has at times also forged strong bilateral relations with certain actors. The most notable example is the golden years of cooperation between Turkey and Israel in the 1990's and early 2000's. There were two main motives behind the forging of these strong relations: the first was to obtain access to advanced weapon systems the West was not willing to sell Turkey, and the second was to exert pressure on Syria. In fact, it has been claimed that Turkey was even against the peace negotiations between Israel and Syria at the time (when a decade later, in sharp contrast, Turkey mediated negotiations between Israel and Syria).⁶⁸

A lesser-known example of Turkish bilateral cooperation was Turkey's relations with Pakistan and Argentina in the 1980s. Turkey's interest in cooperating with these two countries rested on their advances in the nuclear sphere. The US applied heavy pressure on Turkey to stop this cooperation. In fact, such pressure is

⁶⁶ Yurter Özcan, "Turkey as a NATO Partner: Reality vs. Rhetoric," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* vol. 10, no. 3, (2011), p. 107

⁶⁷ Vamvakas, "NATO and Turkey in Afghanistan and Central Asia," p. 65.

⁶⁸ Ofra Bengio, "Turkey and Israel: Friends for Life?" Lecture given at the conference on Turkey's Role in a Changing Global Environment, Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University (May 11, 2009).

part of the reason why Turkey has not been able to develop a civilian nuclear program, although they have attempted to do so five times.⁶⁹

In recent years, the thriving Turkish-Brazilian relations, as exemplified by their cooperation in trying to mediate with Iran, can also be seen as part of Turkey's push toward forging stronger bilateral relationships, as a balance to its long-time alliance with NATO. Another notable development has been the improvement in relations between Turkey and Saudi Arabia. While there remain points of contention between the two, and Turkey is worried about the framing of certain issues as a Sunni-Shiite struggle, they do see eye to eye with regard to recent developments in Syria, the need to reduce Iranian influence, and their basic objection to Iranian military nuclear capabilities. Turkey's attempts to build its relationship with China are also worth mentioning. Although this relationship was paused during the Cold War, it has been in flux during the last two decades. For example, Turkey has acquired the knowledge of how to build short-range ballistic missiles from China.

Self-Procurement

In recent years, there has been a growing Turkish emphasis on self-procurement. For example, Turkey plans to build by itself, or by collaborating with another country, a fighter jet, an unmanned aerial vehicle, a satellite, long-range ballistic missiles, and an aircraft carrier. While this emphasis on self-procurement could be explained as part of Turkey's wish to maintain a strong conventional force within the NATO framework, and a means of taking advantage of the economic potential of its status as a weapons-exporting state, it also symbolizes Turkey's basic mistrust in its traditional allies, as well as anger over some of the past refusals to sell it advanced weapon systems. The pace of self-procurement has also accelerated following the positive performance of Turkish economy in recent years; also, the rupture in Turkish-Israeli relations has caused a near-standstill of the military cooperation between the two.

The self-procurement program will eventually enable the Turkish government to establish itself as a more independent actor. For these reasons, the Turkish government set a goal in 2011 that the Turkish defense industries would test a number of "homemade" weapons systems. In order to achieve this goal, the Turkish defense industries started to test a wide range of weapons, including a tank (ALTAY), a ship (through the Mili Gem project), a helicopter (T-129), and unmanned aerial vehicle (ANKA). Still, these weapons are not solely a product of Turkish R&D, rather they represent growing corporation between Turkish defense companies and foreign companies, especially in the area of technological knowledge.⁷⁰ Turkey has substantially increased spending in these areas; it has moved from investing \$5.5 billion in defense research projects in 2002 to investing \$27.3 billion in 2011. Turkey already self-produces more than 50 percent of its defense needs and plans to increase this figure, thereby reducing its dependency on imports.⁷¹

This self-procurement serves a dual purpose: to become a more independent actor and to strengthen their economy. However, if we examine the current weapons list, we may find that these weapons will not give

⁶⁹ Leon Fuerth, "Turkey: Nuclear Choices amongst Dangerous Neighbors," In *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider their Nuclear Choices*, edited by Kurt N. Campbell, Robert J. Einhorn and Mitchell B. Reiss (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 145; 160-164.

