

Turkey and Russia: Axis of the Excluded?

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PROOF

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's and Under Secretary Karen Hughes's recent travels to further American diplomacy and improve the image of the United States seem Sisyphean. At every turn there are joint actions by states aimed at counter-balancing or even resisting the United States in key regions or policy areas. While formal international arrangements counter-balancing the United States, like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in Central Asia, are modest at best, we see plenty of odd pairings on an array of issues. Couplings like China and India, and Russia and Iran with China thrown in, seem to have America looming behind them as the unspoken object of alignment.

Turkey and Russia form another such couple, as states with histories of conflict, deep structural differences and divergent views, which seem to have come together more out of frustration with the United States than a new strategic vision of world affairs. Turkish anger at US policy in Iraq dovetails with longer-term Russian disgruntlement over America's encroachment on Moscow's sphere of influence. Behind the scenes, Turkish-Russian relations have steadily improved over the last decade, particularly after March 2003 with a tactical decision by the Turkish Foreign Ministry and other parts of the Turkish state to explore a new rapprochement with Russia in Eurasia.

To be sure, there is little strategic depth to any of these couplings, and none of these quasi-alliances have coalesced into opposing blocs with the implication of some future military threat. Still, these developments underscore the growing opposition to the United States around the world and could obstruct American policy in the Middle East, Asia and Eurasia. New relations between

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states like Turkey and Russia are a signal to the United States that old allies, new friends and other states may not be amenable to its position on regional issues.

Resisting and diverging

Russia's and Turkey's stances on Iran, Syria and other states in the Middle East, where Russia hopes to regain some of the position it lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union, are increasingly converging. Moscow is resisting American efforts to put the issue of Iran's nuclear-power programme before the UN Security Council. The hard-line US approach to Iran greatly troubles Ankara, which fears American military action against another of its eastern neighbours and the further destabilisation of its border regions. Closer to home, Russia and Turkey together held up, albeit temporarily, a US request to obtain observer status in the Istanbul-based Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Similarly, Russia is trying to exploit its new relationship with Turkey to complicate American support for the long-term development of Georgia in the South Caucasus.¹

Russia and Turkey place a high premium on stability in their neighbourhood. They share an aversion towards potentially chaotic regime change. For the Bush administration, the divergence of Turkish interests from those of the United States is particularly troubling. In the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the Turkish Republic was Washington's ideal 'model' for its vision of the Islamic world. With its Muslim, democratic, secular, pro-Western credentials and NATO membership, Turkey was the Bush administration's strongest counterexample to the 'clash of civilizations' the attacks seemed to herald. Ankara's leadership in the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan gained it additional praise from the administration, not only for providing military assistance, but for further proving that the war against terrorism was not a war against Islam.

Washington's rosy view of Turkey in 2001–02 faded fast in the lead-up to the US-led invasion of Iraq. On 1 March 2003, after six months of contentious military, political and financial negotiations between Ankara and Washington, the Turkish parliament denied US troops access to Iraq through Turkish territory, and thus the ability to open a northern front against Baghdad. Turkey's decision not only forced the Pentagon to change its original war plans, but also complicated the post-war situation. US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recently argued that the current Sunni militant insurrection in Iraq is in large part the result of this absence of a northern front.² Saddam's Republican Guard was able to retreat north and blend in with the civilian population. Turkey gained a place of its own in Rumsfeld's constructs of 'old' versus 'new' Europe thanks to the heartburn it gave Washington.

An unnoticed casualty of the Iraq war

More than two years after the American-led invasion of Iraq, the US–Turkish relationship is an unnoticed casualty of the Iraq war. For Ankara, the 1 March 2003 parliamentary vote and America’s alliance with the Iraqi Kurds broke the back of the US–Turkish strategic partnership. The Kurdish question has since engendered a deep distrust of the United States in Turkey. Poll after poll now confirm that growing numbers of Turks perceive their NATO ally as a potential security threat. A January 2005 poll by the BBC World Service, for example, found that 82% of Turks do not support US policies in the Middle East.³ One of the more colourful reflections of Turkish anger towards the United States is *Metal Storm*, one of the country’s best-selling novels in 2005, a fast-paced depiction of a Turkish–American war over Kirkuk in northern Iraq.⁴ If this distrust continues, the long-term projection for US–Turkish relations is gloomy.

