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**TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS
THE KURDISTAN REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT (2003-2013)**

A GLOBALIST ANALYSIS

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of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Relations*

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ABSTRACT

Despite the shadows cast by their history, Turkey has developed relations with the Kurdish government to the level of a strategic partnership within the last decade, following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This thesis contextualizes this unexpected rapprochement from a globalist perspective. To do so, the research first identifies and analyses important developments taking place during 2003-2013, then it seeks the motives that led to the emergence of this strategic partnership between these two regional actors, first at regional, then at global level. In conclusion, it argues that it was mainly the power shift in global political system that led Turkey to abandon its traditional policy towards the Kurdish Region of Iraq.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction:

The main objective of this thesis is to understand the extent and the motives behind the shift in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Kurdistan Regional Government (hereafter the KRG) from an alternative globalist perspective. This research aims to examine a ten-year period of Turkey's foreign policy towards the Kurdistan Regional Government (the KRG), from 2003 to 2013. Although the Iraqi Constitution formally accepted the regional government of Kurdistan in 2005, the period of analysis starts from 2003, the year of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 has deeply influenced the political structure of the region and Iraq in particular. To put it more clearly, the invasion led to the emergence of a powerful Kurdish political entity. This so-called sub-federal entity has been acting as a *de-facto* state or a "quasi-state," (Natalie, 2005) with its unique characteristics, such as having its own military, *peshmerga*,¹ representatives in the big capitals around the world, developing foreign policy towards other states, and signing contracts and agreements with international companies, despite the opposition of the federal government. All these facts mean that this sub-federal entity in Iraq has been constructing its own interests, some of which have clashed with the interests of the federal government. It might be for this

¹ *Peshmerga* is the name used to call Kurdish militias in Iraq. Therefore currently Kurdistan Region of Iraq has a Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. For Ministries and Departments of the Kurdistan Regional

very fact that the KRG has been developing these tools (having its own militia, representatives in key capitals, etc.), which can provide the Kurdish polity with power/capability of pursuing/securing these interests.

Throughout its “modern” history, one of the main security concerns of Turkey has been the existence of a Kurdish state. Its presence in any part of the world has been perceived as a threat to the “unity” of the Republic. As a reflection of this concern, Turkey traditionally opposed and threatened to interfere violently in any development that could lead to the emergence of a Kurdistan in its region, even if it was in another country. Accordingly, Turkey has always supported the unity of its neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations. This policy has been Turkey’s “traditional” approach. Therefore, although Iraqi Kurds throughout the “modern” history of Iraq have always stayed away from Baghdad politically and culturally and never fully integrated into the Iraqi state, Turkey has always supported the unity of the Iraqi state. However, by 2014 Turkey renounced its traditional policy towards Iraqi Kurds. Furthermore, both Iraqi Kurds and Turkey have been normalising and constructing a new type of relationship, a regional strategic partnership. All these changes are happening despite the shadow cast by their history.

[Aims and Objectives](#)

Within this ‘new’ context, this research problematises Turkey’s relations with the KRG and aims to unfold the policy shift and then understand the motives behind this dramatic policy change. More specifically, it aims to identify and

analyse the factors that determine Turkey's foreign policy towards the KRG. To achieve this overall aim, the research has three specific objectives:

1. To provide a historical account of Turkey's approach towards a Kurdish polity.
2. To illuminate the extent of the shift in Turkey's foreign policy via analysing some dislocatory moves.
3. To identify and analyse regional and global motives behind the Turkey-KRG rapprochement.

My Story

Alongside my academic interests, some personal motives/stories have played a crucial role for me to look at/work on the case of Iraqi Kurdistan. Remembering the 1989 *Anfal* Campaign and my granddad, Mist-e Kafili's concerns regarding the Kurds in Iraq, and the measures he took in order to protect us against any possible attack by Saddam Hussein, have also played a crucial role for me not to forget and always follow the developments in Iraqi Kurdistan. Also growing in a village and family that named a weasel after 'Saddam', after it assaulted poultry and killed all the hens by only eating their heads and leaving their bodies in the coop in a single night, has helped me to code Saddam in a certain way in my mind throughout my childhood.

Growing up and being educated in Turkey, in relatively more nationalist parts, also enabled me to observe the reaction and perception of certain segments of

society, if not the majority, with regard to words such as ‘Kurds,’ ‘Kurdish,’ and ‘Kurdistan.’ Naming a political entity “Kurdistan” has been avoided for years, while those who referred to a region as Kurdistan have been regarded as “traitors.” It might have been due to this fear that, at the beginning of my academic venture at Keele University, I, as a Turkish citizen with Kurdish background, was anxious about naming the entity Kurdistan, although the region was officially called Kurdistan in the Iraqi Constitution in 2005. For Turkish Kurds, even uttering/writing this expurgatorial word, Kurdistan, was enough to be labelled a “terrorist” or “PKK supporter.” After witnessing the utterance of the word Kurdistan by senior Turkish officials and seeing it in state documents after 2012, I managed to let go of this concern.

In short, all of these experiences and narratives have led me to be an observer/student of any developments in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Furthermore, seeing the emergence of a Kurdistan in Iraq, a “friend” with Turkey, as a Turkish Kurd, has drawn my interest and provided me with enough enthusiasm to conduct the present research.

Why A Globalist Analysis

At the start of his groundbreaking work, Andre Gunder Frank formulates and rationalises his **holistic approach** with the following words: “there is a unity in diversity... Unity itself generates and continually changes diversity” (Frank,

1998: 3). He puts forward this argument as his thesis and also as a framework to enable the exploration of the complex reality of world politics and changing or sustaining the behaviour of its (sub)units.

His denunciation of the Eurocentric approach to the socio-political reality of the world is also linked with this **holistic** understanding. He quotes from Herodotus, arguing that “Europe” is not an independent actor, but part of Eurasia. Then he reminds us of Hodgson’s rejection of the maps drawn according to the Mercator projection, which shows European actors as being bigger and, in a way, justifies their ‘superiority.’ Indeed, all these existing Eurocentric preferences illuminate that an emerging power sees its future lie in its success, in its ‘unavoidable’ **interactions** with the wider world. The interaction has been unavoidable not only since the beginning of the 19th or 20th centuries, but throughout human history. The Silk Road linking East with West, the Romans’ acceptance of Christianity, the founding of the Vatican and the emergence of the Holy Roman Empire, the Crusades, the emergence of Andalusia in the heart of Christian Europe, are some of the many examples that shed light on the ‘interactions’ at global level. This led units or emerging units to set a target of subjugating ‘rivals,’ dominating the globe and defining the ‘reality,’ the ‘rationality’ of their time. This reality or rationality might be read as the International System/Structure established by the dominant power(s) with particular reference to Wallerstein (2004).

This means that it is the interaction or role of the actors with(in) the wider/broader world that is 'shaping' or 'changing' its behaviour within certain contexts. In other words, it is the 'unity' shaping and directing its diverse units' preferences not only in mapping but also gendering, demonising or making friend of others. So this perspective requires an analysis to start from understanding the unity first, to have a grasp of preferences of the 'diverse units,' which constitutes the 'unity.'

In the "golden age of capital," the Global Economy has been the main driver, shaping the preferences of units/agents as defined reality of the 'unity' at the present time. Some developments, such as the end of the Cold War, recent assertiveness of some global powers, notably the US, Russia, and China, the emergence of BRICS, some dramatic regional changes or alliances between actors, from micro to macro scales, might perhaps be explained from this globalist perspective. Gokay and Fouskas, regarding the value of this global approach, argue that

...we employ a holistic method seeing all these developments as part and parcel of the "Golden Age of capitalism" (Eric Hobsbawm)... We believe that a truly global perspective is needed to think beyond narrow Eurocentric approaches to the vicissitudes of global historical changes and continuity. *Global Fault-lines* can be applied to pre-capitalist epochs, despite the fact that there we had a different articulation of political, ideational and

economic elements. This is because human history has never been singular, linear.

The approach might be criticised as giving more credit to global politics and ignoring/disregarding internal/local motives. However, particularly in our time of **globalised/financialised** world that witnesses intense interactions between global, regional and internal actors, the lines between internal and global is very blurred, as discussed widely in the literature. Therefore, adopting such a global perspective makes particular sense in exploring the politics in the present world.

Global faultlines as a concept is “inspired by of Andre Gunder Franks’ work, in particular his *Re-Orient* (1998).” It adopts a holistic approach to first understand the ‘unity’ then explain the sudden and uneven changes in world politics. It benefits from the movements of tectonic plates as a metaphor to explain its argument. The world consists of plates and where they meet they sometime clash and push one another. These movements either cause mountains to form, or they break up and some vacuums occur. This means that mountains and faultlines are products of a bigger tectonic move. So while analysing/investigating the emergence of a mountain or faultline, it is necessary to look for, identify and examine bigger tectonic moves. In line with this metaphor, the emergence of BRICS, or some rival political houses, seems to cause some tectonic movements, challenging the US dominant world order in global political economy. Some plates have advanced and moved a bit further, with reference to China and the emergence of other BRICS since the end of the

Cold War. This move presents a major challenge to the existing order and dominant plates.

At the places where plates meet, generally in transitional regions such as oil rich Middle East or trade routes such as the Pacific, the Ukraine and Turkey, there is some tectonic movement. This movement and faultlines made some regional actors more visible and active with some more leverage, but also gave birth to some “new” actors. Turkey being more visible and active in world politics and the emergence of the KRG as a friend with Turkey might perhaps be explained from this perspective. Turkey is located in a region where the global powers, notably Russia, China and the US, are very much present (Onis, 2014) with their companies and armies. This very fact shapes, limits, and directs a regional powers’ policy orientation towards other regional actors. For example, while the presence of Russia and China in the region limits Turkey’s influence in Syria, the presence of the US and again China shapes and directs Turkey’s approach to Iraq and its Kurdistan Region. It is for this reason that the thesis favoured a **Globalist analysis**, which the relevant literature lacks.

Literature Review

Currently there are so few studies conducted directly on Turkey-KRG relations. However, there is an emerging and growing literature on both Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds. Particularly after the invasions of Iraq in 1990s and 2003, Kurds drew the interests of academics across the world (Al-Khalil, 1989; Mcdowall,

1992; Adelman, 1992; Black 1993; Chailand, 1993; Howard, 1992). This was apparent in the humanitarian and political crises of *Anfal*,² and Halapca.

There are some monographs and edited books exploring the Kurdish question in general (Tahiri, 2009; McDowall, 1992; Barkey, 2010) or the Kurds' relations with the nation states or these nation states' approach to their own Kurdish people (Vali, 2014; Guneş and Zeydanlioğlu, 2013; Bilgin and Sarihan, 2013; Natali, 2005; 2010; Bengio, 2012). However, these works either do not analyse enough or very briefly touch upon these nation states' relations with the Kurds of other neighbouring countries. They particularly focus on history and regional developments.

This research focuses on the period 2003-2013, when the KRG emerged as a federal part of Iraq and was recognised by the new Iraqi Constitution. Thus, the literature review section of this study particularly engages with academic works analysing Turkey's relations with the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq in the post-Saddam era.

Post Invasion era 2003-2008

In recent years, particularly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a new literature on Turkey's relations with Iraqi Kurdish groups has emerged. First the invasion of

² Anfal is a genocidal campaign against Iraqi Kurds launched by Saddam Hussein during the 1980s Iran-Iraq War. It is claimed that more than 100,000 Kurds were systematically murdered by the Saddam regime.

Iraq and the formation of a semi-independent Kurdish political entity, then the new oil discoveries in the constitutionally recognised Kurdish land in Iraq, once more brought Kurds into the forefront of academic interest, particularly those academics working on energy, energy security and political economy, in contrast to academics who worked on Kurds in the 1990s.

In the early years of the post-invasion era, some articles written on the subject gave particular attention to how an image of Iraqi Kurds was constructed in the eyes and minds of public and state elites in Turkey (Sezgin and Wall, 2005; Demir and Zeydanlıoğlu, 2010). These works mainly argue that there is no significant change in terms of the Turkish state's perception of Kurds. Moreover, as Bill Park points out, post-war political developments increased not only among ruling elites in Ankara, but also in Baghdad (Park, 2005: 11-27). The main reason was the rich oil reserves in Kirkuk (Stansfield, 2006; Akyol, 2014). It was always thought that, if Kurds seized control of the city, the next step would be the declaration of their independence. Due to this belief, throughout the Saddam era and even before, Kurds were kept away from Kirkuk. A number of measures were taken, for instance, a population relocations policy was adopted to keep Kirkuk as an "Iraqi city." Liam Anderson in his monograph on Kirkuk writes that:

Kirkuk was the centre of Iraq's northern oil Industry, sitting a top one of the country's supergiant oil fields, preserving Kirkuk's identity as an Iraqi

city was a key element of state policy for all regimes in modern Iraq, and this discourse remains strong even in the post-2003 setting (Anderson and Stansfield, 2011: 2).

This means that what kept Kirkuk an Iraqi, rather than a Kurdish, city were its immense reserves.

Baghdad and Ankara put immense effort into keeping Kurds away from oil-rich Kirkuk. In 2007 some new oil reserves were discovered, this time mainly in the Kurdistan Region. Kurds met with oil bestowed to their land. As corollary of this, big oil giants engaged with the region and secured some oil exploration and signed contracts. As a result of current political developments, a number of papers have been written on the role of oil in Turkey-KRG relations (Morellie & Pischeddo, 2014).

One of the earliest works that focuses on Turkey-KRG relations in the post-2003 era is Bill Park's monograph (Park, 2005b). He articulates the changing role of the Kurds in Iraq's political system after the Saddam era, increasing political participation by Kurds and their formal recognition by post-Saddam Iraq Constitution in 2005 (Chapter Two). In Chapter Three he draws some scenarios and puts Turkey's concerns and approaches to the developments in northern Iraq. However, the study was written in 2005 and does not cover the developments in the post-2005 era, with the new oil discoveries in 2007. The other interesting point is that, although the region was named the Kurdistan

Regional Government, he regards the region as “northern Iraq”. Similar problems and shortcomings can be seen in work carried out during those years (e.g. Olson, 2005).

Robert Olson’s (2005) study, *The Goat and the Butcher* is another important work on Turkey’s relations with the KRG in the early years of the post-invasion era. Olson, like Park, is a longstanding observer of Kurdish advance in the Middle East. He has produced numerous works on the background of the Kurdish problem and the emergence of Kurdish nationalism.³ Olson (2005) divides Turkey-KRG relations into two phases: prior to invasion and post invasion. His book follows a chronicle structure and analyses the developments related to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Turkey’s relations from the 2003 invasion of the US to 2005. He starts by looking at the impact of the US-led invasion. In this work he investigates the role and impact of increased economic relations between Turkey and the KRG and argues that economic relations will be the main driving source in the normalisation of relations.

Another article, written by Tarik Oğuzlu (2008), mainly focuses on domestic factors and tries to sketch out competing domestic discourses towards the KRG.

Regarding the subject, he identifies two main competing visions. These are

³ Some of his previous works:

Olson, Robert. (1996). The Kurdish Question and Chechnya: Turkish and Russian Foreign Policies since the Gulf War. *Middle East Policy*. 4(3). pp.106–18; (2000). The Kurdish Rebellions of Sheikh Said (1925), Mt. Ararat (1930), and Dersim (1937-8): Their Impact on the Development of the Turkish Air Force and on Kurdish and Turkish Nationalism. *Die Welt des Islams*. 40(1). 67-94; (2009). Blood, Beliefs and Ballots: The Management of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey , 2007-2009. (Mazda)ç

“realist-exclusivist” and “liberal integrationist” accounts. Throughout the article the author talks about diverging points of these competing visions/identities within the Turkish political context and the effects on Turkey’s approach. He identifies the traditional approach, realist-exclusivist,⁴ which has been prevalent for decades. He further argues that the issue, Turkey’s approach to the KRG, in his words “Iraqi Kurds”, has been constructed as a security issue, existential threat to the very foundation of the Republic. This perception made the Traditional Security Elite (TSE), the ultimate decision-makers in Turkey’s relations with the KRG. To put it differently, he borrows the term from Securitisation theory of the Copenhagen School and argues that this construction securitised, pulled the issue off ordinary politics to the realm of security. Concordantly in this realm the security elite would shape relations instead of civilians and this has been the situation for decades. Although the author does not name it, security elites being ultimate decision-makers has been via the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC, MGK in Turkish) following the military coup of the 1960.⁵ The article focuses on domestic dynamics and does not look at regional and global developments affecting the subject. To put it differently, it does not cover the regional and global factors leading to a change in Turkish foreign policy toward the KRG. Also, to a limited

⁴ Actually by using the term of “realist-exclusivist” he refers to *Kemalism*. He wants to give the main attribute/feature of *Kemalist* ideology regarding the distinctiveness of Kurdish identity.

⁵ With respect to the role of NSC in foreign policy-making in Turkey, see William Hale, **Turkish Politics and the Military**, (London: Routledge, 1994); Umit Cizre, 1997. 'The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy', *Comparative Politics* 29:2 (January 1997), pp. 151-66.

degree, it superficially covers the internal factors. Although he argues about competing visions, the real combat between identities took place in 2009.

Ertan Efeğil's article is dedicated to Turkey-KRG relations (Efeğil, 2008). Similar to Oğuzlu, he prefers to refer to the Kurdish polity, not as Kurdistan, but as Iraqi Kurds. In a similar approach to Oğuzlu, he also primarily emphasises the internal political context of Turkey and rival security understandings. The author also points out that shattering the PKK has been the primary motive leading the Turkish government to contact the Kurdish elite of Iraq. The analysis covers a very limited period from late 2007 to late 2008. It takes PKK's attack to Dağlica military base, which cost the lives of 12 soldiers in October 2007, as the starting point, and ends with the late 2008 Turkish Military cross-border operation into northern region of Iraq, where the PKK is based. He draws the picture of the context in which the Turkish elite and the Iraqi Kurdish elite had to start diplomatic relations under the 'full support' of the US. However, he draw the picture of the context only via revealing US and "Iraqi Kurds" concerns to draw the regional context.

Özcan's article has an important place in the literature on Turkey's relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government (Özcan, 2011). He argues that there is a policy shift in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East in general and it is possible to examine this change in Turkey's Iraq policy. Shift in Turkey's policy towards the Middle East means positive engagement with the Arabic

countries, which is in contrast with Turkey's traditional policy. Traditionally, Turkey either ignored developments in the Arab world or kept relations at the lowest level.⁶ He further suggests that Turkey's positive engagement with the Kurdish region became possible within this context. Actually, this approach was fashionable in those years for those who attempted to explain the change, the positive engagement of Turkey with the Middle Eastern countries such as Syria, Iran, and Iraq (Altunışık, 2010; Arı and Princçi, 2010). Some went further and in an assertive way claimed an identity change, a "new geographical imagination," as an "order instituting country" in Turkish foreign policy (Aras & Karakaya, 2007; Aras & Görener, 2010). It seems some temporary, context-specific ruptures and discontinuities from Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy, such as refusal of the US request to use Turkish lands during the invasion of Iraq in 2003, then the Davos incident in 2009,⁷ and then following the flotilla

⁶ Modernisation has been viewed as westernisation and secularisation, or both westernisation and secularisation have been seen as prerequisites of modernisation. Both these terms have occupied and played important roles in shaping the Turkish state and its foreign policy. The Middle East and its Muslim Arab states have been seen as the centre of religion and backwardness. Therefore Turkey historically adopted an orientalist language towards the Middle East, turned its face towards the West and distanced itself from its religious past and Arab countries. Thus "to extend the break...everything associated with the Ottoman and Islamic past" was ignored or removed such as abolishment of caliphate in 1924. (For further details see:

Kemal H. Karpat, "Historical Continuity and Identity Change or How to be Modern Muslim, Ottoman, and Turk," (ed.Karpat, Kemal H.) **Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey**, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp.1-17.)

Alon Liel puts this nature of Turkish foreign policy in this context and argues that "the Kemalist reforms of 1920s and 1930s made the establishment of normal relations with the Arab countries all the more difficult since **their underlying themes, Westernization and modernization, were anathema to the Arabs**" (Alan Liel, **Turkey in the Middle East: Oil Islam, and Politics**, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p.2.

⁷ Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan leveled his critics of Israeli policy towards Palestinians and specifically criticised Israeli actions in Gaza vocally and directed his critics to Israeli President during a panel discussion in World Economic Forum in January 2009 in Davos. Following the incident

(*Mavi Marmara*) crisis⁸ in 2010, some argued that there is an identity change in Turkish foreign policy (Aras, 2007; Aras and Gorener, 2010). However, despite these, some politicians (e.g Turkish Minister of Energy Taner Yıldız, 2010) considered Turkey as a “bridge” or “energy hub” rather than “order instituting” regional power, and in tandem with the argument of this present thesis it has been this imagination/interpretation of Turkey bringing Turkey closer to the Kurdistan and vice versa. This point is discussed in part iii, in chapters 5 and 7, in detail.

Özcan (2009) argues that there is a fundamental change that took place in the year 2009. In the article, he first adopted a holistic/macro perspective to Turkey’s approach to the Middle East and then narrowed it down first to Iraq and then to the “Iraqi Kurds” meaning the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Turkish-Israeli relations came to breaking point. The incident has been used in internal politics to draw sympathy (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/31/world/europe/31turkey.html?_r=0).

However, in the following years the relations were mended rapidly and covertly. According to some sources, Turkey and Israel came to a point of negotiating a gas pipeline worth \$2.5 billion from Israel to Turkey. For details see: “Turkey weighs \$2.5 billion underwater gas pipeline from Israel” *World Tribune* <http://www.worldtribune.com/2014/04/03/turkey-weighs-2-5-billion-underwater-gas-pipeline-from-israel/>

⁸ Following the Davos crisis in May 2010, a Turkish aid vessel set off from Istanbul and headed towards Gaza, alongside 8 other ships under the banner of “Freedom Flotilla,” in order to break the Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip. They were warned by Israeli authorities that they would be stopped for “breaching Israeli law” (“Aid Convoy Sets off for Gaza,” *Al Jazeera*, 22 May 2010). As ships in international waters, not yet reached the territorial waters of Israel, an operation was organised and launched by Israeli commandos against the ship known as *Mavi Marmara*, which set off from Istanbul, and murdered nine activists who were Turkish citizens. This attack was condemned by Turkey and regarded as “state terrorism” by Prime Minister Erdogan (Steve Bryant, “Erdogan Calls Israeli Gaza Ship Raid ‘State Terror’”, *Businessweek*, May 31, 2010).

However these three articles are far from having in-depth critical analyses of the topic, including potential alternative explanatory frameworks.

Henri Barkey wrote a report, a sort of policy paper, for Carnegie Endowment in 2009 (Barkey, 2009). The report was written as a policy offer/recommendation for the new US government. It appears to aim to inform and offer policy to the then new Obama administration, in the wake of US disengagement from Iraq, to solve the problems associated with the Kurdish question and secure US interests, which relied on regional stability. The paper has an interesting title, 'Preventing Conflict Over Kurdistan.' Building on history, it assumes or predicts a potential conflict over Kurdistan, the geography that has been central to global economy and western interests as source and route of energy. Barkey throughout the report argues that Kurdish issues within four Middle Eastern countries, namely Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria, are linked and to solve the problems in parallel with its regional interest, the US should adopt a holistic approach regarding Kurdish issues. He argues that "Kurdish issues in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria are inexorably linked and that, as a consequence, Washington must develop a comprehensive approach that recognises this. Actually there is no doubt about the linkage between Kurdish problems in the region, in terms of their roots, and this approach would help understand the reasons behind Kurdish problems. However, there is a very loose linkage offering a holistic approach to solve this problem and does not comply with the realities on the ground. It is very discernible that the existing/present Kurdish political actors

are politically and ideologically diverted. There are unexpressed rivalries between those actors over certain issues discussed in detail in chapter 5.

The piece is helpful in understanding Washington's interests in the region and problems associated with Kurdish questions. In the last part, as policy recommendation for the US, he states the necessity of improving Turkish-KRG relations to maintain stability in the region. He also states that the US should take the initiative and play the role of facilitator to establish a dialogue between the Kurdish leadership and the Turkish state. To do so, he discusses a tripartite mechanism (Turkey-KRG-The US) and emphasises that:

Tripartite mechanism should pave the way for the normalization of relations between the KRG and Ankara...In addition, this mechanism could be employed to help the parties draw up plans for future economic ties, including oil and gas exports, transportation infrastructure, and trade routes **through Turkey to Europe** (Barkey, 2009: 34).

Then in the following pages he argues that the US should persuade Turkey to take steps such as opening a consulate "to formalise the Turkish presence in northern Iraq." He also claims that the presence of Turkey in the region would "act as a barrier to potential Iranian intervention." The following years witnessed Turkey's steps in tandem with the interests of the US. Thus in order to understand the motives giving rise to Turkish-KRG relations, it is important to understand US interests and policies to materialise these interests, such as the

role for Turkey, its only NATO ally in the region. He discusses the following points: improving Turkey-KRG relations, demobilising the PKK, strengthening federalism in Iraq and helping Turkey to solve its Kurdish question. However, the piece does not reveal the motives behind this ‘new’ policy preference of the US. The emergence of China and its increasing political, economic, and military clout in the Pacific and the Middle East, has been one of the main factor shaping the US policy in the Middle East. This point, via adopting a globalist perspective, is widely being discussed in part 3, particularly chapters 6 and 7.

Another report, particularly focusing on Turkey-KRG relations, was written by Barkey in 2010. This report paid particular attention to the then prospective US withdrawal from Iraq and offered policy suggestions to the US government/Obama administration. He argued that relations between Turkey, Iraq and the KRG had “dramatically transformed for the better.” Throughout the article he identified the elements that led to this change and potential problems, which could undermine this “achievement” of the US, likely to occur, and finally he recommended policies to prevent the occurrence of such events. He mainly argued about the necessity of Turkish influence in Baghdad, to balance the influence of Tehran. This would be possible only with growing Turkish influence in Erbil “because of the Kurds’ ‘critical role in Iraq’s capital.” This presumption of the US is also important to understand US interests regarding post-Saddam Iraq, an Iraq economically integrated with the capitalist western markets through the Baghdad-Erbil-Ankara alliance. However, the following

years demonstrate that giving such a big role to the Kurds in Baghdad was an illusion. Particularly in the post-withdrawal period, Prime Minister Maliki became increasingly authoritarian and Baghdad-Ankara relations soured (Dodge, 2013). Actually, it is quite clear that the US had insisted on establishing such an alliance to maintain stability and in tandem with this stability its interests in the oil-rich Middle East would be secured. This point is further explored in detail in chapter 7.

Julide Karakoç (2010) looks at the impact of Kurdish identity on Turkish foreign policy. She underlines that Kurdish identity has been one of the fundamental deterrents in Turkey's relations with its neighbours, especially those that have a Kurdish population, namely Iran, Iraq and Syria. She identifies "Kurdish identity as an important agent in construction process of Turkish foreign policy" (Karakoç, 2010: 920). Regarding the role of Kurdish identity in Turkey-Iraq relations she argues that:

As far as relations with Iraq are concerned, Turkey–Iraq negotiations were heavily influenced by Kurdish identity from the 1980s until 2003. Iraq and Turkey have always been the states, which are the most vulnerable agents of Kurdish identity in the region. They had always cooperated on this issue and never had major mutual problems. (Karakoç, 2010: 923).

This thesis also accepts that the Kurdish identity, more precisely the perception of Kurdish identity by Turkish bureaucratic elites has been one of the

fundamental factors in Turkey's relations with these states. However, it does not see the changing policy of Turkey towards one of them, the recognition of Kurdistan in Iraq, as the result of a changing self-perception/identity of Turkey. Furthermore, from a different point of view, it discusses the changing structure of the global system pushing/compelling Turkey to abandon its "archaic" identity.

Jacoby and Özerdem's book *Peace in Turkey 2023* is another work that needs to be mentioned. Although it might not be seen directly relevant to Turkey-KRG relations, it is a certain contribution to the shifting state approach towards Kurdish identity. The book focuses on the Kurdish question in Turkey from a human security perspective. It particularly analyses the first and second terms of the AKP governments and their approach to the Kurdish question in Turkey. The study recognises a change in state perception with the following words: "during its eight years in power [first and second terms] the AKP significantly departed from the hitherto omnipotent view of political elites that the Kurdish issue was predominantly one of violent crime and regional underdevelopment" (Jacoby and Özerdem, 2013:10). Therefore, the book is also important for the present research's second part, which focuses on the normalisation of the Kurdish polity in the eyes and mind of the 'new' Turkish political elite. It also adopts scenario writing technic as a tool and uncovers the steps guiding decision-makers towards success or failure in the solution process of the Kurdish question, which is seen to lie in democratisation and fair representation

of the people. Although it does not cover Turkey's relations with the Kurds out of its borders directly, it does well to critically approach Kurdish rebellions and unleash traditional and shifting state perceptions regarding Kurdish identity and demands.

Post US military withdrawal

Park (2013) puts Turkey-KRG relations in the post-withdrawal era under scrutiny. He investigates the impact of the US military withdrawal from Iraq on the relations. He underlines that "Ankara Baghdad relations have gone from bad to worse since the end of 2011 with the US military withdrawal from Iraq" (Park, 2014:2). Throughout the work, he touches on US influence on emerging Turkey-KRG relations and its importance/necessity for the US to secure its interests in the region. However, the research falls short of identifying the influence of the changing global context, which is the emergence of China as a global power house and client to oil with a relentless increase in its energy, particularly oil consumption. This influence is also being addressed in chapter 6.

Marianna Charountaki (2012) in her recent article puts Turkey-KRG relations under scrutiny. She unfolds the regional and internal developments, which push Turkey to construct a new approach towards the KRG. However, the article covers the regional and domestic context to an extent, but fails to cover the global context with reference to energy security of global actors, within which this rapprochement has been taking place.

Another monograph on Turkey-KRG relations is *Yeni Komşumuz Kurdistan*, written in Turkish by Simla Yerlikaya, published in early 2013. Yerlikaya (2013) is a journalist, representative of TRT in Kurdistan Region. In the book Yerlikaya, a Turk who had not known much about the Kurds before coming to the region, shares her evolving (mis)conceptions of Kurds and Kurdistan in Iraq. In this regard, the book also reveals stereotypes of Kurds and Kurdistan in the minds of typical Turks. Then she shares her observations in the region, discusses daily politics and social problems ranging from education to difficulties women experience in daily life. In short, the book is not an academic work, but a kind of diary sharing observations of the author in Iraqi Kurdistan. It might be a very good starting point for those who want to understand the emergence of a Kurdistan within the borders of Iraq. However, in terms of its capacity to explain the motives behind the emerging Turkey-KRG relations, it falls short.

Some scholars (Morelli & Pischedda, 2014) address the possible implications of a new pipeline, under the Kurds' control and alternative to the existing historic Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, for Erbil-Baghdad and Turkey-KRG relations. It also focuses on the internal dispute between Erbil and the federal government of Iraq, and its direct and indirect impact on Turkey-KRG relations. The article gives a clear answer to why the KRG sought an alternative export infrastructure under its control. There are two factors that led Erbil to seek an alternative pipeline directly connecting Kurdish oil to Turkish port of Ceyhan. For some, this meant the Kurds putting all their eggs in Turkey's basket. Going back to the

factors, the first one is the dispute between Baghdad and Erbil over the budget, and the second is oil exportation and revenue. Actually, these factors are interlinked and will be further discussed.