⁷⁰ "Turkey's New Corvette Class Ship," <http://Turkishmaritime.com.tr>, September 27, 2011; "Predators complete Test Flight as Turkey produces more UAVs," *Today's Zaman*, November 23, 2011; Burak Ege Bekdil and Ümit Engimdoğ, "Turkey Launches R&D Center," *defensenews.com*, January 17, 2011; "First Turkish Unmanned Plane likely to be ready this Summer," *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 24, 2012; Saban Kardaş, "Turkey Plans Serial Production In National Weapons Programs," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* January 24, 2012, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38920;

⁷¹ "Local Suppliers to Meet Half of Turkish Army Needs," *Hürriyet Daily News* April 4, 2010,

Turkey an industrial or military advantage over other nations in the region. Therefore, to further understand Turkish motivations, we need to examine the projects that the Turkish government has planned. The Turkish government published its intentions for the Turkish defense industries to embark upon three major projects: building a Turkish jet, improving Turkey's ballistic missile capabilities, and manufacturing an aircraft carrier. This future diversification of the means available to the Turkish army may assist it in voicing more targeted and credible threats against possible opponents. This is important since many of the threats Turkey could face in the future are not existential, and specific deterrence could work better than general deterrence.

The first project is building the Turkish jet. Until recent years, the THK flying capabilities were solely based on American-manufactured planes. Moreover, its future fighter jet is supposed to be the F-35. However, during the last decade, the Turkish government has tried to reduce this dependence, considering buying fighter and bomber jets from different sources, resulting in a decision to start negotiations on the purchase of the "EuroFighter." However, these negotiations never matured into a deal due to the government's decision to start the R&D process for a Turkish jet. The Turkish jet should be operational by 2023 and will probably be a product of cooperation with another country, like South Korea or Italy.⁷² This decision is supposed to free Turkey from its dependence on American jets, and is a strong indication of Turkey's ambition to establish itself as a competitor to other major arms suppliers.

The second project is the Turkish plan to buy its own missile defense systems (in spite of the fact that it is already part of NATO's missile defense umbrella) and to improve its own ballistic missile capabilities. The fact that Turkey places such importance on ballistic missile capabilities and missile defense systems, and that it is willing to devote significant resources toward this aim indicates that Turkish strategic thinking also relies on the deterrence by denial concept. In 2009, it was first announced that Turkey was looking to buy four missile defense systems. In this announcement, the government stated that it was contemplating purchasing this system from Russia or China.⁷³ This caused NATO officials to argue that systems bought outside of NATO will cause a leak of the organization's intelligence.⁷⁴ If indeed Turkey would move to acquire such systems from non-Western sources, it would then affect its ability to cooperate with the NATO aviation commands. In the end, the Turkish government decided to purchase the American Patriot system for \$7.8 billion. However, it is unclear whether this deal will go through.⁷⁵ Moreover, in the last year, the government decided to purchase a missile defense system from France in a \$4 billion deal. In response to this deal, Lale Kemal of the *Today's Zaman* wrote: "For Turkey, which has already come under NATO's defense shield, there is no rationale behind its bid to buy missile systems through an international competition."⁷⁶

The other aspect of the Turkish missile project is offensive in nature. *Hürriyet Daily News* quoted the Prime Minister, from a speech made in the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey:

"Iran is manufacturing long-range missiles capable of reaching 2,000 to 2,500 km. Our neighbor can do this. They produce domestic missiles independent from Europe, and they do this despite the embargo. We can do this too. I want this from you."⁷⁷

⁷² "Turkey to make its own Fighter Jet," <http://www.Turkeydefence.com>, December 23, 2010; İpek Yezdani, "Italy wants to build first Turkish Fighter Jet Plane," *Hürriyet Daily News*, February 4, 2012.

⁷³ The only country that can't, unofficially, participate in the auction was Israel.

⁷⁴ Ümit Enginsoy, "NATO warns Turkey against buying Chinese, Russian Air Defense Systems," *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 17, 2009.

⁷⁵ "Turkey's Massive Missile Purchase Plan raises Questions," *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 17, 2009.

⁷⁶ Lale Kemal, "Turkey's Costly Missile Project draws Close Attention," *Today's Zaman*, February 6, 2011

⁷⁷ "Erdoğan cites Iran for Turkish Missile Program," *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 30, 2011.

As one can see, the Turkish government is determined to build its own missile defense systems and a ballistic missile arsenal outside the NATO framework. In our opinion, all of this is to increase Turkey's regional reputation and enhance its security posture, while enabling the government to decrease its dependency on the US and NATO's ballistic missiles and missile defense.

