# THE CHANGING ROLE OF TURKEY´S MILITARY IN FOREIGN POLICY MAKING[1]

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**Abstract:**

Changing domestic power configurations following the EU Helsinki Summit in 1999 and increasing US influence in Iraq after 2002 created distinct political circumstances in which the military in Turkey had to relinquish its grip on foreign policy- making process. The harmonization process with the EU deprived the military of its most influential bureaucratic instruments to exert influence over the formulation of foreign policy decisions, and removed one of the main obstacles that prevented governments from exercising full authority in making foreign policy decisions. Furthermore, the invasion of Iraq caused a chain of reactions that eventually limited the military's influential position in Turkish foreign affairs. This article tries to shed light on the combined impact of the EU reforms and the invasion of Iraq in restricting military influence on foreign policy- making in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Turkish military, EU, Invasion of Iraq, foreign policy-making.

***Resumen:***

*Configuraciones domésticas cambiantes tras la Cumbre de Helsinki de 1999 y la creciente influencia de los EEUU en Iraq tras el 2002, crearon unas circusntancias políticas distintas en las cuales los militares en Turquía tuvieron que ceder su protagonismo en el proceso de toma de decisión en política exterior. El proceso de armonización con la UE privó a los militares de sus instrumentos burocráticos más influyentes para ejercer influencia sobre la formulación de las decisiones concernientes la política exterior, y eliminó así uno de los principales obstáculos que impedían a los gobiernos ejercer su plena autoridad en tal ámbito. Además, la invasión de Iraq causó una reacción en cadena que acabó limitando la posición tan influyente del ejército en los asuntos exteriores de Turquía. Este artículo intenta esclarecer el impacto combinado de las reformas de la UE y la invasión de Iraq que logró reducir la influencia del ejército en el proceso de toma de decisiones en Turquía.*

***Palabras clave:*** *Ejército turco, UE, invasión de Iraq, toma de decisiones en política exterior.*



[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared in, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy: Turkey's Military in Foreign Policy Making Process", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, vol. 40 (2009), pp.85-104.

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## 1. Introduction

The military's decisive position in Turkey's foreign policy-making process seems to have been undermined by interrelated domestic and international developments that have been taking place since the early 2000s. Firstly, Turkey's harmonization process with the EU that gained momentum after 2001 introduced legal reforms limiting the military's jurisdiction. From a legal standpoint, the harmonization process with the EU deprived the military of the bureaucratic instruments which allowed it to exert great influence over the formulation of foreign policy. Military authorities wrangled with successive governments over the political prerogatives they had cultivated for decades and were compelled to forsake some of the turf they seized in the nineties. Concomitantly, EU reforms also opened up a larger space for non-governmental agencies to take an active role in the process of foreign policy-making, and this, too, contributed to military loss of influence in this field. Secondly, the 3 November 2002 elections that brought the Justice and Development Party (JDP) to power with a clear cut majority in parliament heralded the end of the political fragmentation that had prevailed in Turkish politics since the 20 October 1991 elections. By surmounting the pressure imposed by the military, the JDP government gradually consolidated its position and succeeded in exercising full authority over the decision making on foreign and security policy issues. In a number of issues the JDP government challenged the military and eventually redefined Turkey's position in cases such as Cyprus. Thirdly, the military's retreat from Northern Iraq also meant a loss of influence. A divergence of ideas over priorities regarding the future of Iraq between Turkey and US after 1998 led to events that distorted the working harmony between the armies of the two age-old allies. Eventually, in the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq in April 2003, the military found themselves less able to steer the country's most sensitive foreign and security policy issue, i.e. Turkey's policies towards the Kurds of Iraq.

Although both developments should be taken into consideration simultaneously to explain the military's loss of influence in foreign policy making, current literature on the issue appears to focus on the question as to how and to what extent Turkish foreign policy has become Europeanized. It is true that the EU's conditions for entry sparked a wave of reformation that changed many aspects of Turkish politics.[1] The extensive literature on this deals with Europeanization as a consequence either of overall demilitarization/ desecuritization in Turkish polity[2] or the increasing civic involvement in the foreign policy decision making,[3] or both of these. The first group of documents describes the recent state of Turkey's foreign affairs as embodying the principle of "zero-problem-with neighbours"

[1] Aydın, Mustafa and Açıkmeşe, Sinem A.: "Europeanization through EU conditionality: Understanding the New Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2007), pp. 263–74; Öniş, Ziya: "Turkey and the Middle East after September 11: The Importance of the EU Dimension", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4 (2003), pp.84-95; and Akçapar, Burak (2007): *Turkey's new European era: Foreign policy on the road to EU Membership*, Lanham, MD: Toronto, Rowman & Littlefield.

[2] Linda, Michaud-Emin: "The Restructuring of the Military High Command in the Seventh Harmonization Package and its Ramifications for Civil-Military Relations in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2007), pp. 25-42; Aras, Bülent and Karakaya Polat, Rabia: "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 39, no. 5 (2008), pp. 495-515.

[3] Hakkı, Murat Metin: "Turkey and the EU: Past Challenges and Important Issues Lying Ahead", *Turkish Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (2006), pp. 451-471; Rumelili, Bahar: "Civil Society and the Europeanization of Greek–Turkish Cooperation", *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1 (March 2005), pp. 45–56; Kubicek, Paul: "The Earthquake, Civil Society, and Political Change in Turkey: Assessment and Comparison with Eastern Europe", *Political Studies*, vol. 50, no. 4 (September 2002), pp.361-377; Göksel, Diba Nigar and Güneş, Rana Birden: "The Role of NGOs in the European Integration Process - The Turkish Experience", *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1 (March 2005), pp.57–72; Ulusoy, Kıvanç: "Europeanization and Political Change: The Case of Cyprus", *Turkish Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2009), pp. 393-408.

introduced by the JDP to improve Ankara's bilateral relations by deploying a less coercive discourse than the one which had prevailed in the previous decade, thereby dislodging the military from its position of power in foreign policy. The second group highlights the emergence and role of NGOs that gradually became more discernible in the foreign -policy making process. They are concerned about the importance and extent of NGO activities regarding issues of foreign policy. Both debates try to understand the impact that developments regarding Iraq had on the change in the military's position on the foreign and security policy decision making. Initially, the plight of the Iraqi Kurds and the formation of a Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and later their alliance with US before and after the occupation, together with their recent elevation in status in post-occupation Iraq, compelled decision-makers to redefine the tenets of Turkey's foreign and security policy, thereby shifting the balance of power within the foreign and security policy-making establishment. In 1998, when Washington started to pursue policies relating to Iraq at variance with those of Ankara, the priorities of the two allies had already begun to move in different directions. However, following the Turkish parliament's refusal to allow US troops to be stationed in their country on the eve of the invasion, Turkey was gradually forced to cut down its military activities in Northern Iraq, thus causing the loss of an important operational ground where for a decade the Turkish military had had the opportunity to exert its power with almost no interference.

In addition to the impact created by the Europeanization of Turkish polity and the new power configuration in Ankara, this chapter argues that the invasion of Iraq caused a chain of reactions that undermined the effectiveness of the military's position in establishing foreign policy and security. This chapter will take a closer look at events relating to Iraq. The US invasion of Iraq weakened the military's alliance with the US Armed Forces, compelled the military to forsake the red line policies towards Iraqi Kurds it had been espousing, forced it to grind to a halt in an area where it had maintained a high profile since 1991, and last but not least, revived a propensity for clandestine activities within top brass.

## 2. The Military´s Role in Foreign Policy-Making in Turkey

The military has had a long history in the role of shaping all aspects of politics in Turkey. Following the 1980 *coup d'état*, the military imposed arbitrary laws and regulations on the country and also secured the army's omnipresence in the area of foreign policy.[4] Moreover, after 1984 as the PKK, (*Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan*) began to operate more effectively within and outside of Turkey, the military gradually assumed a greater role in curbing armed insurgence; this led to the legitimization of its position in the foreign policy-making process. Furthermore, the regionalization of the Kurdish problem after the 1990 Gulf Crisis led to the further consolidation of the military's position in this field and catapulted the military authorities into the prime position of power as far as Turkey's foreign policy-making process was concerned. Since the matters at stake were military in nature, the military naturally came to the forefront as the key player. The plight of Iraqi Kurds after they escaped from anticipated retribution and massed along the Turkish-Iraqi border in March 1991 dragged Turkey further into the crisis, thus perpetuating the military's decisive position. When the US-led coalition, which used Turkish military bases, launched Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) to provide security for Kurdish safe havens in Iraq, close cooperation between the Turkish

[4] Uzgel, İlhan: "Between Praetorianism and Democracy: The Role of the Military in Turkish Foreign Policy", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, vol. 24 (2003), pp.177-211.

Armed Forces (TAF) and the Pentagon was essential. TAF's contribution to OPC became even more significant after the civilian authorities handed over their authority to prolong OPC to the National Security Council (NSCl), within which the military had a strong say. As the PKK began using its Northern Iraq bases as a spring board for its incursions into Turkey, TAF maintained various units there and frequently extended its military operations deep into Northern Iraq. Until the end of 1997, large scale cross-border operations — Operation Steel, Operation Hammer and Operation Dusk — were carried out to uproot the PKK in Northern Iraq. Thereafter, large chunks of territory in the area remained under TAF control.