More than the short-term implications of these problems, it has been the practices of the incumbent Baghdad government that have been prone to change the decentralised character of the state (Dodge, 2013), of which the Kurds agreed to be part after the collapse of the Saddam regime, that concern Kurds in the long term, so they prefer to put all their eggs in Turkey's basket.

Contribution of the Research

There is little research on Turkey-KRG relations. However, new oil and gas discoveries⁹ in the region have been triggering unexpected changes and developments, inviting academic interest in the topic. In tandem with these developments, the region and actors have gone through phases and alterations. The region has been witnessing new alliances and enmities. Thus, every single work, especially if it is focussing only on regional developments, conducted on the topic has gone out of date in a very short time. Therefore, it might be argued that works analysing only regional developments would not have or could easily lose their validity.

⁹ As Fouskas underscores, the reserves in the region have not been known exactly and for some Iraq has a reserve potential of around 400bln barrels.

So far the literature focusing on Turkey-KRG relations predominantly looked at regional and some internal¹⁰ factors and analysed their impact on the relationship between two entities, Turkey and the KRG. These points were widely referenced in the literature to explain motives behind Turkey-KRG rapprochement. However, the influence of global power shifts in world politics on Turkey-KRG rapprochement has been overlooked. On the other hand, this thesis argues that in order to contextualise the emerging strategic partnership between Turkey and KRG, and also to put the regional factors that led to this policy change into context, it is necessary to adopt a globalist perspective, in other words political and economic rivalry between global power houses.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis will utilise a variety of concepts associated with different schools of thought. By deploying a multi-structured conceptual framework called eclectic theorising, this thesis will seek to analyse Turkish foreign policy change towards the KRG.

Eminent names in eclecticism, Katzenstein and Sil (2010), explain eclectic theorising using the following quote from Waltz:

The prescriptions directly derived from a single image [of international Relations] are incomplete because they are based on partial analyses. The

¹⁰ In the existing literature, by ‘regional developments’ is meant changing regional context and structure of Iraqi state with the invasion of Iraq. As for internal developments, it is developments in Turkish politics and changing priority of decision makers, civilians with reference to changing civil-military relations.

partial quality of each image sets up a tension that drives one towards inclusion of the others...one is led to search for the inclusive nexus of causes (Waltz cited in Katzenstein & Sil 2008: 109).

This research first will benefit from the explanatory power of concepts of ‘securitisation’ and ‘desecuritisation’ from the Copenhagen School’s Securitisation School (see chapter 3) to compare traditional and emerging Turkey-KRG relations. It will also benefit from other relevant concepts, such as ‘global faultlines’, ‘peak oil’, and ‘energy security’ (see part 3, chapters 6 and 7). These concepts will enable the researcher to indicate and analyse the motives influencing Turkey-KRG relations at global level.

Instead of explaining all these concepts and terms in this section, the thesis will engage with them critically at the beginning of each chapter.

It is necessary to clarify some issues and remind that this research is not a theory building or testing study; it is a case study aiming to understand first the extent of the shift in Turkey’s policy towards the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government), then look for the motives that led to the shift at different levels of global politics. The concepts being used in the research are being explained in the relevant chapters.

Overview of the Chapters

The chapters of the thesis are structured around three points. As first point, the research will give a background, the shadow of the history in relations between

Turkey and the KRG. It will illustrate the construction of terms such as ‘Kurds,’ ‘Kurdistan’ and ‘Iraqi Kurds’ in the minds of Turkish political elites. This will help to set the scene for the subsequent chapters. In other words, it will draw a picture of the past to compare with the present, in order to demonstrate the extent of Turkey’s policy shift towards the KRG.

The second part of the study will focus on Turkish-KRG relations from 2003 to 2013. It will illustrate the evolving direction of ruling elites’ perception towards Iraqi Kurds. In other words, it will examine the process of the “new perception” of Iraqi Kurds. To do so, the period will be divided into two parts, under two themes. The first part will focus on the period 2003-2008, under the theme of ‘Facing the Reality’. This will help the research to uncover Turkey’s official reaction to the political development in Iraq in the post-invasion era.

The second half of this part will investigate the post-2008 era. The section will attempt to identify dislocatory events impacting Turkey-KRG relations, such as diplomatic exchanges within the period. This section will try to understand current relations. In doing so, it aims to identify drivers of Turkish foreign policy towards the KRG.

The third part will put the motives/drivers identified in the previous chapter under scrutiny. It will provide an account of regional and global motives in turn. The part will start (chapter 5) with seeking the regional motives identified briefly in the second part of chapter 3, facilitating the shift in relations between Turkey

and the KRG. Following this part, it will turn its focus to the global political system and will discuss the global motives that influence the oil-rich Middle Eastern regions in general, KRG and Turkey in particular (chapters 6 and 7).

Design

First of all, an observation period is required, since as Lewin states “the first prerequisite of a successful observation in any science is a definite understanding about what size of unit one is going to observe at a given time” (Lewin 1951: 157). The planned period of this study is from 2003 to 2013.

A chronological and thematic design will be adopted throughout the research. As a starting point, the year 2003, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, was selected, because of the tangible change in Iraq, such as the establishment of KRG and issuing a new constitution. So the changing character of Iraq required the change in Turkey’s Iraq policy as well. The study is divided into two chronological sub-periods, 2003-2008 and 2008-2013, each corresponding to a distinctive theme, i.e. the 2003-2008 Resurrection of Turkish Concerns, and the 2008-2013 normalising relations.

Methodology: Data Collection

The theoretical framework pushes the researcher to focus on mainly political statements, historical documents, interviews or statements of leading figures in the media. Therefore, the study looks at recent documents, issued in the last decade, and speech acts/discourses produced by the state elite. Alongside the

speech acts, it will look at some other developments at domestic and regional levels, to uncover the extent of the *change* in Turkey's KRG policy.

The research puts a very recent, unfinished and sensitive period and case under scrutiny. Thus, utilising archives or memories is not possible, since such materials are still being produced behind 'closed doors.' It also recognises the difficulty in conducting interviews with incumbents. Therefore, it looks for alternative techniques to extract relevant data for the research. In order to extract data, instead of asking for an interview appointment from relevant incumbents, I either used already done and published interviews, or decoded some relevant video recordings of some relevant TV programs, in which some of these incumbents were guests (i.e. Hard Talk). As a third option, I attended a number of relevant conferences at which some of these incumbents were speakers.¹¹ Briefly, as primary sources: documental analysis, cables leaked via *Wikileaks*, official press-releases, press conferences, news reports, debates in the Parliament (Hansard), speeches, already conducted interviews, newspapers and video recordings.

Alongside the above, some statistical data/numbers, such as oil production, consumption and production potentials were accessed via websites of International Energy Agency (IEA).

¹¹Kings Collage Bayan Sami, Yasar Yakis, Officials from Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs at level of Ambassador.

Conference at Cambridge, Falah Mustafa Bakir and Bayan Sami Abdurahman were speakers.

Issues of *The Kurdish Globe*, the first English-language newspaper of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, will be utilised to capture the perceptions of the entity and its leadership regarding Turkey. This weekly is seen as mouthpiece of the Erbil-based Kurdish government. It has been publishing since March 2005. As it is stated above, it is the mouthpiece of the Kurdish government, in terms of information production and dissemination. About this weekly, Wikipedia says, “The Kurdish Globe is edited from the point of view of the Kurdistan regional Government”. Thus, the news in this weekly also has the power of conveying messages from the leadership and reflecting their point of view regarding regional and global developments.

As quantitative method, some statistical data, such as import-export numbers from Turkey Statistic Institute (TSI), graphs, numbers, tables demonstrating crude oil production, consumption import and export gathered mainly from Energy Information Administration (EIA), will be used. As secondary sources, academic books and articles, and policy papers written by distinguished academics of Social Sciences will be analysed. Understand the nature of the topic requires going beyond International Relations, to anthropological, economic and historical studies. For example, without understanding the role of tribes in Kurdistan, it would be hard to understand regional politics, or without knowing oil-economy or oil-politics it is impossible to comprehend the dispute over the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

Limits of the Study

One of the main limits of the research is its attempt to analyse a very recent and relatively short period. Thus, regarding the change in attitude of elites towards a polity in a particular tenure as change of a state policy might be misleading. Therefore, the researcher prefers to limit the study as change in policy under the successive AKP governments.

It also limits itself to a certain period, 2003-2013. Thus, the developments taking place outside this period will not be researched. As was previously mentioned, the period of analysis starts in 2003, the year Iraq was invaded by the US. The invasion has deeply influenced the regional balance in general and the structure of the state of Iraq in particular, leading to the emergence of a powerful Kurdish entity within the borders of Iraq, recognised by the post-invasion Iraqi Constitution in 2005. This so-called sub-federal entity has been behaving as a *de-facto* state with unique characteristics, such as having its own military, *Peshmergas*, reps around the world, developing foreign policy towards other states and signing contracts and agreements with International companies, despite opposition by the federal government.

PART I) CASTING SHADOW OF HISTORY:

CHAPTER 2: State's Perception of Kurds And Kurdistan

INTRODUCTION

Since being elected to government in 2002, the AKP, in contrast to previous Turkish governments, has been de-securitising/normalising certain issues which were securitised and seen as threats (Aras & Karakaya, 2007). Religious movements, Kurds, non-Muslims and other minorities were among these issues (Kuru, 2012; Yeğen, 1998). In this era, not only domestic elements but also external actors, who were seen as threats, were normalised as part of a “zero problem with neighbours approach”.¹² Additionally, there were significant shifts occurring in Turkish foreign policy.

In this part, to have a better grasp of the issue, the historical perception of Kurds and Kurdishness, in terms of their impact on Turkey's traditional approach to the KRG, will be discussed.

Some argue that, until very recently, Kurdish identity and Kurdish advance in any part of the world have been viewed as a threat by the Turkish state elite (Barkey, 2010). This historical perception by the Turkish military elite of

¹² Although this situation has changed now, particularly in their second term from 2006 to 2011, relations with Syria changed a lot in a positive direction. For these see Aras, Bülent and Karakaya Rabia, “From Conflict to Cooperation: De-securitization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran,” *Security Dialogue*, 39 (5): Fall 2008: 475-495.

Kurdishness/Kurdish identity has played a crucial role in constructing Turkish foreign policy, particularly towards those neighbouring countries with a Kurdish population (Karakoç, 2010).

The chapter is structured as follows: first, the concept of securitisation, as tool of analysis, will be explained briefly. Then the chapter is divided into two parts: the first part briefly discusses perceptions of the “Kurds” and “Kurdistan” before the Republican era, then turns its focus on contemporary times. It aims to reveal the evolution of the ruling elite’s perceptions and identify what Kurds and Kurdistan meant in ‘traditional’ state perception. Then the second part concentrates on the perception of Iraqi Kurds and their political representatives by the Turkish ruling elite.

Theoretical Framework: Copenhagen School’s Securitisation Theory

The Theory of Securitisation has been developed by the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI). Thus it is called Copenhagen Schools’ Securitisation Theory. It was developed as an analytical toolkit to answer the question of how something becomes a security problem to a relevant referent object. The concepts are the fruit of the debates taking place during the 1990s. The main contributors and representatives of this account are Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (Buzan et al., 1998; Waever, 1995; Buzan & Waver, 2003).

Copenhagen Schools’ theory of securitisation as a framework has been criticised for being Eurocentric (Bilgin, 2011). So far the theory has been mainly applied to

cases of migration, economy and the environment (Huysman, 2000; Boswell, 2007, Nyers, 2003; Bigo, 2001, 2002). Although few, there are also some studies that apply the securitisation theory to cases outside Europe. Although the concepts of the theory mainly apply to European issues, there are a number of studies that push the boundaries and adopt the concepts to discuss cases outside Europe (Coşkun, 2008; Wilkinson, 2007; Jackson, 2006; Kaliber, 2005; Oelsner, 2005; Aras & Karakaya, 2010; Karakaya, 2008). Coşkun's study is a good example of this. She applies this theory to Israel-Palestine relations. Another example is Oelsner's study, which applies the concept of desecuritisation to South America, to explain regional order. Rabia Polat Karakaya and Bülent Aras apply this theory to Turkey.

Securitisation is a relatively a new approach in IR. Its concepts have been developed from the “speech act theory”. Although it has been called ‘School,’ it is more of a toolkit to analyse and understand some social and political issues, from a realist, or from a constructivist perspective. In other words, it might be seen as a hybridisation of speech act theory in constructivism. Securitisation, in Buzan and Waever’s word is:

...the discursive process through which an inter-subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and enable a call for urgent

and exceptional measures to deal with the threat (Buzan&Waever, 2003: 491).

As might be deduced from the above, securitisation is a process and there should be a referent object to which the issue can be posed as threat. Also we might highlight the concept of discourse in terms of who it belongs to, how it is used to designate something as a threat, and, most importantly, the environment that compels the securitising actor to constitute something as a threat. This environment can be referred to as facilitating factors, applying securitisation to a particular issue. At this point it is necessary to explain the terms ‘referent object’, ‘securitising actor’ and ‘facilitating factors’.

Threats and security are seen as non-objective matters, while securitisation is seen as a process, and there is a need to understand the cultural dimension of this process as well. In Waever’s words, securitisation is framing/labelling something as a threat and then utilising a “speech act” to prioritise the issue over others matters. Generally, the object that is securitised, posed a threat to the ‘survival’ of the referent object, mainly the state. Thus, the threat has been regarded as ‘existential.’ Therefore all measures are to ensure ‘survival.’ Coşkun (2008: 23) argues that stressing the survival of the referent object brings the understanding of security in this school close to Waltzian neo-realism, ‘survival in the face of existential threat’ (Buzan et.al 1998:33).

For securitisation, a valued object is needed, a “valued referent object”. In other words, in the process of securitisation there must be something of value, whose existence is in danger, to which the securitising actor needs to refer (Coşkun, 2008 Table 11). In some cases, this valued object is the environment, sometimes identity and survival of an institution, while in other cases it is religion, or ideology. In our present case, it is the “national unity” of the state, which has been ‘sanctified,’ shown as being in danger, the threat being diversity/social heterogeneity.

To successfully make/construct something as existential security threat to a “valued referent object,” Taureck (2006:55) points out three steps. These are: “identification of existential threats; emergency action; and the legitimisation of exceptional threats even by breaking free of norms and rules of normal.” Also, to be successful in the process, it is essential to gain the support of the audience. However, in our case there was not much need of audience support. Following the War of Independence, the ruling elite was very powerful and society (the audience) was very weak, so the aim of the elite was to construct the “ideal society.” To put it differently, society, at the early years of the Republic, was not an active audience, but a target. The ruling military elite as the ultimate decision-makers were the most powerful and organised group to construct the new ideal French-style society.

Securitisation transports any issue from the boundaries of the political sphere to the security sphere within which all the exceptional measures can be justified

(Fierke, 2007: 108). In other words, suspending politics and dealing with the issue as a matter of security. This means that securitising something provides securitising actors with pretexts of examining extraordinary measures over some particular issues. For example, constructing migration from certain countries to European countries as existential threat to European economy, identity or social order, can give the pretext to decision-makers to adopt some extreme measures, such as deportation.

In the historic transition from *millet*-based Ottoman Empire to the ethnic-based nation state model (Zurcher, 2011), the ruling military elite securitised Kurds and Kurdishness. Kurds were the most resistant group in this nation state project. Due to this resistance, the ruling military elite considered the Kurds and Kurdishness as a matter of security, rather than a political issue. To eliminate this challenge, this threat posed to the projected ideal society, the elite did not hesitate to deploy any extraordinary measures against Kurdish people, such as the 1925 decree, and oppressive actions against Kurdish rebellions, relocations and assimilation policies.

In the early years of the Republic, constructing images of some groups as threats was not limited to Kurds, but extended to any groups refusing to identify themselves as Turks. This was reflected in the well-known state motto "happy are those who say I am a Turk".

Coşkun (2008:23-24) describes the conventional process of securitisation in democratic societies. However, the question is whether the same principles and procedures will be applicable in transitional or non-democratic societies. To put it bluntly, how does securitisation work in non-democratic societies? It is clear that there will be some different procedures and tools, such as designation of audience, defining and managing entire securitisation process. For example, whilst in a democratic society the securitisation process requires active participation of different actors, such as parliaments, media, civil society, institutions, charities, even some in cases celebrities,¹³ in non-democratic societies this process only requires the participation of a small ruling group. The other point that needs to be emphasised is that in democratic societies the securitisation process is based on a negotiation; therefore, the process is open and transparent. However, in non-democratic societies it is not about negotiation but more about enforcement. One also needs to ask some crucial questions in the process of desecuritisation or normalisation.

Pushing the Boundaries

Securitisation theory, like other theories, is dynamic and open to discussion and contribution. Thus it has been changing and developing. The literature has been growing since the 1990s and it seems that there is a shift from realism, which regards “survival” as the referent object. In the beginning, the theory was state

¹³ For example to raise awareness on some crucial societal problems, such as drug use or child abuse, securitisation can be useful. In such cases, celebrities can help in the process of persuading an audience.

centric and the referent object in general was the state and its survival; in some cases the unity of the state, in others the economy were considered matters of survival

The matter of audience is problematic. In the traditional application of the theory, state elites are considered securitising actors and people who vote are seen as audience. It has been seen as a process of dialogue between elected decision-makers and voters/citizens. Thus, adopting the concept made sense only in democratic Western societies/states, where their elites have to convince people before taking any exceptional action, such as waging war. Thus, it has remained Eurocentric. However, in some cases the process of securitisation/desecuritisation has been conducted by some non-state groups/stakeholders and decision-makers have been the audience. For example, looking at lobbying groups and their relations with senators one would easily notice that a process of securitisation or desecuritisation is on the ground (Petras, 2014; Hinnebush, 2007: 224). In such a case, the elite might be the audience, so we need to push the borders of the concept and, instead of accepting given formats, we need to identify the audience in each case. In this research actors and audience show significant differences from Eurocentric securitisation.

A small group of elites, as securitising actor, attempted to convince a comparatively larger group of elites within the government, as audience, that Kurds and Kurdishness were an existential threat to very foundation of the

projected nation state model, so Kurdishness needed to be solved, or normalised. In other words, the process might occur as a dialogue of elites.

KURDS AND KURDISTAN

Etymologically, “istan” connotes “garden”, so Kurdistan literally means the Garden in which Kurds live or land of the Kurds. In the words of David McDowall, Kurdistan is:

...a marginal zone between the power centres of the Mesopotamian plain and the Iranian and Anatolian plateaux... marginalised geographically, politically and economically (McDowall, 2010: xi).

Kurds, as one of the ancient peoples of the Middle East, had traditionally been organised under the emirates/principalities as a political organisation, like Armenians and Assyrians across the Middle East, and basically in Mesopotamia as an autochthonous/indigenous people of the region (Stokes, 2009: 379). These emirates were mainly “lying along the geopolitical fault-line between the power centres of the Middle East” (Gökay, 2000). These power centres of that time were the Sunni Ottoman and Kizilbaş/Shiite Safavid Empires. As Saraçoğlu underlines, “the modus operandi of the system was shaped by mainly religious affiliation. This is to say that Kurdishness and even Turkishness were not [even] politicized issues” (Saraçoğlu, 2011:39). During the 16th century the majority of these emirates, as Sunni Muslims, were persuaded by the leading Kurdish figure

Idris al Bidlisi to join the Sunni Ottomans against Kizilbaş¹⁴ Safavid Empire during the Sultan Selim era (Kendal, 1993). In line with this, Özerdem and Jakoby assess the Kurds' acceptance of Ottoman rule, of their own volition, as follows:

...the acceptance of Ottoman rule was in many ways the product of shared interest in holding back the ambitions of the Persians. It was on this that Kurdish tribes fought alongside the Ottoman army in Tchaldiran in 1514. Following this victory, the Ottomans decided not to impose their authority or directly interfere with the autonomy enjoyed by Kurdish tribes, as long as the lords paid tribute to the Porte (Jacoby & Özerdem, 2013: 68).

After the first annexation of Kurdistan to the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, Kurds continued to enjoy their semi autonomous position for centuries. They were recognised, accepted as they are and named as they wished. For example, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, in the 16th century, and Sultan Ahmed I, in the 17th century, in their rescripts used the term 'Kurdistan' to refer to the land Kurds intensively lived on.¹⁵

Kurds, as Muslims, had a privileged position within the Empire. The decentralised (*ademi merkezî*) structure of the Ottoman Empire gave the Kurds and

¹⁴ Kizilbas means Allawid, a Shiite sect of Islam.

¹⁵ For the letter of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to Fransuva, the King of France, in which Suleiman introduces himself also as the King of Kurdistan, see <http://cihanhukumdari.istanbul.edu.tr/Kanuni-Sultan-Suleyman-Fransa-Krali-Fransuva-Mektup.html> (last accessed on 09.11.1013).

Kurdish nobles/notables the right of maintaining their traditional institutions, such as principalities/emirates and sheikdoms, to rule the lands on which they had been living. Since the leading figures such as tribal leaders, warriors or religious figures, and other people benefited from this political space, deliberately left by the empire, *Kurdiyati* (Kurdish nationalism) did not progress as well as nationalism in the Balkans and Caucasus in the 19th century (Vali, 2008).

Alongside the de-centralised structure of the empires, particularly for the Ottoman Kurds, being ruled by Caliph-Sultans, which meant being ruled by both a political and a religious leader, was one of the factors that kept the Kurds, as Sunni Muslims, attached to the Porte (McDowal 2010: 27-36).

The 19th century might be regarded as a period of reforms for the Ottoman state machinery. The main incentive behind these reforms was nationalism, which had already got off the ground in the Western part of the Empire. Problems of possible dismemberment compelled the Porte to make some structural changes within the state. Thus, the traditional *ademi-merkezi* (de-centralised) structure was replaced with a centralised one. For this reason, *Tanzimat* reforms, which commenced in the early 19th century, aimed to alter the de-centralised structure, which Kurds had enjoyed for more than two hundred years, to a centralised one (Inalcık, 1977: 27-52). However, in this era, although their principalities were abandoned, Kurdish notables were allowed to rule their lands. Moreover, the gap created after the abandonment of principalities, made Kurdish sheiks more

visible alongside traditional tribal chiefs, as mediators and opinion leaders. In another words, Kurds, compared to non-Muslims, continued to enjoy semi-autonomy in the region they had been living, through their sheiks (Bruinessen, 1992: 182-84; McDowell, 2010: 38-47; Gökay, 2000).

In the Ottoman Empire the Muslim population -regardless of their ethnicities- had a privileged position in parallel with the level of their religiosity. Thus, Kurdish Sufi *tariqa* orders such as *Naqshbandiyya* had a very dignified place in the Ottoman Empire and the leaders and prominent figures of these orders had enjoyed the structure for a long time. Furthermore, the *medreses* and mosques in the region were run by the Kurds, who, besides practising their culture, had the opportunity to advance Kurdish literature via these institutions within the empire. In addition, as a response to this allowance, *medreses*, ruled by these Sufi orders, played a very important role as integrators of the Kurdish population into the Empire. Also, Alevi Kurds were enjoying the conditions where they were not required to pay taxes or provide soldiers to the Porte (Natali, 2005:4).

Against the rising of nationalism and dismemberment of the Empire, a number of strategies emerged among the elites. These were: Pan-Islamism, Ottomanism and Pan-Turkism. Sultan Abdulhamid espoused and promoted Pan-Islamist ideology “as counter-balance to emerging nationalism” (Gökay, 2005: 318). Thus, during Sultan Abdulhamid’s era (1876-1908), despite the centralisation policies across the country, due to their being Muslim, the Kurdish lands were kept on as semi-autonomous. Besides, during this era, Kurdish notables were

well integrated into the Porte. Some Kurdish notables assumed good posts, such as ambassadors and ministers (Natali, 2005: 5-6; Kendal, 1980:33). Abdulhamid also had a special military force constituted by Kurds, which was named as *Hamidiyan*, mounted troops/cavalry chosen from Sunni Kurds. McDowall suggests that “the intention was to imitate Russian Cossack regiments, which had been used so effectively as scouts and the skirmishers in the Caucasus” (McDowall, 2004: 59). In addition to these developments, they continued to hold positions of prominence, as sheiks, aghas and tribal chiefs, until the Republican era. Kurds did not feel his despotism (Özoğlu, 2001 :384), they were allowed to keep their “de facto” autonomous structure, which they enjoyed for centuries.

Following Bedirhan’s Revolt in 1847, Kurdistan, as an *Eyalet* (a local government unit, a sort of federation), was formed. Our main focus is not whether these Kurdish governmental units had enough rights or were symbolic, but the language, the usage of the term Kurdistan and Kurds in state documents. Ozoglu goes through a number of state documents, *salnames* (yearbooks) and shows that these terms, Kurds and Kurdistan, were being used to refer to the region Kurds lived, without constructing the terms as a security threat to the very foundation of the Empire (Özoğlu, 2004: 60-5).

It might have been because of this fact that Hamit was loved and still put in a good word for the Kurds. He was even called *bave Kurdan* (father of Kurds) by some Kurdish groups at that time (Bruinessen, 1992: ; Klein, 2011).

All this explains why, unlike non-Muslim minorities, Kurds were not inclined to develop their nationalism in those late years of the Ottoman Empire.

In short, during the Ottoman era the terms Kurds and Kurdistan were not used to denote a threat, these terms were not “politicised” yet (Saraçoglu, 2011: 39). Kurds were called *Ekrad* (plural version of Kurd) and the land occupied by the Kurds was named Kurdistan. In the Ottoman Empire, unlike the Turkish Republic, Kurdistan as a term was used in *fermans* (rescripts), and *salnames*, state documents, without attributing any negative meaning to it.

Actually the recent developments in the geography of Kurdistan seem similar to what happened 500 years ago. Still the geography lies along the geopolitical fault-lines between oil dependent powerhouses, China, Europe, and the US. Lying along the fault-lines, the land the Kurds live on is like a chessboard, the Kurds one of the regional players alongside the main players. The chess game is discussed in detail in part three.

Construction of Kurds and Kurdistan as Threat

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War deeply influenced the people of the Fertile Crescent, the Kurds. Kurdish identity and the existence of Kurdistan have been perceived as a threat since the early years

of the Republic. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 sealed the Kurds' destiny as the largest nation without a state. After the collapse of the Ottomans, the Kurds were divided among and shared by four 'modern' nation states, Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, becoming minority among three nations, Arabs, Turks, and Persians.

After the collapse of the empire, the elite of the Turkish Republic planned to establish a Western style, modern, secular nation-state. This project required creating a nation from the ashes of a multinational polity, the Ottoman Empire. As some argue, the elites embarked upon a nation-building process. However, it lacked the Kurds' and other ethnic minorities' consent. Therefore, since then the process has turned into an assimilation process to form a *kulturnation*, instead of projecting 'staatnation', from the ashes of an ethnically diverse polity. These two concepts were introduced by German historian Friedrich Meinecke. He divides the concept of nation into cultural (*kultur*) and political (*staat*) (Iggers, 1983; Cemiloğlu, 2009). *Kulturnation* is made up by people speaking the same language and practising the same culture. On the other hand, *staatnation* consists of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The former is natural, there is no need to have a contract to form such a nation. However, the latter is not natural, it is based on a social contract, which requires all groups/identities to give consent to form this polity. It also endows them with equal rights and makes them equal before the law, with their distinct identities and languages. Switzerland is a good example of a *staatnation*.

Projecting a *kulturation* came to mean creating, converging diverse cultures into one ‘culture.’ Furthermore, this project allowed the construction of different ethnic identities as threats to very foundation of a *kulturation*. Putting ethnic differences in the realm of security allowed decision-makers/ Republican elite to take ‘security measures’ to deal with such ‘threats.’ That is to say, this aspiration of forming a cultural nation, a Turkish Republic, has justified violence in the minds of the elites, with Kurds being one of the victims of this project. It was this project that shaped the elites’ conception of Kurds as threat to the projected nation state. The elite resorted to the denial of their identity. Kurds were regarded as “the mountain Turks” and the language they speak was thought of as a ‘corrupt’ form of Turkish (Cemiloğlu, 2009; Yılmaz, 2014: 25). Regarding to this Bruinessen suggests that “everything that recalled a separate Kurdish identity was to be abolished: language, clothing, names, and of course the tribes themselves” (Bruinessen, 1978: 10).

The Kurdish question might be summed up as the resistance of Kurds living in Anatolia against the denial of their existence. Denial of existence seems to be the most extraordinary measure applied to a nation. To legitimise/rationalise taking this step as a measure for the sake of the “survival” of the then newly born modern Turkish Republic, the elite embarked upon a process of engineering/constructing the image of Kurds as barbarians who needed to be civilised. The existence of Kurds and Kurdish as distinct ethnicity and language

were denied and new meanings, such as savage, bandit etc., were assigned to these words.

In line with this discussion, Nilufer Göle helps us understand the construction of some terms as threats by the ruling Republican elites. She points out four main phobias of the Kemalist regime. These are namely liberalism, Islamism, Kurdish nationalism and the threat of Communism, which disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it might be said that the Republic was founded on threat perception and various fears. She argues that the Kemalist regime viewed these streams of thought and relevant groups and movements as being out of its control. It means the regime's elite has considered them difficult to shape or keep under its control, so threatening to the very foundation of their "modern nation state". Also the possibility of their being exploited by exogenous powers triggered the ruling elite to take measures to put them under its control (Göle, 1998:171). In a similar approach to Göle, Kuru in his more recent study points out three threats: Islamism, Kurdish nationalism and Communism (Kuru, 2012). It seems, according to Kuru, liberals are not perceived as a threat anymore. Thus, such groups and figures were introduced to official documents and text books as threats, traitors i.e. Ethem Circassian.¹⁶ It is also worth noting that these movements have tried to exist in the form of associations, or raised

¹⁶ Ethem Circassian was a militia leader during the Turkish War of Independence. After the war he faced some problems and refused to join the regular army under the command of İsmet Pasha. Upon this he was declared a "traitor." For some sources he was an action officer of Kemal Atatürk and on his behalf he was attending secret meetings held between Ottomans and Greeks (Bülent Gökay, **A Clash of Empires: Turkey between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism, 1918-1923**, London: I.B. Tauris, 1997, p.104-106).

their voices via some associations. Thus, in Turkey even civic societies were seen as challenges and existential threats to the regime.

Why the early Republican elites have seen these differences as a threat is clear. The ruling elite in the Turkish Republic, in the early years, believed that a nation-state relied on one language and ethnicity. As Anderson underlines, “nation was conceived in language not in blood” (Anderson, 1991: 145). Zurcher argues that:

The political and cultural elite of the young republic opted for a radically different definition of its own identity: they decided to be Turks and take Turkishness as the basis for their new national state. This identity was then imposed gradually on the population through a process of nation building in which, as in similar processes the world over, historiography and linguistics played a key role, as did suppression of alternative or even sub-identities (Zurcher, 2011: 211).