The third project is the building or purchasing Turkey's first aircraft carrier. This project is part of the new "Turkish High Sea Strategy."⁷⁸ In February 2011, the Spanish carrier, "Juan Carlos I," visited Turkey as part of a Spanish effort to sell this carrier model to Turkey.⁷⁹ In May 2011, Murad Bayar, the Turkish Defense Industry Under-Secretary, said that the Turkish shipyards are capable of building a similar project on their own.⁸⁰ Further, The TDK commander, Oramiral Bilgel, said in an interview to an American naval journal, that a carrier and other new ships are needed to increase the abilities of the TDK, to implement its new strategy, and that it is part of the ten-year plan to modernize the TDK.⁸¹

An additional facilitating factor that might change Turkish policies and assist self-procurement is the fact that unlike before, Prime Minister Erdoğan views the Turkish army more positively. Previously, Erdoğan viewed the army as the main threat to the rule of the AKP in Turkey. Due to the fact that many officers have been jailed in recent years amongst allegations of involvement in a planned coup against the AKP government, and that almost all those in senior positions announced their early retirement in July 2011, the army is changing markedly. Those who were not arrested are now seen if not as loyal, then at least as compliant with the AKP.

In this new context, Erdoğan may be more receptive to voices from the security forces that perceive Iranian intentions as threatening. While Iran is trying not to confront Turkey directly, there have been threats voiced from within Iran that if it were attacked by the US or Israel it would respond by attacking the NATO radar system in Turkey.⁸² Iran has also voiced threats against possible Turkish military action against the Assad regime in Syria. In the latter case, it can be claimed that Iran and Syria succeeded in deterring Turkish military action, at least temporarily.

Will Turkey Develop a Nuclear Program?

In order to deal with this question, we shall first examine the different layers that make up the current nuclear discourse in Turkey. Then, we shall explore the options that the Turkish government has for acquiring nuclear capabilities. Finally, we shall try to assess if Turkey is walking down the nuclear path. Mustafa Kibaroglu and Barış Çağlar previously examined the nuclear discourse in Turkey in a 2008 paper that scrutinized this subject from several angles. First, they looked at public perception, and concluded that there is little popular debate on the subject. Second, they analyzed the discourse of the security elite, who argues that Turkey should attain its own nuclear capabilities. Finally, they examined other factors like the future of the EU accession process, and the relationship with the US (and determined that if Turkey

⁷⁸ Murat Yetkin, "On the New Turkish Naval Strategy," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 15, 2012.

⁷⁹ İpek Yezdani, "Spain Showcases Landing Platform Dock competing for Turkish Navy bid," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 6.2.2011.

⁸⁰ "Türkiye uçak gemisi yapabilir," *Radikal*, 7.5.2011

⁸¹ "Türkiye 'Uçak Gemisi' Yapacak," <http://www.aktifhaber.com/>, March 12, 2012

⁸² "Olası saldırıda ilk hedef Türkiye'deki Nato füze kalkanı," *Milliyet* and "Iran'a saldırı olursa vurulacak ilk hedef Malatya!" *Radikal*, November 26, 2011.

develops its own nuclear capabilities, not only would it not enhance its security posture, it would hurt Turkey's vital interests with the EU and the US).⁸³

With regard to official discourse on the nuclear issue, there is still an almost complete absence of public statements about this subject. The second draft of *2023 Vision* does not mention the prospect of Turkey gaining military nuclear capabilities. Indeed, it only addresses nuclear prospects as part of the discussion of Turkey's energy market.⁸⁴ However, in January 2012, an AKP-elected member of parliament from Ankara published an opinion piece in two places in which he claimed that:

"If Iran does go nuclear, the US will most likely offer its nuclear protection umbrella to a number of countries in the region, including Turkey. For Ankara to accept such an offer would be reasonable only if it doesn't relinquish its own nuclear option. Otherwise Turkey could be, as circumstances develop, a strategic hostage to the US in the Middle East. Turkey has a legitimate right to consider all future possibilities....For the time being, Ankara could initiate a well thought-out and comprehensive nuclear technology program. It should aim to develop its technological expertise, essentially in pilot plant capacities for nuclear fission chain reaction materials. This could encompass various methods, including centrifuge and laser technologies. And finally, Turkey must also improve the range of its guided missiles."⁸⁵