82% of Turks do not support US policies in the Middle East

Beyond Iraq, a more fundamental problem for Ankara and Washington is that they no longer have a common enemy. For 40 years, the Soviet Union was that enemy. It was a clear and present danger for Turkey, the only NATO member directly bordering the USSR. From Turkey’s perspective the Soviet Union’s successor state, Russia, now looks increasingly friendly. The ‘Axis of Evil’, with a very different cast of characters, is hardly a substitute for the ‘Evil Empire’. Iraq, Iran and, of course, North Korea have never posed existential threats to Turkey. Bilateral US–Turkish relations have entered a new phase, giving Ankara the opportunity to reflect on other relationships.

Turkey and Russia coming together

For most of the 1990s, Moscow viewed Turkey as a proxy for the United States. Turkey encroached on Russia’s position in the Caucasus and Central Asia by playing on its historic associations with the Turkic Muslim peoples of the regions. Because of the Balkan and Caucasian diasporas in Turkey, Russia and Turkey were in diametrically opposed camps on issues like Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya. Russia also saw American efforts to transform Turkey into a transit corridor for Caspian energy exports (especially Azeri oil and gas) to Europe as a strategic threat to its interests. Turkey’s membership in NATO and NATO enlargement to Eastern Europe, including potentially to the Caucasus, further rankled Russia.

This produced a tense bilateral relationship and the two states neglected each other politically. In spite of the end of the Cold War, there was no strategic rethinking on either side. Russia focused on its relations with the United States, Europe and the post-Soviet states. Turkey was preoccupied with its partnership

with the United States, the management of its volatile relationships with Greece and Cyprus, and its efforts to become a member of the European Union. While there were bilateral visits and declarative protocols and agreements in the 1990s and in 2000–01, the change after 2003 was quite dramatic.

Since then, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan have held multiple meetings, including one in July 2005 at Putin's summer retreat in Sochi, on Russia's Black Sea coast. Trade between the two countries is at an all-time high, rising from \$10 billion in 2004, to an estimated \$15bn in 2005, and projected to increase to \$25bn by 2007.⁵ Russia now accounts for more than 70% of Turkish natural gas imports thanks to a dedicated gas export pipeline – Blue Stream – between the two countries, running under the Black Sea, which started supplying gas in 2003. And Russia and Turkey are now discussing additional energy deals. This includes the possibility at some juncture of Turkey re-exporting Russian gas to Europe.

The relationship is not just fuelled by natural gas. Turkish construction companies and consumer-goods companies like Enka, Alarko and Anadolu have major ventures in Russia. Turkey was the top destination for Russian tourists – some 1.7m – in 2004.⁶ This is more than from any other country, except Germany. The sting has been taken out of NATO enlargement through the creation of the NATO–Russian Council. Once-divisive issues such as Chechnya and the Kurds have gradually faded. In their meetings in Sochi in July 2005, Putin and Erdogan reportedly reached an agreement to support each other's positions on Chechnya and the Kurds – expressing similar fears of terrorism and separatism.⁷ This is a far cry from the 1990s when the Turkish government turned a blind eye to their North Caucasus diaspora's active support for the Chechen cause, and when Russia allowed Kurdish associations with links to the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) to operate in Moscow.

These are all good reasons why Turkey and Russia have drawn together, apart from their mutual disillusionment with the United States. Indeed, given a history of imperial competition and frequent wars between the Russian and Ottoman Empires since the eighteenth century, Cold War rivalry, and perceptions of competition in post-Soviet Eurasia, relations between Turkey and Russia today are probably better than at any point in the last several centuries.