In other words, the ruling elite had a given reality, an ideal state, which was “modern” or western-style. In this process of constructing a modern Turkish state, France was taken as the model (Bozdoğan, 2001: 107). Therefore, they embarked upon a project of modernisation, creating the state of their dreams. They used material (military power) and intellectual (reforms in education, re-writing a new ideological –Kemalist- history in line with their aim etc.) powers to construct the country of their dreams. To understand the nature of the proposed state during the 1920s, with reference to the “Kurdish question”, it is necessary

to deconstruct the intellectual component of the established state. To do so, deconstructing the period of reforms, which were issued in the early years of the Republic, would be enough to have a grasp. It is expected that, by doing so, the climate in which the Kurdish issue and securitisation of some relevant terms such as Kurdish language, Kurdistan etc. occurred, can be better understood.

History shows that securitisation in different forms has been used as the most common tool to find “legitimate” grounds to ban usage and political activities of the movements seen as threat to this nation building project. Taking them out of politics and placing them in the sphere of security gives the ruling elite the opportunity to take all kinds of extraordinary/marginal measures.

Religious groups were seen as a threat to the establishment of a western style, modern, secular state, because westernisation was perceived as modernisation. Thus, they planned to keep religion under the control of state machinery. To eliminate them, *tekkes* and *zaviyes* (religious schools), which were independent of state authority, were closed down just two years after establishing the Republic, in 1925. Some religious figures were seen as threats and sentenced to death, exiled or put under state surveillance.

The second threat to the foundation of a new western style nation state was the ethnically diverse nature of Anatolia, remnant of the Ottoman Empire. As solution to this “threat” plural structure of the land was denied, any ethnic expressions of Muslim communities except Turkishness were understood as

threats to the unity of the Republic, with reference to the Kurdish question. Thus, their existence was rejected, they were declared mountain Turks and, to make them “proper Turks” who speak only Turkish, an assimilation policy was adopted. They, the founding fathers, were thinking that assimilation of differences into Turkishness would remove the threat posed by “Kurds” with respect to possibility of “Kurdistan”(İsmet Pasha Doğu Raporu). The terms Kurds and Kurdistan were seen as an existential threat throughout the 20th century by the ruling elite, who were mostly soldiers who had been active in the War of Independence. These people, soldiers, were always active in politics. They were seen as the Guardian of the Republic and Constitution, which gave them the right to intervene in politics when they saw/perceived the Republic and its founding document, the Constitution, threatened. In short, in order to justify violence and military solutions, such groups were constructed as threats to the ‘unity’ of the projected state.

The domestic Kurdish problem of Turkey has had a huge impact on Turkey’s foreign policy towards Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. Mesut Yeğen has carried out a number of studies related to Turkish State Discourse, or concerns regarding Kurdishness (Yeğen, 1998). In his work, he points out that the words related to Kurdishness have deliberately been ignored, loaded with negative notions, such as “bandits,” “uncivilised” etc., or erased from the pages of history. The discourse adopted by the state was that “there are no “Kurds”, but bandits, ignorant and rebellious people”. In other words, they were

uncivilised Turks. As Yeğen noted, they assessed [intentionally] all the insurgencies by the Kurds, in the east part of the country, as a problem of banditry, being economically and socially underdeveloped, and most importantly as a problem of civilisation, “mountaineer Turks”. They believed that these people needed to be modernised (Yeğen, 1999).

Education has been used as a tool to civilise these people. For example, education has been provided exclusively in Turkish. Modernisation for the people speaking Kurdish was deduced to speaking and writing in Turkish. In other words, there was no other way but assimilation to modernise Kurds. They generated a project, ‘*Dersim Bölgesini Ortaçağ Karanlığından Kurtarma*’, which literally means “Emancipation of *Dersim* Region from the Darkness of the Medieval Ages”. The project was presuming to modernise/civilise the people via “Turkifying” them. Recently, a book written by a teacher who dedicated her life to this project uncovers the constructed perception regarding the Kurds living in the region (Işık, 2012; Ocak, 2011). It seems the intention of the state at that time was to create a Turkish nation by intentionally ignoring Kurdish identity and assimilating these Kurds via education and relocation (if necessary).

In those years, the ruling elite of the Republic considered having a distinct ethnic identity as a core point of being an actor within the then emerging system i.e., Woodrow Wilson's 14 points were drawing the borders and style of the new era and determining the style of the reasonable actors of the emerging order. These

principles by Wilson had broad repercussions across the world and had an effect on the *Treaty of Sevres*,¹⁷ as well. The 12th point of the agreement was about Turkey and stated that "the Turkish people should be governed by the Turkish government. Non-Turks in the old Turkish empire should govern themselves." Establishing a "modern" state, which involved the targeted borders, *Misak-ı Milli*, except Mosul, was the main goal of Mustafa Kemal and his friends. Thus, in order to establish such a state, and have it recognised by the hegemons of the system, it had to be a nation state. Since the heritage of the empire was ethnically diverse, they projected a "Turkification" project as part of the "modernisation" (Jongerden, 2007:213; Bali, 2006) in these circumstances.

Alongside the ruling elite's dream of creating a nation state based on Turkish ethnicity, there were some other factors which helped or motivated the elite to use a security language regarding Kurdishness. These related to the Treaty of Sevres, known as Sevres Syndrome, Kurdish insurgencies in the early years of the republic and the PKK as 'modern' Kurdish uprising.

The Treaty of Sevres was signed between the Ottoman Empire and allied powers at the end of the First World War. It presumed an Independent Kurdistan in the Middle East, which included part of Turkey. Thus, in the minds of elites, the treaty contained a hidden agenda of the West (Sevres Syndrome). It

¹⁷ It is the agreement, which was signed between the Ottoman Empire and allied powers at the end of the First World War

is this fear that shaped the traditional foreign policy of Turkey towards the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

To sum up, during this period a number of steps with respect to Kurds had been taken. As Andrew Mango elucidates, it was forbidden to use Kurdish in public places, the geographical term 'Kurdistan' was forbidden and omitted from all official documents and textbooks. All these steps were motivating factors for the upcoming uprisings known as Kurdish rebellions.

Kurdish Rebellions

According to historians working on the Ottoman Empire, the 19th century minority uprisings, in the long term, led to the dissolution of the Porte. Therefore, Kurdish uprisings in the early years of the Republic revoked this memory of 19th century uprisings and made the elites, the majority of whom were active members of the Ottoman army, consider diverse identities/languages/cultures, more specifically pluralism, as a threat to the 'unity' of the Republic. The unity of this new polity in all respects was viewed as the fundamental base of security. After all, the Republic was a continuation of the Porte, as Eric Zürcher very well demonstrates in his well-known work, the *Young Turks Legacy and Nation Building* (Zürcher, 2010). In this groundbreaking work he argues that the emergence of the Turkish Republic was a stage in the process of transformation of the Porte from multinational to national polity (Zürcher, 2010: Chapter IV pp.209-97). Consequently, within

this context, the founding elites of the Turkish Republic treated or felt compelled to treat those people claiming different identities in a framework of security.

In line with this, Hakan Yavuz, in his work on ‘construction of Kurdish nationalism,’ points out the “major reason for the politicization of Kurdish cultural identity” as “the shift from multi-ethnic, multi-cultural realities of the Ottoman Empire to the nation-state model,” which has been seen as modernisation (Yavuz, 2001: 1).

In line with this argument, Kurdish insurgencies at the early years of the Republic were reactions against the modernisation of the state, the nation-state. They were against the measures taken by the ruling elite to modernise the state. The adopted style, which was based on creating/building an ultra secular, very centralised nation state, left no place for their identity differences and no place to practise the power they had. Following the reforms regarding the centralisation of the state, Kurdish notables revolted against the government. The insurgencies were mostly against the reforms, which were seen as the basic conditions of establishing modern state machinery. Thus, the Kurdish identity and related elements, such as language, were perceived as threats against building a modern state (McDowal, 1996; Bruinessen ; Natalie, 2005). Looking at these insurgencies would help us to understand the perception of the Kurds by the state and the other way around; perception of the reforms, undertaken by the state, by the Kurds. In doing so it is assumed that the process of construction of

perceptions regarding one another would be well grasped. To put it differently, it aims to unveil the image of Kurds in the minds of the state elite, while uncovering the image of the “new” elite in the eyes of the Kurds.

Developments such as establishing secular, centralist, western style state machinery, were perceived as threats by Kurdish notables to their privileges. Thus, they revolted against the state. On the other hand, the Kurdish people were mobilised by these Kurdish notables via securitisation of some notions such as religion, caliphate etc. Ergil argues that it was these developments/uprisings/resistance, which destroyed the “ruling elites’ faith in multiculturalism” (Ergil 2000: 124). In a way, it might be said that Kurdish uprisings facilitated and ‘necessitated’ the securitisation of Kurdish identity. The upheavals, for some, awakened the memories of state elite from late nineteen and early 20th century nationalist revolts in Balkans (Bozarslan, 2000: 17-30). Bozarslan shows court statements of Kurdish leaders of the insurgences to back up this argument and it was after the Sheik Said rebellion in 1925 that the famous *Takrir-I Sukun Kanunu* (Law of Maintenance of Order) was decreed. The law allowed the government, with the approval of the President, ‘to stifle all reactions and rebellions.’ This led to hundreds, maybe thousands of executions (McDowall, 1996, 184-200).

In the following pages I will try to narrate some of these remarkable upheavals, along with an effort to depict the context within which the insurgencies occurred (Ergil, 2000).

There are a number of Kurdish upheavals against the regime in the early years of the Republic; however, instead of narrating all of them, only two important and widely known insurgencies from the early years of the Republic will be analysed below, as the motives of the other insurgencies between 1923 to 1938 were similar.

1925 Sheikh Said upheaval

There is a discussion among academics on whether this uprising is nationalist or religious. For Bruinessen, “the uprising has often been described as a conservative religious reaction to the government’s modernising policies; there was however, an undeniable Kurdish nationalist dimension to it...” Also in his very well-known, and one of the first academic works conducted on Kurds, study *Agha, Shaik and State*, he highlights the component of Sheik Said Rebellion as being “neither a purely religious nor a purely nationalist one” (Bruinessen, 1978: 404-405). Olson’s observation is in the same direction by a narrow margin (Olson, 2000:69). However, Olson and Bozarslan argue that nationalist motives were dominant in the rebellion (Olson, 1989: 91-163; Bozarsalan, 1988). In opposition to this argument, Bruinessen stresses that while leading actors were nationalist, the people, “rank and files,” were more religious motivated.

Bruinessen also adds that the uprising was organised by “an underground organisation of Kurdish military officers and nationalist intellectuals [Ihsan Nuri Dersimi, Khoybun, Bedirxhans etc.]” He points out that Sheik Said was nothing more than a selected charismatic leader of a Sufi order. The very same discussion is in Turkish academia as well. While Yasar Kalafat (1992) and Uğur Mumcu (1992) assess the uprising as totally religious prompted, Aybars (1994: 301-327) and Tunçay (1981) believe that the dominant motive of the insurgency was nationalist. In the end, the discussion on the motives of the rebellion reveals that a religious discourse might be used by the leading figures of the upheaval to motivate people in order to mobilise them. Thus my understanding fits Umit Cizre’s explanation. She argues that the rebellion of Sheik Said “was basically an ethnic Kurdish rebellion with religious overtone” (Cizre, 1996: 235).

In short, the uprising occurred as follows. Sheik Said was a sheik/leader of the religious order Naqshbandiyya. After the reform process in the 1920s, which “disfranchised the traditional stratum tied to the Ottoman system”, Said of Piran made a call for resisting against “Turkish infidels” and asked for an Islamic or Kurdish country under the rule of religion/Sharia (Natali, 2005:81). He sent several letters to Kurdish religious and tribal leaders, publicised a *fatwa* (religious order given by an Islamic, recognised authority) which criticised the existing regimes’ approach to religion’s rule (Toprak, 1981: 64-65; Olson, 1989).

...the Turks have, moreover, themselves destroyed the last bond which remained between the Kurds and themselves, that of religion. Since the Khalifate has been cast off like a cracked water-pipe, all that remains is the feeling of Turkish oppression. ("Kurds and Turks" 1925; cited in Natali 2005:83)

The answer to the question why Sheik Said revolted against the existing regime is clear. It was the policies, which aimed at ending the structure of the pre-existing system, and the motives behind the uprising were a mix of religious and nationalist feelings.

Mount Ararat 1927-30

The other important Kurdish insurgence in those years was Mount Ararat. This rebellion came after the Sheik Said uprising in 1930.

In October 1927 those in exile following the Sheik Said rebellion gathered in Bihadun, Lebanon. At this meeting, a Kurdish umbrella organisation, *Xoybun* (Independence), was formed with the aim to bring all Kurdish political fractions under the leadership of Jaladat Badr Khan. This was a very modern post-tribal organisation that focused not on religious or tribal fractions between Kurdish groups, but on forming a "trained non-tribal force" (Mcdowall, :203) 43). This was the "most purely nationalist of all rebellions," in Bruinessen's words (Bruinessen, 1994: 149).

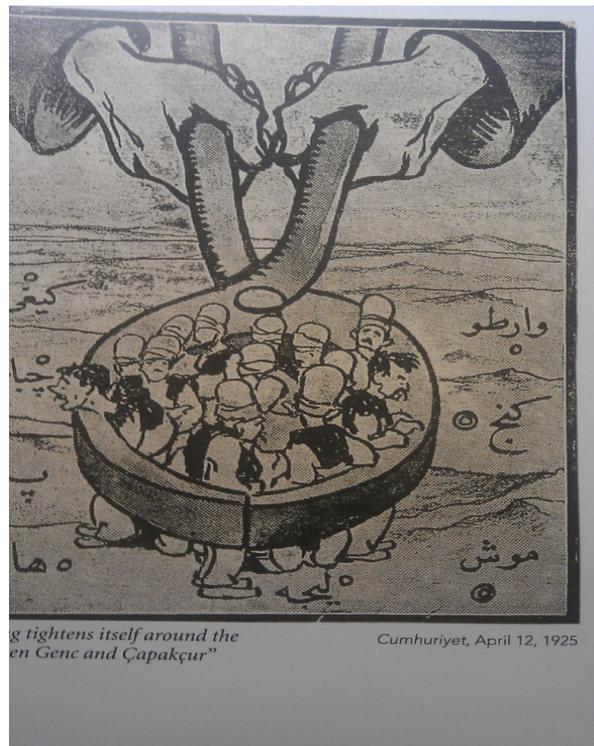
Then these forces were transmitted to the Mount Ararat region via Iran. The region became a Kurdish front against the Turkish state. Their success in the beginning compelled the Turkish government to contact and talk with them (White, 46). Finally, the Turkish government put pressure on the Iranian government and agreed with Iran to close the oil connections passing through Iran (Mcdowall, 205). This step, cutting off the supply line, broke the back of the insurgency. Furthermore allowed Kurdish troops to use Iranian lands as front against the Kurdish rebellion and bring an end to the Mount Ararat insurgency in 1930.

As a result of the rebellions in the early years of the Republic, the ruling elite considered “assimilation of the Kurds to Turkish Culture would be the best way of preventing future separatism, favouring forced resettlement over compulsory education (Bruinessen, 2008: 118). These rebellions and their harsh suppressions helped the government to exercise a more nationalist policy. Accordingly, Olson notes that “Suppression of Kurdish nationalist rebellions of 1925, 1930 and 1937-38 enabled the Turkish government to articulate a much more strident nationalist discourse within a one party autocracy” (Olson, 2000: 69).

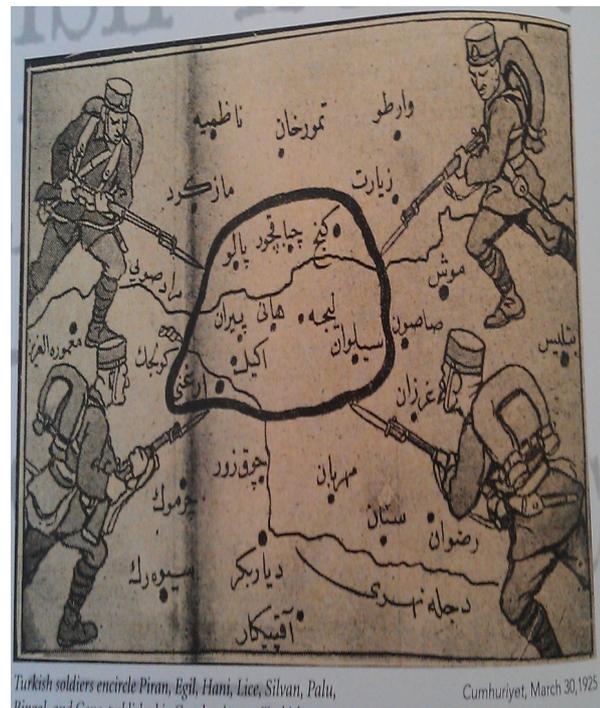
To uncover the perception of the state elites concerning the upheavals of the Kurds in the early years of the republic, some pictures from the newspaper

Cumhuriyet, which had direct ties and seen as the mouthpiece of the ruling elites of the era, will be analysed in the following section.

The first one (see picture below, cited also in Meiselas, 2008: 118) was published on April 12, 1925, just after the uprising of Sheik Said. People of the region were drawn and portrayed as uncivilised rebels. The state's reaction against the people was perceived as a way of shaping people. In the picture, a nail puller is used to shape the people in accordance with the aim of the elites, establishing a central ruling structure.



1 Picture, Sheik Said Rebellion, Source: Cumhuriyet



2 Picture, Kurdish Rebellion, Source: Cumhuriyet

The second picture (cited in Meselas, 2008: 118), also was a reflection of the perception towards the uprisings and possible solutions. In the second picture, which was published in March 1925, we see a region within which the uprising occurred and soldiers crushing the resistance. One of the main aims of the founders was centralisation. The ruling elites were in favour of exercising power to break the resistance and establish a structure of centralisation.

One of the other documents I encountered was from the English archive, a letter from the British Embassy in Istanbul to London. The letter was sent after the *Dersim* Rebellion in 1937, to inform the English government of the

developments in Turkey. The second half of the letter gives some information on the reform package that the government was planning to implement:

The Istanbul press has published details of the program of reform to be instituted in the Dersim area. This includes the construction of roads, bridges, schools and barracks, as well as the establishment of gendarmerie posts. It apparently proposed to introduce the banking system, and Mr. Catton has learnt that the *Is* Bank will shortly open several new branches in the Dersim region. It is also stated in the press that the feudal system will be abolished and that the chief Kurdish leaders will be transported to other and distant parts of Turkey.

In another example, Mazhar Mufit, the judge who sentenced Sheik Said and his friends to death, in his verdict regarding the people who attended the rebellions, states that:

...everyone should know that the government of the young Republic would not tolerate reactionary agitation or any kind of other accursed activities and that its firm measures will leave no place for this sort of rebellions movement. **The poor people of this region who have for centuries been exploited and oppressed by sheiks, aghas, begs, will be liberated from your evil agitations** and guided by our republic that promises them progress and happiness they will henceforth live in prosperity and happiness (Translated by Bruinessen in Meiselas 2008: 133).

This reform package has reflected how the rulers evaluated or the way they wanted to evaluate the reasons behind the upheavals. As mentioned before, they considered the problem as economic backwardness. The highlighted parts above indicate that the elite assumed that the rebellions emanated from regional backwardness and presumed that investing the region in physical terms would provide the integration. This approach was the first discursive approach, which was used by the elite and influenced the state policy towards the region and Kurds. However, there was no such demand from the people who rebelled against the central government. About this discursive preference by state elites, Yeğen argues that:

Whenever the Kurdish question was mentioned in TSD, it was mentioned as an issue of political reaction, tribal resistance or regional backwardness, but never as an ethno-political question. In TSD Kurdish resisters were not Kurds with an ethno political cause, but simply Kurdish tribes, Kurdish bandits, Kurdish sheiks- all the evils of Turkey's pre-modern past (Yeğen, 1999: 555).

Actually, all the insurgencies led/helped the Turkish government to adopt very harsh measures. For example, the law no 1850, issued after the Mount Ararat rebellion, facilitated legalisation of mass murders after bringing an end to the insurgency. The law was as follows:

"murders and other actions committed individually or collectively, from the 20th of June 1930 to the 10th of December..." (51)

These insurgencies became "pretexts" in Kendal's words, or, with reference to securitisation theory of Copenhagen school, became facilitating factors for the government to adopt extensive assimilationist policies, such as population exchange, banishments and prohibitions. However, on the other hand, these measures created the environment that led to more uprisings, which continue to this day.

[A Modern Kurdish Rebellion; the PKK](#)

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the military proclaimed itself 'guardian' of 'Ataturk's Republic.' Therefore, to 'protect' the Republic it has intervened in politics four times: in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997. The first three of these coups were direct military interventions. Following each coup, the Kemalist project of nation building was refurbished and the Constitution was reviewed and reshaped in line with Kemalist principles.

Kurdish movements following the 1938 *Dersim* insurgency entered into a process of stagnation until 1960s. These decades from 1940s to 1960s were called 'silence decades' for Kurdish movements. Although the Constitution drafted after the 1960 coup was assessed as being relatively more 'liberal,' it was not as liberal as it was thought. It formed some control mechanism such as a Constitutional Court and National Security Council (NSC), in order to check and

keep under control any developments threatening “Republican values” (Gözler, 2008: 189).

Also, from the early years of the Republic through the ‘silence years,’ the non-Turkish names of places were replaced with some new Turkish names (Argun, 2009). Alongside changing ‘foreign’ names of places into new Turkish names, state boarding schools were established in Kurdish intense areas (Işık and Arslan, 2012; Ak, 2004). All such steps clearly show the assimilationist intentions of the state. This means that even the ‘liberal’ Constitution drafted by Kemalist cadres aimed at assimilating diversity into one nation, which is Turkish. However, this relatively ‘liberal’ Constitution led to the emergence of some alternative leftist movements/voices within the global context of the time.¹⁸ These characteristically anti-fascist movements, the ‘knock-on effect of Europe’s 68 Generation’ (Özcan, 2006:52), were against *Kemalism’s* nation-building project. Therefore, Kurdish activists raised their voices in leftist parties and movements. However, in 1969 they separated from leftist fractions and formed Kurdish organisations called *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları* (Revolutionary Cultural Hearts). Then a group of university students, led by Abdullah Öcalan, formed *Apocular* in the 1970s and out of this group the PKK was established in 1978 in the capital of Turkey, Ankara. Its ultimate aim was to have an independent Kurdish state, Kurdistan, by waging ‘the war of national liberation’ of the Kurds of ‘north-west Kurdistan’” against the Turkish state. Then during the late 1970s

¹⁸ By ‘global context’ of the time it refers to the emerging leftist tendency and movements across the world.

they moved to the intensely Kurdish populated Southeast Turkey, historically known as Kurdistan (Marcus, 2007: 1).

Almost all the factions that emerged in the 1960s were suppressed by the Military coup in 1971 and then the following coup in 1980. The junta of the 1980 coup went further and revised the Constitution, banning speaking and writing in “non-official languages.” Article 26 of the 1982 Constitution stated, “in expression and dissemination of thoughts a language banned by the law cannot be used”. The language, which was banned, was explained in another article, issued in 1983 law, no 2932, which states that “except the official languages of the countries which were recognised by Turkish state using another language in expression, dissemination and publishing is forbidden.” Parents were forbidden to give their children Kurdish names and changing the Kurdish names of places to new Turkish names continued (Romano, 2006: 80).

The PKK benefitted from this in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as it gained public support. The organisation adopted a radical leftist, Marxist ideology. Thus, their first actions were against Kurdish tribal leaders, in order to create a ‘classless Kurdish society’ (Entessar, 2010: 123). Then the PKK started a campaign against the Turkish state. They particularly turned their focus on the military and started to launch guerrilla attacks on military posts and units based in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Following the military response, they found sanctuary in Syria and the Kurdish region of Iraq. However, in the 1980s and 1990s the state continued to perceive Kurds as a ‘Turkish tribe’ and the Kurdish

question only as “PKK terror,” and preferred to deal with it in the framework of security (Oran, 2006: 23).

In 1999 PKK leader Öcalan was captured in Kenya and brought to Turkey with the help of the US (McDowall, 2004: 443). Upon this development, the organisation declared a unilateral ceasefire, which would last until 2004. In 2004 the PKK broke the ceasefire and resumed its campaign against Turkey. Marcus in his book argues that this was a “response to Ankara’s political inaction; it was a way to ensure that the PKK remained relevant and in control” (Marcus, 2007: 2). The revival of the PKK threat and it being based in the Qandil area, a mountainous region within the borders of Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, has been one of the main factors pushing Turkey towards opening contact channels with the KRG. It is clear to me that, if not the most important, one of the main motives behind this ceasefire has been the desire of the US to open a front from the north, Kurdish side of Iraq. This incites me to again see the Western desire to secure an energy route as the main motive behind the current “peace process”, reconciliation process with the PKK in Turkey (see Demir, 2013b). This factor will be discussed in detail in the chapter that seeks to find regional motives behind the rapprochement.

IRAQI KURDS AND ‘KURDISTAN’

In the following pages of this chapter, I will endeavour to uncover the construction of the interpretation/perception of Iraqi Kurds and their advance

by Turkish Republic as reflection of the previously securitised notions revealed above.

This will provide the historical background for the following chapters, which aim to scrutinise the period 2003-2013 as a time of desecuritisation. In order to analyse the developments from 2003 to 2013, I borrow the term desecuritization, and facilitating factors from Copenhagen Schools' (de)-securitization theory.

To have a better grasp of the issue, before looking at Turkish perceptions of Iraqi Kurds, it is necessary to have some background information about the Iraqi Kurds and the emergence of the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government), the unique Kurdish political entity officially recognised by Turkey and in the global political system.

The Iraqi Kurds

After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the rest of the region, remnant of the Ottomans except Turkey/Anatolia, was divided into mandates and shared by France and the United Kingdom. Under the control of France and Britain, the region experienced a transformation period from an Imperial system to a state system. The borders of the countries were (re)demarkated and even some new countries, e.g. Iraq, Syria and Jordan, were established by both these powers (Stewart, 2013: 121-149). Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI in 1918, British forces invaded Mosul where the majority of Kurdish tribes lived. After the invasion a new state named Iraq, consisting of Baghdad, Basra and

Mosul provinces of the late Ottoman Empire, was formed under the mandate of Britain in 1919 (Ari, 2004: Stewart, 91-120).

In 1920 the government of the Ottoman Empire signed a “peace treaty” with allied powers. This post-WWI settlement scheme was known as Treaty of Sevres. Articles 62 and 63 of the treaty (Section III) gave autonomy to the lands intensely populated by Kurds:

...local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia, as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia... (Treaty of Sevres, Section III: 21).

As a further step, article 64 of the treaty recognised the Kurds’ right of applying to the League of Nations for independence. The treaty also provided Kurds living in the Mosul area, which includes today’s Kurdistan Region of Iraq, with the right of unification to a prospective Kurdistan. This article of the agreement left great doubt on the strategic perception of the Turkish elite with respect to the Kurds of Mosul, the majority of whom live within the borders of “modern Iraq” (see map below, figure 3).



Figure 3 Vilayet of Mosul

The following year, 1921, the British occupied Mosul and its surroundings (Baghdad and Basra provinces, see map above, figure 3), forming a Kingdom of Iraq, and Emir Faysal was crowned King of Iraq under the mandate of Britain (Ari, 2004). Following this development in 1923 Kurdish notable Shayk Mahmud Barzanji staged a revolt in the Kurdish majority part of Iraq against British rule and declared a Kingdom of Kurdistan. In the same year, the Republic of Turkey was founded and the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in July 1923, replacing the Treaty of Sevres. The latter treaty did not envisage any Kurdish state and recognised the National Pact Borders of Turkey (*Misak-ı Milliye Sınırları*) except Mosul. The first section of this agreement consists of territorial clauses. It settles the borders of Turkey, except in areas of some minor uncertainties, such as Mosul and Antioch/Hatay (Lausanne, Section I: 2-11).

The British approach to Kurds was initially affirmative; their ethnic identity was recognised. They were even considered equal to Arabs in the state. In short, Kurds with their identity were provided with a large political space. Denis Natali evaluates the underlying cause behind this approach as follows:

Although the British government gained colonial rights over Iraq, it had not secured control of the political apparatus or strategically territories. Key Arab communities, tribal groups, and regional states continued to destabilise the new government. In this insecure post-war transition period and with the fear of losing the oil-rich, Kurdish populated [at that time intensely Kurdish] Mosul Province, British officials made special efforts to pacify Kurdish communities (Natali, 2005:27).

The watershed of this affirmative policy was post-1925, when the British mandate took control of the country and established their colonial system over Iraq. Following the establishment of the British colonial system in Iraq, they raised Sunni Arabs over other communities in Iraq and made Arab nationalist Feisal (Sunni Arab) King of Iraq, excluding other sections from the administration body. Ramifications of this policy can be felt even today, in 2014.

Regarding the Kurds in Iraq, the colonial rule elected to support Kurdish tribal groups to the detriment of urban Kurdish communities. They kept special relations with Kurdish tribes and particularly tribal leaders, via their commissioners and bureaucrats, to control these rebellious groups/militias. They

exploited the rivalries between tribes and set them against one another, when necessary. To summarise, compared to Kurds in Turkey, tribal Kurdish communities in Iraq were provided with semi-autonomous political space under the British mandate (Natalie, 2005; McDowall, 2004; Bruinessen, 1978). These policies kept Kurds in Iraq distinct and less integrated into the state than their counterparts in Turkey.

Key figures; Barzani & Talabani

Barzani and Talabani have been leading figures in representing Iraqi Kurds and head of the two main parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (hereafter KDP) and the Patriotic Union Party (hereafter PUK). These two parties have been the main components of the current KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government).

In Iraq, Mulla Mustafa Barzani spearheaded a new rebellion and took both Irbil and Badinan regions under his control in 1943. However, just three years later in 1946 British air forces pushed Kurdish rebellions into Iran, where they were welcomed by Qazi Mohammed, the Iranian Kurdish leader and founder of the Kurdish Republic of *Mahabad*. Molla Mustafa Barzani played a key role in founding the Kurdish Republic. Also Barzani's KDP was formed and held its first congress there. However, in a very short time the Republic was invaded by Iranian forces and defeated. Qazi Mohammed was hanged, and Molla Barzani fled to the Soviet Union in the same year. From then on, until 1958, Kurdish nationalists were silent and invisible. In 1958 the Iraqi Monarchy was overthrown by a military coup. The new elite of Iraq drew a new Iraqi

constitution, which recognised Kurdish “national rights”. Upon this, Molla Barzani returned from the exile. The years of 1960-61 witnessed increasing tension between the Kurds and the government of Iraq. Finally, a peace accord was agreed upon by both sides. According to the accord, the Kurdish language was recognised as one of the official languages of Iraq and Kurds were recognised as one of the consisting nations of the state in the constitution. However, the peace brought by the accord lasted only one year and relations were again strained. Mullah Barzani rejected an autonomy offer by the Iraqi government to the Kurds, due to Kirkuk being left outside Kurdish autonomy and under the control of the Iraqi government (McDowall, 2004).

