

**TESTIMONY FOR
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DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR EUROPE AND NATO
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Thursday, March 15, 2007, 1030 hrs**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for your invitation. The United States and Turkey have a broad, historical, and important relationship. This is a particularly crucial and challenging time in the relationship and I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about it.

U.S.-Turkey Relationship

The U.S. values Turkey as a key ally and a close friend. Our friendship shares a long history. For more than half a century, Turkey has served as NATO's southern anchor. From Korea to Kosovo to Kabul, the U.S. and Turkey have stood together in defense of peace and security. Turkey has been a strong ally in support of freedom and democracy and is working closely with the United States in the Global War on Terrorism. The United States deeply values Turkey's contributions and friendship in support of our common objectives and values.

As important as our cooperation has been in the past, it is even more important today in addressing a wide range of international security challenges, particularly in the Middle East. At the same time, while the United States and Turkey have a shared vision on the most fundamental issues, our relationship is more complicated than in the past.

Mil-Mil Relationship

The U.S.-Turkey military relationship has long provided a solid foundation for the overall relationship. Despite the challenges over the past few years, the fundamentals of our relationship remain intact. Despite sometimes widely publicized differences of opinion, the differences are largely over tactics. Today, U.S.-Turkey defense cooperation is dynamic and produces significant results.

Engagement: A key element of our defense relationship is the annual High Level Defense Group (HLDG) meeting. This past December in Ankara, a milestone was reached as we held the **twentieth** HLDG, co-chaired by then Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman and Turkish Deputy Chief of Defense General Ergin Saygun. These regular consultations are an opportunity for invaluable, in-depth, senior-level

dialogue, which is then translated into greater practical cooperation and a stronger military relationship.

Another valuable dimension of our mil-mil relationship is the frequency of senior-level meetings. In Washington, Ankara, and at US European Command in Stuttgart, senior American and Turkish defense officials meet with reassuring regularity, further cementing critical relationships among leaders. For example, within the last four months, Secretary Gates, General Pace, and Admiral Giambastiani all met their counterparts for substantive and productive meetings. Deputy Secretary England, Under Secretary Edelman, and Assistant Secretary Rodman also all met recently with senior Turkish officials and officers.

Defense Industry Cooperation: Another key pillar in our defense relationship is industry cooperation. The Turkish General Staff has long valued compatibility and interoperability with the U.S. Equally as important is the long-term collaboration necessitated by defense industry cooperation.

- Turkey is a partner in the Joint Strike Fighter, with an estimated \$175 million already invested and an expected purchase of 106 jets. The total contract would be worth approximately \$10 billion.
- Turkey is negotiating to purchase 30 F-16s through Foreign Military Sales at a value of approximately \$1.65 billion.
- Turkey is upgrading its 200-plus existing F-16s through FMS at a cost of approximately \$1.6 billion to ensure continued US and NATO compatibility.
- The Patriot PAC III Air Defense System, a Raytheon/Lockheed Martin consortium, is expected to be a leading contender for an air defense system for which Turkey is expected to open an estimated \$1.3 billion tender in 2007.
- Sikorsky Black Hawks are under consideration for a 52-helicopter purchase (approximately \$800 million) by the Turkish Armed Forces and Forestry Service to support the fight against PKK terrorists in southeastern Turkey and search/rescue and fire-fighting operations.
- Boeing and Sikorsky are potential contenders for 10 heavy lift helicopters (approximately \$500 million) and related training for use in similar operations.
- Turkey has requested the purchase of dirigibles (\$21-26 million) to monitor its border with Iraq for infiltration by terrorists operating in and out of northern Iraq.

- General Electric is the sole provider of over 1,200 aircraft engines to the Turkish Air Force.

Other Military Cooperation: Turkey authorized the temporary deployment of 22 USAF F-16s to Incirlik Air Base during January-February 2007, providing vital training and experience to the U.S. crews. A second rotational deployment is scheduled for May 2007.

Additionally, Turkey welcomed 16 US Navy ships to Turkish ports in 2006, including 9 port calls for US crewmen and 7 fuel deliveries for Coalition forces in Iraq. Six US Navy ships also made passages through the Turkish Straits on their way to/from the Black Sea. Eight to ten port calls are expected in 2007.

Turkish Support for U.S. Policy

Turkey is a key ally in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). As the only NATO member bordering Iraq, Iran, or Syria, Turkey has made consistent, unique, and important contributions.

Afghanistan: Turkey's contributions have had a significant impact on the re-establishment of stability in Afghanistan. Turkey has twice commanded the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), and in November 2006, Turkey opened its first Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), accompanied by a 100 million Euro pledge of support. Turkey also shares a rotating command of the ISAF Kabul Region Capital with France and Italy, and in April, will assume command from France.

Iraq: Turkey shares the U.S. goal of a unified, democratic Iraq that is secure within its borders. In support of this, Turkey facilitates the distribution of critical supplies and fuel to Coalition forces and materials for the reconstruction effort in Iraq.

- Approximately 25% of the fuel used by Coalition forces enters Iraq from Turkey via the Habur Gate border crossing. Turkey supplied a significant portion of Iraq's total fuel supply, primarily for consumers in the northern governorates. Billions of gallons of fuel have entered through Habur Gate in the past year despite occasional Iraqi payments of arrears.
- Turkey has the capacity to export 270 megawatts of electricity to northern Iraq, and averages around 220 MW, depending on the season. Turkey has plans to increase that total to 1000 megawatts, which would represent 25% of Iraq's current peak capacity.

- Over 20,000 Turks have worked in Iraq since 2004, and approximately 150 (mostly truck drivers) have lost their lives in insurgent attacks. About 1,000 Turkish companies are active in Iraq.