Tsars and Ottomans: hedging against the West

Paradoxically, even Turkey's European aspirations have brought it closer to Russia. In spite of the start of accession talks with the European Union on 3 October 2005, Turkey is increasingly frustrated with the EU, at turns feeling rejected or treated like a second-tier state. There is diminishing enthusiasm in

Turkey itself for the accession process. In any event, Turks increasingly think the EU will find ways to exclude them.⁸ Russians are also certain that Turkey will not be admitted. Both Turkey and Russia want the EU to recognise and respect them as European Great Powers, with significant imperial histories and roles in the Near East and Eurasia. Russia and Turkey are undergoing parallel revivals of their imperial state traditions. In both countries, the imperial state religion, Russian Orthodoxy and Sunni Islam respectively, is back in the political picture – as manifest in the personal and publicly acknowledged beliefs of President Putin and Prime Minister Erdogan – after a long period of absence.

Russia is becoming more ‘Tsarist’ with all politics increasingly focused on the central figure of the president and strong links between the Kremlin and the Orthodox Church. It has been reinvigorated as a state and a regional power by economic growth boosted by soaring oil revenues, and increasingly sees itself – as it did in the imperial past – as a *Eurasian* civilisation complementary to Europe. Turkey is coming to terms with its Ottoman history under the leadership of Muslim-Democrats keen on pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy. With its vibrant economy, large population and growing national pride, Turkey still wants to be anchored in Europe. But after half a century in the EU’s waiting room, its patience is wearing thin. In the meantime, growing frustration with the United States does not make the concept of ‘the West’ any more attractive. Turkey is emerging as a regional power frustrated with both the EU and the United States, and ready to follow its own national interest as far as Iraq, the Kurdish question and stability in neighbouring countries such as Syria and Iran are concerned. In all these matters, Ankara sees eye to eye with Moscow, which has its own independent interests in multiple regions.

The high-level meetings between Putin and Erdogan have altered the relationship. Commentators in both countries talk openly of the importance of the two states re-establishing themselves as major regional powers, and of forming a closer alliance as a ‘hedge’, if not an outright alternative, to trans-Atlantic and European ties. This may not, as yet, be reflected in polls and public opinion,⁹ but popular culture is kicking in. One of the most popular current films in Russia is the ‘Turkish Gambit’, set during the 1877 Russo-Turkish War and emphasising the glories of the Russian imperial tradition and the relationship between the Russian and Ottoman Empires.¹⁰ The main Turkish protagonist, Anvar, the Sultan’s secretary, is sympathetically portrayed, with his ‘European appearance’ and ability to blend in with the Russians. And in Turkey another new best-selling book depicts

Turkey wants to be anchored in Europe but its patience is wearing thin

a fictional military confrontation, 'The Third World War', in 2010, where a vengeful Turkey joins forces with Russia for a military attack on the EU after German, Austrian and French fascists kill Turks and Muslims in Europe.¹¹

Among the political elite, in interviews in Moscow in September 2005, there was considerable satisfaction with the state of Russian–Turkish relations. And in our meetings with Turkish political observers in Ankara and Istanbul in October 2005, the general feeling was that Turkey's reassessment of its relationship with Russia was long overdue. The Turkish government may have made a tactical decision in 2003 to pursue rapprochement with Russia just as relations were souring with the United States over Iraq, but senior Turkish officials noted that they were now just trying to catch up politically on all the developments of the last few years in trade and energy relations.