In a nutshell, autonomy for the region was promised by the central government, but never brought into force. Upon this, Mullah Mustafa restarted his rebellion against Baghdad. Meanwhile, the other important actor, Jalal Talabani, sided with Baghdad. Four years after the first unfulfilled promise, Baghdad re-offered autonomy to Barzani for northern Iraq, except Kirkuk, which had rich oil sources. However, when Iraq and Iran agreed on the “Algier Accord,” which solved the Iraq-Iran border dispute in 1975, Iran retracted its support from Talabani and Iraq breached its act with Barzani and unfulfilled its promise once again (Ari, 2004:488; Gunter, 1995; Bruinessen, 1996).

While there was such progress on Barzani’s side, in 1975 Talabani founded his PUK, supported by Syria, and launched a campaign against Iraq and the KDP. In 1978 a fight between KDP and PUK forces left many dead. Meanwhile, there

were some important changes in the leadership of the KDP in 1979. Mullah Mustafa Barzani, historical figure of Kurdish rebellion, died and his son Masoud assumed the leadership of the KDP. On the Iraqi side, Saddam Husain staged a military coup and overthrew the government, took power and became president (Ari, 2004).

In 1980 an 8-year war broke out between Iraq and Iran. During this war Barzani's KDP established close relations with Tehran, while the PUK stayed away until 1986. In 1983 Iran opened a northern front in the land under the control of the KDP against Iraq. In 1986 Tehran brought KDP and PUK together and reconciled them. Upon this, Talabani's PUK attended the KDP-Iran's front against Iraq. As the Iran-Iraq War was coming to an end in 1988, Saddam launched a brutal campaign on Kurds, for allying themselves with Iran, which became known as "Anfal." As part of this campaign nearly 200,000 people were killed, majority of whom were civilians. Saddam even used chemical weapons against vulnerable civilians; in Halabja 5,000 people were killed by this chemical weapon (Bruinessen, 2008: 308). Analysts point out that, as a result of this tragic event, Kurds in Iraq came to the attention of the international community.

[The emergence of the KRG \(Kurdistan Regional Government\)](#)

The US has twice invaded Iraq, first in 1991 and then again in 2003. While the first invasion did not overthrow Saddam Hussein, the second operation successfully knocked down the regime. It was second US-led invasion that

transformed not only Iraq but the regional order as well. However, both of these incursions favoured the Kurds in Iraq, making them more apparent in the region. For example, the Kurdistan Regional Government in the north of Iraq was formed in the “safe haven” established by the US and its coalition above the 36th parallel, after the US invasion during the 1991 Gulf War. After the unfulfilled promises to the Kurds by Iraqi governments, the Gulf crisis was a turning point for the Kurds.

As noted above, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds, one of the distinct ethnic groups of the Empire, were divided among and shared by four countries, Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. Gunter (Gunter, 2004: 201) argues that among those closest to establishing a state or state-like institution were Iraqi Kurds. They advantage of both 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran and 1991 Gulf wars, to resume their armed struggle for autonomy and perhaps even independence. Also Saddam’s murderous forays, Halepce and Anfal Campaign¹⁹ helped them be noticed by the international community. After such savagery, more than a million Kurdish refugees fled from Saddam to take refuge by the Iranian and Turkish borders. This population move forced the US and its coalition partners to establish a no-fly zone above the 36th parallel. Ironically, this humanitarian intervention enabled Iraqi Kurds to create a semblance of a quasi-independent state. Ankara was one of the coalition partners of the US and during that time Turgut Özal was president and he had to help Iraqi Kurds establish a no-fly

¹⁹ For details, see the Report of Middle East Watch & Physicians for Human Rights, 1993.

zone above the 36th parallel by allowing the Western powers to use the airbases in Adana to maintain the safe haven, and he also helped the Kurds be noticed by the international community (Bruinessen, 2008:308). Graham Fuller, head of the Middle East department in CIA at that time, in his 1993 article “The Fate Of Kurds”, argues that Kurds are one of the biggest groups without a state in the Middle East and now –just after the Gulf War- they are so close to be recognised by other countries and so close to making their own decisions about their future, which can have negative consequences for the countries where Kurds have been living (Fuller, 1993).

As a result, the region was formed after the Gulf War by allied powers to protect Iraqi Kurds from Saddam’s brutality. Since that date this region has been in a process of transformation from being a no-fly zone to a state-like entity. Until 1998 there were inter-tribal conflicts generally on land disputes and similar issues. There were some other Kurdish tribes, which did not have any affiliation with any of these parties. These disputes were used by the KDP and the PUK to “expand their influence over the small non-affiliated Kurdish tribes” (Akyol, 2008:9). Thus, a domestic balance of power was established among Kurdish power holders in the region. Alongside this natural process, in 1999 there were some attempts by the US to bring an end to the conflict between the PUK and the KDP and establish a stable administration in the region. For this purpose, leaders of the parties were invited to Washington for discussions.

Then the entity advanced towards a semi-autonomous federation, which had its own foreign policy and oil revenue, after the incursion in 2003. The Iraq invasion in 2003 and the Turkish parliaments' rejection of the US wish to use Turkish land to launch a ground incursion into Iraq made Iraqi Kurds "a key ally to the US" Furthermore in 2005 the federation status of the KRG was formally recognised by the Iraqi Constitution.

The main concern of neighbouring countries with Kurdish populations has been the Kurdish success in northern Iraq that can trigger the desire of their own Kurds (Natalie, 2005; Barkey, 2010; Park, 2005; Gunter, 2004).

Enemy Stories

Traditionally the Turkish ruling elite always thought that a success in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq would have a knock-on or spillover effect on the Kurds in Turkey. So they conducted a defamatory/securitisation campaign against the Kurds in Iraq. Barkey (2010) called this fear of "political mobilisation," or in Gunter's (2004:108) words, this was fear of a "magnet effect". By "political mobilisation" or "magnet effect," Barkey and Gunter mean political developments in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which may trigger/mobilise Kurds living in the "other parts of Kurdistan". The Turkish elite thought Turkish Kurds could see and claim to have such a structure (federation) in Turkey. Furthermore, Kurds in Turkey and Iraq, even Kurds in Syria and Iran, can come together to establish a proper "Great Kurdistan" after the success of Kurdistan in Iraq. This fear is not new, but a remnant of "Sevres

Syndrome”, which has been the core point of Turkish strategic culture and security policy since the establishment of the Republic. Furthermore, this fear makes decision-makers interpret every development in the region as a threat against its “unity” (Jung, 2001).

To make the reason behind this fear clear, we need to go back to the early years of the state. The following statement by Mustafa Kemal, founding father of the Republic, reflects this fear:

Mosul is extremely important for us. Firstly as an oil rich region...Secondly, [because of] equally important issue of Kurdism (*Kürtçülük*), Britain tries to create a Kurdish state there. If it does so [the idea of Kurdism] will also get spread out among the Kurds inside our borders (Kemal Atatürk, cited in Mumcu, 1991: 47).

By Mosul he did not mean the current city of Mosul, but the region in northern Iraq that includes Erbil, Suleimania, and Kirkuk.

Traditionally Turkey has a very sceptical political culture. As Robins points out, Turks are distrustful of their adjacent countries (Robins, 2003). It was easy to find reflections of this scepticism and lack of trust in daily life. There are common sayings in Turkish, such as “Turkey is a country surrounded by the seas on three sides and by the enemies on four sides”; “There are no friends of Turks except Turks” etc. These expressions are the remnants of “Sevres Syndrome” which was used to explain the fear of being invaded by the neighbouring

'enemies' [external and internal] and being broken into pieces as predicted in the Treaty of Sevres, which never came into force (Kirişçi, 2006; Park, 2005). This metaphor reflected the state's traditional perspective of international relations and security culture. Turkey's neighbourhood policy was under the influence of this (Narlı, 2010 more reference needed; Önis).

A policy or perception shaped in this sceptical political culture towards a Kurdish entity would be very problematic. As a result, under the circumstances Kemalist statecraft and mass media in Turkey preferred to use and impose the name of "northern Iraq" with regard to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Kurdistan as a name has been labelled an existential threat. Its existence in any part of the globe was labelled an existential threat against the unity of the Republic by the founding elite (Demir, 2013). It is noteworthy that until recently the traditional Iraq policy and its characteristics have been maintained and relations with Iraqi Kurds were shaped by this approach. Official documents and statements related to Turkish-Iraqi relations have always pointed out the "unity of Iraq" as an absolute must for Turkish interests (Robins, 2003). Any separatist movement in Iraq with implicit reference to Kurdish groups was seen as a threat the unity of Iraq, but also to the unity of Turkey.

A Break from Traditional Policy

The first engagement of the Turkish state with the Kurdish groups in Iraq happened during the Özal era in the late 1980s. The PKK guerrillas in the north

of Iraq were the main reason why the Turkish security elite contacted Iraqi Kurdish groups and their elites. Traditionally, Turkey throughout its republican history had supported the unity of Iraq, even sometimes more than Iraqis did. This was mainly because of the possible effect of the partition of Iraq on Turkish state structure.

President Özal's approach to Iraqi Kurds was a dramatic departure from the conventional perception of the Kemalist regime with respect to the Kurdish identity. He positively engaged with the Iraqi Kurds, recognising the Kurdish leadership in Iraq. However, in this engagement again Turkey was playing its role as a reliable ally to NATO. For the first time in its history the Turkish presidency accepted Kurdish leaders. Turkey facilitated their engagement with the US, for example providing Kurdish leadership with passports (Barkey & Fuller, 1998:135). Kurds were being supported by the US against Saddam and Turkey as a NATO ally was asked to provide them with security. Despite this reality at a higher level of politics, Özal's approach was a real breakthrough in terms of resisting the Kemalist establishment (Çandar, 2012).

However, in the post-Özal era the following governments adopted the very same traditional perception of Iraqi Kurds again. The image of Iraqi Kurdish groups was drawn as "enemy," "puppets," of "foreign powers" in a similar way the Arabs and their "tribe" leaders were coded in Turkish perception as "untrustworthy," "undisciplined," "unreliable," "traitor," and "backward"

(Bozdağlıoğlu, 2004: 112-115).²⁰ Turkish officials adopted a very orientalist language. Kurdish ruling elites were regarded as “tribe leaders,” “traitors,” “collaborators” of exogenous powers etc. For instance, in an official record dated 12. 08. 1999 by the then President/Speaker of the Assembly Cemil Çiçek, who is President of the current Assembly as well, regards Barzani and Talabani as tribe leaders in his address to the Parliament. He stated that:

“...**the tribe leaders** in northern Iraq, Barzani and Talabani, are frequently being invited to the US and spending huge efforts to bring an end to the conflict between them and to **set a new order** for northern Iraq. And it’s clear that there is a constant progress in this...In addition, in the past few days it has been announced that Barzani will **raise a new flag**, declare their **national anthem**. There are claims that after some time he will **print money** in the name of himself... it is a must that Turkey should follow the developments in the region seriously to **protect the unity of Iraq**, existing of Turcoman and national security, territorial integrity and **unitary state structure of herself.**”

The highlighted phrases reflect Turkey’s main concern/fear regarding any potential Kurdish success in Iraq. It is clear that the main fear regarding the Iraqi Kurds has been “setting a new order for northern Iraq,” which means the emergence of a Kurdistan in Iraq. “Raising a new flag,” “declaring national anthem” and “printing money” are state symbols.

Iraqi Kurdish leaders have been presented very negatively in Turkish mainstream media too, as enemy/threat to the very foundation of the Republic in parallel with state discourse (to see Kiliç, 2010; Kaplan, 2003, Güzel, 2007). There are a number of studies conducted on the topic arguing that these sources deliberately libel and slander the leading figures and personages of Iraqi Kurds (Medialog, 2009; Güngör, 2009; Demir & Zeydanlıoğlu, 2010).

Until recently the reference points of Turkey's approach to Iraqi Kurdish groups has been through the lens of national security. The developments in the region have been received as national security matters. Even the recent official documents and statements adopt this language. The region's official name is not used and is instead referred to as "northern Iraq" in official documents and statements.

Of course, there have been reasons why Turkey sees Kurdish groups and any Kurdish advance, even when it occurs out of its boundaries, as a threat. One of the most cited reasons has been any possible influence of any Kurdish progress on Turkey's own Kurdish population. In Henri Barkey's words, fear of "political mobilisation" (Barkey, 2010), or in Atatürk's words, the "spreading out" effect of Kurdism. This means that it is believed that if Kurds in any neighbouring countries with Kurdish population/minority managed to secure any autonomy or self-rule, it would have direct bearing on Kurds in three other countries. Turkey perceives not only Kurdish success in Iraq but also any Kurdish success

anywhere in the world as a potential threat to its territorial integrity. This had been the guiding principal of Turkish foreign policy regarding the Kurds out of Turkey's borders. The other reason for the perception of Iraqi Kurds as a threat has been the deployment of the PKK in the region and its attacks on Turkey. This very fact significantly facilitated the construction of this narrative of "enemy."

The historical perception of Kurds in general has been as "uncivilised", "barbarous", "traitor" people "in their nature," providing the basis for the construction of the image of Iraqi Kurds as an enemy. **"Kurds" were a securitised notion that needed to be dealt with.** Thus it was normal, and what had been expected of them, to be an enemy of "modern" Turkey. This view has been prevalent until recently. During the invasion of Iraq Turkey's main concern was its possible effect on the Kurdish dominated region of Iraq.

Prime Minister Erdoğan was adopting the same language. In June 2007, responding to a question related to any crossborder operations of Turkish military into the north of Iraq to chase PKK militias, Prime Minister Erdoğan said that:

Our counterparts are not Kurdish leaders, but central government in Iraq. And I met both President and Prime Minister of the central government. However, apart from these [Iraqi President and Prime Minister] I can not meet a [sic] **tribe leader** [Barzani].

This shows that the mainstream perception of Kurds and Iraqi Kurds in Turkish politics has been totally parallel to the Kemalist approach. To put it differently, the majority of the parliament, including those who reject the Kemalist understanding, have been carrying a Kemalist mind-set with reference to the Kurdish problem. The above quote shows that the Kemalist mind-set, the Kemalist baggage with respect to the Kurdish question carried on until 2007.

Fear of the emergence of a Kurdistan has led and shaped Turkey's relations with the Kurdish political units in neighbouring countries. Karakaya, regarding Turkey's Kurdish problem and its influence on Turkey's foreign policy, argues that "It [Kurdish demands] has been one of the most securitized issues in domestic politics, and has also influenced relations with neighbouring countries" (Karakaya, 2008: 75). In other words, it has been the perception of Kurdistan or probability of a "Great Kurdistan" that led Turkey's conventional relations with the Kurds in the Middle East in general and the Kurdistan Region in Iraq in particular, who have been closest to statehood. Thus, this thesis argues that the Kurdish identity has been one of the mostly securitised issues, not only in domestic but also in foreign politics, with respect to its impact on Turkey's relations with neighbouring countries with Kurdish population. Therefore, Turkey's relations with the Kurds abroad have been the embodiment of this understanding/fear of Kurdish identity/existence. In line with this argument, Karakoç also argues that Kurdish identity has been one of the main determinants

in Turkish foreign policy towards its “neighbours and near environment.” She also rightly argues that it affects not only Turkey’s relations with its near environment, but also “as subject of human rights” it has had huge impact on Turkey’s relations with the EU and EU countries (Karakoç, 2010).

Iraqi Kurds’ perception of Turkey is also in parallel with Turkish perception of Iraqi Kurds, which is discussed above. Turkey has always been seen as hostile to the Kurds and to their dream of “Kurdistan.” However, for the Iraqi Kurds, who are relatively closer to the US and protected and supported by the US since the Gulf War, Turkey has been the only “Western power,” with respect to it being a NATO ally, in the Middle East, the volatile region Kurds live in. Although both sides did not trust each other, they had to keep open some diplomatic channels during 1990s. As mentioned before, Turkey, with its air bases and military powers, played a crucial role in establishing a “no-fly zone” over the Iraqi Kurdish area, above the 36th parallel in Iraq as part of Operation Northern Watch (Globalsecurity).²¹ Kurdish leaders were provided with Turkish diplomatic passports to travel in the western world. These steps taken by the Turkish state might be seen as contradicting its historical concerns, and demonstrate the extent of NATO or US influence on Turkish foreign policy. In return for this Turkish help, Iraqi Kurds, particularly Barzani’s KDP, joined and helped Turkish forces during military interventions into the region against the PKK. However, these efforts have always been disregarded or seen as

²¹ For details of the Operation, see “Operation Northern Watch,” available at: *Globalsecurity.org*.

inadequate by Turkey. After all, they were Kurds, “unreliable” in not only state but also Turkish perceptions. This perception of Kurds in state discourse is uncovered in Mesut Yegen’s works (see Yegen, 1996; 1998; 1999; 2007). Iraqi Kurds were well aware of how they were viewed by Turkish eyes. For historical reasons and rhetoric, Turkish policies used against Kurds in general and Iraqi Kurds in particular, the Turkish state was seen as “untrustworthy.”

After the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, Turkey continued to hold this hostile position for a while. For example, Turkey held its traditional policy towards Kurds’ possession of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and once again regarded any Kurdish advance in Kirkuk as its “red line,” *casus belli*. This reaction of Turkey is discussed in detail in the following chapter, under the rubric of “recurring Turkish concerns.”

CONCLUSION

The founding fathers of the Republic of Turkey aimed to establish a western style nation state. France has been the example/model for the elite, because the majority of the ruling elite were educated in France, or could read and write in French. Mustafa Kemal himself was a French reader influenced by French culture and so his modernisation model was that of a French-style ‘modern’ Turkish state (Mango, 2000). Toci argues that,

In order to create a single, indivisible and homogenous nation able to fend off all threats to the state, Atatürk attempted to impart upon the peoples of Anatolia and Rumelia the 19th century French conception of civic nationalism and citizenship... All citizens would be first class citizens regardless of their race or religion. Hence, no minorities, other than those mentioned by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne [religious minorities], would be recognised (Toci, 2001:2-3).

The elite perceived and constructed elements standing against creating such a polity as a threat. This securitisation policy enabled them to stay in control of developments perceived as threats through extraordinary/illegal measures such as military actions, assimilation policies, relocations etc. Security has been the foremost excuse for the state bureaucracy to legitimise taking exceptional measures. The existence of Kurds as distinct identity/ethnicity was seen as a threat by the ruling elites, who were known Kemalists, so to eliminate this threat they took measures such as military suppression, assimilation, relocations and denial of existence.

Not only Kurds within the borders of Turkey, but all Kurds were perceived as a threat to the foundation of 'modern' Turkey. This conception has been constructed as a "red line" in strategic and National Security documents of the state. The Turkish elite have been close observers of any Kurdish developments in neighbouring countries. Fear of a Kurdish advance pushed the ruling elite to support the unity of these neighbouring countries, even sometimes to the

detriment of its regional and economic interests. Turkish elites who denied the existence of Kurds and any Kurdistan also avoided and rejected using these two words in any documents. They have never called the Iraqi Kurdistan Region with its official name, instead preferring “northern Iraq” (Demir, 2013). Kurdish political leaders were seen as “tribe leaders” until recently.

The pattern of avoiding direct relations with the Iraqi Kurds was only broken in the Özal era to an extent, for a short time, under the specific context of the time, in the course of the Gulf War. Following the sudden death of President Özal, Turkish governments continued to pursue the previous/traditional policies towards Iraqi Kurds. However, since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, particularly after the withdrawal of the US military, Turkey’s attitude towards the Iraqi Kurds and their political entity became more positive. This new attitude is discussed in the following part. It is noteworthy, and this thesis argues, that in both cases the US, as a powerful NATO ally, played a crucial role in Turkey’s bypassing of/passing over its own “red lines.”

PART II) THE EXTENT OF TURKEY'S CHANGING POLICY TOWARDS THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ; Picturing The Recent Times

Introduction

Andre Gunde Frank in the preface of his famous groundbreaking work, *Re-Orient*, underlines that a research should be done backwards (Frank, 1998). He explains that it should first take a picture of the current/present, then seek/dig for the dynamics/motives of the apparent reality/picture backwards. By adopting this as a guiding principle and methodological structure of the present work, the following chapter aims to take a recent picture of Turkey's relations with Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq. Then, the motives behind this picture are sought in part III.

As current picture, a “new” and sui generis Kurdish entity/regional actor has been emerging about 350 km above of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. It is a *sui generis* entity in terms of having its own security forces (*peshmergas*-Kurdish militia), foreign policy/relations, and being capable of signing agreements/contracts despite the opposition of federal government of the state of which it is part.²² As much as being a unique political entity with reference to

²² For example, in 2013 signed an independent Pipeline agreement with Turkey, despite the opposition of the central government in Baghdad. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/01/08/oil-iraq-turkey-idUKL6N0KI3FW20140108>

above-mentioned features, being a Kurdish entity draws the attention of neighbouring countries, particularly Turkey. As is very well known to observers of Turkish foreign policy and politics, the ruling elite and Turkish bureaucracy had long perceived a possible success in the Kurdish Region of Iraq as existential threat to the unity of the Republic, because of its spillover effect (Park, 2005; Natalie, 2005; Olson, 2003). It seems that the main reason behind this interpretation has been securitisation, which comes to mean construction of the notion of Kurds, Kurdishness and Kurdistan as existential threat to very foundation of the “holy unity” of the Republic in its early years. This process of securitisation has been analysed in depth in the previous chapter, as background of this work.

Structure of Part II

After giving a picture of the past in the previous chapter, this chapter concentrates on recent relations, over the past decade. Developments since 2003 show a dramatic and positive change in Turkey’s relations with a Kurdish political unity outside its borders, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, a new trend.

This chapter aims to present the current relationship via looking at the Turkey-KRG relations over some snapshots/events occurring in the last decade to see the extent of the policy shift/departure from the traditional one, explained in the previous chapter under the rubric of ‘enemy stories.’

The chapter argues that to establish constructive relations between Turkey and the KRG, the AKP governments have been trying to normalise the region and its political elites, who were once labelled 'tribe leaders', 'bandits,' 'terrorists' or 'collaborators of the PKK' (Akgün, 2008; Demir & Zeydanioğlu). Therefore, it might be said that this part of the research aims to demonstrate the process of the shift in Turkey's policy towards the Iraqi Kurds, from 'enemy stories' to 'brother' stories.²³ In other words, it is a process of shift in language from 'terrorist' or 'collaborator' to '*kak*' (elder brother).

The 2003-2012 period witnesses a number of very important developments, which might be seen as indicators of emerging relations between Turkey and the KRG. Hence, the chapter aims to analyse the developments and discourses of the responsible actors/leading figures both chronologically and thematically. A number of snapshots are being put under scrutiny in order to detect the attempts at normalising by the officials/elite of the AKP governments of Turkey.

The period is divided into two parts, under two themes. The first part focuses on the period 2003-2008, under the theme of 'Facing the Reality'. It argues that although the period of pre-invasion and aftermath of the invasion (2003-2008) witnessed that conventional concerns of both sides, in due course these concerns faded away. It also suggests that, at elite level, there is a shift of

²³ "If Iraq is divided and it is inevitable, they [Iraqi Kurds] are our brothers ... Unfortunately, the situation in Iraq is not good and it looks like it is going to be divided," Huseyin Celik, spokesman for the ruling AKP, told the Financial Times on 27 June 2014.

perception regarding the advance of Iraqi Kurds (in the post-2008 era). However, this shift shows its concrete effects in the second term, which starts in 2008.

CHAPTER 3. Invasion of Iraq and Turkish Perception of Iraqi Kurds; 2003-2008

In the wake of the Invasion

In contrast to the 1990-91 Gulf War, in 2003 the Bush administration was determined to bring an absolute end to the Saddam regime in Iraq. In the Gulf War in 1990s, although Saddam was defeated, the US allowed him to stay and rule the country. Before the war started, Dick Cheney, Vice President of the US, had asked CIA director Luis Rueda if it was possible to overthrow Saddam without going to war. His response was negative. He told Cheney that Saddam annihilated his opposition so that organising a coup or counter movement was not possible:

He [Saddam Husein] destroyed anybody who has a talent to do this...the possibility of overthrowing Saddam Hussein via coup is nil the only solution is war (BBC, part1: 3-5).

Kurds' prior Concern: If Saddam stays

Before the war commenced, Kurdish leaders Masoud Barzani, leader of the KDP, Celal Talabani, leader of the PUK, and some other figures from the Iraqi Kurdish front, were invited to the US. A meeting was held at a secret CIA training camp in rural Virginia with some senior CIA officials. Deputy Director

of the CIA, John McLaughlin, stated to the Kurdish leaders that: “In the event that the United States embarks upon this operation, we are going to need a network of intelligence agents in Iraq’. He added that “they, the Kurds, have been fighting Saddam for decades; they had contacts and intelligence, they knew the region very well.” (BBC, 2013: part 1: 4-7) In the words of Luis Rueda, CIA Chief of Iraq Operation:

...Removing Saddam almost certainly meant war. So good intelligence inside Iraq would be essential. The Kurds, from the mountainous north, had been fighting Saddam for decades. The Americans turned to them. The Kurds helped the Americans in the past but it had cost them...the Kurds had networks, the Kurds had contacts, there were Kurds throughout all of Iraq and I explained to them that ‘Kurds are an integral part of this thing. We need you to provide access to intelligence, to provide access to your territory.

However, the Kurds were anxious, concerned. Images of the Gulf War were still fresh in their minds (Ahmad, 1992). Their main concern was the cutting off of US support after the invasion and the possibility of another brutal attack by Saddam, as had happened before the Gulf War in *Halabja*²⁴ in 1988 (Bruinessen, 1994: 171-76). They were suspicious of the US, because in the words of Michael Gunter, an expert on US relations with Kurds, “the Kurds remember that they

²⁴ The town of Halabja was bombed by Saddam’s regime in March 1988. Chemical weapons were used and around 5,000 Kurdish people, including children and women, were murdered. For the details of this tragic event see Martin van Bruinessen, 1994, “Genocide of the Kurds”, *The Widening Circle of Genocide* (in), 171-176.

were twice betrayed by the United States, once in 1975 and again in 1991, and therefore might be again” (Gunter, 2011:94). Jonathan Randal in his book argues that Barzani had “never forgotten Kissinger’s ‘treachery’ in 1975, had never totally recovered from the humiliation of his years of enforced exile, which he blamed on the United States” (Randal, 1998: 299).

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger accepts and rationalises the “betrayal” of the US in 1975 in his book *Years of Renewal*. He argues, “saving the Kurds would have required the opening of a new front in inhospitable mountains close to the Soviet border” (Kissinger, 1999: 576). That means the Kurds were sacrificed due to greater US security concerns.

Leader of the PUK Talabani, regarding this matter, stated to the BBC: “I refused to have any kind of contact with the United States of America. But at that time in Iraq, we reached the conclusion that removal of dictatorship was impossible without the support from outside”. In compliance with Talabani’s statement, Barzani, the other Iraqi Kurdish leader, stated, ‘we said “convince us you [US officials] want regime change. We won’t be left stranded again.” In the end they, the Kurds, were persuaded. In the words of Berham Salih “this is, at long last. It is for real” and he whispers to Talabani’s ear ‘this time you can get rid of Saddam Hussein’. Kurds were assured that the Bush administration was determined to overthrow Saddam’s regime. The intention of the government was very explicitly announced in a press conference after the Bush-Blair meeting in April 2002. Bush stated that ‘the policy of my government is the removal of

Saddam, and all options are on the table.’ After taking these assurances, the Kurdish leadership decided to take the side of the US during the War. This decision has been the first step in forming a legal Kurdish political entity, which would formally materialise in the Iraqi Constitution in 2005.

Second concern of the Kurds: Turkey’s role in the invasion

The second concern of the Kurds was Turkish involvement in the north of Iraq. This was a traditional reflex of the Kurds against the Turkish state. This concern was eliminated as well, ironically not by the US, but by Turkey. Actually the concern disappeared without any need of US interference. The motion of non-involvement by the Turkish Parliament started the war without Turkey. Thus, the Kurds were assured of the non-involvement of Turks. The background and details of the process, which is known as “March Crisis”, are narrated below, with the help of some leaked US diplomatic cables.

An important incident that occurred in 1999 needs to be noted here. Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was captured and brought to Turkey in February 1999. Details of this incident might be useful to contextualise the invasion of Iraq in 2003. From a critical perspective, it is noteworthy that there had been some interesting developments since 1999 in the region. The process of EU membership gained a momentum in Turkey. Turkey was asked to make reforms within her state machinery to meet the EU requirements, called Accession or

Copenhagen Criteria.²⁵ Then the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan was captured in 1999. Up until then he had taken refuge in Syria, an ally of the opposite camp led by Russia. According to some sources, US officials played a crucial role in the capture of Öcalan (Weiner, 1997). Soon after Öcalan's capture the PKK declared a cease-fire, which would last until 2004 (Sarihan, 2013:). On the eve of the invasion the US might have wanted the PKK not to be a millstone round its neck. As this picture indicates, the US had been preparing the region, making some arrangements before 11 September 2001 within the region for the invasion, which would take place in 2003. It would have been for these purposes that in 1997 the US had initiated a project to settle the on-going conflict between Celal Talabani and Masoud Barzani. It is interesting that Turkey was asked to play the role of observer in the reconciliation process between Barzani and Talabani. The regional developments from 1999 to 2009 (from the capture of Öcalan in 1999 to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the 2009 Kurdish peace process in Turkey) were engineered to facilitate a project of **construction of a secure route** for Iraqi oil, its potential estimated to be around 12 million bpd, better than Saudi oil. This point is discussed in detail further in the thesis.

²⁵Accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria): "To join the EU, a new Member State must meet three criteria: **political**: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; **economic**: existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; **acceptance of the Community acquis**: ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union."

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen_en.htm

What made Berham Salih whisper in his leader's ear "This time you can get rid of Saddam Hussein" and what convinced the Kurds that the US was determined to overthrowing Saddam's regime? These fundamental questions also in a way explain the motives behind the rapprochement of Turkey and the KRG in long run. In other words, the main motives behind the de facto decision taken by the Turkish government to desecuritize the existence of a Kurdistan within the borders of Iraq, which is discussed in the second part of this chapter (3.2). These questions are answered in chapters 5 and 6, which look at regional and global dynamics from the perspective of the Western energy security and Iraqi or half Kurdish untapped 'sweet oil,' as this thesis fundamentally suggests.

The following section discusses the developments during and in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, as related to the Kurds' position in Iraq and Turkey's reactions.

Invasion of Iraq; Recurring Turkish concerns

Initiative of Iraq's Neighbours

Against this backdrop, in January 2003 Turkey took the initiative and with the participation of Iran, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt held the first meeting of Initiative of Iraq's Neighbours. By launching this initiative Turkey managed to bring Iraq and its neighbours together.²⁶

²⁶ "Irak'a Komsu Ulkeler Girisimi Nasil Basladi?" CNN Turk (2 Nov 2007).
<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-139766-turkey-led-initiative-grows-to-be-key-platform-on-iraq.html>

Turkey's main reason for organising/initiating such a meeting (the first one held in Istanbul in January 2003) was of course the Kurdish question, or its traditional concerns regarding the emergence of a 'Kurdistan.' The possibility of the emergence of a Kurdish state in Iraq following the invasion of Iraq, which was certain at that time, was the main determinant of Turkey's efforts in the region in those days. This fear has led and shaped Turkey's relations with the regional countries throughout its history, as discussed previously. Now it was again playing its role, but rather more intensively. It was directly touching on the security nerves of Turkey and inciting it to spearhead such initiatives as pre-emptive action, in order to curb any possible advancement of Iraqi Kurds. In rhetoric, the initiative was a very 'humane' reaction, which aimed at preventing a war against Iraq. However, there was a fear of change in the regional status quo that lay behind this 'humane' intention. It is also essential to note that what Turkey has perceived by the status quo in the Middle East has been the absence of a Kurdistan, rather than unity, the indivisibility of the state of Iraq.