The military assumed a pivotal role in the implementation of two strategies — the 2½ War Strategy and the Turkish Peripheral Strategy — both of which had a strong influence on the shaping of Turkey's foreign policy options by the second half of the 1990s.[5] The former stipulated new troop deployments to deal simultaneously with a two-pronged threat: the conventional one on the Greek and Syrian fronts, and the Kurdish insurgency at home. Formulated by the veteran diplomat Şükrü Elekdağ, this strategy shaped the mindset of many officials in the security establishment for the latter part of the decade.[6] The Turkish Peripheral Strategy, on the other hand, was articulated less formally, but, instead, was reflected in Turkey's growing relations with Israel, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Ukraine in security-related areas.[7] Both strategies, albeit to varying degrees, addressed Kurdish separatism and considered employing coercive diplomacy. Hence, they accorded a key role to the military. Its growing influence was also reflected in other unfolding regional crises, for example, with the Syrians in 1998, when the military took the initiative and appeared on the cast list as the lead actor.[8]

When the Welfare Party and True Path Party formed a coalition, the military effectively put pressure on the government on account of its Islamic inclinations and finally forced it to resign. In this process, the military cultivated ad hoc modalities with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by-passing the government in a number of cases, and most notably imposing its own policy as regards Northern Iraq. Furthermore, against the background of fragmentation in domestic politics, military encroachment on cases under the Foreign Ministry's jurisdiction was increasingly considered legitimate.[9] For instance, in a briefing given to the diplomats at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy CGS Çevik Bir, who was known as "the foreign minister of the military," was able to publicly blame Foreign Minister Tansu Çiller for not being active enough abroad.[10] In some cases, the military authorities declined to give the government sufficient information about cross-border operations.[11]

By early 1996, having forsaken the policy of critical dialogue, Ankara launched a policy of deterrence, putting heavy pressure on Damascus to end its support for the PKK. In January 1996 Ankara delivered an admonitory note to Damascus saying that continuing

[5] Bengio, Ofra and Özcan, Gencer: "Old Grievances, New Fears: Arab Perceptions of Turkey and Its Alignment with Israel", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2 (April 2001), pp. 51-92.
[6] Elekdağ, Şükrü: "2½ War Strategy", *Perceptions*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March-May 1996), pp. 33-57.
[7] Makovsky, Alan: "Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish Periphery Strategy?", in Barkey, Henry J. (ed.) (1996): *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, Washington D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, p.170; Bengio, Ofra (2004): *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*, New York, Palgrave, p. 80-89.
[8] Yetkin, Murat (2004): *Kürt Kapanı: Şam'dan İmralı'ya Öcalan*, İstanbul, Remzi, pp. 92-95.
[9] See Uzgel, *op. cit.*, p.184-186
[10] "Çevik Bir'den Çiller'e Ağır Eleştiri", *Hürriyet*, 27 June 1997.
[11] Elekdağ, Şükrü: "Hesaplaşma", *Milliyet*, 19 May 1997; Güler, Mehmet: "Operasyonu Matbuattan Öğreniyoruz", *Hürriyet*, 23 May 1997; Özkök, Ertuğrul: "12 Saat Sonra Haber Verdik", *Hürriyet*, 21 May 1997; Özkök, Ertuğrul: "Ordu-Dışişleri Soğukluğu", *Hürriyet*, 9 June 1997.

Syrian support for the PKK would be considered a *casus belli*.[12] However, given the political instability caused by the December 1995 elections, putting pressure on Syria remained an almost solely military affair. After skirmishes with the PKK groups infiltrating Turkey across the Syrian border around Samandağı in November 1995, Turkish troops had already engaged in a hot pursuit operation and entered Syrian territory. Although an unexpected crisis which erupted in the Aegean over islets off the Turkish coast diverted attention away from this, the military committed itself to keeping up the pressure through troop movements along the border and gave blunt warnings throughout the summer of 1996.[13] Although the military deliberately refrained from blowing things out of proportion, the final outcome of the crisis over the Kardak islets in the Aegean, was attained by the application of a limited use of force, so enhancing the image of the military's dexterity at ending a diplomatic crisis.[14]

To deter Syria, Ankara gave further momentum to its alignment with Israel, and the military played a key role in the forging of intimate military cooperation with the Israeli Defense Forces. In March 1996, the military authorities declared that they would conclude a cooperation agreement on military training with the Israeli Defense Forces. The conclusion of yet another military agreement with Israel, the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement, was announced on 28 August 1996. In the making of both these agreements, the initiative came from the military, and furthermore, in the case of the latter agreement, the CGS in person intervened to make sure that the agreement received the consent of the government led by the Welfare Party, an avowedly anti-Semitic party. Strategic dialogue forums for top security elites, joint air and naval military exercises, and large-scale military modernization projects between Turkey and Israel became key elements of Ankara's regional policy in the latter part of the decade.[15]

The way the problems with the Syrians were settled indicates the weight of the military in the foreign policy decision making. It is understood that Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu had prepared the groundwork for the plan when he was appointed as Army Commander in September 1997, and somehow deferred implementing his plans until he became CGS in September 1998. It is interesting to note that the measures that the Kıvrıkoğlu Plan advocated were not merely military ones.

> I concluded my duty as the Commander of the 1st Army on 30 August 1997 and was appointed as the Army Commander in Ankara. Then the responsibility to curb terrorism had already been transferred from the office of the CGS to the Army. At the time I made the following evaluation … There was something that should have been done against Syria. Syria has been waging a war against Turkey for 15 years at heavy cost to us yet without causing the least harm to itself. In return for the packing-needle with which Syria pricked Turkey, we should at least have needled Syria a bit. And we made a proposal at the NSC in 1998 that we needed to make a plan of action to deal with the issue from political, economic and military directions, and out of this synergy, we needed to put pressure on Syria. My speech did not receive any reaction in this meeting. Yet at the next meeting held in June, I raised the issue again. And then Honorable President Demirel took me up on the plan and immediately ordered that preparations should be started. We commenced preparations. What could be done from political perspectives? We decided on a number of measures such as calling Syria a terrorist state on every political platform and asking other states for cooperation against Syria, putting an economic embargo through terminating all sorts of imports from and exports to Syria, and worsening Syria's economy by reducing the price of the very goods that Syria was exporting. We were always discussing these issues

[12] See Yetkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-43.
[13] "Sınırda Hareketlilik", *Milliyet*, 8 June 1996; "Suriye'ye Gözdağı", *Milliyet*, 12 June 1996; Çongar, Yasemin: "Suriye'ye Savaş Uyarısı", *Milliyet*, 22 June 1996.
[14] Aksu, Fuat (2008): *Türk Dış Politikasında Zorlayıcı Diplomasi*, İstanbul, Bağlam, pp.250-283.
[15] Özcan, Gencer and Bengio, Ofra: "Decade of the Military: The Case of the Alignment with Israel", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1-2 (Spring 2001), pp. 90-109.

> with Atilla Ateş, then the commander of the 1st Army. In three months time, I would become CGS, and he would be the Commander of the Army.[16]

So the final showdown with the Syrians came in September 1998, after Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu became CGS and re-launched the so called "deterrent pressure policy" against Syria. To the surprise of many in Ankara, an unexpected prelude to the crisis was made by Army Commander General Atilla Ateş on 15 September 1998 when he delivered a blunt warning in a speech delivered at Samandağı located near the Syrian border. He openly called on Syria to either immediately cease hosting Abdullah Öcalan in Damascus or face the consequences. It is striking that during the climax of the crisis, the civilian side of the establishment, eclipsed by the military, strove to steal the role of the military. The military had already planned to put its own seal on the crisis during the impending NSC meeting at the end of the October, when President Süleyman Demirel deliberately came to the forefront to play the leading role by inserting an overt warning to Damascus in his opening speech in the Turkey's Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on 1 October 1998.[17] Due to the good offices of Egypt and Iran, Syria bowed to the pressure and swiftly deported Öcalan, having signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 20 October 1998.[18] Throughout the rest of the decade, the military retained and expanded its central place within the security establishment and its *de facto* authority over security and foreign policy issues. The military role therefore became more conspicuous and in some cases maintained an uncomfortable co-existence with that of the elected government in the making of Turkish foreign policy.[19] This configuration created various crises between Turkey and its Western allies. In particular, allegations as regards transgressions of human rights overshadowed Ankara's relations with the EU, and denunciations were mostly directed towards the military as being in charge of security in the country.

## 3. Loosing Its Prerogatives

The 1999 Helsinki Summit confirming Turkey's candidacy in December 1999 provided further impetus for change in Turkey's domestic politics. However, it has to be remembered that increasing awareness within Europe of Turkey's political problems was to a large extent an outcome of the transnationalization of Turkey's internal problems due to the formation of a large diaspora of Turkish citizens in European countries, a process which gained momentum after 1980.[20] The Europeanization of Turkey's problems had already been ripening during the nineties. In addition to Kurdish politicians, other dissidents in all the levels of Turkish political life learned how to mobilize various sectors of the European public alongside their own agenda. The Europeanization of Turkey's problems was dramatically reflected in the way Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, tried to gain asylum in Europe in late 1998 and was apprehended in February 1999 in the Greek Embassy in Kenya after an odyssey across Europe.[21]

[16] Mercan, Faruk: "Kıvrıkoğlu: Tanklarla Suriye'ye Girecektik", *Aksiyon*, 17 October 2005.
[17] See Yetkin, *op. cit.*, p. 94. See also Dündar, Can and Akar, Rıdvan: "Çankaya'daki Şam Zirvesinin Tutanakları", *Milliyet*, 7-9 November 2007.
[18] See Aksu, *op. cit.*, p. 257-261.
[19] See Uzgel, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
[20] Ulusoy, Kıvanç: "The Changing Challenge of Europeanization to Politics and Governance in Turkey", *International Political Science Review*, vol. 30, no. 4 (2009), pp.363-384.
[21] The unilateral truce proclaimed by the PKK after the apprehension of its leaders to some extent eased political tension and opened up some room to maneuver in for a variety of political actors.

The constitutional and legal amendments to Turkish law made under EU influence provided for the gradual elimination of prerogatives granted to the military and thereby consolidated the influence of the government. [22] Among the constitutional reforms passed in 2001, the amendment concerning the composition of the NSC was the most decisive. It increased the number of civilian members of the council, thus reducing its military members to a minority.[23] It also changed Article 118 of the constitution, so that the council's effect on the government was weakened and the council's advisory character underlined. Meeting with low profile resistance from the military,[24] the Seventh Democratization Package, which was adopted in August of 2003, aimed at further demilitarization of the council. The most significant amendment of the package was geared towards removing legal obstacles that prevented the appointment of a civilian to the influential office of the Secretary General of the NSC. Thus, in August of 2004, for the first time in the history of the NSC, it became possible for the government to appoint a career diplomat, Ambassador Yiğit Alpogan, as the Secretary General of the council. Not only did the reforms mean the loss of the most influential platform on which the military authorities could legitimately exert influence to shape Turkey's foreign policy, they also created a state of mind among the public geared towards claiming the advancement and consolidation of democratic reforms. In parallel to this change, public declarations and speeches made by the Chief of General Staff (CGS) were unwelcome in political circles, forcing military authorities to pursue a low profile and be less outspoken on foreign policy issues. Striking examples of this were witnessed on the eve of the US invasion of Iraq between January and March of 2003, and in debates about the Annan Plan for the Cyprus issue in the first half of 2004, when the CGS chose not to intervene.