A troubling rapprochement

From the perspective of the United States, the rapprochement is troubling. In the context of the Middle East, Turkey and Russia are increasingly sceptical about the American-led 'war on terror'. Ankara and Moscow have their own specific terrorist groups to worry about. Al-Qaeda is a lesser concern for Turkey and Russia, in the face of PKK terrorism and Kurdish separatism, and Chechen (now broader North Caucasian) terrorism and separatism. In their view, these groups threaten their territorial integrities and prevailing conceptions of statehood. The threat for Turkey and Russia is very different from the external threat to the United States from stateless jihadi networks. In Turkey, for example, the fact that domestic groups linked with al-Qaeda targeted the British Consulate, a British bank and two synagogues in Istanbul in November 2003 was not perceived as a threat to the Turkish state, or to Turkish secularism. Instead, these incidents were seen as attacks on Western and Jewish targets; and the main terrorist threat to Turkish interests is still considered to come from Kurdish separatists of the PKK. Likewise, in Russia, although there are documented ties between Chechen terrorists and international jihadi groups with links to al-Qaeda, the Russian public still sees its terrorist problem as primarily a domestic one. The overwhelming majority of terrorist attacks in Russia have been carried out by ethnic Chechens and members of other groups from the Russian North Caucasus.

Turkey and Russia also associate Iraq not with the war against terrorism, but with destabilising chaos that has damaged their national interests – Turkey's more profoundly, but Russia's too, given its Iraqi oil contracts. In Iran, Turkey's main interest is to have a stable ally against Kurdish nationalism and to improve trade relations. Both Ankara and Tehran have major concerns about the spill-over effect of Kurdish separatism in northern Iraq on their own sizable

Kurdish minorities. In contrast, Russia's interests are in investing in the civilian nuclear-power industry. These may be very different interests, but both require accommodating Tehran at the expense of US policy preferences. In Syria, similarly, Turkey wants to reinforce its bulwark against a potential Kurdish state, while Russia is looking to rebuild relations with an old Soviet-era friend. Ankara and Moscow look on President Bashar al-Assad's Syria, and the possibility of gradual political reforms, much more favourably than Washington does. They see the new Bush administration policy to spread freedom and democracy around the world not as a bulwark against tyranny or extremism in places like Syria, Iraq and Iran, but as an expansionist policy that will further damage their interests by encouraging even more chaos on their southern tiers.

The challenge the United States faces with Russia and Turkey goes well beyond issues of public diplomacy. Ankara and Moscow do not want a lecture from Washington on the virtues of democracy and the perils of stability. Instead, they want the United States to appreciate that the broader Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia are full of weak states prone to ethnic and sectarian fragmentation in case of sudden regime change. Turkey worries that political upheavals will become the basis for more, not less, regional conflict; while Russia sees an anti-Russian alliance emerging around the Black Sea, if not across Eurasia.

'Coloured revolution' angst

Russia has been angered, and Turkey concerned, by the apparent US policy of encouraging 'coloured revolutions' and regime change in Georgia in November 2003, Ukraine in December 2004 and Kyrgyzstan in March 2005. For Moscow and Ankara the so-called 'coloured revolutions' have 'made in the USA' stamped all over them. Moscow sees US support for free and fair elections in Eurasia as an anti-Russian strategy – an attempt to pull Russia's allies away from it by installing American friends, like Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia and Victor Yushchenko in Ukraine (but not Kurmanbek Bakiyev in Kyrgystan), as new regional presidents. Nationalists in Ankara believe that the 'march of freedom and democracy' spearheaded by the United States can only lead to one thing – the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan and the eventual dismemberment of Turkey with the loss of Kurdish territories in Anatolia to a new Kurdish state.

Ankara also sees Georgia and Ukraine under new management as potential competitors for EU membership – a view encouraged by some injudicious statements on the part of Georgia's former foreign minister, also a former French diplomat – or as an excuse for some EU member states to stall the accession process. Ankara wants a slower pace than Washington for NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia – a perceived precursor to EU membership – so they

do not interfere with Turkey's march toward the EU over the next 10–15 years. Russia, at this juncture, would be delighted to keep Ukraine and Georgia out of NATO and the EU permanently. Senior Russian officials, in meetings in Moscow in September 2005, derisively dismissed the image of these 'Lilliputian states ... running from one master in Moscow to another in Brussels as fast as they can'.