In the beginning the initiative was opposed by the United States; first because it was being left out, then because it opposed a war against Iraq. However, in due course, this initiative expanded to permanent members of the UN Security Council and G8 countries, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Arab League and the European Commission. Şaban Dişli, then deputy chair of the ruling AKP regarding inclusion of the US, told the press that:

At first, the United States was not included in the initiative. Turkey is the one who proposed Washington's inclusion, and this was welcomed by other members of the initiative as well. Now it feels so natural that it almost seems like a US-led initiative, because the US is still in Iraq and controlling the country.

The meetings continued in the post invasion era too. However, the main agenda of those meetings was always the 'unity' and 'integrity' of Iraq. It changed its aim from 'preventing war' to 'stabilize Iraq and improve regional security,' as it is noted in the beginning of the Marmara Declaration, which was issued following the second meeting convened in Istanbul in March 2007 (The Marmara Declaration, 2007: 1). In the post invasion era Turkey's main anxiety/fear has been any possible control of Kirkuk by the Kurds, which has been one of the traditional concerns of Turkey regarding the Iraqi Kurds, because of its possible positive impact on Kurdish advance in Iraq. It is also important to note that this initiative lost its impact, in due course, because of the rapidly changing regional context and new political developments. In parallel with this, Ali Özcan of TOBB University notes that:

Right from the beginning, establishing such a platform was good foresight. But one has to admit the fact that both the political environment in the region and the dominance of actors in the region have changed over time. And also over time, every actor wanted to use this platform as a place to voice its own concerns. The United States believes that the platform is

useful for voicing its own concerns about Iraq; however, on the other side, the Shiite-Sunni issue turns the platform into a venue of regional competition. It is debatable to what extent Turkey can defend its thesis concerning Iraq in such a tense environment.

At this point, although it is outside the period under analysis, it would be good to remember that insufficiency and lack of such platforms for parties to voice their concerns would lead to the emergence of sectarian tension in Iraq and radical Sunni movements (IS) in the region in 2014 (Demir, 2014, Tzaman).

In conclusion, it might be noted that this Turkey-led initiative has been a good indicator reflecting Turkey's traditional concerns with respect to Kurdish advance in Iraq.

March Crisis: In March 2003 the Turkish Parliament rejected a motion that would allow the US military to use Turkish land to open a northern front for the invasion of Iraq. Rejection of the motion was seen as a crisis in Turkish-American relations (Taşpınar, 2011: 13-14; Zanotti, 2014).

Having analysed the relevant diplomatic cables, leaked by the *Wikileaks*, issued by the US embassy in Turkey in late 2002 and early 2003, it is very clear that the US government did its best to persuade the Turkish government to pass the motion of allowance. US officials assured Turkey of her red lines regarding Iraq.

According to a leaked cable, Wolfowitz, US Deputy Secretary of Defence, gave a guarantee to Turkish officials that:²⁷

- Turkey's red lines on military action against Iraq were also US red lines;
- The territorial integrity of Iraq would be preserved;
- There would be no independent Kurdish state;
- The rights and welfare of the Turcoman people would be protected;
- Iraqi national control of Kirkuk and Mosul would be retained; and,
- Iraqi national control of the nation's oil would be retained.

There were a number of other attempts by US officials, revealed by similar cables, to diffuse concerns of Turkish officials regarding Turkey's 'red lines' and possible economic loss that would stem from the invasion of Iraq. However, despite the support of the newly elected AKP government of Turkey, the motion was turned down by the anti-votes of the MPs. Before submission of the motion/resolution, it had been split into two. The first part of the resolution was about deployment of Turkish troops in Iraq. Turkey and the U.S. had agreed that 52,000 Turkish soldiers would deploy in the north of Iraq. As it may be noticed, this was a precaution against Kurds in Iraq, due to Turkey's conventional Iraq policy, which has been primarily under the influence of the Kurdish problem in Turkey and its ties in Iraq. The ties in Iraq were PKK

²⁷ Wolfowitz And Grossman Press Turks For Support On Iraq, 20 December, 2002. http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/02ANKARA9058_a.html

militants, deployed in Qandil, a range of mountains located on Turkey-Iraqi border, and fear of possible spillover of any nationalist success of Iraqi Kurds. The second part of the resolution submitted to the Parliament was related to the deployment of US troops through Turkey to open a front against Iraq. As expected, the first part of the motion was passed by the majority of the parliament while the second part, which would authorise the US troops to deploy through Turkey, was turned down by Turkey's Grand National Assembly (TBMM) in March 2003. It was rejected by 250 MPs, while supported by 264 MPs. According to the Constitution (article 96) of Turkey, the motion could only pass by the support of an absolute majority of MPs, at least 267.

The position of the Turkish Government was as if it was stuck between its society, that was strictly against any intervention in Iraq, and US officials, who were insistently asking Turkey to let them use its territory to open a northern front during the war. For example, the famous motto used in different walks of the life was "*size Irak bize yakın*" (the word of Iraq has two meanings in Turkish, besides being a name of a neighbouring country it means far-off).

This catchphrase was first used on 1 December 2002 during an anti-war meeting in Istanbul and then became the battle cry of the masses that were against the war. Then according to some opinion polls 80% (Frazer, 2003), according to others 94%, of Turkish people were against any war against Iraq. While Turkish officials discussed the decision behind close doors in February 2003, around 50,000 people gathered in *Sıhhiye* and demonstrated against the impending war.

Masses chanted, “We do not want to be soldiers for America”, “The people will stop the war”, and “Money for the people, not for war,” “We are all Iraqis. We will not kill, we will not die” (cited in Leict & Scwarz, 2003). Rejection of the motion was due to this pressure coming form the people.

Even some prominent government figures were against such an intervention. The speaker of Parliament, Bülent Arinç, did not hesitate to voice his opposition, despite pressure put on Turkish government by the US to make its bases available to the US military. Following rejection of the motion, Arinç stated, “ “For months we have had Big Brother on our backs. Parliament has done the right thing, everyone should be proud of themselves” (cited in Leict & Scwarz, 2003).

According to the media, and particularly leaked diplomatic cables via wikileaks, the government and the army were willing to play an active role during the invasion, particularly in the Kurdish region of Iraq, then called “northern Iraq.” However, the people were reluctant to let US soldiers use Turkish land as a front during the war. Thus, the Turkish people’s anti-war reactions to the “imperialist” attitude of the US precluded the passing of such a motion.

The results of the 1 March motion election were seen as “humiliating” to the government’s leading figures; primarily Erdoğan and Gül and “The AK Government is now badly shaken.” However, the people of Turkey interpreted the rejection of the motion, contrary to what was reflected in the cables, as

success of the AKP. On 2 March, the immediate aftermath of the election, Erdoğan, as party leader, issued a press statement that the proposal would not be brought to the Parliament for a second voting. This statement might have strengthened this perception as well.²⁸

In a report presented to the US congress in 2003, reporter Carol Migdalovitz assesses the rejection as follows:

The rejection resulted from strains within the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), an inexperienced leadership, competing influences, and the overwhelming opposition of Turkish public opinion. Moreover, the powerful Turkish military had not actively supported the government's position before the vote, and the President had suggested that the resolution would be unconstitutional (Migdalovitz, 2003).

Also the report puts stress on the influence of the military and Kemalist institutions over the rejection. It was reminiscent of traditional concerns, “fear that a war would lead to an independent Iraqi Kurdish state and inspire the revival of Turkish Kurdish separatism, worries over the fate of Iraqi Turkomans” (Magdovitz, 2003). Rejection of the motion was seen as the result of the influence of the military on MPs and this might influence traditional US relations with the Turkish army in favour of civilians.

²⁸ Turkey: Why The Vote Went South
<https://wikileaks.org/cable/2003/03/03ANKARA1350.html>

Different voices were raised among Turkish opinion makers about this rejection. While some talked about the inevitability of the war and the need to protect Turkish interests by being involving in the war, others argued that rejecting the motion was ethical and democratic.²⁹ It was the first exam of the AKP and for some it successfully passed. The picture was as follows: the people, the opposition and a substantial number of AKP members were against. However, the US was very determined and put pressure on this relatively young ‘novice government,’ in Bill Pak’s words (Park, 2005). They did not act in defiance of the people, while trying to manage relations with the US. Although the rejection had some negative consequences for Turkey with reference to the economy, it proved that Turkey could pursue a more independent policy from the US, which made people overlook those negative consequences. The AKP government’s support for the motion has been perceived/viewed as balancing tactics. Erdoğan, during an open interview conducted by late journalist M. Ali Birand on a TV channel just before the voting for the resolution, noted that no group decision had been taken on the motion, “we did not take any group decision.” As an answer to the question “will the motion pass?” he replied, “if I give an exact answer to this question, I will have pressed and directed the MPs who will make a decision” (CNN, 2003).

²⁹ For example, Hasan Unal of Zaman daily argued that the War was inevitable. The rejection would not prevent the invasion so “foreign policy should not be formulated by ideological considerations or by looking at reactions on the streets” (HasanUnal, Zaman). Fehmi Koru, though, wrote in his column “Turkey’s decision enhances the value of democracy” (Fehmi Koru, Yenişafak).

On the other hand, rejection of the motion was welcomed by Iraqi Kurds. From their perspective this would i) prevent the presence of Turkish soldiers in the region and ii) will result in cooperation between the US and Iraqi Kurds, instead of Turks. However, rejection of the motion by Turkish Parliament left the US disappointed. This unexpected/unpredicted development brought the importance of the Kurds in the north of Iraq to the surface. Consequently, the US cooperated with them and did not allow any Turkish troops in the region, and even purged the existing soldiers/military personals from the region in a disgraceful way, i.e., the hood event in the immediate post-invasion period.

Iraqi Opposition Conference in Salahadeen

Opposition groups in Iraq secretly met in Salahadeen, in March. Bahros Galali, Ankara rep of PUK, reported that, following the meeting, Barzani and Talabani got together and decided to fuse two administrations and their militia forces, *peshmergas*. Galali told the American officers that this specific development was not aired, since Turkey could perceive the initiative as “a move toward statehood”. They, PUK and KDP officials, also agreed that in case of any fighting against Turkey, they would act together (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA 1391).

Following the opposition conference held in Salahadeen, a declaration that was strongly against any Turkish intervention was revealed. Then on March 3 a demonstration against Turkish involvement took place in Erbil, during which the Turkish flag was burned. All these developments heightened tensions

between Turkey and the Kurdish entity. As a reaction against burning the flag, KDP's Ankara office was attacked, when Molotov cocktails were thrown by some unknown figures. Luckily none of the staff were injured (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1386).

Iraqi Turcoman Front (ITF): This front was formed with the support of Turkey after the Gulf War. According to Iraqi Kurds, it was formed by Turkey to use as a means to manipulate the developments, which were interpreted against Turkish interests or security policy. It is also widely discussed in the relevant literature that Turkey has used ITF as a tool/pretext to control, check, and even sometimes intervene in the developments, the Kurdish advance in the region. Mater argues that the Turkomen card has been particularly used by Turkey since the Gulf War (Mater, 1996). PKK has also been another excuse for Turkey to intervene or appear in the region. Therefore, it might be said that Turkey benefitted from the existence/deployment of the PKK and Turcomen in northern Iraq, which served as an excuse to intervene in developments in the region with respect to Kurdish advance. All these concerns and strategic perceptions that were built during the first Gulf War were revived on the eve of the second Gulf War in 2003.

Sanan Aga, chairman of ITF, gave an interview to NTV on March 3 and claimed that Erbil was a Turkish city, which was taken from Turkmen by Barzani. He also claimed that the Turkmen population is around 3.5 million in the region. In reaction to Sanan Aga's provocative statements, as reported by some leaked

cables, Galali, representative of the PUK in Turkey, “contested those numbers and posited that Turks were trying to use the ITF to provoke the Kurds and create a pretext for Turkish intervention” (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1391_a). During the interview, ITF reps asserted that they were excluded from the Iraqi Opposition group after the meeting in Salahadeen. The Kurds rejected this claim and pointed out “if the ITF was not included in the opposition's leadership council within ten days, the US would reject the leadership council” (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1391). Since the US was well aware of Turkish concerns over Turcoman, it insisted on active involvement of ITF in the opposition council. However, the Kurds perceived ITF as “the Trojan horse” being used by Turkey, and it seems Turkey has wanted ITF to function in that way.

Before and during the war Barzani was against the Turks. In the words of Galali, “Barzani is defiant and playing the role of defender of the Kurds against the Turks,” while Talabani was more willing to cooperate with the Turks. However, Galali adds that “if Barzani decides to fight the Turks, we, Talabani’s PUK, will be stuck alongside him” (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1391). This was an indication that the meeting in Salahaddin resulted in success, as both Kurdish parties agreed to fuse their powers, pursuing a common foreign relations policy.

The main concern of Kurds in Iraq related to the possibility of Turkish involvement in the north, as was once again revealed by Berham Salih of PUK

when he met with the staff of ONW (Operation North Watch)³⁰ on 7 March 2003 in Ankara. He stated that,

...if push comes to shove and the coalition needs Turkey to be involved, we will need assurances that our political rights will be protected, that Turkey would not get involved in Iraqi Kurd-Turcoman politics, and that we will have the right to tell the Turks to go home. We will need to have clearly defined and agreed to Turkey's mission, rules of engagement and depth of presence.

Then TGS Chief Hilmi Özkök: “We will never allow a Kurdish state.” The military overtly supported the operational plan, which was turned down by the Parliament. Hilmi Özkök, Chief of TGS, stated that “The Turkish military is also against the war, but we should act realistically and take the side of the US in the name of national interests and to compensate Turkey's losses” (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1461). This expression of support by the Chief of Staff was also very welcome and relaxed the AKP government. Orhan Bursalı of *Cumhuriyet* wrote, “in order to prevent any unwanted formation just beside, Turkey [government and Turkish army] has been heading to support the US in its invasion of Iraq.”

Also, as Sami Kohen, of nationalist *Milliyet* daily, in his column wrote, the Iraqi opposition's expressions of their intention to keep the integrity of the Iraqi state

³⁰ ONW was formed following the first Gulf War to protect the no-fly zone, above 36 parallel from Saddam.

and to negate any aim of forming any kind of Kurdish entity in the region was addressing the long-lasting concern of Turkey (Wikileaks, 03ANKARA1461).

Post-Invasion era, the Kurds and Turkey

After the invasion, an administrative body, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), was formed to rule Iraq by the US-led coalition. The head of this authority was L. Paul Bremer, pro consul for the US until June 2004.

Under the supervision of this authority, a number of steps have been taken in due course to hand over sovereignty to 'Iraqis.' At each stage, Kurds played important roles and were appointed to important positions, even to presidency. In the provisional constitution and the Iraqi Constitution they have succeeded in legitimising their gains. In the beginning of the post-invasion period, increasing visibility of the Kurds was not welcomed by Turkish authorities. However, in 2008-2009 it pushed Turks to set dialogue platforms with the Kurds and recognise them. The following section focuses on the period immediately after the invasion, from 2003 to 2005, which witnesses increasing Kurdish visibility in Iraq's emerging governing body and the reaction of Turkey to this Kurdish success.

Coalition Provisional Government

Following the invasion, a body of administration was created by the US to restore order in Iraq. The document, which created this authority, explains the role of this body as follows:

The CPA shall exercise powers of government temporarily in order to provide for the effective administration of Iraq during the period of transitional administration, to restore conditions of security and stability, to create conditions in which the Iraqi people can freely determine their own political future, including by advancing efforts to restore and establish national and local institutions for representative governance and facilitating economic recovery and sustainable reconstruction and development (Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1).

July 2003 Iraq Governing Council (IGC) and Turkey's reaction

THE Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) under the control of the US formed a provisional governing body, the Iraq Governing Council (IGC), in July 2003, with a regulation called “Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 6,” signed by Paul Bremer, head of the CPA. The aim of this body was as follows:

Recognizing that, as stated in paragraph 9 of Resolution 1483, the Security Council [United Nation Security Council] supports the formation of an Iraqi interim administration as a transitional administration run by Iraqis, until the people of Iraq establish an internationally recognized, representative government that assumes the responsibilities of the CPA.

This step was welcomed by the UN and the Security Council. UN Special Representative for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, shared his opinion with the Security Council on the formation of such a body:

We now have an institution that, while not democratically elected, can be viewed as broadly representative of the various constituencies in Iraq. It means that we now have a formal body of senior and distinguished Iraqi counterparts, with credibility and authority, with whom we can chart the way forward (UN News Centre, 2003).

The members of this governing council were appointed directly by Paul Bremer from among the Iraqis. The members of the governing council were selected among Iraqi political, tribal and religious leaders. The IGC had 25 members, consisting of 13 Shiites, 5 Sunnis, 5 Kurds, Barzani, Talabani, and three independent Kurds, one Turkman and one Assyrian. They were in charge of providing advice to the leadership. Their duty continued until the formation of the Iraqi Interim Government in June 2004 (BBC News, June 2004). Giving 5 seats to the Kurds, equal to Sunni Arabs, ruling elite of the Saddam era, in the first governing body was an important indicator of the prospective role of the Kurds in the future of Iraq.

This governing body announced in February a provisional constitution- Transitional Administrative Law (TAL)- signed in March 2004. According to this provisional constitution, Kurds were allowed to form a federation in the north of Iraq, an area already ruled by the Kurds for more than a decade. Chapter 8 of TAL under the rubric of “Regions, Governorates, and Municipalities” introduces the federal system for Iraq and gives the details of places under

Kurdish administration in Iraq. Article 52 talks about the necessity of a federal system and its design in order to:

Prevent the concentration of power in the federal government that allowed the continuation of decades of tyranny and oppression under the previous regime. This system shall encourage the exercise of local authority by local officials in every region and governorate, thereby creating a united Iraq in which every citizen actively participates in governmental affairs, secure in his rights and free of domination.

Article 53 of TAL introduces the Kurdistan Region as a federation and states that:

The Kurdistan Regional Government is recognized as the official government of the territories that were administered by the government on 19 March 2003 in the governorates of Dohuk, Arbil, Sulaimaniya, Kirkuk, Diyala and Nineveh. The term “Kurdistan Regional Government” shall refer to the Kurdistan National Assembly, the Kurdistan Council of Ministers, and the regional judicial authority in the Kurdistan region.

Also another article of TAL allowed the Kurds to have and keep their own militia, the *peshmerga*.

Turkey was not happy about the governing council’s capacity in terms of representing all segments of Iraqi society, particular with reference to Turkmen. In Iraq Turkmen are the third largest ethnic group after Arabs and Kurds and

their being represented only by one seat in a 25-seat council disappointed Turkey. Thus, Turkey was reluctant to support the selected governing council. Regarding this, then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül stated:

We should strengthen Baghdad. All the ethnic groups should be represented in Baghdad. We don't want separate entities in Iraq. Giving separate advantages to ethnic groups endangers the future of Iraq (HDN 2003).

To assure Turkish support for the governing council, UN special envoy to Iraq Sergio de Mello paid a visit to Turkey and met Foreign Minister Gül. De Mello praised Turkey's position during the transition period and talked about the critical role Turkey would play in the on-going process. At the joint press conference with Gül de Mello, with reference to Turkey's main concern, Kurdish development and existence of the PKK, stated:

With the help of all neighbouring countries, Iraq will emerge as a democratic country. This new state will not cast a threat for its neighbours and will live in peace with its neighbours.

In June 2004 the council transferred its sovereignty to the Iraqi Interim Government and was dissolved.

Turkey was asked and was planning to contribute to the coalition by sending around 10,000 soldiers. Although US administrator Paul Bremer was in favour of Turkish troops' joining the coalition, some members of the governing council

were against the appearance of Turkish troops in Iraq. It was clear that the most concerned about Turkish soldiers in Iraq were the Kurds. As mentioned above, on March 3 there was a demonstration against Turkish involvement in Irbil, during which the Turkish flag was burned. All these developments heightened the tension between Turkey and the Kurdish entity. The Kurds were anxious about Turkish presence in the region. As members of the governing council, they were not only against the involvement of Turkey but also of all neighbouring countries. The general view held by members was “that neighbouring countries should limit their involvement in Iraq to civil projects, like reconstruction” (Fisher, 2003).

They were claiming that it would increase tension, particularly among the Kurdish population in the north. The governing council was given assurances that “Turkish troops would not be deployed in sensitive areas of the country, including the Kurdish north” (VOA, 2009).

On October 07 2003 the Turkish parliament approved a motion that allowed troops to be sent to Iraq. Ian Fisher of NYT who covered Iraqi conflict for (New York Times), in his column assesses this development as a success of the Bush administration in persuading a Sunni Muslim country to have a military presence in Iraq. He also argues that “Turks are Sunni Muslims and their troops would likely be stationed in the fractious Sunni areas west of Baghdad that have been the spots of greatest difficulty for American soldiers” (Fisher, 2003).

Iraqi Interim Government

The Iraqi Interim Government ruled the country until the instalment of a transitional government following the Iraqi National Assembly election held in January 2005. This governing body was created and supported by the coalition powers as well. The Iraqi Transitional Government replaced the Interim Government in May 2005. The head of this interim government was Iyad Allawi. In June 2004 the US had handed sovereignty to this interim government under the leadership of Iyad Allawi. Allawi was regarded as a moderate and secular Shia. Due to his close ties with the US, he was criticised by some for being “Washington’s puppet”(BBC News, 2010). In this interim government, the Kurds, for their help during the invasion, were given a number of important positions. Barham Salih from the PUK was appointed deputy of Allawi, while a member of the KDP, a top Barzani aide, Hishyar Zebari, became Foreign Minister (Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 10).

Following the election of the Transitional Iraqi National Assembly in January 2005, a transition government was formed and assumed sovereignty in May 2005. This assembly was to draw a permanent constitution for Iraq. As their first duty the MPs elected president and two vice presidents with a two-third majority. Then a Prime Minister was elected, and he formed the cabinet.

In this transitional government, surprisingly, Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani was elected President on April 6, 2005. In the cabinet formed by Prime Minister Ibrahim Al-Jafere, Shiite leader, Hosyar Zabari from KDP kept his position as foreign Minister.

2004: PKK takes the stage again

Following the overthrow of Saddam, the PKK, which had not been active since 1999, re-launched its activities in July 2004. The unilateral ceasefire declared by the PKK with the capture of its leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999 came to its end with Öcalan's deputy Murat Karayılan's declaration in 2004. He broke the ceasefire and restarted staging attacks from northern Iraq (Bilgin and Sarihan, 2013: 89-100). This development made the Turkish government contact Iraqi Kurdish parties that controlled the north of Iraq. How the renewed PKK attacks affected Turkey's relations with the Iraqi Kurdish leadership is discussed in part 3.

2005: Year Of Elections; Increasing Visibility of Kurds In Iraqi Politics and Turkish Reaction

2005 became the year of elections for Iraq after the invasion in 2003. Iraqi and Kurdish National Assembly (KNA) elections were held in January 2005, and then the Iraqi Constitution was drawn and passed by Parliament in October. The Kurds became more visible and active in the Parliament, and were guaranteed

gains by the Constitution. Their polity was recognised by the Constitution and became legitimate.

The Kurdish Parliament with the consensus of Iraqi Kurdish parties selected KDP leader Masoud Barzani as President of the Kurdistan Regional Government. Meanwhile, Jalal Talabani, the leader once at odds with the Iraqi central government under the rule of Saddam, became President of Iraq. In the wake of the election Turkey was very active in persuading Sunnis to attend the elections. Turkey's fear was again the Kurds. In the absence of Sunnis, Kurds would gain more power. Barzani's election as President of the Kurdistan Region and Talabani's becoming President of Iraq discomfited Turkey. Actually, not only Turkey, but also Arabs in Iraq, mainly Sunnis (HDN, 2010). Regarding Barzani's selection as President of the Kurdish region, Namik Tan, Turkish Foreign ministry spokesman, stated:

[Selection of Barzani as President] does not carry much meaning...The future structure of Iraq will take its final shape only after completion of the constitution and will gain legitimacy with the social consent that the Iraqi people will display by approving the constitution (AFP, 2005).

This statement was criticised by Kurdish officials as "short-sighted, out-dated and politically and diplomatically inappropriate" (KRG, 2005).

Following Barzani's selection as President, 5 months later another election was held, on 15 December 2005.

New Iraqi Constitution recognises Kurdistan Region as Federation

On October 15, 2005 a new Iraqi Constitution was drafted. For Turkey the most remarkable point of the Constitution was the article recognising the Kurdish region as a federation (Section 5, Article 113). Actually the draft of the Constitution was not signed by the Kurds until securing great autonomy for Kurdistan within the Constitution, despite the opposition of the Sunni block (Jawad, 2013:12). Only after gaining this constitutional statute, it was fully supported by the Kurds. Katzman (2010: 3), regarding the motives behind the Kurds' position, states:

The Kurds supported the constitution in the October 15, 2005 referendum because it appeared to meet their most significant demands. The constitution not only retained substantial Kurdish autonomy but also included the Kurds' insistence on "federalism"—de-facto or formal creation of "regions," each with its own regional government. The constitution recognizes the three Kurdish provinces of Dohuk, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah as a legal "region" (Article 113)—the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)—with the power to amend the application of national laws not specifically under national government purview; to maintain internal security forces; and to establish embassies abroad (Article 117). Arabic and Kurdish are official languages (Article 4). In September 2007, the Senate endorsed the federalism concept for Iraq in an amendment to the FY2008 defense authorization bill (P.L. 110-181).

At the beginning the Turkish government reacted negatively to these Kurdish related articles that recognise the Kurdistan Region as a federation. This article was pushing Turkey to abandon its historical/traditional position regarding the unity of Iraq. Especially within the military ranks this discomfort was voiced.

2006 Valley of Wolves

In July 2003 a symbolic message had been given to Turkey to withdraw its military existence in the Kurdish Region of Iraq. US soldiers swooped down on a Turkish post in northern Iraq, arrested the soldiers on the post and covered the Turkish soldiers' heads with hoodies in an insulting way, as reported by the Turkish media. However, in other sources, on July 4th 2003 an American marine force noticed a unit of Turkish Special Forces in the Kurdish region of Iraq and it claimed that this unit was there to assassinate Abdul Rahman Mustafa, Kurdish Mayor of Kirkuk (Olson, 2005: 28-29). However, it is interesting that this second story was not told in Turkey. The event passed into history as the 'hood/bag event' (çuval olayı).

Three years after the "famous" hood event, a film, 'Iraq; the Valley of the Wolves' (*Kurtlar Vadisi Irak*) with the largest budget ever in the history of Turkish cinema, *Yeşilçam*, was released in 2006. The film focuses on the invasion of Iraq and the Hood event. It dramatises the event and presents the Kurds as "collaborators" of the "imperialist America," while drawing the picture of Turkmen as suffering after the invasion alongside Sunni Arabs. Al-Rawi

questions the title of the film, 'Valley of the Wolves' and comes to the conclusion that "The film's title hence refers to a dark and dangerous place where howling and vicious 'wolves' – namely Americans and Kurds – are gathered" (Al-Rawi, 2009). The film has been one of the most watched films in the history of *Yeşilçam*. Whoever watches this film can see that Iraqi Kurds have been portrayed as abettor of the Americans against Turkish presence in the region. This film also sends the message that "Kurds are traitor to the state, it does not matter [what state it is]. They are the collaborators of exogenous powers to all the states they live in." The film was promoted by the Turkish government. Promoting such a film reveals the state perception regarding Kurdish advance in Iraq. This means that in 2006 Turkey still had the very same traditional security anxieties with respect to the Kurdish advance in Iraq.

In the era immediately after the invasion, Turkey's main concern was the establishment of a Kurdistan in Iraq. The PKK was not active at that time, had declared ceasefire, which lasted until 2004 (Bilgin and Sarıhan, 2013). Turkish officials, particularly military elite, were trying to use all kinds of tools/measures to control and limit Kurdish advancement in Iraq. Since the rejection of the motion, it also lost the right of military existence in this region. The other excuse Turkey has been using since the 1990s to intervene in the developments in the region was the Turkmens. Voller, regarding the "Turkmen card" of Turkey in the Kurdish Region, argues "another tactic used by Ankara to put Kurdish autonomy in check was to amplify its role as the protector of the Turkic-

speaking Turcoman minority in northern Iraq” (Voller, 2012: 233; Oğuzlu, 2001). Also, to have a bigger influence in the region, the number of Turkmen population there was exaggerated and presented as 3 million by Turkey (Orsam, 2010). However, it is estimated by some sources to be around 300,000 (Gareth, 2008).³¹

In August 2006 Nechirvan Barzani met with Murat Karayilan, then head of the PKK, regarding the Turkish PM office report that Barzani criticised and condemned PKK’s trans-frontier assaults and urged Karayilan that “he wouldn’t allow such actions” (Ayin Tarihi, 2006, item 12). According to some sources, during the meeting Barzani also asked for the PKK to leave their territory as well. These sources also note that Barzani was going to close the PKK offices in the region (Sabah, 2006). Those were the steps that would satisfy Turkey.

Following this, in April 2007 Barzani spoke to *Al-Arabiya* and to a question regarding Turkish involvement in Kirkuk, he replied:

I am not afraid of their military or diplomatic power. Because, they are interfering in matters that do not concern them in the domestic affairs of another country...Kirkuk is an Iraqi city with a Kurdish identity[sic]. All the historical and geographic facts prove that Kirkuk is part of Iraqi Kurdistan, which is itself part of Iraq. Therefore, Kirkuk is an Iraqi city with Kurdish identity and Turkey has no right to interfere in this matter. If

³¹ Jenkins, Gareth (2008), *Turkey and Northern Iraq: An Overview*, The Jamestown Foundation

Turkey interferes in the matters of Kirkuk we will do the same with regard to Diyarbakir [sic] and other cities [with intensely Kurdish populated] in Turkey (Al-Arabiya, 2007).

However, following this strong statement from Barzani, a balancing step came from Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, also the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). According to reports, he called Prime Minister Erdoğan to express his regrets over Barzani's statement (Turkish Weekly, 2007).

That year the PKK increased its attacks. The sources reported that in a month the PKK had killed 40 people. Twelve of them were soldiers. Then it launched an attack on a military post known as Dağlica and killed 12 soldiers. The PKK being based in and launching its attacks from the region under the control of the KRG led Turkish officials to ask the Kurdish government to take necessary actions to stop the PKK, otherwise they would carry out cross-border operations. Kurdish leader Barzani reacted strongly and stressed that any incursion of Turkish troops would come to mean a declaration of war. He stated that "If they invade or if there is any incursion, it means war", adding that "If they attack our people, our interests, our territories, then there will be no limit because everything is subject to that incursion" (Today's Zaman, 2007a). Actually these statements indicate that Kurds did not trust Turkey the way Turkey mistrusted Iraqi Kurds.

The main fear of Kurds was losing what they had gained in the post-Saddam era.