The military was also hamstrung by other legal changes. In 2005, when the National Security Policy Document (NSPD) was revised,[25] the government appeared to have taken an active role in the making of the new document.[26] The document was short in comparison to its predecessors and did not include the preparation of "action plans" against certain countries. It is understood that the document was carefully worded so that Ankara would not resort to the threat of the use of force as a means of conducting foreign policy, thus implying a lesser role for the military.[27] After a five- year interval, when the NSPD was to be revised again in 2010, it seemed that the government had steered the reformulation process of the document.[28] President Gül emphasized that the document should be re-written in the light of the foreign policy principle of "zero problem with neighbours"[29] It is to be noted that these endeavors were part of a wider demilitarization of the political regime, and legal amendments further limiting the military's jurisdiction were placed high on the government's agenda.[30]

[22] For a concise account of these reforms, see Özbudun, Ergun and Yazıcı, Serap (2004): *Democratization Reforms in Turkey (1993-2004)*, İstanbul, TESEV, p.32-41.
[23] When Recep T. Erdoğan formed the second JDP government in March 2003, the number of deputy ministers without portfolio was increased so that the civilian members could have constituted a clear majority in the NSC. Demirdöğen, İsmet: "Yeni Hükümet MGK Ayarlı", *Radikal*, 12 March 2003.
[24] Küçükşahin, Şükrü: "Orgeneral Kılınç'ın Uyum Paketine 'Gizli' Damgalı İtirazı", *Hürriyet*, 19 May 2003; Şık, Barkın: "Sezer Veto Ederse Erdoğan Direnmesin", *Milliyet*, 2003.
[25] Bayramoğlu, Ali: "Milli Güvenlik Siyaset Belgesi Nedir?", *Yeni Şafak*, 29 April 2005.
[26] Yılmaz, Turan: "MGSB, Özkök Paşa'nın Dediği Gibi Değişsin", *Hürriyet*, 25 November 2004; Aydıntaşbaş, Aslı: "Kırmızı Kitapçık Açıklanmalı mı?", *Sabah*, 22 June 2005; "MGSB'de Yeni Baştan", *Radikal*, 13 October 2005.
[27] Zeyrek, Deniz: "Gerekirse Asker Yine 'Göreve", *Radikal*, 28 October 2005.
[28] "EMASYA'ya Gerek Yok MGSB ise Yenilenebilir", *Milliyet*, 3 February 2010.
[29] Aydıntaşbaş, Aslı: "Kırmızı Kitabı Hem Gördüm, Hem de Yazdım", *Milliyet*, 8 February 2010.
[30] Berberoğlu, Enis: "Sivil Silahsız Siyaset Belgesi", *Hürriyet*, 30 June 2007; "TSK Hesaplarına Fiili Denetim Geliyor", *Radikal*, 29 January 2010; "EMASYA'yı Ortadan Kaldıracağız", *Radikal*, 1 February 2010; Yılmaz,

The military's loss of ground in foreign policy-making also manifested itself in the fact that the concept of national security began to lose preeminence in state discourse. The military had introduced this concept into Turkish political and legal parlance following the 1960 coup, by using it for naming the council they formed to oversee politics, the NSC. After the 1980 coup, the concept was granted even wider usage by the military.[31] Later, in the following decades, it was geared towards securitizing ordinary political issues as a pretext towards hindering democratic alternatives.[32] However, after the 1990s, this concept was publicly questioned.[33] Yet, the most outspoken criticism came in August 2000 when Motherland Party leader Mesut Yılmaz openly questioned the common and frequent use of the concept by the military, calling it a stumbling block to the introduction of democratic reforms.[34] The military responded forcefully,[35] but since then the centrality of the concept in state discourse has been increasingly challenged.[36] Early in 2008, a suggestion regarding the redefinition of the concept came from within the security establishment. The ex-deputy-undersecretary of the National Intelligence Service, Cevat Öneş, proposed that a rigid national security concept should be replaced by a "democratic security concept." Although he did not specify what he meant by 'democratic security', he implied that the concept of national security should not be used as a pretext to hinder democratic alternatives in high security issues such as the Kurdish question.[37] By the same token, at the beginning of the 2000s, many governments began to refrain from using the language of force and coercion. Instead, they seemed to prefer to use a new rhetoric based on "zero problems with the neighbors" and a "good neighbor policy" which appeared to be more successful in decreasing security restrictions over so-called national causes.[38] In a similar way, military authorities changed their tune to harmonize with the governments' rapprochement with some of Turkey's neighbors, most notably Syria and Greece.[39]

## 4. Loss of Affiliations

The diversification of foreign and security policy-making was an important aspect of the EU-induced political transformation. Although the significance of the external pressure applied by the EU for democratization can not be over-exaggerated, the pressure coming from within played a decisive role in the reformation process. Pressure within Turkey had been

Önder: "İç Hizmet Kanunu Değişmez Değil", *Milliyet*, 2 February 2010; "11 Soruda Yeni 'Terörle Mücadele'", *Radikal*, 19 February 2010.

[31] The concept was upgraded once again in September 1980 when the five generals who ousted the government named their junta the *National Security Board*. In the 1982 Constitution, the concept was used in five respective articles. Eren, Hasan and Zülfikar Hamza (eds.) (1985): *Anayasa Sözlüğü*, Ankara, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, pp. 73-124.

[32] Çelik, Seydi (2008): *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Devlet ve Asker: Askeri Bürokrasinin Sistem İçindeki Yeri*, İstanbul, Salyangoz, pp. 288-292; Akgüner, Tayfun (1983): *1961 Anayasasına Göre Milli Güvenlik Kavramı*, Istanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi, pp.144-145.

[33] Tanör, Bülent (1997): *Türkiye Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri*, İstanbul, TÜSİAD. For a detailed breakdown of the issues that the NSC had introduced into its agenda, see, Tanör, Bülent: "MGK'nın İlgi Alanları", *Milliyet*, 13 July 1998.

[34] "Tabuları Yıkarız", *Milliyet*, 5 August 2001.

[35] "Muhtıra Gibi", *Hürriyet*, 8 August 2001.

[36] Cizre, Ümit: "Demythologizing the National Security Concept: The Case of Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, vol. 57, no. 2 (2003), pp. 213–230.

[37] Öneş, Cevat: "Demokratik Güvenlik Konsepti", *Radikal*, 12 April 2008.

[38] See Uzgel, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

[39] In November 2004, the Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök declared that the military no longer regards Turkey's neighbors as foes. "Org. Hilmi Özkök: Komşularımız Tehdit Değil", *Zaman*, 12 November 2004.

accumulating in the post-1980 period as a result of the mobilization of different economic, social and political powers striving for further democratization. In this regard, it is plausible to use the analogy that the EU- induced political transformation opened the floodgates to the accumulated political demands that had previously been denied articulation. The groups that took advantage of political reforms remained steadfast in their support for the furtherance of the democratization process and overcame various challenges raised by the political establishment. The ongoing democratization process became, as a student of Turkish politics observed, "a bottom-up process rather than a top-down effect".[40] As interest groups increased their activities, they began to convey their arguments to European platforms through peer organizations.[41] As a result of this transformation, the official apparatus, relatively speaking, lost its prominence, and non-state actors became increasingly involved in formulating foreign and security policy decisions. A vast spectrum of civic organizations has now become involved in activities which formerly had been the province of the security sector, thus becoming agents of a de-securitization process towards more open policy-making in Turkey. Their impact became visible in debates on how to define national interest. These new actors put their weight behind those who encouraged revisions on crucial national issues, as was the case over Cyprus. The new political and legal institutions proved successful in formalizing networks leading to the internalization of European style interaction in Turkey. The extent of Europeanization in Turkish politics was demonstrated in overt public sensitivity on the question of Iraq. Inspired by a chain of demonstrations worldwide, challenging the legitimacy of the US decision to occupy Iraq, the Turkish public actively sought to influence the government on the eve of the parliament decision on this matter. The size of the demonstrations, in particular the one held in Ankara on the very day parliament was to vote on the government motion, took parliament by surprise and was believed to have exerted enormous impact on the MPs.[42]

Another related phenomenon became conspicuous: Turkey's foreign and security policy decisions became affected by economic considerations.[43] Big-business circles started to place demands on the state agenda, urging that their views be reflected in important foreign policy decisions. Notably two businessmen's organizations, TUSIAD (Turkish Association of Industry and Business) and TOBB (Turkish Union of Chambers and Bursaries), may have played significant roles. After the 1990s, TUSIAD advocated Turkey's integration into the international economic system and strove to gain Turkey's full membership to the EU. By using the slogan "less geopolitics, more economics," a TUSIAD report entitled *Towards a New Economic and Trade Diplomacy in Turkey* advocated a new strategy, giving precedence to economic interests in shaping Turkish foreign policy.[44] Politicians continually reminded military authorities of what sort of repercussions on the economy their interferences might provoke.[45] And at least some segments of the military began to display more restricted reaction in public and became more sensitive to the economic consequences their statements might cause.[46] After retiring from the Army CGS, Özkök complained that his maintenance of