Do these statements indicate a change in the official government rhetoric? Probably not. For example, according to a report from March 2012 in *Vatan* newspaper, Prime Minister Erdoğan repeated the claim that Turkey will build nuclear power plants in order to increase its electric capabilities.⁸⁶

The second layer is the academic discourse on the nuclear issue and on whether Turkey should attain nuclear capabilities. There are very few academics in Turkey focused on researching this subject and its implications for Turkey. The leading researcher in the Turkish academic community in this field is Professor Mustafa Kibaroglu from Bilkent University in Ankara, who, in his wide range of academic publications and opinion columns, has argued that the nuclear option has not been a state policy and nor will it be one in the near future. Furthermore, he argues that Turkish attainment of nuclear weapons would hurt its vital interests, like the accession process to the EU and the relationship with the US; further, such capabilities would not guarantee the integrity of its borders, nor will it improve the future of Turkey's security posture.⁸⁷ Moreover, he states that if Turkey wants to improve its regional stature, it needs to negotiate for the withdrawal of the tactical nuclear weapons from Turkey's soil with the US.⁸⁸ He explains that these tactical weapons have no significant deterrent power against Russia or any other country, and that because of their marginal numbers and the THK capabilities, they are insignificant to Turkey's deterrence. Further, he argues that by requesting the US to remove the tactical nukes, Turkey will enhance its position in support of the creation of a nuclear-free Middle East.⁸⁹

Other Turkish researchers and analysts do not share Kibaroglu's views. For example, Tarık Oğuzlu from Bilkent University argues that if Iran acquires nuclear capabilities and if a nuclear arms race in the Middle

⁸³ Mustafa Kibaroglu and Barış Çağlar, "Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey," *Middle East Policy*, vol. 15, no. 4 (Winter 2008), pp. 59-80.

⁸⁴ *TVS 2023*.

⁸⁵ Haluk Özdalga "Nuclear weapons," *Today's Zaman*, January 29, 2012

⁸⁶ "Nükleer için 'hızlı çalışın' emri!," *Vatan*, March 21, 2012.

Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Iran's Nuclear Program May Trigger the Young Turks to Think Nuclear," *Carnegie Endowment for World Peace* (2004-2005), <http://carnegieendowment.org/>; Mustafa Kibaroglu and Barış Çağlar, "Implications, pp. 69-74.

⁸⁸ Mustafa Kibaroglu, "A Turkish Nuclear Turnaround," *Bulletin of The Atomic Scientists*, vol. 63 no. 6 (November/December 2007), p. 64

⁸⁹ Mustafa Kibaroglu "Turkey, NATO & and Nuclear Sharing: Prospects after NATO's Lisbon Summit," *Nuclear Policy Paper*, no. 5 (April 2011), pp. 5-8

East commences, the Turkish people—feeling that the NATO nuclear assurances are insufficient—will insist on the establishment of a nuclear program.⁹⁰ Whether Turkey becomes a nuclear power is a question that intrigues scholars outside of Turkey, as well. Henry J. Barkey from Lehigh University argues that the Turkish decision to begin a nuclear program depends on two variants; how the region reacts to Iran achieving nuclear capabilities, and which party is in power. He elaborates the options that Turkish decision makers have: creating a multilayer defense system, beginning its own nuclear program, and applying its regional diplomatic capabilities to isolate Iran. None of these options, according to the writer, is appealing.⁹¹ From this short presentation of the scholarly debate, we can see decision-makers in Turkey will contemplate three key questions with regard to Turkey's future path. First, what will NATO and the US do if Iran achieves nuclear capabilities? Second, how will other states in the region react? Third, how will the Turkish public react to this potential threat?