Black Sea paranoia

Chaos in Iraq has been a major trauma in Turkish foreign policy. It is the prism through which Turks see American activity in the neighbouring Black Sea and Caucasus regions. Turkish Foreign Ministry officials question, with direct reference to Iraq, whether the United States has calculated the risks elsewhere of its 'freedom and democracy agenda'.¹² As one Turkish regional analyst noted at an October 2005 seminar in Ankara, 'what the U.S. is doing in the Black Sea is seen with paranoia in Turkey, in spite of the fact that it is not even linked with Iraq'.¹³ Turkey and Russia view the Black Sea as traditionally 'their sea', and a Russian representative reportedly responded to the United States' request for observer status in BSEC by retorting: 'if the U.S., why not Belarus?'¹⁴ Turkey made no attempt to support the American candidacy, which had to be pushed through, in September 2005, by the other littoral states. In the words of one official, 'Turkey doesn't want democratization to bring instability to its neighbourhood ... The U.S. is a new actor in the Black Sea, a currently stable region; why risk destabilization there?'¹⁵

Turkey's relations with Georgia have deteriorated since the 'Rose Revolution' of November 2003, while Russia's relations with Tbilisi are perhaps the most contentious of Moscow's regional relationships and increasingly the flashpoint in its bilateral relationship with the United States. Russian politicians, including President Putin and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, make it clear that they view Georgia as a failed state. Poor relations between Georgia and Russia seem set to continue. Turkey is one of Georgia's most important neighbours and trading partners, so Ankara ought to be a US asset in helping to resolve the Russian–Georgian stand-off. Indeed, Turkey has traditionally played a positive role, supporting Georgian independence after the collapse of the USSR, helping to broker a cease-fire in South Ossetia in 1992, and intervening in Adjara after the Rose Revolution to facilitate the 'resignation' and removal of regional strongman Aslan Abashidze. But, at present, the new rapprochement with Russia, antipathy towards the United States because of Iraq and suspicion about America's would-be role in the Black Sea are shaping Turkey's relationship with Georgia. Compounding the problem, the new Georgian government has limited experience in managing relations with Turkey and is fixated on the United States, Russia and Europe.

Abkhazian standoff

Especially tricky is the issue of Georgia's separatist region of Abkhazia, which has fallen under the de facto sway of Russia after more than a decade of frozen conflict with Tbilisi. Most of Abkhazia's residents have obtained special Russian travel documents to replace expired Soviet-era passports. The Russian rouble circulates as the official currency, and Moscow has repeatedly threatened to use the anticipated independence of Kosovo as a precedent for recognition of Abkhazia's *de jure* separation from Tbilisi.

The presence of a pro-Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey is a complicating factor. Thanks to the exodus of North Caucasian ethnic groups from the Russian empire to the Ottoman empire in the 1860s, there are more ethnic Abkhaz (or Cherkess) living in Turkey today than in Abkhazia itself. Over the last decade, trade between Turkey and Abkhazia has increased. Using new coast guard patrol boats provided by the United States, Georgia has begun to intercept Turkish vessels sailing to the Abkhaz port of Sukhumi, arresting their captains and crews.

Georgian-Turkish negotiations on jointly patrolling their Black Sea maritime border, and using the Turkish Abkhaz diaspora to reach out to Sukhumi, have made little headway. In interviews in Tbilisi in July 2005, Foreign Ministry officials accused Ankara and Moscow of entering into a condominium on Abkhazia to impede Georgian efforts to resolve the conflict. While this seems overblown, there is little incentive at this juncture for Turkey to engage in serious discussions with Russia and the United States over Georgia and Abkhazia. Under current circumstances, American policy toward supporting the stabilisation and development of Georgia could easily unravel.