[40] See Ulusoy, "The Changing Challenge …", *op. cit.*, p. 376.
[41] Cerit-Mazlum, Semra and Doğan, Erhan (eds.) (2006): *Sivil Toplum ve Dış Politika*, İstanbul, Bağlam.
[42] Kaliber, Alper: "Toplum da Artık Bir 'Aktör'", *Radikal*, 6 March 2003.
[43] Kirişçi, Kemal: "Turkey's Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times", *Challiot Paper*, vol. 92 (September 2006), pp.29-52.
[44] Öğütçü, Mehmet (2000): *Towards a New Economic and Trade Diplomacy in Turkey*, İstanbul, TUSIAD. See also Ogutcu, Mehmet and Saner, Raymond: "Fine-Tuning Turkey's Economic Diplomacy", *Eurasia Critic*, vol. 4 (July 2008), pp.41-47.
[45] Berberoğlu, Enis: "Paşam Borsa %12 Kaybetti", *Hürriyet*, 2 July 2007.
[46] Bila, Fikret: "Özkök'ten Müdahale Yanıtı: Çare İhtilal Değil, Komutanın Konuşması", *Milliyet*, 4 October 2007.

a low profile in politics in order "not to distort the country's economy and the balances prevailing in foreign affairs" had been misunderstood."[47]

As the big industrialists opted for Turkey's integration with the global economy, their views increasingly came into conflict with the military.[48] During the late 1990s, TUSIAD, as Karin Vorhoff pointed out, was "ready to accept European criticism of Turkey's record on democracy and on meeting other international standards; the reports TUSIAD issued and the seminars that [were] organized in the course of the last decade [were] directly related to this debate".[49] By the beginning of the 2000s, TUSIAD had begun to revise its views and to become critical of sensitive issues, such as the liberalization of the political regime, the democratization of the legal system and, most notably, the Cyprus question.[50] While the military, for instance, espoused the continuation of the *status quo* based on two separate and sovereign Turkish and Greek Cypriot states, business circles began to downplay the strategic considerations that the military espoused. In September 2001, when President Rauf Denktaş declined UN General Secretary Kofi Annan's call on both parties to resume talks, TUSIAD Chairman Tuncay Özilhan publicly criticized Ankara's Cyprus policy for lending unconditional support to Denktaş's uncompromising stance.[51] In a statement made in November 2001, Özilhan claimed that the association would propose solutions to issues such as Cyprus, which were "blocking the country's destiny."[52] In the early months of 2002, TUSIAD continued to criticize traditional Cyprus policy based on the *status quo* created after 1974.[53] Likewise, the media, which had come under the direct control of industrialist and financial circles, did not grant the military the support it had formerly received.[54] On the contrary, mainstream media published reports that caused adverse effects for the military's Cyprus policy.[55] In some cases, Rauf Denktaş was targeted by the daily papers that disclosed irregularities in affairs in which he had previoulsy been involved .[56]

In this regard, it is to be noted here that mainstream media kept itself aloof from such activities. In January 2004 it was revealed that some of the top brass had encouraged journalists to publish reports supporting their positions as regards Cyprus, or endeavored to influence media patrons to employ journalists to their liking or deliberated on measures to increase the circulation of certain daily newspaper's.[57] However, little by little mainstream

[47] Yetkin, Murat: "Özkök'ten 'Savunma': Beni 28 Şubatçılar Gibi Davranmamakla Suçladılar", *Radikal*, 25 December 2008.
[48] Öniş, Ziya and Türem, Umut: "Entrepreneurs, Democracy, and Citizenship in Turkey", *Comparative Politics*, vol. 34, no. 4 (July 2002), pp. 439-456.
[49] Vorhoff, Karin: "Businessmen and Their Organizations: Between Instrumental Solidarity, Cultural Diversity, and the State", in Yerasimos, Stefanos; Seufert, Günter and Vorhoff, Karin (eds.) (2000): *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism*, İstanbul, Orient-Institute and Institute Français d'Etudes Anatoliennes, p.155.
[50] Gürpınar, Bulut: "Türkiye Dış Politikasında Bir Aktör", in Cerit-Mazlum, Semra and Doğan, Erhan (eds.) (2006): *Sivil Toplum ve Dış Politika*, İstanbul, Bağlam, pp. 244-246.
[51] Fırat, Melek M.: "Helsinki Zirvesinden Günümüze AB-Türkiye İlişkileri Çerçevesinde Kıbrıs Gelişmeleri", *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, vol. 4, no. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 67-70.
[52] "TÜSİAD: Türkiye Denktaş'ın Uzlaşmaz Tutumunu Desteklemesin", 26 November 2001, at www.dunya.com/haberArsiv.asp?id=58364 ; "Kıbrıs Kavgası Kızıştı", *Radikal*, 28 November 2001.
[53] TUSIAD Press Release, "Kıbrıs Sorunu Avrupa Birliği Genişleme Süreci Bağlamında Ele Alınmalı", 4 May 2002.
[54] For cases in which the Turkish media gave support to the "official" Cyprus policy, see: Robins, Philip (2003): *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Cold War*, London, Hurst and Company, p.83-84. For the changing attitude of the media, see: Gürpınar, "Türkiye Dış Politikasında Bir Aktör: TÜSİAD", p.244-246.
[55] See Kenan Evren's remarks that in 1974 TAF eventually occupied a larger chunk of territory than had initially been planned. "Veririz Diye Fazla Aldık", *Hürriyet*, 21 November 2002.
[56] Duran, Teoman: "Rauf Bey'in Çiftliği", *Sabah*, 30 May 2002.
[57] Opçin, Tuncay: "Kayıt Merakı", *Yeni Aktüel*, May 2008, pp.15-16.

media took a sharp turn and begun criticizing its intimacy with the military.[58] In defiance of the JDP government, the visit by the Army Commander Aytaç Yalman to the island of Cyprus was deliberately ignored by the media, although some segments of the military were expecting it would produce a public euphoria.[59] Instead, occasional reports causing annoyance to the military in particular, and to those who opposed the Annan Plan in general, appeared in daily newspapers with a large circulation. When *Hürriyet* published a report that secular citizens' political and social affiliations were being scrutinized and filed at a military headquarters close to Istanbul, this [60] led to a mini crisis whereby the CGS was compelled to open an investigation.[61] In other instances, mainstream media adopted a critical stance on the demarches made by the military. When in 2008 information on several juntas that had allegedly been formed in 2003-2004 were disclosed, mainstream media published many reports based on the leaked memorandums prepared by some segments within the CGS and gave critical coverage to those reports.[62] It was understood that the military had been upset at the changing attitude of the media. Minutes of a meeting held by disgruntled generals on 15-16 July 2003 reveal the way a segment of the top brass expostulated about the media's attitude: "What the media has done to the detriment of the TAF was not perpetrated even by the enemy. TAF have lost their moral and motivation to a serious extent. Now, who is made happy by this? Who is becoming sad?" [63] In November 2006, the CGS was reported to have prepared a memorandum to revise the list of accredited daily newspapers and also of journalists. It concluded that the accreditation practice that had been launched in 1997 should be maintained, and that those who weakened the credibility of the TAF should not be allowed to attend press briefings.[64] The list which made distinctions between "reliable" and "unreliable" journalists also provoked public reaction.[65] This change stands in a striking contrast to the way the media reacted in October 1998 during the Syrian crisis. In advance of this the media had blown things out of all proportion so that the Syrians supposed that TAF had completed their preparations to strike, and eventually bowed to such pressure.[66]

## 5. Loss at the Battle of Cyprus

The debate over Cyprus, an issue traditionally considered a national cause, seemed to have evolved into a "discursive battlefield" between the military and the government, from which the military eventually had to retreat.[67] In late 2002, soon after it came to power, the JDP government began to promote the Annan Plan and to question Ankara's established Cyprus policy based on the *status quo*. This change of policy immediately put the government and Rauf Denktaş, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, at logger heads. While the government ostracized Denktaş,[68] he, in return, declared that the Annan Plan should not be

[58] Özgürel, Avni: "Medya, MGK ve Özeleştiri", *Radikal*, 16 September 2003.
[59] See Özkök, "24…", *Hürriyet*, 24 January 2004.
[60] "İlginç İstihbarat", *Hürriyet*, 10 March 2004.
[61] Genelkurmay: Biz Dahil Herkes Hatalı", *Radikal*, 17 March 2004; "Eğitimi Zayıf Olan Subayların Hatası", *Hürriyet*, 17 March 2004; Şık, Barkın: "Genelkurmay'dan İki Binbaşıya Soruşturma", *Milliyet*, 18 March 2004.
[62] "Hiç İşiniz mi Yok Vaktiniz mi Çok?", *Radikal*, 8 April 2008.
[63] Mavioğlu, Ertuğrul: "Komutanlar: Hükümeti Değiştirme Şartlarını Bulmamız Lazım", *Radikal*, 8 August 2008.
[64] "İki Tür Gazeteci Vardır: TSK Karşıtları, TSK Yandaşları", *Nokta*, 8-14 March 2007.
[65] "Demokrasi İçin Üzüntü Verici", *Milliyet*, 9 March 2007.
[66] Dündar, Can ve Akar, Rıdvan: "Suriye'yi Türk Basını Korkutmuş", *Milliyet*, 9 November 2007.
[67] Kaliber, Alper: "Securing the Ground through Securitized 'Foreign' Policy: The Cyprus Case Revisited", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 36, no. 3 (September 2005), pp. 297-316.
[68] Demirtaş, Serkan: "AKP Denktaş'ı Dışlıyor", *Cumhuriyet*, 18 December 2002.

considered as a basis for further negotiation.[69] When the military, criticizing the Annan Plan, joined the duel at the NSC meeting of January 2003, Erdoğan stressed in defiance that "Cyprus has become an issue causing trouble for Turkey in all areas," reiterating that "the Annan Plan is an opportunity to continue negotiations and to reach a lasting solution".[70] Although this matter was eclipsed by the occupation of Iraq, throughout 2003 the Annan Plan kept stirring up debate between the military and the government. In late December 2003, a crisis broke out when the government announced that the military and the Foreign Ministry had reached an agreement over the plan. *Cumhuriyet* published a document prepared by the Foreign Ministry, "The Position of the Turkish Side", as well as another document outlining the military's objections, showing that it did not see eye to eye with the ministry over the plan.[71] Upon the ministry's denial of the documents, the newspaper published further details of the report prepared by the military, labeling the ministry's report as a document of "surrender".[72] However, at the final stage, contrary to some expectations, CGS Özkök refrained from taking an anti-government position, emphasizing that "the final decision lies in the hands of TGNA."[73] However, military opposition to the JDP government took several forms: rallying demonstrations in defiance of diplomatic overtures, issuing public denouncements of the government's overtures, top brass visits to the island, and the like.[74] General Tuncer Kılınç, the Secretary General of the NSC, submitted to Prime Minister Erdoğan in April 2003, a three- stage plan that proposed taking harsh measures to deter the EU from accepting Cyprus into the European Union. However, this was disregarded by the government.[75] In the debate on the Annan Plan the tension between some segments of the top brass and CGS Özkök resurfaced so that the latter felt it necessary to state that there was no disagreement within the military.[76]