Clearly Kurdish leaders were not happy with the PKK's existence in the region, since it was used as excuse by the Turkish military to launch cross-border operations. However, it was clear to Kurdish leaders from their past experiences that it was not possible to solve the Kurdish problem, or the PKK via military means. So on every single occasion/opportunity they underlined their support of peaceful solutions. In an interview conducted by *The Times*, Barzani said:

If they take a peaceful approach, then we are ready to help as much as we can... The unfortunate thing is that they are not allowing other ... options. They insist on war as being the only means to solve the problem (*The Times*, 2007).

Prime Minister Erdoğan, in early August 2007, during an interview with a private channel, answered questions about cross-border operations and while answering the question he needed to explain that his counterpart is not anyone in Erbilö but the Iraqi President and Prime Minister in Baghdad. He also accused the Kurdish President in Erbil for supporting the PKK. He stated:

I met with the Iraqi President and Prime Minister. I won't meet with any tribe leader... I won't meet Barzani or someone else....the KDP supports the PKK (*Hürriyet*, 2007).

In 2007 the discourses used by both parties were still in accordance with traditional concerns. The Kurdish leaders was being described as "tribe leaders" and they were portrayed as collaborators of "PKK terrorists."

2007: Revitalising partnership; Turkey and the US

The year 2007 witnessed another important development. The US and Turkey, who had been at odds since the March crisis in 2003, signed an agreement to share intelligence, in Turkey's fight against the PKK. To contextualise this development it is necessary to remember that this year the middle and big range companies started to engage with Iraq and the Kurdish region to invest in the oil sector. Large oil resources had been discovered in the Kurdish controlled areas above the 36th parallel. So it might be said that the interests of energy/oil sector required the US to provide the region and possible route of transportation with security. The companies invested or planned to invest in the region and the US might have seen the PKK as a threat to their investments and flow of the region's sources to the global markets. Actually the flow to the global markets has been the intersection of all four regional and international agents' interests: the US, western energy companies, Turkey and the KRG. This led to the US administration taking this decision of revitalisation of partnership with Turkey and cooperation against the PKK. To put it differently, it was again the geographic location of Turkey that persuaded the US to revitalise its relations.

To sum up, this development has been a turning point in Turkey-KRG relations. Since 2007 relations between Turkey and a Kurdish political actor named Kurdistan have been improving in an unprecedented manner.

Conclusion

All these developments, reactions, correspondences and conversations, information leaked by *Wikileaks*, especially in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, clearly indicate that the traditional Turkish concerns regarding Iraq in general and the developments in the Kurdish constrained north of Iraq in particular were very valid and in practice during 2002-2006. The main concerns were i) the emergence of a Kurdish entity in the north of Iraq which may lead to a “Great Kurdistan” involving the south east part of Turkey, ii) the Turkmen’s place and the PKK’s presence in the region and iii) the status of Kirkuk. All three points were directly linked to the emergence of a Kurdistan. Annexation of Kirkuk to the Kurdish entity would make the Kurds economically independent of Baghdad and would fund their advance towards statehood. The PKK benefitted from the power vacuum and used the area to launch attacks on Turkey to claim a Kurdistan within Turkey. On the other hand, the existence of Turkmen and the PKK in the region provided Turkey with excuses to involve itself in any developments in the region.

Turkey’s perceptions of Iraqi Kurds and the PKK have been very similar. The Iraqi Kurds were being seen as ‘terrorists’ targeting the ‘unity’ of Turkey as well. This conception is reflected in the film, ‘Valley of Wolves,’ released in 2006, as a reaction to the ‘hood event’, discussed above. Thus, as a traditional foreign policy towards Iraq, the unity of the Iraqi state has always been a priority for Turkey. They supported any regime that kept the Kurds under control.

This traditional approach to Iraq and its Kurdish entity lasted until 2009, when a decision to open a Turkish Consulate in Erbil, capital of the Kurdish Region, was taken. However, until 2009 the traditional concerns were alive and resurfaced in the struggle of the new political elite. This political elite entered a process of re-interpreting these 'old-fashioned' anxieties within a changing global context. The next chapter analyses the period starting 2008, focusing on this aspect, the re-interpretation of national security concerns regarding the Kurdish reality in Iraq.

CHAPTER 4. SECURING A KURDISTAN IN IRAQ; An Analysis of Diplomatic Exchanges Between Turkish and Kurdish officials 2007-13

This chapter aims to reveal the extent of the change in Turkey's policy orientation towards the KRG. To do so, this part of the research identifies and analyses the dislocatory moves taking place from 2007 to 2013. While analysing these moves it benefits from the explanatory power of the concept of "desecuritisation" from Copenhagen School's Security Theory. However, before passing directly to the analysis of these events, I will give a brief overview of transforming internal, regional and global contexts, to contextualise these moves and foreign policy behaviour of Turkey towards the KRG. Then an explanation of desecuritisation and how it can help analyse and understand the events, diplomatic and economic exchanges between Turkey and the KRG. Following this brief explanation, identified dislocatory moves will be analysed.

Changing Contexts and their influence on Turkish Foreign Policy

It is necessary to recognise that the domestic transformation that has taken place in Turkey has played an important role in shaping Turkey's orientation towards the Iraqi Kurdish entity. It might be called an identity change or a power transmission from the traditional Kemalist elite to civilians, although I prefer the

latter.³² It is important to remember that the military elite has been seen and has seen themselves as guardian of Kemalist principles. The foreign and security policy of Turkey had been formulated under the control of the military elite. Following the 1980 military coup Turkey's National Security Council (MGK) was designed in a way that enabled the military elite to play a decisive role in the formulation and decision-making process of foreign and security policy (Cizre, 2007). In a way it helped, even institutionalised, military tutelage over civilian governments. This continued until 2007. The reforms made by the governments as part of the EU membership process, from 2002 to 2007, and in parallel with these reforms the trials launched against military members whose coup plans were discovered kept the army away from politics. As a sign of this in 2007 Abdullah Gül, former foreign minister of the AKP government, became president. Secular Turkey witnessed a first in her history, a headscarf-wearing first lady. Although it was seen as being against Kemalist principles, the guardians of the principles could not intervene.

This power transmission in favour of the civilians, towards a political party, has roots in political-Islam, and is important in Turkey's 'new' foreign policy formulation (Murinson, 2012), at least symbolically. It is well known to students of Turkish politics that traditionally the Republic of Turkey, under the guidance of Kemalist principles, detached itself from Middle Eastern, Arab countries. This

³² When they seized "power" with all units (military, judiciary, parliament) they started behaving the same way as Kemalists, attempting to keep all parts of society under their absolute control. Any fragments out of their control were labelled existential threat.

new elite, the AKP, has tried to abolish this policy and adopted an “Islamist” (Baran, 2010) or a “neo-Ottomanist” policy. ‘Zero problem with neighbours’ was a by-product of this policy (Murinson, 2012). It appears that the new elite has tried to widen its space of influence and create their own “liberal zone of peace.” Their Islamic background made them engage with the “Islamic world,” and they see this “Muslim” region as Turkey’s *lebensraum*. In their first and second terms, right up to the so-called Arab Spring, they pursued a very soft and diplomatic foreign policy. They harshly rejected this label of ‘neo-Ottomanism,’ since it connoted imperialist ambitions. However, it is clear to observers of Turkish foreign policy that in their third term/phase active diplomatic engagement of Turkey with the regional countries appears to turn into a revisionist approach to shape this region. In the words of Önis, they became ‘excessively involved in domestic politics of regional countries’ (Önis, 2014). Its position in the recent crisis in the Middle East, in Syria and Egypt indicates this. The ‘Arab Revolution’ (Önis, 2014;), which broke out in 2011, seems to have played a significant role, but it falls outside the scope of this research. I will regard the domestic transformation of state machinery as one of the fundamental motivating factors enabling Turkey to engage with neighbouring countries diplomatically, to create a “liberal zone of peace.” This means that, whatever it is called, ‘neo-Ottomanist’ or ‘Islamist,’ this ‘new’ foreign policy has been driven by economic ambitions. The increase in Turkish export to the Middle Eastern countries (from 2002 to 2008, by a factor five) might be pointed

out as evident of this reality. Turkey's approach to the Kurdistan Region within the given period of this research falls within this framework.

The outbreak of the Arab revolutions in 2011 deeply influenced Turkey's orientation towards the Middle East. The last few years have witnessed a more assertive Turkey in the Middle East. US military withdrawal from the region may also have had effect on this assertive attitude. Turkey reacted to the "changing" Middle East, to maintain its increasing influence in the region. For example, Turkey elected to play an active role in shaping "post-Assad" Syria. This sudden change in Turkey's external behaviour from a "soft" to an "aggressive" foreign policy is reminiscent of the 4th image, "Empire state," discussion in Fouskas's and Gökay's work. They presume that within the existing capitalist system the countries aim to arrive at "empire state level," in order to maintain their economic superiority, or open a space for their economic interests and make use of their military might. The number of imperial states seems to be increasing. Emerging new powerhouses within the existing capitalist system have been causing 'tectonic effects' and influencing global, regional, and even subregional balances. This influence of global power shift over world politics is being conceptualised as 'Global Faultlines' by Fouskas and Gökay. This power shift requires the US to rely on its military power more than ever to maintain the system, which has been functioning in favour of its global interests. On the other side, it led other emerging powerhouses to invest in the military, in order to carve out the system in favour of their "emerging" capitalist interests. The

reaction of the US has been to deploy military power, particularly in the resource-rich regions, or to have strong strategic partners and military bases. Turkey's external behaviour, particularly during and post Arab Spring, reminds one of this imperial behaviour. The basic shortcoming of Turkey is that it is not an actor that economically and militarily arrived at that imperial level in the system. However, it has a strong ambition to play that role which is detrimental to its political and economic gains, which it achieved over a decade in the region. Kardaş, in his article written in 2013, mentions this ambition of Turkey to become a global power, or a power which has capacity to exert influence on global politics. Actually this ambition of the elite is also clear in speeches by Erdoğan and Davutoğlu.³³ They address not only the people of Turkey but "Muslim" people of all Middle East and even Balkans. In his speech after the 2011 election victory, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated:

Sarajevo won today as much as Istanbul. Beirut won as much as Izmir. Damsucus won as much as Ankara. Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, the West Bank, Jerusalem won as much as Diyarbakir (Erdoğan, 12 June 2011).

Davutoğlu in 2009 gave an early example of this approach. He said, on Al-Jazeera:

One thing is important, one principle. **Our policy is a policy of Ankara or Istanbul. We are from this region.** Of course we are strategic ally of

³³ See Erdoğan's speeches after election victories.

the US, we have excellent relations with Russia, we are candidate country for the EU; but the policy we are following is the *policy of Turkey (not Turkish policy)* (...in the region where Turkey is active...in the region we think we have **special responsibilities....A new order** based on the understanding of common security for all, political dialogue to resolve questions and conflicts, economic interdependency, more economic interactions to establish peace, and multicultural coexistence, multicultural harmony... Davutoğlu, 2009, 26 Oct 09 - Talk to Jazeera - Ahmet Davutoğlu)³⁴.

Actually refereeing to Istanbul alongside the capital Ankara and talking about Turkey's 'special responsibilities' are interesting details that came to life as policy later, in Turkey's policy towards Iraq and Syria. On another occasion Davutoğlu stated that:

Turkey could become a union of nations just like Britain's union with its former colonies...Why shouldn't Turkey rebuild its leadership in former Ottoman lands in the Balkans, Middle East, and Central Asia?

It seems this new "assertive" or "revisionist" rhetoric brought into the political sphere after 2009 coincides with accomplishing the process of consolidation of power in the hands of the new elite. Before, none of these [very same] policymakers proclaimed the slogans about the "restoration of the empire," says Murinson (2012:13).

³⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKV9T9VsLuw>

Desecuritisation; A Framework to Analyse Turkey- KRG Relations:

Desecuritisation is a process to normalise any issue previously constructed as existential threat to a cherished value. It is the reverse procedure of the securitisation process explained in part 1. It aims to remove the threat perception on an already securitised issue. “Speeches” and televisual ‘images’ are seen as means of both securitisation and de-securitisation processes. Some visuals/images have more influence than words to shape the perception of the audience, in order to construct something as threat or normalise it. In parallel with this, John Berger (1972: 1) argues, “seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak.” In line with Berger, Fyfe and Law (1988:2) suggest “human beings come to know the world as it really is for them” via “depiction, picturing and seeing.” In parallel with Fyfe and Law’s suggestions, images and narratives are bonded. In other words, images are supportive of and important in generating and validating narratives.

It is also important to mark that the process of desecurtisation is not power free. The visual or verbal materials, particularly in diplomacy, have symbolic meanings. They may represent emerging or shifting power balances between actors, states. Therefore, the visual materials addressed and analysed in this research will be looked at through this lens. Not only visual materials, but also the steps taken to normalise an entity thought to be reflecting a shifting or emerging power balance between the relevant actors, Turkey and the KRG.



Figure 4 Barzani's visit to Diyarbakır in 2013 (from left to right, Prime Minister Erdoğan, President Barzani, and Poet Siwan Perwer)

Of course there are logical motives behind this decision of the governing elite to depart from the “traditional” policy. I identify these motives, which led the governing elite to normalise the KRG, at different levels of global politics, with reference to Waltz’s ‘three images’ (Waltz, 2001).

In Turkey’s relations with the Iraqi Kurds, a number of global and regional developments played crucial roles as *facilitating factors* in the process of desecuritising/normalising the Kurdish polity in Iraq in state narrative.

This chapter aims to describe the normalisation of the Kurdistan Region as ‘new’ neighbour of Turkey and the image of the emerging partnership. To

analyse the process, 11 snapshots are highlighted in the period under analysis, from 2008 to 2013, in chronological order.

Steps Taken To Normalise Relations with the KRG

In 2007 Turkey's traditional concerns with respect to Iraqi Kurdish groups were still alive. This is seen in the language of decision-makers. For example, in June 2007, while responding a question related to any cross-border operations of the Turkish military into the north of Iraq to chase PKK militias, Prime Minister Erdoğan said:

Our counterparts are not Kurdish leaders, but central government in Iraq. And I met both President and Prime Minister of the central government. However, apart from these [Iraqi President and Prime Minister] I cannot meet a **tribe leader** [Barzani].

The question was about whether he met or talked with any Kurdish leaders regarding any possible cross-border operation into their region. Erdoğan, in a very aggressive voice/tone, revealed that he did not like the question and regarded Kurdish leader Barzani as a “tribal leader,” who he “cannot meet.” This was completely in agreement with the traditional line of the Turkish state. The same title, “tribal leaders,” had been used by Cemil Çiçek, then Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, in 1999 in the Turkish Parliament, to degrade Kurdish leaders.

Turkey-KRG relations went through a dramatic change after 2007, the year new oil fields were discovered.³⁵ The change was very discernible in 2009, when Turkish Foreign Minister announced the opening of a Turkish consulate in Erbil, capital city of the KRG. The opening of the consulate in 2011 marked and materialised the change. This means that the region was recognised by Turkey and one of the “red lines”³⁶ in Turkish foreign and security policy regarding Iraq was removed. Finally, both actors signed an agreement to set up a joint venture, an oil pipeline, directly connecting Kurds’ reserves to Ceyhan port of Turkey. The recent developments in 2013 and 2014 made it clear that Turkey was ready to recognise a Kurdistan within the borders of Iraq.³⁷

The following part will discuss alternative narratives and images produced via these dislocatory moves from 2007 to 2013. It focuses on diplomatic exchanges and press statements and aims to identify the extent of the shift in perception. It identifies 11 dislocatory moves from 2007 to 2013. It adopts a chronological design because each event goes one step further in producing image and

³⁵ This oil-related point will be elaborated in part 3 (chapters 5, 6, 7) where motives of the shift will be discussed. This chapter will attempt to draw an emerging picture of Turkey-KRG relations or shift in Turkish foreign policy towards the KRG.

³⁶ Turkish ‘red lines’ refers to Turkey’s main concerns regarding the Iraqi state and its internal developments. These concerns are: the emergence of a Kurdistan, Kurdish control of oil-rich Kirkuk and Turkmen’s situation. Among these the greatest concern has always been the appearance of a Kurdish state in Iraq.

³⁷ Huseyin Çelik, deputy Chair of the ruling AKP, told the Financial Times that ““In the past an independent Kurdish state was a reason for war [for Turkey] but no one has the right to say this now..” Daniel Dombey,” Turkey ready to accept Kurdish state in historic shift” FT, 27 June 2014. Available at:

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/65ac9ac2-fe00-11e3-bd0e-00144feab7de.html#axzz36Yfjph7O>

narrative in the process of normalisation. This shows that there is chronological shift in Turkish foreign policy towards the KRG.

Changing Discourse of Iraqi Kurds; keeping the PKK at Bay

In January 2008 a car bomb exploded in Diyarbakır in a street, while a military vehicle was passing. According to sources, five people lost their lives while there were more than 60 casualties (Ayin Tarihi, 2008a). Following the attack, Nechirvan Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, made a statement condemning the attack:

On behalf of the entire Kurdistan Regional Government I want to express my shock and outrage at **the brutal terrorist attack**, which occurred yesterday in Diyarbakır, Turkey... There is no reason or explanation that can justify this type of **terrorism and we join the world in condemning this senseless act of violence.**

The last thing Kurds wanted to see was an angry Turkey. Through this statement Barzani aimed to show that the region does not support any terrorist attacks of the PKK towards Turkey. Also, as it is bolded above, the action was described as a “brutal terrorist attack.” The following months and years witnessed similar statements from the Kurdish leadership condemning PKK’s ‘terrorist activities.’ For example, Kurdish President Massoud Barzani, in April 2008, stated that:

Today, the use of violence is left in the past. Kurds should adjust themselves to this transformation and change their mentality; they should

try the other path that is modern and peaceful...Now is the phase of dialogue. Kurds shouldn't get involved in violence, either amongst themselves or in neighbouring countries ... The mentality of the Kurds should change, and this way the mentality of these countries will also change (Today's Zaman, 2008).

Turkey welcomed these statements. However, the steps were considered inadequate. Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan stated, "It is not enough. We are expecting them to take a more decisive stance against the PKK" (Ayin Tarihi, 2008b). The exchange of these statements shows that there is a shift in Turkish state perception towards the Iraqi Kurdish leadership. Their statements were being taken into consideration not as statements of 'tribal leaders' but as "Kurdish leaders." However, the PKK problem continued to be an obstacle.

The year 2007 also witnessed important developments. The tension between the central government in Baghdad and Erbil came to surface. In 2007 the Kurdish government proposed an Oil and Gas law that would allow Kurdistan to sign oil exploration contracts independently of the central Baghdad government. In August 2007 the Kurdistan National Assembly approved this, despite the opposition of the central Baghdad government. The Baghdad government saw this attempt of the KRG as a breach of the Constitution's articles 111 and 112. However, the Kurdish government's interpretation of these articles differs.

Details of this are discussed in the following chapters. This tension between the central government and the KRG pushed Erbil, seeking to export its future oil independent of Baghdad, towards Ankara. This might be one of the main facilitating factors in the changing discourse of Kurdish elite towards Turkey. Then in September 2007 a Congressional bill³⁸ in the US “recognised Iraq’s federal structure and Kurdish region as legal entities.” Both these developments, in Charountaki’s words, “stimulated Turkish foreign policy’s hostile attitude towards the KRG” (Charountaki, 2012: 191). However, both these developments set the regional and global contexts bringing Turkey and KRG closer to one another. It is interesting that just following the issuance of this new petroleum law, new and promising oil and gas fields/reserves were discovered in the Kurdish region, as if the companies were waiting for the law to pass to announce new discoveries.

A) Economy and Politics hand-in-hand

The first signs of Turkey-KRG rapprochement occurred in the aftermath of the July 2007 general election, in which the AKP won with an increasing rate in its support from 34% to 47%. The post-2007 period experienced a shift in power balance in favour of civilians. The reforms made as part of EU membership process and *Ergenekon* and *Sladgehamer* trials against military members have facilitated to curb the military’s power. In Ziya Öniş’s words, “rules out the possibility of a direct military challenge to the AKP’s electoral hegemony” (Öniş,

³⁸ FY2008, HR1585, September 2007

2012:136). Within this context, civilians were motivated economically and abandoned the traditional “defensive nationalism” which is based on fear of breaking-up as ideology of early republican elite represented by the military. Instead of this traditional defensive ideology, the new decision-makers adopted a “conservative globalist” ideology (Öniş, 2012) which is driven by economic interests. The following dislocatory moves identified in the post-2007 period might be seen as a reflection of this new “ideology.”

1) May 2008, first high-level official meeting

In May 2008 Ahmet Davutoğlu, chief advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan, and a number of Turkish officials met with Kurdish Premier Nechirvan Barzani in Baghdad. The meeting was historic. The official web site of the KRG summarised the meeting as follows: “This first high-level official meeting of both sides focused on a wide range of political, security and economic issues between Turkey and the KRG” (KRG, May 2008). Actually developments in political, security and economic dimensions would require Turkey and the KRG to build a new constructive policy towards one another. The press release continues as follows:

The meeting was conducted in a cordial and open atmosphere in which both sides stressed similar views on many issues and expressed a desire for **common** understanding and interests. The meeting concluded with future practical steps laid out and a desire on both sides for continued **dialogue**.

Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani expressed the Kurdistan Region's desire to develop good **neighbourly** relations with Turkey. He recognised Turkey's legitimate concerns and highlighted the importance of solving common problems through cooperation, political negotiation and dialogue.

The words highlighted in bold give some clues that the process of constructing a new narrative had started. Although the statement is a bit obscure, it reveals that PM Barzani “recognised Turkey’s legitimate concerns” and mentions “common problems” and offers to solve these problems via diplomatic channels and in cooperation. In his speech he does not give any clue as to what these ‘common interests’ are. Nearly all official press releases issued since 2008 have put stress on ‘common’ interests and understandings and draw attentions to the necessity of ‘dialogue.’ Just a year earlier both sides were seeing one another as ‘existential’ threats, but now they were talking about cooperation and setting out dialogue channels. The possible explanation for this significant change is discussed in detail in part 3.

In the same year Turkey announced the removal of its troops from the region. The decision was welcomed by Kurdish officials. Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani’s response to this step was:

We believe this troop withdrawal is a positive development, which marks a new phase in the relationship between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region. The termination of military operations paves the way for **dialogue and a**

diplomatic solution to the problem of the PKK...Turkey is an important neighbour; **we have a lot in common.**

Before the Turkish incursion, the KRG enforced a number of measures to constrain PKK activity. We did so to ensure our territory is not used to launch attacks against our neighbours. These measures were not triggered by the Turkish incursion and will not be removed because it has ended. The KRG is committed to finding a constructive, peaceful and long-lasting solution to the problem of the PKK; these measures are a testament to that commitment (KRG, March 2008).

These statements indicate that Iraqi Kurds wished to have absolute control over their own territory. It was clear that military operations could not and would not bring an end to the PKK problem on every occasion. Iraqi Kurdish officials thought it necessary to put stress on a non-military solution of the Kurdish problem in general and the PKK problem in particular. Barzani, in his stance towards the PKK issue, has been very consistent and always regarded a military solution as fruitless. For example, during an interview, President Barzani stated:

We have seen the military solution over the last 24 years it was fruitless...if they insist on solving this problem by war we won't support it. We are not part of this problem between Turkey and the PKK. We don't like our region to be used for this fighting between Turkey and the PKK. If they

think about another peaceful solution we will support either the PKK or Turkey to get this position (CNN, 2008).

In the same interview he underlined that the PKK's presence in the region was out of their control:

I totally deny that accusation because the PKK has no presence in Iraqi Kurdistan, in the area controlled by Kurdish Regional Government. I defy and challenge anyone to prove there is PKK presence in Dohok, Erbil, and Suleimania or any villages, even if they have a base close to our Peshmerga bases. We have told the US very clearly that we are not ready to send our Peshmerga forces into these very ragged and harsh mountainous areas to fight the PKK because that will not be controllable. That will not be fruitful. **The fighting against the PKK is inside Turkey.** It is not on the border and it will not be controllable because the PKK have guerrilla fighters. They don't have a conventional military force. If they continue to use this as a pretext just to cover the failure of Turkish policy, we have told the US we are not supporting the military solution and we will not support any kind of solution which will drag us into this fighting and we are ready to facilitate any peaceful solution to this problem (CNN, 2008).

In this era both entities tried to ease the tension and approach one another. Although the main problem of this era between the region and Turkey became the existence of the PKK in the region and its launching attacks on Turkey, it

was also the reason/incentive for both polities to establish dialogue channels. In other words, although it was seen as a kind of obstacle in relations, the revival of PKK attacks was a kind of motive for Turkey to open dialogue channels with the KRG. However, the Kurdish entity also appeared to understand that, without solving the PKK problem, it was not possible to establish a long-run partnership with Turkey. Iraqi Kurdish leaders realised that a military solution would not truly solve the problem. Since the 1990s the Turkish army launched several cross-border operations, however, none of them brought an end to the PKK each time it renewed itself (Marcus, 2007).

The last quarter of 2008 witnessed overt criticism by Iraqi Kurdish leaders levelled at the PKK, mainly about the PKK's being responsible for military incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan. In a joint statement, Barzani and Talabani stated that: 'We recognize Turkey's right to defend itself against terror. We are familiar with Turkey's sensitivities. We will not remain quiet, but will not declare war,' told journalists that 'This is our advice: either the PKK abandons the armed struggle, or it must leave our country... Terror affects all of us negatively'. That these statements were recorded and published by the Turkish PM's official news agency reflects at least some acceptance in Ankara of their viability' (see Ayin Tarihi, July 16, November 11, October 5,6, December 24, 2008).

2) October 2008 First High-level visit to Barzani

In October 2008 a new page was turned between Turkey and Iraqi Kurds.

Ahmet Davutoğlu, chief advisor of Prime Minister Erdoğan, with Murat Özçelik, Turkey's special envoy to Iraq, paid a visit to Iraqi Kurdish leader Mesud Barzani. It was said to be the first high-level visit with Barzani in four years. The visit was welcomed by Kurdish leaders. President Massoud Barzani said:

The **walls** between us have been brought down. The channels are open for dialogue...Before, Turkey refused to have any kind of contact with us. Now, Ankara has taken a step to improve relations with us and the Baghdad government.”³⁹

Actually, the word ‘wall’ is symbolic. It reflects the traditional approaches and perceptions of both actors towards each other. This symbol also implies the “cold war” between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds. The Turkish army has never fought Kurdish peshmerga, but has always been one of the main threats against their ambition to be state. Being ‘brought down’ means the end of this ‘cold war.’

PM Nechirvan Barzani, regarding the visit said, “We don’t want our relations to **be confined to the PKK issue** only. We want extensive ties in all areas.” He also gave the message that both sides intended to advance relations.⁴⁰ All these emerging discursive practices demonstrated that Iraqi Kurds were well aware of

³⁹ “Barzani: Recent meeting brings down walls with Turkey” <http://www.turkishnews.com/en/content/2008/10/22/barzani-recent-meeting-brings-down-walls-with-turkey/> (23.10.2013)

⁴⁰ ibid

Turkey's concerns regarding the PKK. Therefore, this changing language appeared to show that they wanted to make the differences between the PKK and the KRG more visible and their critics more vocal.

3) March 2009, President Abdullah Gül Visits Iraq

The following year 2009 witnessed further growth in relations. Turkish President Abdullah Gül paid an official visit to Baghdad on 23 March 2009. The visit was a historical step in terms of being a visit at presidential level to Iraq after 33 years. During the visit President Gül, alongside Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, met with KRG Prime Minister Nachirvan Barzani. Katzman notes that "This marked the first time a Turkish leader had met a Kurdish official" and also he argues that "The expanding diplomatic contacts coincide with the emergence of Turkey as the largest investor in the KRG region in virtually all aspects of the KRG economy (Katzman, 2010: 11).

Then Turkish President Gül became the first Turkish leader to use the name "Kurdistan" to refer to the Kurdish polity in Iraq. It is not a concrete step, just an utterance, but the use of the name of Kurdistan by a Turkish official at Presidential level has symbolic meanings (Demir, 2012: 95).

During the visit Turkish President Abdullah Gül paid a visit to Erbil, the KRG capital, too. It is reported that he called the region "Kurdistan." At the airport on his way back to Turkey, Gül met with the press and was reminded by a journalist that he had become the first Turkish official to use "Kurdistan" to

name ‘northern Iraq.’ Interestingly, Gül denied this, even though the journalists accompanying him confirmed that he had used the term. However, following his denial he did state:

According to Iraq’s constitution there is a ‘Kurdish Administration’ within Iraq and we stated this. I also had a meeting with their prime minister. [...] Those who will determine Iraq’s territorial unity, political unity and administration are Iraqis. Iraq has its own ‘Kurdish Region’ in its north. We also have relations with them.

Gül added: “What shall I say? We do not refuse to say Macedonia because Greece refuses to do so.” Although at first glance this is not a comparison, it is in fact a very interesting and significant analogy. In the case of “Kurdistan” it was Turkish officials who refused to use the term. Gül may have referred to an anti-reformist, statist block within the state machinery. This meeting and statement was an important indicator of the changing perception of the Turkish ruling elite with respect to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

In a workshop held in London in 2013 some Turkish and Kurdish officials were attendees. During the discussion I reminded one of the Turkish officials⁴¹ that during his/her presentation he/she called the entity “Iraqi Kurdistan” and I asked if it was a reflection of a shifting policy or just a personal preference. In a very aggressive way he/she responded, “the Iraqi constitution formed and

⁴¹ the workshop was held under Chatham House Rules, so I am not allowed to reveal the name of the incumbent

accepted by all sides in 2005 recognises and names the region Kurdistan Regional Government, why should we not use the name of the entity in line with the Constitution of Iraq...?” He/she continued, “What shall I say? We do not refuse to say Macedonia because Greece refuses to do so.” The answer was very meaningful, since it was repeating President Gül’s answer to the journalists following the Iraq visit on 23th of March, 2009. This might be seen as an indicator of the direction of the shifting Turkish foreign policy towards the existence of a “Kurdistan” within the borders of Iraq. It cannot be a coincidence that the same answer was given four years later.

During the break I approached one of the other Turkish senior bureaucrats, former minister, and he, in reference to my question, stated that:

The reality of the past was rejecting the existence of an entity namely Kurdistan in Iraq, but the **context** has changed. This change of the context requires a change in conception as well...and **the new reality** requires us to recognise the existence of such an entity within the borders of Iraq in practice.

It seems that this shift in the political language became salient in recent times, and this coincides with and in a way goes parallel to the booming mutual economic benefit, which is discussed in the following chapters. On the eve of constructing a direct pipeline between Turkey and the KRG, in a workshop on

Turkey- KRG relations, where the main subject was energy and the prospective pipeline, calling the entity “Iraqi Kurdistan” cannot be a coincidence.

October 19, 2009 -The *Habur* incident

The government in 2009 initiated a process of reforms to address the problems of Kurdish people in Turkey. The project envisioned that democratisation of the state machinery would solve the Kurdish problem in Turkey. This Kurdish opening was strongly supported by the KRG elite.