In short, the United States can no longer rely on Turkey as a counterweight to Russia for the pursuit of American policies in the Black Sea and the Caucasus. From the 1950s to the 1980s, American support for Turkey's relationship with NATO and the EU was intended to firmly anchor Turkey in the Western and European camps as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. Turkey's current position in NATO and its new strategic value for the United States is now much more related to the Middle East, not Europe and Russia. Because of Iraq, and anxieties about the future national unity of the Turkish state with the potential emergence of an independent Kurdistan, the United States has lost its influence with Turkey.

A pro-Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey is a complicating factor

PROOF

Feeling excluded

It is, of course, unfair to put all the blame on the United States for the deterioration of relations with Turkey. In fact, Turkey's problem with the Bush administration

is related to its own domestic insecurity with political Islam and the Kurds. For the military guardians of Ataturk's legacy, this means the relentless pursuit of any deviation from the secular and Turkish character of the Kemalist Republic, be it Islamic or Kurdish. The United States, by supporting the idea of Turkey serving as a 'model' for the Islamic world and by relying on the Kurds in Iraq, is now on the wrong side of the Turkey's Kemalist debate.

By promoting 'moderate Islam', the United States alarms Turkish secularists. Although Washington has now erased 'model' from its Turkish political vocabulary – replacing it with creative formulas like 'source of inspiration'¹⁶ – the Kurdish problem is trickier to solve. America's strong partnership with the Kurds in Iraq, the new Iraqi constitution's loose federalism, the status of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and the Pentagon's reluctance to take action against PKK terrorists in northern Iraq all rattle the Kemalist guardians in the Turkish military.

More generally, Turkey and Russia are frustrated that the United States does not consider their interests in its forays into their neighbourhoods. They want Washington to take their views seriously. The Turkish–Russian relationship – like other strange international couplings today – is founded on a sense of *exclusion* by the United States, not mutual interest.

As both sides will admit, there is not yet much political substance to their relations. The states are still more natural rivals than regional allies. Rapprochement has not extended much beyond the persons of Erdogan and Putin. There is lingering suspicion in the Turkish Foreign Ministry about Russia's intentions. Turkey is particularly unhappy with Russia's position on Cyprus, which still seems to favour 'its fellow Orthodox Greeks'. Moscow, too, is trying to exploit Turkish dissatisfaction with the United States to its own advantage rather than see what it can build from the new relationship.

Washington can only head off the creation of a real strategic partnership between Turkey and Russia by paying more attention to the Turkish side of the equation. Russia's concerns are mostly focused on its immediate neighbourhood, around the Black Sea and in the Caucasus, but Turkey's converge on the Middle East, which is the critical region for American policy. There is a fallacy in both Ankara and Washington that Turkish–American problems can be reduced to the issue of the PKK in Iraq. But Turkey's real concerns are about the likely outcome of the 'Kurdish Question' if Iraq disintegrates, and what this means for Turkey and its neighbours. There are 30–40 million Kurds across the Middle East, in Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran. Turkey has about 15–20m Kurds, and Iraq only 5m. Turkey needs to feel that it is a partner with the United States, not an afterthought, in discussions of the potential creation of

a Kurdish state. Turkey does not want to feel punished for its failure to assist the United States in Iraq in 2003. This requires some serious diplomacy and a real strategic dialogue with Turkey.