However, the military failed to mobilize sufficient popular support to bring pressure on the JDP government to get the Annan Plan rejected. In the post- referendum period, the JDP government's occasional overtures to break the diplomatic stalemate in Cyprus caused public reactions prompted by military sources. Such a mini- crisis broke out in December 2006 when the government informed the EU that it could have suggested opening a Turkish seaport and Turkish Cypriot airport for Greek Cypriot navigation, CGS Yaşar Büyükanıt complained that the government had not consulted the military.[77] The government rejoined to the effect that the office of the CGS had been duly informed before they delivered the verbal note.[78] In repudiation of CGS Büyükanıt's remarks, Erdoğan also publicly cautioned the military: "And let us not tire each other. Otherwise, we disturb the economic markets. When markets are disturbed, money that would go into the pockets of my citizens gets less. Let us

[69] "Denktaş Bildiğiniz Gibi", Radikal, 27 November 2002; "Denktaş Söz Düellosunda", *Radikal*, 3 January 2003.
[70] Aksoy, Ergun: "Erdoğan'dan MGK'ya Cevap", *Radikal*, 2 February 2003.
[71] Balbay, Mustafa: "Annan'a Rötuşlu Evet", *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December 2003.
[72] Balbay, Mustafa: "Askerden Çekince", *Cumhuriyet*, 5 January 2004; Balbay, Mustafa: "İşte Belgeler", *Cumhuriyet*, 7 January 2004.
[73] "Özkök: Son Söz Halkındır", *Radikal*, 14 April 2004.
[74] In January 2004, the commander of the Aegean Army, Hurşit Tolon, publicly blamed those who might suggest to "quit [Cyprus] and get rid [of problems]!" as traitors. Akyol, Taha: "Kıbrıs ve Asker", *Milliyet*, 21 January 2004.
[75] Şık, Barkın: "Savaş İlanı Gibi Öneri", *Milliyet*, 1 March 2005.
[76] "TSK'da Görüş Ayrılığı Yok", *Radikal*, 14 April 2004.
[77] "Liman Baskını", *Hürriyet*, 8 December 2006; "Hükümet Bize Sormadı Kararı TV'den Öğrendim", *Hürriyet*, 8 December 2006.
[78] Ergan, Uğur: "İki Müsteşar Gidip Anlattı", *Hürriyet*, 9 December 2006. It is interesting to note that the President's Office made an announcement that he had not been informed either, neither directly nor indirectly. Utku Çakırözer, "Ankara'da Derin Kriz", *Milliyet*, 10 December 2006.

not commit this injustice."[79] The JDP government proved successful in overcoming military opposition to the plan, thus retaining the support of civilians and the Turkish Cypriot government on the island.[80]

## 6. Loss of Ground in Northern Iraq

The decrease in military influence in foreign policy- making is well manifested in Northern Iraq. After the promulgation of the ILA (Iraq Liberation Act) in 1998, Iraqi Kurds gradually became the major local USA allies, thereby putting the strategic priorities of Turkey and the USA in the area in conflict with each other. US perceptions of Iraqi Kurds as partners in the implementation of the ILA aroused Turkey's concerns about the ramifications of a nascent Kurdish state. Within Turkey, criticism was increasingly directed towards Washington, and military circles became more outspoken in criticizing OPC operations on the grounds that the mission was geared towards supporting the survival of a Kurdish state.[81] The first signs of a new regional balance of power had appeared even before the US invasion. By August 2002, Erbil felt confident enough to wage verbal war against the TAF units deployed in the area; KDP leader Masoud Barzani warned Ankara that "they were ready to sacrifice themselves in turning these territories into a cemetery for the aggressors."[82] Developments on the eve of the invasion of Iraq deepened the gap between the US and the Turkish military authorities. During the negotiations about the details of would-be-military cooperation, US diplomats made it clear to their Turkish counterparts that Washington opposed the idea that the TAF should take part in the operation and maintain its control in some parts of Northern Iraq. However, at the end of tortuous negotiations, the US finally acquiesced with Turkish demands, though, in its opinion, these were excessive.[83]

The first crisis broke out on the eve of the invasion when TGNA did not give their approval to Washington's demands for military cooperation. The TGNA's decision of 1 March 2003, not to approve the government motion to allow US troops to land in Turkey, deeply disappointed the Bush administration.[84] Although loose cannons in the ruling JDP were responsible for the decision,[85] the Pentagon put the blame for parliament's disapproval on the military, believing that the military had failed to play the supportive role it was supposed to do in order to secure the motion. As the actual invasion began, Washington "sternly warned Ankara to desist from taking unilateral military action."[86] In the wake of the invasion, the closing down of Operation Northern Watch, substituted for OPC in 1997, meant loss of one of the levers used by the military to exert influence on Washington's Iraq policy. During the following weeks, Ankara received the first signals that the TAF was no longer welcome in Northern Iraq. On 23 April 2003, a unit of the Turkish Special Forces was

[79] Karakuş, Abdullah: "Köşke mi Soracağız", *Milliyet*, 10 December 2006.
[80] See Fırat, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-70.
[81] For critical evaluations by the military authorities on the OPC, see: Çora, Nazmi (2007): *Tarihimizdeki Kara Leke: Çekiç Güç*, İstanbul, Toplumsal Dönüşüm; Çora, Nazmi (2007): *Çekiç Güç'ün Gizli Günlüğü*, İstanbul, Toplumsal Dönüşüm; Bilâ, Fikret (2007): *Komutanlar Cephesi*, İstanbul, Detay.
[82] "Barzani'den Küstah Tehdit", *Milliyet*, 22 August 2002.
[83] Bölükbaşı, Deniz (2008): *1 Mart Vakası: Irak Tezkeresi ve Sonrası*, İstanbul, Doğan, p.39.
[84] Kirisci, Kemal: "Between Europe and the Middle East: The Transformation of Turkish Policy", *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (March 2004), p.7.
[85] Keskin, Barış and Kaarbo, Juliet: "When and How Parliaments Influence Foreign Policy: The Case of Turkey's Iraq Decision", *International Studies Perspectives*, vol. 11 (2010) , pp. 19-36.
[86] Park, Bill: "Between Europe, the United States and the Middle East: Turkey and European Security in the Wake of the Iraq Crisis", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2004), pp. 500-501.

detained by US paratroopers for a day, thus displaying Washington's reluctance to see the TAF moving around freely.[87] On 6 May 2003, US Deputy Defense Minister Paul Wolfowitz publicly put the blame on the TAF for not having displayed the required leadership to put pressure on the government to pass the motion.[88] It also heralded the end of free access to Northern Iraq for the TAF, which had acted without check in the area since 1991.[89] US authorities made several statements to the effect that Northern Iraq was no longer Ankara's nearby "overseas territory."[90] CGS Özkök also candidly confessed that Turkey had "lost its right to have a say in Iraq."[91] Even when Washington approached Ankara in August 2003 to ask for Turkish troops to be deployed in Iraq, it was made clear that Turkish soldiers would not be stationed in Northern Iraq.[92]

Before delving into the details of what happened after the invasion, it should be noted that the TAF's exclusion from Northern Iraq was attributable not simply to US opposition to Ankara's unilateral intervention. Unilateral Turkish intervention in Northern Iraq might have produced manifold political ramifications for the JDP government. In such a case, Ankara's first casualty would have been its relations with the EU, to which JDP governments had anchored their foreign policy since their coming to power in November 2002. Secondly, such an intervention might have run against the political will of the JDP, which aimed to demilitarize Turkey's Kurdish policy within and outside the country.[93] Lastly, a military intervention would inevitably have brought the CGS to the forefront in Ankara which might possibly have tipped the sensitive balance of domestic power towards the military. The two consecutive JDP governments that were established after the November 2002 elections were well aware of the fact that the military's assuming an even more influential role in Ankara's Iraq policy would make it more reluctant to acquiesce to reforms.

The tension among the soldiers on the ground reached its peak on 4 July, 2003, when US forces detained eleven Turkish soldiers in Sulaymaniyah for sixty hours.[94] It was alleged that the unit was involved in preparations to assassinate a local Kurdish political figure.[95] The Sulaymaniyah incident created an impact of unprecedented magnitude as far as Turkish public perception of the US was concerned. [96] The incident was of great symbolic value, indicating that access to Northern Iraq was denied to the TAF unless allowed by US authorities.[97] Having been deprived of its operational ground in the area, as CGS Büyükanıt was to point out in August 2008, the TAF was unable to carry out cross-border operations in Iraq during the three years which followed.[98] This tension brought about manifold impacts on the military's position as a foreign policy-making actor as Turkey had lost its position in an area

[87] Kışlalı, Mehmet Ali: "Özel Kuvvet Savaşı", *Radikal*, 11 January 2006.
[88] Yetkin, Murat (2004): *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, İstanbul, Remzi, pp. 209; 211.
[89] See Bilâ, "Komutanlar Cephesi...", *op. cit.*, pp. 154-156.
[90] Balbay, Mustafa (2006): *Irak Bataklığında Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, İstanbul, Cumhuriyet Kitapları, pp. 287-298.
[91] Özel, Soli: "ABD ile Dans", *Sabah*, 3 July 2003; "Org. Özkök: Irak'ta Söz Hakkımız Yok", *Sabah*, 10 November 2003.
[92] Yetkin, Murat: "Asker, ABD'yle Arayı Düzeltti", *Radikal*, 12 August 2003.
[93] Öniş, Ziya and Yilmaz, Şuhnaz: "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2009), p.17.
[94] Ergin, Sedat: "Özel Tim'e ABD Baskını", *Hürriyet*, 5 July 2003.
[95] See Neşe Düzel's interview with Henry Barkey, "Türk Kuvvetleri Kerkük Valisine Suikast Yapacaktı", *Milliyet*, 5 February 2007.
[96] "Türkiye'nin Başına Çuval Geçirildi", *Hürriyet*, 10 July 2003.
[97] Yetkin, Murat: "Süleymaniye'de Gerçekte Neler Oldu?", *Radikal*, 20 February 2007.
[98] For the text of CGS Yaşar Büyükanıt's farewell speech on 28 August 2008, at http://www.tsk.mil.tr.