The third layer of the nuclear discourse in Turkey is public opinion. As mentioned above, this issue is still not widely discussed. One of the indicators of the relative ignorance of the Turkish public regarding this subject can be gathered from the fact that local newspapers only obtain information about the number of the tactical nukes stationed in Turkey from outside sources.⁹² However, in a poll conducted by Sinan Ülgen from the Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) in Istanbul, from February 3 to March 6, 2012, 54 percent of the survey's participants answered that Turkey should develop its own nuclear weapons when asked, "in reaction to a possible threat from a nuclear armed Iran, should Turkey develop its own nuclear weapons or rely on NATO's protection?" In contrast, 34.8 percent said that they were against developing nuclear weapons under any circumstances, and only 8.4 percent said Turkey should rely on NATO's nuclear umbrella.⁹³ Following this poll, Kadri Gürsel wrote that since Turkey does not have any infrastructure allowing it to develop a nuclear bomb if the government chooses this path, they would be forced to make major cutbacks in welfare.⁹⁴

The nuclear discourse in Turkey is developing and starting to attract more attention. The question of whether Turkey will develop nuclear capabilities cannot be answered easily. As we have seen, this question is deeply intertwined with another question, what will Turkey do if Iran attains offensive nuclear capabilities? There are no definite answers to either of these questions. Official government statements do not indicate that Turkey is on verge of developing a nuclear program for military purposes, or how it would react if Iran became nuclear. There is a beginning of a public and academic debate about whether Turkey should develop its own nuclear program if Iran does become nuclear. According to the only recent public opinion poll available, most of the public supports developing nuclear weapons in this scenario.

If Turkey were to decide to embark down the nuclear path, implementing this decision forces a choice between producing a nuclear bomb, or buying a bomb "off-the-shelf." At present, Turkey has quite a negligible nuclear infrastructure. However, this is changing. According to the *2023 Vision*, Turkey plans to build three nuclear reactors by the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic.⁹⁵ As the Turkish economy is strong and has growing energy needs, and as Turkey now enjoys political stability, it appears to fulfill the

⁹⁰ Oğuzlu, "Turkey and the Transformation of NATO," p. 5.

⁹¹ Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Perspectives on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmaments" *Nuclear Security Studies* (Stimson Center), Vol. 6, (November/ December 2009), pp. 73-75.

⁹² 'Nuclear Weapons of US in Turkey Decreased', *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 1, 2011; "'Türkiye'nin en az 10 atom bombası var'," *Milliyet*, December 1, 2011.

⁹³ "Conditional Support for Nuclear Armament" *Edam Public Opinion Survey of Turkish Foreign Policy* no. 1 (April 2012) <http://edam.org.tr/document/Edam2012Survey1.pdf>

⁹⁴ Kadri Gürsel, "Milletimiz atom bombası istiyormuş," *Milliyet*, April 8, 2012.

⁹⁵ By 2030 Turkey aims to have 20 reactors. See, "Turkey aims to have at least 20 Nuclear Reactors by 2030," *Today's Zaman* February 1, 2011.

necessary preconditions for a country to embark on such a project. Turkey has already signed the deal to build the first reactor with a Russian governmental firm, RUSATOM. This firm will shoulder the construction costs, since Turkey has committed itself to buying most of the electricity produced by the four-1200MW reactors. Additionally, RUSATOM will be in charge of all stages of the fuel cycle. Hence, the uranium enrichment and the recycling of the used fuel will not be on Turkish territory.⁹⁶

The path from a civilian nuclear plan to a military one has been the preferred path of recent nuclear proliferating states.⁹⁷ The advantage of such a path is that it raises less international objection, and in the Turkish context, will allow it to remain in NATO until it acquires enough expertise in the nuclear realm. While Turkey has ratified the NPT and has signed the additional protocol, this will not necessarily inhibit it, especially if a nuclear Iran means the de-facto end of the NPT. However, while Turkey maintains its right to enrich uranium,⁹⁸ according to the deal signed with Russia, RUSATOM will be in charge of the fuel cycle. It remains an open question if this type of arrangement will repeat itself in the other deals Turkey signs with outside firms. While reserves of uranium have been found in Turkey, Turkey still lacks the infrastructure for commercial mining and therefore might continue to rely on outside companies.

While the option of buying nuclear capabilities "off the shelf" has been another option states use to acquire these capacities (for example, Syria), Turkey's recent emphasis on self procurement might make it less receptive to such a notion (although it does maintain a tradition of acquiring major defense systems from outside sources). Still, it seems that even if it does acquire major systems from the outside, Turkey would want to train enough Turkish personnel to staff the systems. Such a process of training would take time.⁹⁹

As presented above, Turkey has not yet decided to develop a nuclear program with military dimensions. However, the Turks have started to plan and implement the different infrastructures necessary if the government were to decide to change course and embark on a full-scale nuclear program with defensive and offensive dimensions in the future.