As first concrete step of this initiative, PKK members were invited back to their homes from the mountains. As response to this invitation, a group of PKK members came to Habur border gate between Turkey and Iraq on October 19, 2009. However, it turned into a show. The militants were welcomed as heroes by members of the pro-Kurdish BDP. It increased tension in the western, Turkish-dominated parts of Turkey. Nechirvan Barzani assessed the image shown during the first homecoming at Habur border as “stupidity.” It is reported that Davutoğlu and Nechirvan Barzani stated that they would never allow such a show as a co-decision. Küçükaya of Akşam daily wrote that Iraqi Kurds welcomed this initiative and, nearly on every possible occasion, asked Turkish officials about the “Kurdish opening.” Küçükaya states that behind closed doors Davutoğlu assured Iraqi Kurds that there was no turning back from the opening with the following words “...it doesn’t stop, there is no turning back in

social events [with regards to the initiative], the river does not flow backwards” (Küçükkaya, 2009).

This image of Habur attracted nationalist attention. Fearing nationalist reactions, the AKP froze the initiative for a while and adopted a kind of nationalist language in domestic politics. The Kurdish side interpreted this new nationalist language adopted by the AKP as a temporary tactic to maintain its nationalist voter base.

Although the Habur incident might be seen as a road accident, it is important to see the reaction of the KRG elite who sided with Turkey. This event might help Kurdish leaders to gain the trust of Turkish leaders to play an active role in solving the domestic Kurdish problem in the following years. In other words, it increased their credit.

4) October 2009, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s Visit to Erbil

Ahmet Davutoğlu, as Foreign Minister of Turkey, paid a visit to the KRG on 31. 10. 2009. The visit was a kind of turning point in relations between Turkey and the KRG. Ismail Küçükkaya of Akşam daily was one of the observers of this meeting and he carried the significance of the meeting to his column with the following words: “In general all these efforts are due to *normalising* relations between Turkey and the KRG” [translated from Turkish to English].

During this historic visit, Davutoğlu met a number of important figures, including President Massoud Barzani and PM Nechirvan Barzani. According to

news reports, during the meetings three topics were on the table, i) starting formal diplomatic relations, ii) fighting terrorism [the PKK], iii) the economic integration of the region (Reuters, 2009).

The meeting itself might be seen as the start of formal diplomatic relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government at Ministry level. During the visit Davutoğlu announced that Turkey was planning to open a consulate in Erbil as well.⁴² Of course the PKK issue was an issue on the table, but this time it was not the main topic as before. According to some sources, during the meeting liquidation of the PKK and recent efforts of democratic initiative were also discussed. In this new era the Turkish elite welcomed constructive involvement of the KRG in solving the PKK problem, as there was an attempt to involve the Kurdish ruling elite in the “peace process.”

The other issue was economic relations and how those relations can be enhanced. Turkish Minister of Trade Zafer Çağlayan and 80 businessmen accompanied Foreign Minister Davutoğlu. Following the meetings, a press conference was held. In the beginning of the press conference Davutoğlu put stress on economic relations and said:

⁴² KRG's official website “President Barzani, Turkey's Foreign Minister Davutoğlu hold historic meetings, announce plans to open consulate”
<http://www.krg.org/a/d.aspx?r=223&l=12&s=02010100&a=32216&s=010000>

I did not come alone, I came with Excellency Zafer Cağlayan, Minister of Trade, and 80 businessmen, and 20 journalists...while we are meeting here now our businessmen are meeting with their **counterparts**.

It was not clear who the counterparts were. However, my understanding is that by counterparts, he meant ruling elites, particularly Barzani's KDP. This means that the counterpart of the Turkish businessmen planning to make investments in the KRG would be the Kurdish administration itself. Therefore, the companies investing in the region would be acting on behalf of the Turkish state.

A journalist from Zagros TV asked an important question: "There are more than 500 Turkish companies in the Kurdistan Region...what will be your good news related to the contribution of Turkey to the improvement of the Kurdistan Region?" Davutoğlu, instead of directly answering the question, talked about the mutual benefits of positive rapprochement. He stated:

....when we collaborate there will be neither terror problem or security problem or any element which has threatened the security in the region. Contrary to these problems, together we will instigate, resurrect our strong civilisation and cities of Iraq and Turkey will be more thriving than European cities and mountains will not separate us, in contrast will unify...during the meeting we talked more about the vision than problems with President Barzani...we will not allow any seditions to enter here!

This statement can be seen as a reflection of the discussion between sides behind closed doors. From his description of the aura in which Turkey and the KRG cooperate, it might be understood as an aura devoid of the PKK threat. The Turkish side probably asked the regional government to eliminate the PKK as condition of enhancing economic and political relations.

The official website of the KRG reports that during the meeting Davutoğlu emphasised Turkey's role as a bridge to Europe for the KRG, while signifying the KRG's geographic position "as a gateway to the Gulf for Turkey,"⁴³ whilst the existing literature on the KRG defines it as 'landlocked.' The Gulf has double significance for Turkey. The first one is the rich oil sources the region possesses and the second one is its being a market for Turkish goods. Therefore this statement might mean that economic interests are driving Turkey's foreign policy towards the KRG. It is also important to remember that this visit and meetings came after huge oil discoveries in the KRG. It is estimated that the region sits on 45 billion barrels of oil (eia).

Going back to the question posed by the journalist from Zagros, although there is no direct answer, it might be interpreted from Davutoğlu's above statement that Turkey's contribution will be in the economic area, economic integration of the polity to the Turkish and its corollary western markets. In the statement he compares developments with those in European cities and then emphasises,

⁴³ *ibid.*

“mountains will not separate us, in contrast will unify...” The term within the context of the meeting means economic integration.

It seems in the first decade of the 21st century finding new markets for the thriving Turkish economy has been one of the main tasks of Turkish foreign policy. This objective of Turkish foreign policy has been clear in its economic and diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries. Economy and economic benefits have been the driving force to further normalise the relations. For example, in this era economic and diplomatic relations went side by side in its relations with Syria and Iraq. It might also be said that the low level of standards in these markets, in contrast to the European markets, could have motivated the entrepreneurs in rural Anatolia find an alternative market to export their productions (see the table below to see increase in export to Iraq). Regarding this point Henri J. Barkey, observer of Turkish politics and foreign policy, argues that:

As exports become the main economic driver, a new middle class emerged away from the traditional economic centres of Istanbul and Izmir. The new economic class, which is pious and conservative, did not owe its wellbeing to government largess and support. On the contrary labelled as Anatolian Tigers, it is free market oriented and willing to take risks and explore **markets in previously unthinkable destinations.** The AKP derives much of its strength from this economic class. This also means that the

need to search for new export markets has become a critical driver of Turkish foreign policy (Barkey, 2011: 18).

In short, the Kurdistan Regional Government has become a huge market “a previously unthinkable destination.” Increasing trade volumes and Turkish investments perhaps played a crucial role in this visit and meetings. Since 2003 economic relations between Turkey and Iraq have been dramatic. The data of the chart below, which shows the increase in trade volume between Turkey and Iraq, is from the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu, TUIK). The chart indicates the dramatic increase in trade volume between Turkey and Iraq and, according to information given by the state, approximately 70 % of this trade is with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

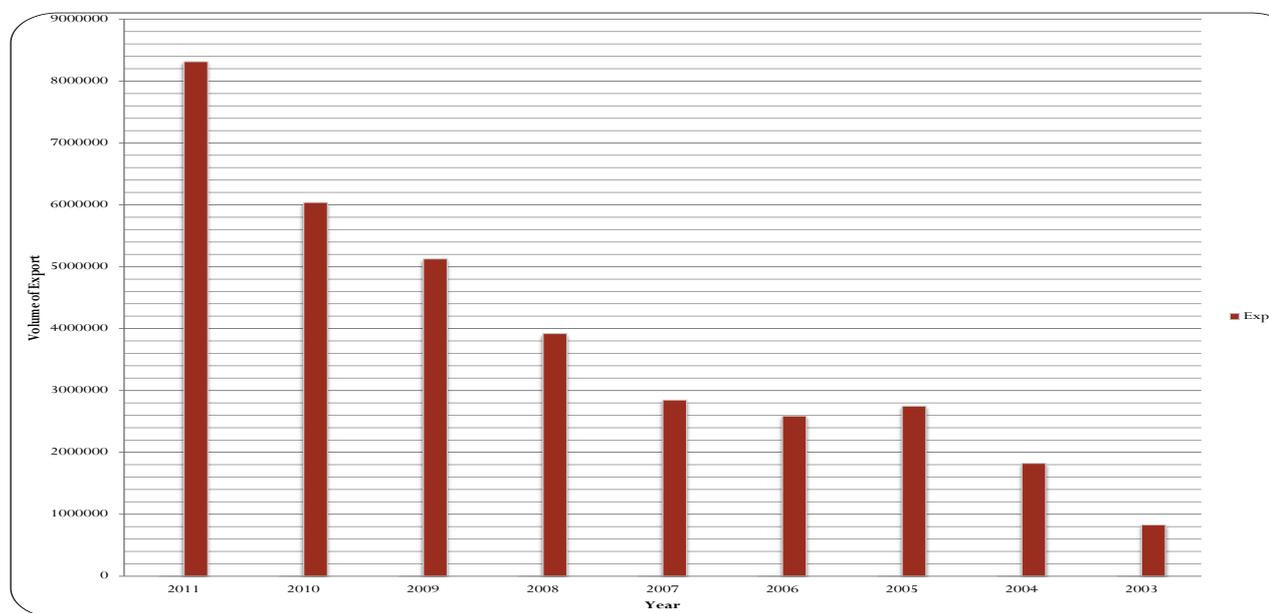


Figure 5 Turkey-Iraq Trade Volume (2003-2011) Source: TUIK, 2012

Turkish investments in the region are almost in all sectors, but particularly construction. A good indicator of this has been the construction of Erbil Airport by a Turkish company. The construction was completed in 2011 and Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan was invited to its opening ceremony. According to *Invest in Group's* report (2013), 80% of the goods sold in Kurdish markets are from Turkey and in the real estate sector alone the value of Turkish investments exceeded \$4 billion in 2012. Considering foreign investment in 2012 in the KRG was \$5 billion helps us put the amount of Turkish investment into perspective. This means that in 2012 80% of foreign investment in the Kurdish region was from Turkey. According to same report 2,300 foreign companies from 78 countries are registered in the region and out of 2,300 companies around 1,500 are from Turkey. As for the trade volume between Turkey and the Kurdish Region, it is estimated to surpass \$12 billion in 2013 (Invest in Group, 2013).

5) March 2011 –The Turkish Prime Minister in the KRG

In March 2011, then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan flew to Erbil to attend the opening ceremony of its airport. It was a historic day in terms of Turkey-KRG relations. It was the first time a Turkish Prime Minister paid a visit to Erbil, and furthermore opened a Turkish consulate and a few Turkish banks in an entity named Kurdistan (Kurdish Globe, 2011). This momentous move is reflected on the official website of the KRG with the following words: “Prime Minister

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in a historic visit today became the first Turkish premier to visit the Kurdistan Region.”



Figure 6 President Barzani and PM Erdoğan open Turkish Consulate and Erbil International Airport, 30 March 2011 (source: official website of the krg.org)

Regarding this historic event, *Kurdish Globe* (the only weekly Kurdish newspaper published in the KRG) wrote the following:

The visit had much more importance than such **symbolic openings**. It **signifies political adjustments of Turkish foreign policy** in Iraq and in the Middle East, and place of Kurdistan Region in such an adjustment (Kurdish Globe, 2011).

Opening a consulate is a very important step and a great sign of Turkey’s changing traditional Iraq policy. In the words of the *Kurdish Globe* “it signifies political adjustment of Turkish foreign policy,” because by opening a consulate Turkey recognised the federal structure of Iraq. This perhaps has become the

first material sign of the shift in Turkish foreign policy towards Iraq and the KRG.

Ceremony provided the leaders with an opportunity to produce needed images and speech acts to normalise each other. Both leaders related to one another in glowing terms. This attracted the attention of the media. The opening ceremony was shown live on Kurdish Zagros TV. Erdoğan was praised and presented as Kurdish-friendly. All semiotics, speeches and motives reflected on the screen were very positive and constructive.⁴⁴

Barzani in his address emphasised the historic side of the visit and praised Erdoğan with the following words:

Your [PM Erdoğan] visit is historic. Visiting Erbil city is one of the bravest decisions you have made... **we have seen many positive changes since you came to power. We support your policies because we believe you strive for peace and stability in the region.**

Throughout his speech Barzani emphasised that Erdoğan was distinct from previous Turkish premiers. Barzani also underlined Erdoğan being Kurdish-friendly. The above highlighted sentence, “we have seen many positive change

⁴⁴ The ceremony was broadcast live by Zagros TV on the same day. The following speeches of Barzani and Erdoğan were decoded by myself from the video recording of Zagros TV, which is also available on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nRBnpCPTFs&feature=related>

since you came to power”, was probably the main message Barzani aimed to deliver.

Following Barzani, PM Erdoğan took the stage. His speech was no different from Barzani’s. In his speech he was inviting “Iraqi brothers” to visit Turkey:

Today our consulate in Erbil issues about 500 visas a day for our Iraqi brothers who want to visit Turkey...We are planning to do away with visas with Iraq, just as we already have done with other countries.

Interestingly, he preferred to use the term ‘Iraqi brother’ not ‘Kurdish brothers.’ He also announced as a piece of good news that they [the AKP government] were working to remove visa requirements in due course. However, at that time he was still avoiding the name “Kurdistan.”

To complete and support the message given by Barzani, he talked about their, AKP’s, vision in relation to Kurds and Kurdish rights, which was different from those of previous Turkish governments. He addressed these points with the following words:

We have ended Turkey’s old policy, which used to deny the humanity of the people. **Decades of neglect and policies of denial have ended in areas dominated by our Kurdish citizens.** Thus state and nation are embracing each other more warmly.

Qassim Khidder of the Kurdish Globe weekly paraphrased what Shiwan Muhammad, Member of Iraqi Parliament from the Kurdistan Block, said as follows, “politically, Turkey’s prime minister’s visit to Erbil reassures the people of Kurdistan Region and the area, as it has been a belief that Turkey is a threat to the Kurdistan region situation” (Khiddir, 2011:5, Kurdish Globe).

On the way back it was shown on the TV screens that in the hosting house Barzani and Turkish delegates, including Prime Minister Erdoğan, his daughter, some ministers and advisors were sitting. Barzani was talking about his memories of the years of resistance against Saddam. He stated to Erdoğan that one of his friends/comrades from Turkish Kurdistan lost his life in the fight against Saddam. When they were together in the mountains the comrade was singing a Turkish folk song, *Burasi Muştur Yolu Yokuştur* (here is Muş, a province of Turkey in her Kurdish region). Barzani told Erdoğan he still remembers the lyrics. Ibrahim Kalın, Chief Adviser of Erdoğan, said if they could find a *bağlama* (Turkish guitar) he could play and sing that song. Finally, they brought a *bağlama* and Ibrahim Kalın played and all in the room including Erdoğan and Barzani were singing together. This image was recorded and broadcast in news programmes in nearly every TV channel in Turkey.

The song tells a sad story. It is a very traditional and historical song that tells of the difficulty of war times, during the First World War, when Kurds and Turks suffered a lot. Singing this song together brought a very soft image of Barzani to

the screens. Although singing upon Barzani's request Erdoğan was very harshly criticised by some radical nationalist newspapers, the majority welcomed the image. These intimate scenes between Barzani and Erdoğan had an impact on the religious, conservative, and nationalist electorate of the AKP. Such images and visuals were also important in terms of constructing a positive image or normalise a threat.

In short, it might be put forward that the images of the Kurdish ruling elite has been improved radically by such scenes, to such an extent that we may speak not of an improved, but a "new" image. More than try to ascertain whether or not the step achieved its aim, for this study it is important to see whether the government was making an effort and taking such initiatives to normalise the image of these leading Kurdish figures. In other words, it might be said that an alternative discourse with respect to the KRG has been constructed. Such visuals might have facilitated construction and dissemination of this 'new' discourse. As discussed before, change in the language of bureaucrats regarding the KRG has recently become discernible. For example, the reaction of Turkish officials in relation to my question about his/her calling the region 'Iraqi Kurdistan,' appears to show this shift in language (p. 138-139).

It appears that this visit was good for Turkey, but also for the Kurds, in normalising their relations. In other words, their diplomatic relations, particularly since 2008, show that there is a **mutual desecuritisation process** taking place.

Production and dissemination of such images and visuals have been backing up this argument of the government's attempt at normalisation. As discussed above, increasing trade volume appears to be the main driving force behind this decision to normalise the KRG.

6) April 14, 2011 -First flight of Turkish Airlines to Kurdistan

After the opening of Erbil Airport on the 30th of March, the first flight of Turkish Airlines took place on the 14th of April. Mehmet Şimşek, Finance Minister, was one of the passengers on this historic flight. As they landed, he gave a speech and spoke both in Turkish and Kurdish. It was crystal clear that Minister Şimşek's flight to Erbil was for the purpose of giving a constructive message and image to the Kurds.

Following the landing, a press conference was held. Minister Şimşek spoke in Kurdish (KRG, 2011) with people welcoming him. He said in Kurdish:

We are very happy to be coming to Erbil. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to the region was important for the brotherhood of the two nations [Turks and Kurds]. I've come here to further strengthen this brotherhood. I'm from Batman. I brought greetings from the people of Turkey and Batman (Today's Zaman, April 15, 2011).

According to reporters who were present, the minister's speaking in Kurdish was welcomed by the audience (Today's Zaman, 2011). Minister Şimşek then continued in Turkish and stated:

We are all siblings. We share the same religion and border. We as a country in recent years have been improving our relations with our neighbours within the framework of zero problems, strong cooperation, and more investment and trade. The flights by THY [Turkish Airlines] to Erbil actually completes the bridging of heart physically. God willing, this will make huge contribution to the improvement of trade, investment and cooperation of the peoples of the two countries (Today's Zaman, April 15, 2011).

Then he again switched to Kurdish and stated that:

The Turkish and Kurdish nations have been together for 1,000 years. Nobody will be able to disrupt this brotherhood as long as the world stands.

It seems through switching from Kurdish to Turkish, then again switching to Kurdish, he expressed his dual identity. It might also give a message to the Kurds in Iraq that Kurdishness was no longer a problem.

The overlapping/mutual interests required consolidating not only economic but also political ties.

Kurdish Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani took another symbolic step in October 2011. He joined Erdoğan's mother's funeral (Milliyet, 2011). This was another important symbolic step in the normalisation process. This step might have helped to "humanise" not only Iraqi Kurdish leaders who were once seen as "terrorists," but also the KRG.

B) Western Energy Security in the aftermath of US withdrawal from Iraq

In December 2011 Turkish fighter jets acted on wrong intelligence and fired on Kurdish villagers, cigarette smugglers from Roboski, thinking they were guerrillas. The event took place on 28 December during the smugglers' attempt to cross the border from Iraq. According to recently leaked secret US documents published by Spiegel (2014), this intelligence was captured by a US drone and given by the US's NSA as part of the agreement signed between Turkey, the US and the KRG in 2007 (see p. 123-24).⁴⁵

It appears to show that following this tragic event the three-party intelligence sharing system established in 2007 to fight against the PKK had failed. This tragic event might have triggered a shift in the fight against the PKK. It had probably been clear to the US and Turkey that using military power would not bring an end to the PKK, but increase its popular support. In this sense this tragic event might have been the last straw to see this reality and incite both actors to change paradigms.

The developments that followed, such as initiating direct talks with the PKK and its imprisoned leader⁴⁶ (Reuters, 2013c) in 2012, illustrate that the new paradigm aimed to bring the PKK from the security to the political sphere and

⁴⁵ Also this year the PKK was pronounced a "terrorist organization" in the US.

⁴⁶ Including Öcalan in the negotiations, holding meetings with Öcalan, allowing him to send messages to the masses supporting the Kurdish political movement.

persuade it to put down its guns. Results of this new paradigm or approach to the PKK issue became visible in 2013.

Internal Developments: The So-Called Kurdish Opening and its Link to the research⁴⁷

When Obama came to power he announced the withdrawal of US military from Iraq. It started in July 2009 and was completed by December 2011. Thousands of US troops left Iraq. The decision was a reflection of Obama's approach to world politics. In order to recover from the loss of the war and remove the burden of the cost of thousands of soldiers deployed overseas on the retrogressive US economy, the decision was taken. The main concern of the US related to the Middle East has been energy security, sustainable easy and cheap oil flow to the Western markets in dollars. Since the Cold War, to maintain this security the US relied on its military might. Now Obama noticed that the US economy could not afford to fund thousands of soldiers around the world. However, energy security was still on the agenda of the Obama administration. To secure energy flow in dollars to the western markets, the Obama administration has sought to find a partner in the region, as a bridge between the US and the oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. The main expectation from this partner was to oversee and keep the existing global political economic system relying on oil and the dollar.

⁴⁷ This part already published by the GlobalFaultline on 26 March 2013 as an op-ed of mine.

Turkey has been the needed actor in the region with its Muslim identity. Obama's first overseas trip as US President was to Turkey. At his speech in the Turkish Parliament Obama described Turkey as "a critical ally. Turkey is an important part of Europe. And Turkey and the United States must stand together-and work together-to overcome the challenges of our time." With reference to energy security he stated that:

...the United States and Turkey can pursue many opportunities to serve prosperity for our people, particularly when it comes to energy. To expand markets and create jobs, we can increase trade and investment between our countries. To develop new sources of energy and combat climate change, we should build on our Clean Technology Fund to leverage efficiency and renewable energy investment in Turkey. And to power markets in Turkey and Europe, the United States will continue to support your central role as an East-West corridor for oil and natural gas.

Obama touches upon both countries' increasing dependency on oil as source of energy by mentioning attempts for renewable energy investments. Then he comes to his main point by pointing out Turkey's "role as an East-West corridor for oil and natural gas". It is a requirement to remind all that the security of the region, as route of transportation, is an absolute must for energy security. At this point it is necessary to mention estimated reserves on the lands of KRG. According to some official KRG sources, the land is located on reserves of at least 45 billion barrels of oil and around 100-200trillion cubic feet of gas. This

amount makes/places the Kurdish entity on the list of powers whose economy relies on oil and the powers/actors that want to increase their influence in the region. Ashti Hawrami, Minister for Natural Resources in Kurdistan's regional government, on one occasion pointed out that "Kurdistan can feed Europe with gas through the Nabucco project for more than 80 years" (cited in Khidhir, 2011:5).

With reference to Churchill's famous quote about security of energy, "Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone," and this fact pushes EU countries to seek alternative roots alongside Russia. Thus, the recent context increases the significance of the *Nabucco* or TANAP project for EU countries. This reality appears to be the motivating factor to support the positive engagement of Turkey with the Kurdistan Region. Specifying Turkey as corridor for oil and natural gas pushes the US and oil-dependent Western countries to be active in the security of Turkey as corridor, with reference to the PKK problem. In other words, security in the South is part of Turkey providing route security for transportation.

2009 Kurdish Opening

Just 4 months after Obama's visit, on August 2009 during a party group meeting Erdoğan gave a historical speech. He talked about Kurds and their suffering. He also pointed out commonalities between Turks and Kurds. He stated:

When Neşet Ertaş says “Gönül Dağı” (Heart Mountain), each of us shudders ... Likewise, we plunge into the depth of our souls when Shevan Perwer says “Halepçe” or “Hazel... As Yunus Emre, Mevlana Rumi, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, Karacaoğlan, and Pir Sultan laid the foundations of Turkish culture, Dengbejs, who lived outside Munzur, were sowing the seeds of fellowship in the same lands.

The AKP Government took a number of historic steps. First of all, Erdoğan made his supporters believe that the rights of the Kurds were violated by the state. A Kurdish TV channel was founded. However, the existence and activity of the PKK continued, the organisation and its supporters could not be persuaded. Regional developments such as the Arab uprisings, which started in 2011, the increasing influence of Shia/Iran in the Middle East, and the polarisation within Iraq also affected the region. Western interests required the positive engagement of Turkey with the oil-rich Kurdistan Regional Government. Turkey also benefited from this engagement economically and decided to construct a direct pipeline from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Ceyhan port of Turkey with the capacity of transporting 1 million barrels of oil per day. On the other hand, Ashti Havrami pointed out that the estimated gas reserves in Kurdistan were meeting the needs of all European countries for 80 years.

2013 Nawroz

March 2013 witnessed remarkable developments in Turkey with respect to its Kurdish problem. First, some MPs from the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) met with Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), at the Imralı Island where Öcalan is imprisoned. Then Öcalan announced a ceasefire, sent a letter and asked the PKK to lay down its guns and withdraw the militia from Turkey.

When I heard Öcalan's letter vocalised by Sırrı Süreyya Önder, MP from pro-Kurdish BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) to almost one million gathered for the celebration of Nawruz in Diyarbakır, I recalled Erdoğan's talk given in August 2009, at the start of his government's so-called "Kurdish Opening".

After a period of silence a new step came from Imralı. It was a fact that for a while the government had been trying to convince jailed PKK leader Öcalan to play an active role in the process of persuading the PKK militia to lay down the weapons. It seems in the end the government persuaded Öcalan to call for the laying down of guns. Following the meeting with BDP MPs Öcalan sent several letters to different actors. In the end he sent a message to the Nawroz celebration in Diyarbakır on March 21, 2013. The message read by Önder was astonishingly similar to Erdoğan's historical talk in 2009. As Erdoğan, in his message Öcalan stresses the commonalities and similarities:

...Tigris and Euphrates are siblings with Sakarya and Maritsa rivers. Mount Ararat and Cudi Mountain are friends of Kachkar and Erciyes Mountains.

Halay and Delilo dances are relatives with Horan and Zeybek dances.

In the end it must be noted that the Western energy security in the context of the 21th century, the rivalry with China and emerging powerhouses over energy, requires a secure and powerful partner in the region, which has the capacity to be a secure corridor for the flow of energy to the Western markets. This global dimension will be discussed in chapter six.

7) 20-21 May 2012, International Conference on Oil and Gas in Erbil

The conference was organised by a Turkish NGO, STEAM. Turkish Minister of Energy Taner Yıldız and his Kurdish counterpart Ashti Hawrami were among attendees and speakers. During his speech Yıldız regarded Turkey-KRG relations as a strategic partnership. Yıldız also “called for a close cooperation” to develop Iraq’s Kurdistan region’s massive energy resources and export to Europe through Turkey. Developing an energy sector independent of Baghdad had been the Iraqi Kurds’ dream. The project would make Kurds economically independent from Iraq and this was one of the top security concerns of Turkey, as discussed in the previous part (part1, chapter 2). Contribution of Turkey to this dream of the Iraqi Kurds was impossible/inconceivable just five years earlier. Since the motives behind this unexpected development are discussed in chapter 5, in this part I will only look at the discursive aspect of the conference.

8) 30 September 2012, Barzani Attends AKP's Congress

In September 2012 Kurdish President Masoud Barzani was invited to join the 4th party conference of the ruling AKP. It was a huge step in terms of normalising Barzani's image that was labelled supporter of the PKK and threat to the unity of the Republic.



Figure 7. Masoud Barzani addresses AKP Party Conference on 30 September 2012. Source:

PRESS PHOTO

In his address he praised the AKP with the following words:

Since the AK party came to power, Turkey has increasingly been making great strides forward and today Turkey enjoys newfound significance at both international and regional levels (Kurdish Globe, 2012).

He also expressed his gratitude with respect to the AKP and its leadership's approach to the Kurdish question. He stated that:

The policy of your party and of your leader is the right policy to address these problems. Here I want to very much thank Mr. Erdoğan for his courage both when, during a visit to Diyarbakir, he said that the Kurdish problem must be addressed, and when he visited us in Erbil last year and said that the days of denying the existence of the Kurdish people is over (Kurdish Globe, 2012).

Actually more than what he said the picture (figure 5 above) given by his presence was important in terms of his being normalised in their eyes. He was welcomed and applauded by the party members.

2013 Overcoming to Taboo of wording Kurdistan

In May 2013 Hüseyin Çelik, deputy head of AKP, met with Barzani in Erbil. Following the meeting he talked to the journalists about the peace process between Turkey and the PKK and the role of the Kurdish administration. He stressed that the Kurdish administration's role was important and needed to solve the problem. In his talk he called the Kurdish region in Iraq "Iraqi Kurdistan." He told reporters:

I believe Mr. Masoud Barzani and Mr. Nechirvan Barzani will do their parts to extinguish this fire. This is my sincere opinion...I do not have a problem with the wording. In Ottoman times, the region was called Kurdistan on maps. We should **overcome taboos** (Turkish Weekly, 2013).

Nechirwan Barzani meets Davutoğlu

His visit came one week after PYD leader Salih Moslim's⁴⁸ visit. Moslim flew to Turkey from Erbil to talk with Turkish leaders regarding the security issues stemming from the advance of ISIS (MFA, 2013).

All these developments show that the KRG was playing an active role in Turkey's relations with the Kurdish factions in the Middle East. Barzani's KDP is the closest Kurdish factions to Turkey in the Middle East. They, Barzani's party, would like to set up an order to maintain sustainability of the Kurdish entity in Iraq. To do so they are trying to establish good relations with Turkey. They knew that in the long run, without acceptance of Turkey, sustainability in the region was impossible.

9) The 2013 Pipeline Agreement between Turkey and the KRG

All these steps taken by the elite since 2008 in a way brought the elites of both sides close together and led to growth of mutual trust. In 2011, on his way back to Ankara, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and Turkish delegate, including Erdoğan's daughter, came together Barzani's guesthouse in Erbil. This visit was also remarkable because it was the first time a Turkish Prime Minister was visiting Erbil. What was caught on cameras was they were singing together in Barzani's guesthouse in Erbil. This shows that what Turkish and Kurdish elites have been trying to do is one step further than the hegemon, the US, would like

⁴⁸ Salih Moslim is the leader of the Syrian Kurdish party, PYD. This party in terms of ideology and policy is close to the PKK.

to see. As outcome of this growing trust between elites, the Turkish side, despite opposition by the federal Iraqi government and its establishment which pursued a traditional interpretation of interests and so the unity of Iraq, signed an agreement with the KRG to build direct pipelines from the Kurdish region to Ceyhan. Furthermore, after the announcement of a second pipeline project, Kurdish PM Nechirvan Barzani met his Turkish counterpart Erdoğan. The invitation came from the Turkish side and Regions' Energy Minister Ashti Hawrami accompanied PM Barzani. During the meeting Kurdish oil in general, and Kirkuk oil in particular, were on the diplomatic table. The discussion was especially about transportation of Kurdish oil, including Kirkuk oil, to the world/global oil market (NSNBC, 2013). Constructing a secure line to transport the regional oil to the global market has been an overlapping interest of both entities.

Alongside the economic outcome discussed above, growing trust led to changes in the Turkish approach towards Barzani and his KDP. The Turkish elite directly or indirectly supported the leadership and increasing influence of Barzani over the Kurds in the Middle East. This step helped Turkey to balance the other groups' influence with direct reference to the PKK. The legacy of Barzani facilitated this. Having a charismatic Kurdish leader who would talk on behalf of all Kurdish factions, or who was respected by all Kurdish groups and had the potential to convince these factions to agree to certain terms, would make things

easy for Turkey in the region, although whether or not Barzani is such a person remains a controversial issue.