where it had been able to exert influence since the mid eighties.[99] It rekindled a public debate in Turkey about the general direction of the country's foreign policy. Questions central in the debate were developments in Northern Iraq and the US support for Kurdish authority. Not only long-known anti-American opposition groups, but also military authorities began making bitter remarks regarding Turkey's age-old alliance with the US.[100]

The state of bilateral relations with Washington appeared to exacerbate the situation in Northern Iraq. Lack of action on the part of Ankara was depicted by an observer saying: "with the Kurdish grip on northern Iraq tightening, the Turks have been largely on the outside looking in, seemingly without a clearly defined policy."[101] After June 2004, despite intensified PKK attacks mostly staged from Northern Iraq, and increasing domestic calls for a cross-border operation, the area was denied to the TAF.[102] Doubts having been raised about the limits and effectiveness of a muscle-flexing policy towards Iraqi Kurds, this denial had a crushing effect on the credibility of the TAF's deterrent in Northern Iraq. Consolidation of the KRG proved to be a matter of contention between the two allies. While Iraqi Kurds were supported by the Americans in every possible way, Ankara was daunted by Washington's feeling that a unilateral intervention in Northern Iraq would have disastrous results.[103] Although prodded by the military to act immediately, the government procrastinated on the operation in Northern Iraq before finally coming to terms with the US.[104]

By the beginning of 2005, Ankara felt it necessary to revise its policy towards Northern Iraq and began to give signs of change. Several reasons are relevant to explain the change. First and foremost, the red-line policy espoused by the military proved to be unsustainable. After the ratification of the new constitution, the KRG became a legitimate body in Iraqi polity. Furthermore, the election results clearly indicated that Ankara's policy of support for the Turcomans in order to counterbalance the Kurds of Iraq had also failed.[105] More strikingly, despite initial opposition by the military, Ankara signaled a shift in its policy towards the Iraqi Kurds, and began cultivating good relations with the KRG.[106] CGS Özkök pointed out that "Turkey's policies should be adapted to the transformation" continuing after the elections. On another occasions, CGS Özkök underlined the fact that the leaders of the Iraqi Kurds were "no longer chieftains of their tribes but statesmen."[107] It was obvious that more co-operative diplomatic approaches on the part of Ankara towards KRG were to be reflected in "the domestic political retreat of the TGS [CGS]."[108] Although the military seemingly changed its policy after CGS Özkök retired in August 2006, and displayed a defiant stance under CGS Yaşar Büyükanıt, the government maintained its policy of rapprochement with the KRG. The government's divergence from its earlier policy of non-

[99] Uzgel, İlhan: "Dış Politikada AKP Stratejik Konumdan Stratejik Modele", Uzgel, İlhan and Duru, Bülent (eds.) (2009): *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, Ankara, Phoenix, p. 374.
[100] See Bila, "Komutanlar Cephesi...", *op. cit.*, p.298-299; Şafak, Erdal: "Karadeniz'e Asker Bakışı", *Sabah*, 30 August 2008.
[101] See Park, *op. cit.*, p. 500-501.
[102] Ergan, Uğur: "Erbil'deydiler ABD Vermedi", *Hürriyet*, 5 January 2007; "Türk Ordusu Irak'ta Kuvvet Kullanmasın," *Milliyet*, 4 June 2007; "Rice: Operasyon İstikrar Getirmez", *Milliyet*, 3 June 2007.
[103] Dörtkardeş, İhsan: "Karşı Karşıya Gelebiliriz", *Milliyet*, 8 April 2007; Gürsel, Kadri: "Büyükelçi Wilson'dan 'PKK Önceliğimiz Değil'", *Milliyet*, 2 June 2007; Barkey, Henry: "Sınır Ötesi Harekât Kimseye Yaramaz", *Radikal*, 3 June 2007.
[104] "Önce Türkiye Sonra Kuzey Irak", *Milliyet*, 13 June 2007; "Erdoğan'dan Asker Yorumculara Sert Tepki: Ülkenin Birliğine Kurşun Sıkıyorlar", *Milliyet*, 31 October 2007.
[105] Bila, Fikret: "Yeni Türkmen Politikası Oluştu", *Milliyet* 21 March 2005.
[106] Yetkin, Murat: "Ankara Tanıma Hazırlığında", *Radikal*, 26 November 2005. "MİT, Barzani İle Görüştü," *Radikal*, 25 November 2005; Yetkin, Murat: "Devlet Zirvesi Kaygılı," *Radikal*, 9 January 2006.
[107] "Irak Politikası Değişebilir", *Radikal*, 24 March 2005.
[108] See Park, *op. cit.*, p. 502.

recognition of the KRG became visible after the 2005 Elections.[109], Oğuz Çelikkol, Turkey's special envoy to Iraq, informed Masoud Barzani, when meeting him in February 2006, that although he was then meeting him as the chairman of KDP-Iraq, his government would approach him as the chairman of the KRG as soon as the new Iraqi constitution was approved.[110] Other Foreign Ministry sources confirmed that Turkey expected to recognize all governmental bodies and institutions by their names as specified in the Iraqi constitution.[111]

By the beginning of 2007, the policy of rapprochement with the KRG was aired by Prime Minister Erdoğan in public, when he said that the government was considering " taking steps to cultivate relations" with the KRG.[112] Publicly criticizing the JDP Government's policy of rapprochement with the KRG, the military tried to turn Northern Iraq into another discursive battlefield. The issue of official recognition for the KRG became matter of contention with the government.[113] Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül insisted that Ankara would keep talking to Iraqi groups, adding that "there are places where soldiers are supposed to talk and there are places where diplomats are supposed to do so". Gül went so far as to scorn the CGS, saying "soldiers speak with their firearms. Until then, it is [only] politicians who will do what is to be done."[114] The way civilian leaders responded to the military authorities' recriminatory remarks during debates on Northern Iraq well reflected the changing balance of power within the foreign policy establishment. In the Cyprus case, military authorities could neither frustrate rapprochement with the KRG nor gain the upper hand over the government in public debates. In these debates, statements made by the KRG authorities[115] and Washington[116] were discouraging to the military and indicated that a cross-border operation would be doomed. Throughout 2007, CGS Büyükanıt's critical remarks challenged the government's policy in Northern Iraq prompting responses, at times scornful, from the government. This stands as a striking example of change in Ankara. Instead of meeting criticism form the military with silence, civilian authorities became increasingly outspoken when they deemed it necessary to respond.

Two examples are worth mentioning: The rapprochement with the KRG seemed to gain new momentum at the beginning of 2007 when Prime Minister Erdoğan said that the government would talk to the Iraqi Kurdish leaders.[117] When CGS Büyükanıt, during his visit to Washington D.C., defiantly stated that, as a soldier, he would decline to talk to the Iraqi Kurdish leaders on the grounds that they were lending support to the PKK, Prime Minister Erdoğan quickly responded that these views were not part of the official policy.[118] Later, in an attempt to undermine the government's policy of rapprochement with the KRG, military sources leaked information to the press that CGS Büyükanıt would try to prove in the next NSC meeting that Iraqi Kurdish leaders had kept supporting the PKK.[119] The leak prompted a harsh reaction from Erdoğan: "First, the person who was involved in the leak has committed

[109] Yetkin, Murat: "Yeni Irak-Kürt Siyaseti Şekilleniyor", *Radikal*, 3 November 2005.
[110] Demirtaş, Serkan: "Barzani İçin Resmi Tanıma", *Radikal*, 28 February 2006.
[111] Ergan, Uğur: "Barzani'ye Kürdistan mesajı", *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2006.
[112] Tınç, Ferai: "Kürt Hükümeti ile Yakınlaşma", *Hürriyet*, 15 February 2007.
[113] For a chronological breakdown of statements made by PM Erdoğan and CGS Büyükanıt on the issue of dialogue with the Kurdish leaders, see Karakuş, Abdullah: "Ben Bir Kabile Reisiyle Görüşmem", *Milliyet*, 8 June 2007.
[114] "Ankara'da Barzani Krizi mi Çıktı?", *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2007.
[115] "Türkiye'ye Karşı En Sert ve Açık Tehdit", *Hürriyet*, 8 April 2004.
[116] "Karşı Karşıya Gelebiliriz", *Milliyet* 8 March 2007.
[117] Tınç, Ferai: "Iraklı Kürtlere İlk Sıcak Mesaj", *Hürriyet*, 15 February 2007.
[118] Ergan, Uğur; Cindemir, Kasım and Ekşi, Özgür: "PKK Destekçisi Kürt Liderlerle Görüşmem", *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2007.
[119] Bila, Fikret: "Kanıtlar MGK'ya", *Milliyet*, 23 February 2007.

an act of treason. Second, those who published it are equal partners in this act." Warning that "nobody should drag the government away from the table", Erdoğan reiterated that it would remain committed to a solution "on the table". [120] Foreign Minister Gül took a moderate position: "Don't negotiate with them! Don't talk to them! What will you do, then? People talk even to their enemies."[121] On the following day the NSC, following the government's policy, announced that in order to overcome the instability and tension in Northern Iraq, Turkey should intensify its political and diplomatic endeavors.[122] In June 2007, when CGS Büyükanıt urged the government to prepare a motion to let Turkish Armed Forces carry out a cross-border operation, Erdoğan reminded CGS Büyükanıt that terrorists were active in Turkey: "There are 500 terrorists in Northern Iraq. In the mountains of Turkey, there are 5000 terrorists. Well. Did we finish them all off? Have we reached the stage of dealing with the 500 in Northern Iraq? Let's first sort out those that shelter within Turkey."[123] It is interesting to note that on the eve of the 22 July 2007 elections, Northern Iraq became an issue for the contending parties in the election campaigns.[124]