Notes

- 1 The background interviews for this article were conducted by the authors in Ankara, Istanbul, Moscow, Tbilisi and Washington DC with a range of Turkish, Russian, Georgian and American senior government officials, policy analysts, businessmen, journalists and embassy representatives, between July and October 2005.
- 2 In March 2005, appearing on US television talk shows, Rumsfeld stated that he wished US troops had not been 'blocked' from entering Iraq through Turkey, and asserted that this had enabled the post-war insurgency in Iraq to flourish. 'Given the level of the insurgency today, two years later, clearly if we had been able to get the 4th Infantry Division in from the north, in through Turkey, more of the Iraqi, Saddam Hussein, Baathist regime would have been captured or killed. The insurgency today would be less', he said, adding that the resulting thrust of the US invasion through southern Iraq had enabled many insurgents to evade capture in the north. See *Agence France-Presse*, 21 March 2005, at <http://www.turkishpress.com/news.asp?id=39081>; see also CNN's coverage of Rumsfeld's statements at <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/03/20/iraq.anniversary/>.
- 3 The January 2005 BBC World Service Poll, which was conducted in 21 countries, indicated that a record 82% of Turks perceived President Bush's policies as negative for global peace and regional security in the Middle East. See Karl Vick, 'In Many Turks' Eyes, U.S. Remains the Enemy', *Washington Post*, 10 April 2005, p. A21. According to the German Marshall Fund's (GMF) 'Transatlantic Trends Survey' of September 2005, a slightly lower 77% of Turks found the US administration's global leadership to be 'undesirable'. See the GMF report at <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/doc/TTKeyFindings2005.pdf>.
- 4 Orkun Uçar and Burak Turna, *Metal Firtina* [Metal Storm] (Istanbul: TimasYayınevi, 2004).
- 5 In 2005, the Turkish Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Kursat Tuzmen, projected that the trade volume between Russia and Turkey would continue to grow during 2006 and 2007, reaching a projected goal of \$25bn in line with the Turkish government's 'Eurasia Action Plan'. See http://cnnturk.com/HABER/haber_detay.asp?PID=318&HID=5&haberID=56090.
- 6 See 'An Historic Turkish–Russian Exchange', Turkey Now (website of the Turkish–US Business Council), January 2005, at <http://www.turkey-now.org/default.aspx?pgID=111>.
- 7 Author interviews with Turkish embassy and Foreign Ministry officials in Washington DC and Ankara, October 2005.
- 8 Author interviews in Turkey in August, September and October 2005, with a broad range of politicians, government officials, analysts and journalists. For an outspoken and articulate presentation of this view by a leading Turkish commentator, see Hasan Unal, 'Turkey

Would Be Better Off Outside the EU', *Financial Times*, 17 December 2004. In 2002, one of Turkey's most prominent generals, Major-General Tuncer Kılınç, the secretary of the National Security Council, was one of the first to suggest in a public presentation that Turkey should perhaps abandon its efforts to secure EU membership and seek out alternative alliances with other neighbours such as Russia or Iran. See Owen Matthews, 'Europe's Orphan: A Showdown is Brewing Between Turkey and the EU', *Newsweek International*, 22 April 2002.

⁹ It is worth noting, however, that in the GMF's 'Transatlantic Trends Survey' of 2005, Russia and the United States now enjoy the same level of popularity in Turkey, and that China's image in Turkey is as positive as the European Union's.

¹⁰ 'Turetskii gambit', directed by Dzhanik Faiziyev, based on a novel and screenplay by the Russian author, Boris Akunin, released in 2005.

- ¹¹ Burak Turna, *Üçüncü Dünya Savası* [The Third World War] (Istanbul: TımasYayınevi, 2005).
- ¹² Presentation by the Georgian foreign minister at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, Thursday, 3 June 2004; also author interviews with Turkish embassy and Foreign Ministry officials in Washington, DC and Ankara in October 2005.
- ¹³ Presentation at TEPAV-EPRI roundtable discussion on 'Latest Developments in the Caucasus and Russia: A Strategic Perspective for Turkey', at TOBB-ETU University, Ankara, 12 October 2005.
- ¹⁴ Author interview with senior BSEC representative in Washington DC, 8 July 2005.
- ¹⁵ Author interview with Turkish Foreign Ministry official, Ankara, Turkey, 11 October 2005.
- ¹⁶ Author interviews with senior US Embassy staff in Ankara, February 2005, and senior State Department officials in Washington DC.