Incirlik Air Base: Incirlik Air Base serves as a key logistical hub for Iraq and Afghanistan.

- Nearly 60% of air cargo heading for U.S. forces in Iraq transits Incirlik.
- Access to the base allows 6 planes to deliver the supplies it previously took 9-10 planes to move from Germany, saving \$160 million per year.
- KC-135 tankers operating out of Incirlik have flown over 3,800 sorties and delivered more than 40 million gallons of fuel to U.S. fighter and transport aircraft on missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Other Support for U.S. Operations:

- Turkey continues to provide blanket clearance to the U.S. for military over-flights supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan.

Other Turkish Contributions

Lebanon: Turkey demonstrated its commitment to the region and to the U.S. during the fighting in Lebanon last summer by evacuating over 1700 U.S. citizens through Incirlik airbase. Subsequently, Turkey deployed over 900 troops to UNIFIL. Turkey also played a key role permitting hasty transit of Indonesian peacekeepers to UNIFIL via US-chartered and US Air Force aircraft.

Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia: Turkey has also contributed troops to SFOR in Bosnia, KFOR in Kosovo, and EUFOR both in Macedonia, and Bosnia. Turkey contributed five planeloads of humanitarian supplies, including a \$5.2 field hospital and related equipment, medicine, and doctors and nurses to staff the hospital.

Black Sea: Turkey plays a key role in Black Sea security affairs as one of six littoral countries and as one of three NATO members on the Black Sea. We look to Turkey to provide regional leadership, particularly through Operation Black Sea Harmony and Black Sea Force, both of which encourage and facilitate regional cooperation.

Challenges to the Relationship

In order to maintain the close U.S.-Turkey defense relationship, we must confront and overcome several major challenges.

PKK: The single greatest challenge to the U.S.-Turkish relationship is the continuing presence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist group in southern Turkey and northern Iraq. Since 1975, there have been over 30,000 deaths as a result of PKK violence, with some 600 civilian and military deaths in 2006 alone. As a result, there is intense public pressure on the Turkish government to take action against the PKK. To address this, we have engaged in a process – led by General (ret.) Joe Ralston, Special Envoy for Countering the PKK – with the Turks and the Iraqis intended to deal with the PKK threat. This process is complex and difficult, but we are committed at the highest levels of the U.S. government to working with our Turkish friends to achieve our shared objectives.

The Armenian Genocide Resolution: There are many sides to the debate on this issue, but there is one thing of which we are certain: passage of an Armenian Genocide Resolution would have a wide range of negative repercussions in Turkey. In particular, the response in Turkey would harm ongoing U.S. efforts to promote reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia, and it would undercut U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and damage vital national security interests.

Passage of the resolution would inflame nationalist and anti-American sentiment at a time when the Turkish public already has a very low opinion of the United States. Such an emotional outpouring would likely compel the Turkish government to take actions that would cause significant operational disruption for our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as restricting or even denying U.S. access to Incirlik Air Base. As noted above, Turkey's contribution to the Global War on Terrorism and U.S. strategic objectives in the region is significant – it would all be at risk. More broadly, relations with a crucial NATO ally would suffer a serious and lasting blow, which would in turn significantly undermine our ability to achieve our near- and longer-term goals in the Middle East.

Defense Industry Cooperation: While there are a number of promising projects, the defense industry relationship has been stagnant for the past several years. Onerous terms and conditions--liability, work share, technology transfer, and upfront USG approval requirements in Turkey's standard contract--have kept U.S. firms from bidding. Until Sikorsky finalized a sale of 17 Seahawk helicopters last fall, no U.S. firm had won a major direct commercial sale since 2002. We remain concerned that the current approach of Turkey's defense procurement ministry is hindering Turkey's military modernization, interoperability with NATO Allies, and U.S.-Turkey defense industry cooperation.

This element of the U.S.-Turkey relationship has been the core of the overall relationship in the past. A much-needed realignment of Turkey's procurement priorities would reinforce a critical element of our strategic relationship. Both sides need to continue to

find creative solutions to ensure the longevity of our defense relationship and the interoperability of our forces.

Iraq: Turkey is concerned about instability in Iraq, increasing Iranian influence in the region, the PKK, and sectarian tensions which could cause the country to fragment along ethnic lines resulting in an independent Kurdish state on Turkey's border. Additionally, Turkey sees Kirkuk as a microcosm of Iraq; conflict over an upcoming referendum to decide Kirkuk's status, as well as Kirkuk's energy reserves, could result in violence.

The U.S. and Turkey increasingly share the same strategic vision for Iraq. We need to continue to facilitate and increase Turkey-Iraq cooperation, leverage Turkish offers of support, and maximize Turkey's regional expertise and influence.

Way Ahead

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the contributions that Turkey makes to U.S. operations and the Global War on Terrorism are considerable. The importance of Turkey's regional role as a successful secular democracy cannot be overstated. And perhaps most importantly, Turkey is a close friend and long-time NATO ally. In short, our relationship with Turkey is one of strategic importance, and without it our operations and objectives in the Middle East would become much more difficult, and much more expensive, to support and achieve.

We are now at a critical point in our relations with Turkey, and it would behoove us to take well-considered steps to maintain and cultivate that relationship. We at DOD will continue to work closely with our Turkish colleagues in the General Staff and Ministry of Defense to increase military cooperation, support U.S. objectives, and address their concerns. I also ask that Congress does its part to make sure that Turkey remains a close friend and ally on whom we can depend for support and cooperation in one of the most complicated and challenging regions in the world. We look forward to working with you in the coming months to reach our mutual goals. Thank you very much.