Despite military antagonism, the JDP initially established party-to-party contacts with the KRG authorities. After the 22 July 2007 elections in Turkey, visits at various levels were frequently reciprocated. Idris Nami Şahin, Secretary General of the JDP, met Sefin Dizai of the KDP in September, 2007.[125] Since PKK activities were intensifying, on 17 October 2007 the TGNA almost unanimously authorized the government to deploy troops abroad. After PKK attacks on the post of Dağlıca on the Turkish-Iraqi border on 21 October 2007 which claimed twenty lives, political pressure on the government to carry out a cross-border operation in Northern Iraq further increased. Yet, cross-border operations began only after PM Erdoğan reached an agreement in Washington on 5 November, 2007 on bilateral cooperation against the PKK in Northern Iraq.[126] As part of the deal, US began to exchange real-time intelligence, and airspace and ground space in Northern Iraq was opened up to the TAF.[127] In two subsequent air force operations carried out after the deal, the PKK camps in Northern Iraq were bombed by TAF fighters on 16 and 22 Decembers 2007 respectively.[128] It was noted that both operations were carried out in "effective cooperation with the US."[129] In a press briefing on 16 December 2007, CGS Büyükanıt singled out the *sine qua non* condition for the accomplishment of the operation: "Last night Americans opened up airspace over Northern Iraq. By opening up the airspace, US thus gave consent for the operation."[130] On 26 December, 2007, the TAF delivered another strike upon receiving real-time intelligence from Heron UAVs and US intelligence sources.[131] Furthermore, the first large-scale cross-border operation, *Operation Sun*, which involved large numbers of troops on the ground, came about in February of 2008, after an interval of six years.[132]

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[120] "Sızan Haberler İhanettir", *Hürriyet*, 23 February 2007.
[121] "Gül İnsanlar Düşmanıyla Konuşuyor", *Milliyet*, 23 February 2007.
[122] Ergan, Uğur: "MGK Görüşme Kapısını Açtı", *Hürriyet*, 24 February 2007.
[123] "Önce Türkiye Sonra Kuzey Irak", *Milliyet*, 13 June 2007.
[124] Hasan, Aydın: "Öncelik Artık AB Değil, Kuzey Irak", *Milliyet*, 2 July 2007.
[125] Durukan, Namık: "AKP Barzani ile Temasta", *Milliyet*, 11 September 2009.
[126] "Anında İstihbarat Anında Vur Anlaşması", *Hürriyet*, 5 November 2007; Zeyrek, Deniz: "Operasyona Yeşil Işık", *Radikal*, 6 November 2007; "Süreç, Operasyon Sürecidir", *Hürriyet*, 6 November 2007.
[127] "Canlı İstihbarat", *Hürriyet*, 6 November 2007.
[128] "16 Jetle 35 Dakika", *Milliyet*, 23 December 2007.
[129] Yetkin, Murat: "ABD Yolu Açınca, Türkiye Vurdu", *Radikal*, 17 December 2007; Köylü, Hilal: "ABD'den Hem İstihbarat Hem Lojistik Destek", *Radikal*, 17 December 2007; Şafak, Erdal: "Operasyonun Arka Planı", *Sabah*, 24 February 2008.
[130] "PKK Kampı Değil, BBG Evi", *Radikal*, 17 December 2007.
[131] "PKK'lılar Heron'a Yakalandı", *Milliyet* 27 December 2007.
[132] Çakırözer, Utku: "Operasyon Başladı Taliban'a Davet Gitti", *Milliyet*, 23 February 2008.

After the 5 November 2007 agreement with Washington, to the surprise of many, the military agreed to the JDP government's overtures to the KRG, and the government has increasingly come to have full control over Turkey's policy towards Iraq. This phenomenon was clearly reflected in the statement made in the aftermath of the NSC meeting held on 24 April, 2008. Abandoning Turkey's traditional policy of non-recognition for the Kurds of Iraq, the NSC confirmed that it is in Turkey's interest to maintain consultations with all Iraqi groups and formations".[133] After the green light given by the NSC, high level contacts with the KRG authorities gained unprecedented momentum.[134] TAF authorities came to praise overtly the significance of technical assistance and of the real-time intelligence provided by the US. However, such statements also noted that Turkish military activity has been subject to American consent since 2007.[135]

Rapprochement went on unabated throughout 2009. CGS İlker Başbuğ displayed a more conformist attitude towards the government and refrained from interfering in government policies towards the KRG. Other institutions within the security establishment also acted in visible harmony with the government.[136] When President Abdullah Gül paid an official visit to Baghdad in March, the first of its kind for 33 years, he used the term "Kurdistan" in a gesture of recognition for the KRG.[137] In October 2009, Turkey's rapprochement with the KRG reached its peak when Foreign Minister Ahmet Davudoğlu visited Erbil[138].

## 7. Loss of Internal Cohesion

Loss of cohesion within the military was another phenomenon that undermined the military's position in foreign policy making. The specter of factionalism within the TAF started to loom large again at the end of the nineties. During the past decade it had become obvious that the military had been paying the utmost attention to keeping lower-level activities within the army in check.[139] This became salient at the turn of the new millennium, and, in addition the aforementioned debate on Cyprus, the debate on Iraq catalyzed the tug-of-war within the army and brought it to the surface. Friction among the contending segments became conspicuous in the summer of 2002, when Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and GNA Speaker Ömer İzgi, in a clear violation of the military's established traditions with regard to succession, tried to extend outgoing CGS Kıvrıkoğlu's term of office for another year.[140] They tried to legitimize their attempt under the pretext that CGS Kıvrıkoğlu had more

[133] *Milli Güvenlik Kurulu Generel Sekreterligi*, at http://www.mgk.gov.tr/Turkce/basinbildiri2008/24nisan2008.htm.
[134] "Kürt Yönetimiyle Temas Kuruldu", *Radikal*, 29 March 2008.
[135] "Genelkurmay Başkanı Orgeneral İlker Başbuğ'un Basın Toplantısı", *Türk Silahli Kuvvetleri*, Vaşington-ABD, (4 June 2009), at http://www.tsk.tr/10_ARSIV/10_1_Basin_Yayin_Faaliyetleri/10_1_7_Konusmalar/2009/org_ilkerbasbug_vasington_konusma_04062009.html.
[136] Yetkin, Murat: "Ankara Çözüm Hesaplarına PKK'yı Katmaya Karar Verdi", *Radikal*, 12 May 2009. In order to see the change of mind in the security establishment, the articles published by Cevat Öneş, ex-deputy undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization are noteworthy: "Kavşakta Liderlik Yapmak", *Radikal*, 27 April 2009 and Çağdaş Demokrasilerde İşbirliği", *Radikal*, 28 April 2009.
[137] Yetkin, Murat: "Ve Gül Adını Koydu", *Radikal*, 24 March 2009.
[138] "Barzani: Asra Bedel Bir Yıl", *Radikal*, 29 October 2010.
[139] See Michaud-Emin, *op. cit.*, , pp.25-42.
[140] Ergin, Sedat: "Sivil Darbe mi; Askeri Tasfiye mi?", *Hürriyet*, 7 December 2003.

experience to handle the approaching Iraq crisis.[141] The plan proved futile, being disapproved of by the leaders of the other coalition parties, Mesut Yılmaz and Devlet Bahçeli, yet outgoing CGS Kıvrıkoğlu succeeded in appointing his aides to key posts, so that incoming CGS Özkök had to work with a staff hand-picked by his predecessor.[142] The November 2002 elections which gave the newly founded JDP a clear majority in the parliament exacerbated the military's recalcitrance towards cooperating with the government. However, military opposition displayed a greater number of differences than previous cases, e.g. the 28 February Process, which ended the Welfare Party- True Path Party Coalition government in 1997. This time the military's stance appeared to be far from cohesive. The first public outburst of discontent among the lower ranks of the army, reported by the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* on 23 May 2003, gave a stern rebuke from the "disgruntled young officers" to both the government, and to their CGS Özkök for not being tough enough towards the JDP government. The message was a clear reminder of the existence of internal divisions within the military.[143]

The debate with the government spilled over into military headquarters. Statements made by anonymous military authorities charged CGS Hilmi Özkök with being too submissive to and remaining in line with the government on the issue. Reactions indicated that there was a group of officers who disagreed with their seniors officials on a national cause, and that the internal cohesion of the army was at stake.[144] Following similar incidents, the office of the CGS took some precautions by severely restraining those who were authorized to make statements on behalf of the TAF, and the Deputy CGS started holding regular press briefings.[145] Reports leaked by "disgruntled young officers" were dismissed by the office of the CGS.[146] In doing so, the office of the CGS also aimed to discourage these "disgruntled young officers" from making public statements "defying the chief of staff."[147] However, as was the case in some strong public demarches, the CGS tried to appease the young officers. For instance, contrary to comments that the military was flexing its muscles again,[148] CGS Özkök's comprehensive speech on 20 April 2005 seemed to be aimed at soothing junior officers. Later on, it was understood that a number of juntas had been formed by top generals who disagreed with CGS Özkök, as well as detailed plans to force the government to resign, using the "betrayal in Cyprus" as a pretext.[149]

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[141] Ergin, Sedat: "Ordu ile Oynamak", *Hürriyet*, 9 December 2003.

[142] Bilâ, Fikret (2003): *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları*, Ankara, Ümit, pp.152-159; See Yetkin, "Tezkere ...", *op. cit.*, p.70-71.

[143] See Yetkin, "Tezkere ...", *op. cit.*, p.213; For a recent elaboration made by Özkök, see: "Genel İstek Üzerine, Ergenekon ve Darbe Girişimleri", *Radikal*, 6 April 2008.

[144] Yetkin, Murat: "Cyprus Summit, the Government and the Office of Chief of Staff", *Turkish Daily News*, 9 January 2004.