Conclusion

In this paper, we presented two scenarios regarding the possibility of Turkey embarking on a nuclear program. According to the first scenario, Turkey acquiring nuclear capabilities is unlikely. Turkey would remain a NATO member and would continue to rely on US-NATO nuclear guarantees. According to the second scenario, the growing independence of Turkish foreign policy and the growing perception that NATO nuclear guarantees are unreliable would make Turkey develop its own nuclear capability. As shown, this would be done most likely by first building nuclear power plants for civilian usage. It seems less likely that Turkey would be one of the states that buys nuclear capabilities "off the shelf."

If the first scenario plays out, Turkey's prior emphasis on its Western allies and multilateralism would continue into the future. Moreover, Turkey would find it extremely difficult to forgo its longstanding desire to be seen as an integral part of the West, and thus would probably continue its efforts not to defy specific Western policies dramatically. However, tensions with the West are not a new phenomenon. In fact, it can be argued that the love-hate relationship between Turkey and the West has been a persistent dimension of these relations. It is true however, that Turkey is now more assertive in its foreign policy. Still, even in this

⁹⁶ Sinan Ülgen et al. *The Turkish Model for Transition to Nuclear Energy* (Istanbul: EDAM, 2011), p. 172-173.

⁹⁷ Fuerth, "Turkey: Nuclear Choices," p. 160.

⁹⁸ Ülgen, *The Turkish Model for Transition*, p. 156.

⁹⁹ See for example: "Turkish Students learn Nuke Know-how in Russia," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 26 March, 2012.

new assertiveness, there are fluctuations and there are many indications that Turkey is quite aware and at times responsive to reactions from the West to its policies.

In the second scenario, Turkey would pursue an independent course. Its foreign policy would reflect this newfound independence, in its growing defense industries and in a Turkish nuclear program. While Turkey, at least with regard to its physical borders, would most likely remain a status-quo actor, it would then base its policy of deterrence by punishment not only on its conventional forces, but also on its newly acquired nuclear capacity, moving away from its emphasis on multilateralism. Its emphasis on procuring an independent missile defense system also indicates that part of its security practices would be based on deterrence by denial practice.

While both scenarios have an inner logic, in our opinion, Turkey's future path will most likely resemble the first scenario presented. Even if the second scenario occurs in the future, the changes would happen gradually. Thus, outside actors wishing to dissuade Turkey from such ambitions may have many opportunities to try to convince it that former or new nuclear guarantees might be the better option. We base these conclusion on several factors:

First, the Turkish *2023 Vision* does not give any indication that Turkey would like to break from its NATO membership or duties; rather, it presents just the opposite—that Turkey wishes to integrate itself further in NATO and Europe. This has had practical implications already—for example, one of the radar systems of the NATO missile defense shield is stationed on Turkish soil today and Turkish strategic thinking is adapting itself to the new NATO strategic concepts.

Second, by maintaining its NATO membership and remaining committed to implementing the necessary changes in order to conform with EU membership criteria, Turkey is able to achieve one of its basic long-term aspirations: to be an active part of Western society. While this has not always been a linear process, Turkey has taken the necessary steps to bring it closer to the West. These steps might not result in the outcome that the Turks are hoping for—full membership in the EU, but they are already so encompassing, that they will have a lingering influence on Turkish politics.

Third, NATO's conventional and nuclear military umbrella, according to the point of view of Turkey's ruling elites, is sufficient to repel the threats that face the country. Moreover, Turkey concurs with the global nature of NATO threat assessment and as such, is preparing itself by planning to acquire far-reaching power-projection capabilities, like an aircraft carrier and long-range ballistic missiles. This, in addition to a diversification of the military means available to the Turkish army, aims to improve Turkey's and NATO overall deterrence by preparing for varied scenarios.

Fourth, on whole, Turkey prefers multilateral action. In fact, there were times it has tried to push NATO and the international community to act together more than they were willing to do so. This has caused frustration at times, but not to the degree that would make Turkey rethink its basic belief in multilateralism.

Fifth, Turkey does not have the industrial and technological infrastructure to reach full self-reliability. It would take it a substantial amount of time to have the means to carry out an independent nuclear strike, if ever, and the strategy it will maintain in the meanwhile would resemble its past strategies. While Turkey has very ambitious plans for self-procurement, there is the likelihood that it will not be able to achieve the best results in all its planned projects. This could cause pauses or a complete stop in the scenario that Turkey pursues the nuclear path.