[145] As an observer noted, "the press briefing by the Office of the Chief of General Staff was actually aimed at dismissing reports appearing in the media that the military was uncomfortable with the government policy on Cyprus. In other words, it wanted to correct a false report and say that the opinions leaked to *Cumhuriyet* were not true. It wanted to send the message that on Iraq and Cyprus the government and the military were united." Birand, Mehmet Ali: "If Our Military Really Wants EU Membership...", *Turkish Daily News*, 20 January 2004.

[146] The following reports exemplify this attitude. Yetkin, Murat: "Genelkurmay Sağlam Durdukça", *Radikal*, 28 February 2004; "Özkök: TSK'nın Her Konuda Tavır Koyması Beklenmemeli", *Radikal*, 13 April 2004.

[147] "The Army of an EU Country", *Turkish Daily News*, 14 April 2004.

[148] "Strong Messages from Top Commander", *Turkish Daily News*, 21 April 2005; Özel, Soli: "Meal", *Sabah*, 21 April 2005; Bayramoğlu, Ali: "Hilmi Özkök'ün Konuşması: Usül", *Yeni Şafak*, 21 April 2005.

[149] "Kıbrıs'tan Gelen Sarıkız" and "Tek Komutanlı Darbe Girişimi: Ayışığı", *Nokta*, (29 March- 4 April 2007) pp.10-57; Berkan, İsmet: "Ergenekon'un Yakın Tarihi, (2)" *Radikal*, 5 April 2008; "Ergenekon'un Yakın Tarihi (3)", *Radikal*, 6 April 2008.

Preparations by some segments of the military to intervene in politics reached a peak in 2003-2004. A groundbreaking view was aired on October of 2003 in a conference held by the War Academy when the Secretary General of the NSC, General Tuncer Kılınç, severely criticized the EU for its aloofness towards Turkey's security concerns and called for an overall reorientation of foreign policy, taking into consideration the positions of Iran and Russia.[150] In the same period, the foreign policy decisions of the JDP government were increasingly denounced by anonymous military sources. In consideration of the unrest long simmering within the army, it was claimed that deterioration in Turco-American relations on the eve of the occupation of Iraq had led some segments of the military to prepare plans for a coup. Avni Özgürel declared that the military hastened to conclude plans to undermine the JDP government on the grounds that Washington would remain indifferent to a military coup against a government that had failed to deliver what it promised on the eve of the occupation.[151] The plans disclosed in 2008 contained extensive deliberations on Turkey's bilateral relations with the US and on developments in Iraq and complained about the US support given to the government.[152] After his retirement, CGS Özkök would later confirm that there were attempts to destabilize the government. He rejected allegations that he had not disclosed the presence of juntas and had avoiding prosecuting those who were involved. He stressed his opinion that "people who perform the duties that we perform, should move cautiously."[153]

Reflecting the debate within the TAF, another unprecedented event took place in February 2007. While CGS Büyükanıt was paying an official visit to Washington, the text of Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference was put on the CGS's website.[154] In this speech, delivered at an international conference on security, Putin blamed US policy for inciting other countries to seek nuclear arms in order to defend themselves against an "almost uncontained use of military force."[155] The inclusion of this text obviously aimed at undermining Büyükanıt's position in the eyes of the Pentagon, and the quick removal of the speech from the site suggested that its insertion had not been fully

[150] Kınalı, Mustafa and Arslan, Levent: "AB Dışında, Rusya ve İran'la Yeni Arayışa Girilmeli", *Hürriyet*, 8 March 2002. Having long been known for his anti-EU stance, Kılınç would become even more outspoken against the US after his retirement. He went so far as to suggest that, in order to be free from western hegemony and colonialism, Turkey should leave NATO one way or another. In June 2007, in a staggering wording Tuncer Kılınç proposed a new direction for Turkish foreign and security policy. "Now, the will of a hegemonic power is there striving to shape the world according to its own mind and consulting with nobody. They invade countries on flimsy pretexts. In order not to let such things happen, Turkey needs to distance itself from the US' shadow and its influence. Yet Turkey is moving under the control of this power. Should it distance itself from the USA, it will have the opportunity to stand on its two feet… The world is on the threshold of a new cold war and this time Turkey should not be the forward post of the West. It should cultivate good relations with both sides. Let us not forget that what lies underneath the troubles that we have experienced with Russia throughout history is the fact that Turkey had always been bludgeoned by Europe, by the USA [against Russia]. Turkey has neglected to play the Russian card against the USA. We should come out of NATO as well. Because its patron is the USA, too". Yalnız, Murat: "Batı'nın Karakolu Olmayalım", *Yeni Aktüel*, (28 June - 4 July 2007), pp. 45-48. This represents a pattern similar to the way some other generals who after their retirement start espousing revisionist foreign policy for Turkey. In July of 2006, Şener Eruygur gave a stern warning that the USA's interests and Turkey's national policy no longer overlapped: "We can no longer be strategic partners. The USA's problem is to keep energy regions under its control, whereas our priority is to maintain our independence." Eruygur, M. Şener: "ABD ile Stratejik Ortak Olamayız", *Milliyet*, 24 July 2006

[151] Özgürel, Avni: "Hesaplaşmada Son Perde", *Radikal*, 27 January 2010.

[152] Mavioğlu, Ertuğrul: "Komutanlar: Hükümeti Değiştirme Şartlarını Bulmamız Lazım", *Radikal*, 8 August 2008.

[153] Bila, Fikret: "TV'den Gol Kurtarmak Kolay", *Milliyet*, 7 August 2009.

[154] "Putin'in Münih Konuşması Genelkurmay'ın Sitesinde", *Hürriyet*, 15 February 2007.

[155] Yetkin, Murat: "Rusya Putin'le Sahneye Döndü", *Radikal*, 11 February 2007.

authorized.[156] Similar events displayed the extent of disagreements and divergences over foreign policy issues within the top brass. An observer close to military circles described the state of the TAF during the first half of the 2010s as "the air of disorder" prevailing within the army. [157] Retrospectively speaking, it is safe to say that between 2003-2004 the office of the CGS spent a considerable amount of time in controlling loose cannons among the top brass and in derailing their plans to destabilize the government.[158] In coping with these continual attempts, in some cases apparently led by his own top brass, CGS Özkök was preoccupied with the restoration of TAF's internal cohesion. In this respect, it is plausible to assume that the priority of the office of the CGS at this time was to check centrifugal forces within the military rather than to control or formulate government policies.

## 8. Conclusion

Change in domestic power configurations that came into existence in the early 2000s created distinct political circumstances in which the military had to relinquish its grip on the foreign policy-making process in Turkey. The military's retreat was reflected by four concomitant developments. First and foremost, the democratization reforms that gained momentum after 2001 aimed at the demilitarization of foreign and security policy-making processes. The embodiment of the demilitarization was the introduction of civilians into the NSC and its General Secretariat organization. Furthermore, national security, as a concept invented and introduced into the country's political jargon by the military, was also removed from apparent monopoly by the military as part of the demilitarization process. In the face of the rise in non-governmental organizations seeking to play an active role in foreign policy-making, the weight of the military steadily declined after the end of the 1990s. Increasing US influence in Iraq gradually limited the military's operational power which it had freely implemented in the area throughout the 1990s. From an operational point of view, the military lost its ability to intervene in contingencies in Northern Iraq after Turkey's military activities were circumscribed there. Having failed to make Iraqi Kurds recognize its prerogatives, the military lost its position as a key player in the area. The loss of operational ground there marked the end of the military's overwhelming influence on the making of policy in Iraq, deemed extremely important by Ankara. At the discursive level, the TAF seemed to have lost the battle of words with those who challenged established policy lines. On a number of occasions, the military could not mobilize public opinion to voice agreement with its policy preferences. Thus, it became increasingly difficult for the military authorities to put political pressure on the government. The military had lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the general public on such issues, most notably regarding the Cyprus question. Mainstream media, which increasingly came under the direct control of industrialist circles, did not grant the military the support it had been used to receive and, from 2002 onwards in particular, put their weight behind the JDP governments. Apparently the military lost its monopoly over defining the concept of national security as a result of legal-institutional changes as well as of demands raised by societal actors that were becoming more outspoken. Lastly, these

[156] Yetkin, Murat: "Putin, Genelkurmay'ın Gündemine Nasıl Girdi?" *Radikal*, 17 February 2007. For related claims, see Neşe Düzel's interview with Yasemin Çongar, "Rusya'nın Etki Alanına Girmiş Askerler Var", *Radikal*, 21 May 2007.

[157] Kışlalı, Mehmet Ali: "Başbuğ'dan İkili Görev," *Radikal*, 6 September 2008.

[158] When he testified to the public prosecutor of the plans, ex CGS Özkök accepted that despite having been informed of the plans, he could not prosecute those who were involved as he failed to prove the accusations against them. Şardan, Tolga: "Bilgim Vardı, Ama Delil Yoktu", *Milliyet*, 28 July 2009; "Tanık Özkök Anlatıyor: Şener Eruygur'a Darbe Girişimini Sordum", *Radikal*, 6 August 2009.

developments galvanized a paradigmatic debate on Turkey's alignments that spilled over into military circles. Among the so-called "disgruntled young officers," the debate was reflected in their growing resentment of their superiors for being too submissive to government demands or to pressures from Washington. This resentment was manifested in unauthorized statements by anonymous "military authorities" and frequent leakages of classified documents to the press — obviously geared towards putting the office of the CGS at a disadvantage. Endeavors by the military authorities to keep the command structure intact made them to turn inwards and preoccupy themselves only with restoring the internal cohesion of the army. Thus, rather than putting pressure on the government concerning foreign and security policy issues, the problem of disunity gradually became the major preoccupation for the office of the CGS. Therefore, it is also possible to argue that the ramifications of such loose internal cohesion within the army may discourage the office of the CGS from taking an assertive stance on foreign affairs in the foreseeable future. Hence, despite the gloomy estimates that "many Turks will once again look to the military not only for stability within the country but also as the *de facto* opposition to the government,"[159] many in Turkey today are looking in other directions for answers to these issues.

[159] Jenkins, Gareth: "Continuity and Change: Prospects for Civil–Military Relations in Turkey", *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 2 (2007), p. 354.