The Turkish elite welcomed Barzani's contribution to the peace process between Turkey and the PKK. In one of the latest attempts to bring an end to PKK's insurgency, in March 2013, the Turkish ruling elite praised Barzani's role in the process. Bülent Arınç, State Minister and Vice-Prime Minister and one of the founding members of the AKP, stated that "The Kurdistan Region President, Masoud Barzani took positive steps to end the armed struggle in preparation to adjust the peace among the sides in the country, hoping this support to continue by the Region"(Iraqi News, 2013).

10) June 2013: An 'Awkward' Demonstration in Erbil

2013 witnessed a remarkable demonstration in Erbil. On 15 June Kurdish people gathered before the Turkish Consulate in Erbil, this time not against Turkish cross-border operations, but to support Erdoğan and his initiative to solve the Kurdish problem. People were waving Turkish and AKP flags, carrying Erdoğan's picture and expressing their support. It was a historic moment in terms of being an indicator of changing perceptions. Just ten years earlier, in the same city, maybe the same people were burning the Turkish flag. Erdoğan now was perceived as the first Turkish Prime Minister recognising Kurdish identity and rights to an extent. It is certain that a new image of the Turkish elite was painted in the eyes of Iraqi Kurds and in this attempt the Barzani administration

played the role of painter. The motives behind this step are discussed in one of the following chapters seeking the motives at regional level (Zebari, 2013).

As one of the biggest problem between the Kurdish entity and Turkey, the PKK was persuaded to leave Turkey and announce a ceasefire via Abdullah Öcalan. The PKK was asked to withdraw all its militia from Turkey to the north of Iraq, the region under the control of the KRG. The process was supported by the US and European countries as well. The only implicit opposition came from Iran.

It is a well-known fact that since 2007 Barzani has been very eager to play the role of mediator between Turkey and the PKK.

Some claim there is a power struggle between the PKK and the Barzani administration in Iraqi Kurdistan (Akşam, 2013). Denis Natalie, long term observer and expert on Kurdish developments in Iraq, claims that the PKK is supporting the “new” main opposition, the Goran Party (Goran means Change), against Barzani in the election. She argues that:

This struggle is being played out by the PKK’s efforts to check the influence of Massoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, over leadership of the Kurds. By engaging in the Kurdistan Region’s messy pre-election politics and supporting the opposition Change Movement (Goran), the PKK is attempting to stifle a third mandate for Barzani, while stirring local criticism of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). These PKK interventions are unlikely to alter the status quo in the region

— at least for the forthcoming elections — however; they are fueling political fragmentation and creating additional challenges to regional stability (Al-Monitor, 2013a).

Natali also reminds us that the PKK and Barzani's KDP were rivals in 1990s. Further she argues that this rivalry has been going on since then. She argues that the rivalry between these two Kurdish sides was resurrected when the Syrian civil war started.

All regional Kurdish actors, including the PKK and the KDP, were aware that any attempt to fight against any Kurdish groups would lose legitimacy and support among Kurdish people. Thus, Barzani on several occasions repeated that Peshmergas would not fight directly against the PKK and he stated “the period of Kurds killing Kurds is over”. He also, particularly in his recent statements, used a very inclusive language that portrayed him as protector of Kurds across the world. For example, regarding Kurds living in Syria, he stated, “If Kurds were "under threat of death and terrorism" then Iraqi Kurdistan would be "prepared to defend them" (BBC, 2013a).

11) December 2013: Barzani in Diyarbakır

In December 2013 some unexpected developments occurred. Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Regional Government, was invited not to Istanbul or Ankara, but to Diyarbakır, together with Kurdish poet and human rights activist Siwan Perwer, who had been in exile for more than 35 years. According to

sources, the meeting was demanded by Barzani to discuss recent developments, but Diyarbakir as the place for the meeting was chosen by PM Erdoğan (Radikal, 2013). The meeting was historic in the sense that it was the first visit of Barzani to Diyarbakir after 21 years. This shows that the steps taken so far led to confidence between Barzani and the AKP's ruling elite that he was invited to Diyarbakir, heart of Kurdish political movement. We must remember that just a few years earlier Barzani was threatening Turkey that, should Turkey interfere with the Kirkuk issue, he would not hesitate to intervene in Diyarbakir (Al-Arabiya).



8 Picture from Barzani's Diyarbakir visit in 2013, Source

The invitation was also criticised by some as an investment for the upcoming election (Yetkin, 2013). Cengiz Çandar, an experienced journalist, called this a “drama”, “political marriage rites”, which “represent a political matrimony between Erdoğan and Barzani against Tehran, Damascus and even Baghdad. It was also seen as a matrimony of the unique Turk-Kurd alliance against the PKK

and its Syrian extension, the PYD” (Candar, 2013). Candar likens the engagement of Turkey with the KRG to the alliance between Kurds and Sultan Selim I in the early 16th Century against the Shiite Safavid Empire (chapter 2 discussed these relations). He argues that:

Today, Erdoğan and Barzani, two conservative leaders who have ambitious oil and natural gas deals between them, are in the process of forming an alliance similar to the one forged by Ottoman Sultan Selim I with the region's Kurdish lords against Shiite Iran. This new alliance is an inevitable by-product of a Sunni axis in Mesopotamia and it will seek a solution to the Kurdish issue by side-lining the PKK in Turkey and PYD in Syria.

On the other side, this meeting and rapprochement between Turkey and KRG has been read by sources close to the PKK as a “divide and rule” policy of Turkey against Kurdish cause/claims (Haninke, 2013). Following the visit, it was leaked to news agencies that a new Kurdish party with the support of Barzani would be founded and opposition in the PKK and some important Kurdish figures such as Leyla Zana who were against violence would gather under the umbrella of this party (Türkiye, 2013). The Turkish government supported such an initiative to diminish the power of the PKK in the region.

The resurrection of PKK attacks since 2004 and recent attacks in 2007 and 2008 in a way pushed Turkey to open diplomatic channels with the regional authority. This chapter only aims to draw the picture of the relations in the given tenure

and following chapters analyse the motives and dynamics which led the to Turkey-KRG rapprochement.

November 2013: Kurdish-Turkish Pipeline Project

As outcome of these growing relations between elites, the Turkish side, despite the opposition of the federal Iraqi government, signed an agreement with the KRG to build direct pipelines from the Kurdish region to Ceyhan in November 2013. Premier Nechirvan Barzani met his Turkish counterpart Erdoğan on November 27, 2013 and signed the pipeline agreement. The invitation came from the Turkish side and Kurdish Regions' Energy Minister Ashti Hawrami accompanied PM Barzani. During the meeting Kurdish oil in general, Kirkuk oil in particular, was on the diplomatic table. The discussion was especially about transportation of Kurdish oil, including Kirkuk oil, to the world/global oil market (NSNBC, 2013). Constructing a secure line to transport the regional oil to the global market has been an overlapping interest of both entities. The agreement was signed by then Turkish PM Erdoğan and Kurdish Premier Nechirvan Barzani following a three-hour meeting in Turkey.

This pipeline project means direct access to the global energy market. So far the region, to transport its oil production to sell on the international market, relied on the pipeline under the control of the central Baghdad government, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.⁴⁹ As first step, before the alternative pipeline project, to

⁴⁹ Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline is an existing/running Baghdad-controlled pipeline. It has capacity to transport 1.5 million barrels of petrol per day.

bypass reliance on this Baghdad controlled 'insecure' pipeline the companies preferred to truck the oil they produced to the Ceyhan port of Turkey. This new project would allow Kurds to reach the world market independent of Bagdad. On the other hand, exporting oil directly from Kurdistan to Turkey via Erbil/Kurds-controlled pipeline has been seen as "smuggling" by the central Iraqi government and Turkey's involvement has been considered illegal. Turkey was threatened with legal action (Rasheed 2013, Reuters). It was reported by Reuters that Abdul Kareem Lauibi, Iraqi Oil Minister, stated:

Turkey must consider its commercial ties and its interests in Iraq, Turkey should know this issue is dangerous. It touches the independence and unity of Iraq. If Turkey allows the export of oil from the region, it is meddling in the division of Iraq, and this is a red line.

"All companies...were notified not to deal with the (Kurdish) region to buy any quantity of oil which is considered as smuggled."

On the day the agreement was signed between Erdoğan and Barzani Baghdad warned Turkey once more that the agreement would seriously harm their relations (AFP, 28 November 2013). Maliki spoke to Reuters and regarded the agreement as violation of the constitution. He further threatened Kurdistan with cutting its share of federal budget (Reuters, 12 January 2014).

However, for some this project would make the Iraqi Kurds overly dependent on Turkey. Niyaz Barzani of Rudaw argues that Turkey's and KRG's

relationship seems to be an over-dependent one (Niyaz Barzani, 2013. Rudaw 1/12/2013). He argues that relations between the KRG and Turkey are unbalanced in favour of Turkey, because of the KRG's over-dependency on Turkey, if Turkey is the only route for Kurdish oil to reach the second biggest oil market in Europe. He further says that the KRG should find some alternative routes, in order to have "more leverage in negotiations." He points to Syria and Iran as alternatives. The former has been indicated as an alternative route to Turkey, while the latter as entrepot. He states that "The KRG's reliance on Ankara as the sole energy export route and dependence on Turkish imports give Ankara an upper hand in its relationship...clearly, this relationship appears unbalanced in favour of Turkey."

However, "overdependence" does not seem a correct term to evaluate the quality/type of this relationship, which appears to be an interdependent one. First, Turkey's being an energy hungry neighbour and the PKK issue and the role of the Kurdish elite in the peace process construct an interdependent relation benefitting both polities, despite the size and power of the KRG. However, he has a point in questioning whether having/constructing good relations with the KRG is AKP's policy or Turkey's policy. To put it differently, whether good relations are dependent on AKP's being in power. In his words, "if the ruling Justice and Development Party, (AKP) loses the election, there is no guarantee that its successor will pursue the same policy choices towards Erbil."

Is constructing good relations a policy of the KRG or Barzani's KDP? If the ruling KDP loses the election, there is no guarantee that its successor will pursue the same policy choices towards Ankara. Goran would look for alternative policies. During the recent Syrian crisis different approaches of the KDP and Goran to the PYD, and again their relations with the PKK, make it clear that Goran represent not only opposition, but also an alternative identity in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The KRG government has been playing a very important role in solving Turkey's Kurdish problem. Barzani, as charismatic leader, has been allowed to reach Turkish Kurds to balance the power/influence of the PKK in the region, in order to break the domination of PKK and the BDP (Peace and Democracy Party). The recent invitation of Barzani to Diyarbakır and formation of a new group, KDP Bakur (KDP-North), backed by Barzani can be read in parallel with this new policy of the Turkish government (Taştekin, 2013 November 24, Radikal). Although via this step, as Taştekin underlines, the AKP would "lure pro-Barzani Kurds", Barzani would have a say in one of the most important domestic problems of Turkey. Therefore, the relationship seems to be not an over-dependent but an interdependent one. Thus, it might be regarded as a success of the KRG, getting Turkey, the most relevant and important actor in the process, to back its cause.

One of the main concerns of Turkey related to natural resources in the Kurdish land has/had been their being used as leverage for first economic then political independence by the Kurds. The Kirkuk issue was a product of such a

perception. The traditional elite perception has been “if Kirkuk, a well known oil-rich geographical area, is controlled by the Kurds they will then seek political independence, which threatens the ‘unity’ of Turkey.”

Hiltermann suggests that “the Kurds see Kirkuk as vital in providing, at a minimum, enhanced economic leverage vis-à-vis the central government and, more ambitiously, an economic base supporting their bid for statehood” (Hilterman, 2008).

Iraqi Arabs fear that if the Kurds control Kirkuk, the region’s oil resources could provide an economic base for an independent Kurdistan. Turkey shares this same fear. Leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Turkey repeatedly warned against any Kurdish advance on Kirkuk or other major Iraqi oil fields. Ankara has threatened to send troops across the Iraqi border, in an attempt to block a possible move by the Kurds to establish an independent state. Turkey worries that a Kurdish takeover of Kirkuk and its surrounding oil fields could provide the Kurds with the opportunity to move toward the establishment of an independent Kurdistan (Straus, 2010; Lerenzetti & William, 2003).

However, now the Turkish government seems to pursue an alternative policy regarding the Kirkuk issue. It is reported that during the Erdoğan-Barzani meeting in November 2013, alongside signing a pipeline agreement, the other issue on the table was Kirkuk and its oil, as one of the richest resources in Iraq

since the beginning of the 20th century (Anderson & Stansfield, 2011: 19; Kandiyoti, 2008: 53-54).

Barzani asks, “if Turkey tries to mend fences with Baghdad at Erbil’s expense, what would be the KRG’s plans/alternatives?” Indeed, it is a difficult question to answer. However, taking the geopolitics of the KRG, a landlocked entity, and its being endowed with rich oil and gas resources compel the polity to engage with one of its neighbours to reach the clients/market. Therefore, Turkey’s being the most secure route and a hungry client for Kurdish oil, combined with the insecurity of alternative routes, from South of Iraq or north Syria, make Turkey the sole option for Kurdish oil.

Conclusion

This part of the study depicted the current picture and trend of the relations between Turkey and the KRG. It aimed to show the extent of Turkey’s policy has changed towards the KRG. As an answer, the chapter does not provide any measure, but argues that the Turkish ruling elite has been departing from the traditional narrative and policy towards the KRG and constructing a new one. This new narrative also appears to show that Turkey has been pursuing a new policy towards the Iraq, particularly since 2008.

The chapter used tools from the Copenhagen School’s Securitisation theory to analyse the identified dislocatory moves. The number of these moves could be higher, however the research limited itself to those seen as most salient.

The section also contends that since 2008 this traditional pattern of Turkey's approach towards the KRG has been changing chronologically. The events occurring in the period 2008-2013 appear to show that the Government of Turkey has been trying to construct a new narrative, which narrates that the KRG and its leadership are not a threat to the "unity" of Turkey. The high-level visits and historic moves and messages given through these dislocatory moves appear to show that the existence of a Kurdish entity within the borders of Iraq is in line with the "new" interests of a "new" Turkey. Furthermore, they also show that Kurdistan is the true ally of Turkey in the turmoil of the Middle East. Inviting the charismatic Kurdish leader Barzani to Diyarbakır, capital of 'Turkish Kurdistan,' might be a good indicator of this being the constructed narrative.

The chapter splits the given term into two. The first era is from 2008 to 2011 under the theme of "economy and politics hand-in-hand." This part attempts to illustrate that the economy has been the main driver behind the historic moves of Turkey towards the KRG. Increasing economic relations, booming trade volume between Turkey and the KRG directed Turkey to take constructive and historic steps, such as high-level visits, agreements, and finally even opening a consulate and entering into joint ventures. It might be said that until 2011 the economy had been the main driver. However, after 2011 another driver, at global level, entered into the formula. This new driver was energy and Western energy security, from 2011 onwards. The steps taken in this era show that its impact on Turkey-KRG relations is greater than economic relations between

Turkey and the KRG. This “new” driver and positive approach of the Kurdish administration to this reality attracted oil giants to invest in the Kurdish region and this development expedited the emergence of a Turkey-KRG strategic partnership.

This emerging narrative was reflected in the political language of the ruling elite. Some regarded the Kurdish leader as ‘kak’ (elder brother), some spoke of our Kurdish brothers, and some even spoke in Kurdish to welcome, or greet, or even sing together in a very friendly environment. It was the same with Kurdish leaders and their efforts towards Turkey and the Turkish ruling elite. For example, Barzani’s speech and greetings during the opening ceremony of Erbil airport and Turkish Consulate show this. This new language and practices of the leading figures has demonstrated a deliberate effort, on both sides, to normalise relations in their security practices.

The chapter argued that the ruling AKP has been constructing a new picture of Iraqi Kurdish leaders and the KRG. There have been discernible efforts to produce a new narrative regarding Iraqi Kurds and new positive images (figures 4 and 5) of the KRG. In the new, emerging narratives the KRG and its leaders are not ‘enemies,’ or ‘terrorists,’ but ‘brothers’, as spokesman Hüseyin Çelik recently told the Financial Times (Financial Times, 2014). This new narrative is being supported by positive images (figure 4). Therefore, the present picture shows that, under the rule of the AKP government, Turkey has shifted its traditional policy towards the KRG, normalising its political existence.

PART III) MOTIVES BEHIND THE CURRENT PICTURE; Turkey and the KRG as Strategic Partners

Structure of Part III; Introduction to Chapters 5 and 6

This part is divided into two chapters (5 and 6). The chapter 5 identifies and analyses regional developments or dislocatory moves that brought Turkey and the KRG closer together.

After identifying and discussing regional incentives, chapter 6 looks at the global picture and contextualises regional developments in a bigger picture. It first tries to identify the changing system and then existing and emerging rivals over the Middle Eastern sources. It mainly discusses China's economy its booming energy needs. Thus, China, the new rival to the Western allies over energy resources, is not happy with the rules and structure of the international market. Due to its increasing oil demand, it feels insecure, so it has initiated an "oil diplomacy" to circumvent the obstacles and secure the energy it increasingly needs. It mainly targets resources in states that are either excluded from the market through sanctions or similar implementations, or resources seen risky to invest in by the big Western oil companies. On the other hand, the Middle East region in general, Iraq in particular, with rich, new and "cheap" oil and gas

discoveries has become tempting for oil and gas dependent economies and Energy companies more than ever. Within this context the chapter argues that the US, in order not to lose control of a potential 12 million bpd of Iraqi oil, has been trying to keep the unity of Iraq. However it, and western oil giants that have invested in the Kurdistan region, supports any initiative of transportation-infrastructure, trans-Turkey pipeline projects, which would tie Iraqi resources to the international markets. Within the context of “Oil War Era” Western ally, NATO, wants Turkey to be an energy corridor, something that Turkey is ready and willing to be more than ever.

Regarding China it might be said that an emerging China is leading the US to recalibrate its interests and policies in the oil/energy rich regions, namely the Middle East. This might be called the Chinese impact on US foreign policy towards the Middle East.

CHAPTER 5. REGIONAL MOTIVES; Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan within the Regional Picture

Introduction

This chapter deals with the regional drives encouraging Turkey and the KRG to develop a strategic partnership. It suggests five regional factors that have facilitated Turkey-KRG rapprochement in the post-Saddam era. These are: i) the resurrection of the PKK's armed campaign against Turkey in 2004, ii) the disguised contention between the PKK and Barzani's KDP, or the rivalry between the PKK and the KDP, iii) the rising dispute between Erbil and Baghdad over control of resources, iv) the new oil discoveries in the Kurdish region after 2007, and v) the growing Turkish economy.

It is required to underline that the existing literature particularly focuses on new oil discoveries and increasing tensions between Erbil and Baghdad (Oğuzlu, 2008; Özcan 2011; Park, 2014). However, in this part it is argued that alongside these two factors, the resurrection of PKK attacks after 2004 and disguised rivalry between the PKK and Barzani administration have also played a crucial role in terms of pushing both Turkey and the KRG to open dialogue channels.

The following pages discuss these incidents as facilitating factors in normalising Turkey-KRG relations.

Resurgence of PKK's Campaign against Turkey:

In 1999 PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya, brought back to Turkey and sentenced to life imprisonment. Upon this, the organisation announced unilateral ceasefire and PKK guerrillas withdrew from Turkey to the Qandil Mountains, near the Iran-Iraq border, territory currently belonging to the KRG. This ceasefire lasted until 2004. In this course of ceasefire the PKK launched no attack against Turkey. In 2004 the organisation broke the ceasefire and resumed its assaults onto Turkey (Sarıhan, 2013).

The resurgence of PKK attacks in 2004 was one of the earliest motives compelling Turkey to engage with the Kurdish administration in Iraqi Kurdistan. The first attempt led to a trilateral agreement between the US, Turkey and Iraq in August 2006, based on intelligence sharing in fighting against the PKK. A diplomatic cable leaked by the *Wikileaks* reveals that KRG representatives participated in the Iraqi delegation (Wikileaks, 08BAGHDAD3710). Since the PKK has remained the sole excuse of Turkey to launch incursions/cross-border operations into the region, the Barzani administration has seen the PKK as an obstacle that urgently needs to be smoothed away. They do not believe in a military solution. The officials of the region have been mediating between Turkey and the PKK. For example, in August 2006 Nechirvan Barzani met and talked to then head of the PKK Murat Karayılan. Barzani said to Karayılan that

“he would not allow such actions [using northern Iraq as base to launch attacks into Turkey]” (Ayn Tarihi, August 2, 2006, item 12). The level of critics has increased with every passing year.

June 2007 Military Incursion into northern Iraq and heightened tension between Barzani and Turkey

2007 witnessed PKK’s bombing attacks in some Turkish cities.⁵⁰ October 17, 2007 the Turkish government obtained approval from the Parliament for military incursion into Iraq. The PKK continued its attacks in 2008 with increasing intensity.⁵¹ Iraqi Kurdish leaders were criticised and accused of providing the PKK with a safe haven in the region. The US condemned the PKK attacks as well (Ayn Tarihi, October 5, 2008, item 8). Then Deputy Chief of Turkish General Staff Hasan İğsız said,

...there is no problem regarding the US commitment of intelligence sharing, however we can’t take any support from the local administration in northern Iraq. Contrary to the expectations they are **providing the PKK with infrastructure, road and hospitals** (AT 05 October 2008).

⁵⁰ On January 4, a car bomb exploded in Diyarbakır. In a number of incidents Turkish security forces detected artificial fertiliser, which would be used for the urban bombing campaigns of the PKK. It seemed that specially trained guerrillas in northern Iraq were infiltrating into Turkey to launch such attacks.

⁵¹ Aktütün Gendarmerie Frontier Company in the Şemdinli district near the Turkish-Iraqi border was attacked by the PKK on October 4, 2008. Since the attack was launched with heavy weaponry from the north of Iraq, the local Kurdish administration came to the limelight. They were criticised for providing PKK guerrillas with a safe haven.

In February 2008 the Turkish military, as a reaction to the PKK attacks against military posts in several cities, launched a military incursion into Iraq, where the PKK was based. The offensive was said to be the largest cross-border offensive in the last ten years and it was “the first confirmed ground incursion since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003” (Tavernise, 2008, NYT). All relevant actors, the US, the UN, the EU and the Baghdad government urged Turkey to keep the offensive limited to the PKK and “to respect its sovereignty and to avoid any military action which would threaten security”.⁵² Actually, by urging Turkey to “avoid any military action which would threaten security” they meant any confrontation with the Peshmergas of the KRG which has been seen “the most stable region in Iraq at a time when security is improving, and also rekindle tensions between Turks and ethnic Kurds.” Turkish General Staff’s statement to appease the relevant actors’ concerns at that time was depicting the traditional approach to Iraq. He stated, ““The Turkish Armed Forces, which attach great importance to Iraq's territorial integrity and stability, will return home in the shortest time possible after its goals have been achieved.” The Kurds have not been happy about Turkish military incursions into Kurdish northern Iraq. For example Iraq’s Kurdish Foreign Minister, Hosyer Zebari, said:

⁵² Paul de Bendern, “Turkey launches major land offensive into Northern Iraq” Reuters <http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/02/22/us-turkey-iraq-idUSANK00037420080222> (last accessed 27 October, 2013).

... it is not Turkey's right to create instability and hit targets other than the PKK. This is what makes the situation dangerous ... and we fear military errors that may have harmful consequences for all sides (Reuters, 2008).

Meanwhile Talabani and Barzani harshly criticised the PKK at every opportunity as being responsible for Turkish cross-border operations into Iraq (Aydın Tarihi, 16 July 2008). However, they did not ask the PKK to leave the region, but stay quiet, as stated to a Greek newspaper:

it is the PKK who is responsible from the bombings and current happenings in Iraqi Kurdistan. They should take example from Iranian Kurds, whose camps based in Iraq but they never take military actions against Iran (Aydın Tarihi, 16 July 2008).

In October 2008 US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte met with Mesoud Barzani in Salahaddin. Following the meeting, a press conference was held. Negroponte stated to journalists that they talked about the PKK attacks to Turkey and stated that “it is an ugly attack and we are condemning this incident”. They also urged the PKK not to use northern Iraq to launch such “acts of vandalism” (Aydın Tarihi, 6 October 2008).

All these attacks compelled Turkey to contact the Kurdish leaders. Turkey sent its special envoy to Iraq, Murat Özçelik, to President Mesoud Barzani on 15 October 2008. They met in Baghdad. The main theme of the meeting was cooperation against the PKK attacks. Following the meeting Özçelik, reported

that Barzani “responded ‘positively’ to Turkey’s demands”. “The two sides agreed to turn a new page and continue talks,” said Faisal Dabbagh, a spokesman for Barzani. Dabbagh also underlined that Barzani told Özçelik that the terror problem should be resolved through politics and dialogue and that the Kurdish administration was ready to give support in every way.” The meeting was welcomed by Turks and Kurds. “The meeting was positive. It was a good step to develop ties,” senior Kurdish official Fouad Hussein told the *Cihan News Agency*. (Today’s Zaman, 15 October 2008).

During the following years the KRG was urged to play an active role as mediator between the Turkish government and the PKK. Also the statements reveal that the KRG would like to be partners with Turkey to bring stability, to secure and protect its post-invasion gains.

PM Barzani also gave the message that they want to be good neighbours of Turkey. He stated, “We will not allow use of our territory to threaten others’ security. Turkey is an important neighbour” (Fayaad, 27 February 2008, KRG). He also underlined, however, that those military incursions would harm the stability of the region:

The military incursion and the escalation of the crisis negatively affect the current situation. Nevertheless, the KRG continues to act as a calming influence. I hope these military operations end as soon as possible, because their continuation will only lead to further complications and casualties.

3-5 November 2011, Barzani visits Turkey

Following the rising tide of PKK attacks since August 2011, President Massoud Barzani was invited to Turkey for a two-day visit to hold a number of meetings with the relevant officials. The meeting was organised following the bloody assault of the PKK on the 19th of October, when 24 soldiers were killed in Çukurca, close to the Iraqi border. Prime Minister Erdoğan, on the back of this attack, asked President Barzani to pay a visit to Turkey in order to discuss the PKK problems. The attack brought the army's biggest loss since 1993. Following this attack, a number of officials from the KRG paid a visit to Turkey to express their condolences and solidarity, including Nechirvan Barzani. The visit also had symbolic meaning, that the leadership of the region was against any attack of the PKK against Turkish soldiers (Raufoğlu, 2011 SesTurkiye).

During the visit President Barzani met with President Gül, Prime Minister Erdoğan, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, and a number of officials. During the press conference Davutoğlu stated:

Irrespective of which country they live in, Turks and Kurds are eternal brothers [putting stress on common historical background from the Ottoman in line with his foreign policy project]. This eternal brotherhood must be further strengthened and carried into the future...the most important factor that threatens this brotherhood is terrorism...we would like to say that all Turks and Kurds, Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdish regional

administration, will act together against terrorism...it is our right to expect everyone to take a clear stance against this terrorist organisation...we expect the Kurdish administration to offer active support and solidarity (Today's Zaman, 04/05 November, 2011).

According to media reports, during the meetings the Turkish side put pressure on the Kurdish side to cooperate in the fight against the PKK. According to Turkish media, Barzani was given a "red dossier" which covered some hotspots of PKK in Qandil Mountains, some leading figures' names etc. Also, the dossier asked Peshmerga forces to actively engage in the fight against the PKK. However, the Kurdish side at every opportunity prefer to use a constructive language and rationalise and convince their Turkish counterparts of their standing, which supports non-military solutions. Safeen Dizayee, Minister of Education in the KRG, stated, "The root cause of the problems is inside Turkey, so we would like to see a solution coming from within Turkey."

The visit came following increasing infiltration of Turkey's borders PKK militants. Dizayee, who came to Istanbul in order to attend "The Istanbul Forum," stated that the KRG was also experiencing problems from the existence of the PKK in the region.

At the end of this meeting, Barzani made it once again clear that they would not join any military action against the PKK, instead would support political solutions and, if necessary, they would play the role of mediator. Serhat Ekmen,

from the Ankara-Based Centre for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies, assessed the meeting and statements given by Barzani as follows: “Turkey should not hope for support from Iraqi Kurds regarding military cooperation anymore, that’s what Barzani wanted to explain.”

Kenan Ertürk, who is head of the Terrorism Research Centre at the Istanbul-based 21st Century Turkey Institute, points out that “Barzani and his people understand very well that besides the PKK, ethnic Kurdish nationalism is also a problem in Turkey. Therefore, if he joins this battle, Barzani might lose his power in the region” (cited in Raufoglu, 2011). Regarding this meeting, Ertürk points out that “The government is likely to discuss some steps in both political and military areas with Kurdish politicians before drafting the new constitutions.

In conclusion, the resurrection of PKK’s activities against Turkey, despite some negative effects, led Turkish officials to establish a dialogue channel between Turkish and Kurdish officials in Iraq. Even in the medium term, it helped Iraqi Kurdish leaders show that they were not content with the PKK’s bloody attacks.

[Emergence of the PKK as Rival to Barzani’s KDP](#)

In recent years the PKK started getting involved in politics in Kurdistan and has sought to gain ground among Iraqi Kurds too. This development has concerned Kurdish leader Barzani so he kept some distance from the PKK. In another words, the organisation has been emerging as a rival to Barzani’s KDP.

Denis Natali, long-time observer of developments in the Kurdish region of Iraq, claims that the PKK is checking the “influence of Massoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, over the leadership of the Kurds”. Natali argues that to do so the PKK got involved in domestic politics of the region and supported the main opposition, *Gorran* Movement⁵³ in the 2013 election. She also contends “the PKK is attempting to stifle a third mandate for Barzani, while stirring local criticism of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)” (Natali, *Al-Monitor*, 2013). In the same article Natali also discusses the development in northern Syria, Kurdish inhabited area, and rivalry between PKK supported PYD (Democratic Union Party) and Barzani supported KNC (Kurdish National Council).

Actually, there has always been a power struggle between the KDP and the PKK. Since the capture of Öcalan in 1999, a de facto agreement had been reached between the PKK and the KDP. The return of the PKK militias to the Qandil region, which is under the control of the KRG, was tolerated. Barzani several times underlined that the *Peshmerga*, Iraqi Kurdish militia, would not fight the PKK militia or any other Kurdish groups, by saying “the period of Kurds killing Kurds is over”. Natali points out that “these efforts have led to a mutually peaceful coexistence between the KDP and the PKK, despite the distinctly

⁵³ Gorran is an off-shoot of Talabani’s PUK. In 2009 a group of PUK members led by Newshirwan Mustafa, an ex-peshmerga, separated from the party and formed a new political movement. Then it turned into a political party and currently it is the main opposition party to Barzani’s KDP in Kurdistan’s Parliament. See <http://www.gorran.net/en/Content.aspx?LinkID=137&Action=2>.

different ideologies and regional relationships each has developed, particularly with Ankara.” However, just before the 2013 elections in Kurdistan, the PKK changed its tactic. Particularly in 2009, Murat Karayılan, PKK leader in Qandil, showed that he wanted to work with Barzani. However, in 2013, just before the election, the PKK opposed the presidency of Barzani for the third time. Further, the PKK actively engaged with the election process and launched defamation campaigns against Barzani. It also organised local companies to show opposition to Barzani and KRG leaders. This is a crucial point, which shows PKK’s ties with the Kurdish people in Iraq. These developments reminded me of my conversation with a Kurdish man on the plane, while flying to Istanbul. He was a well-educated man with a PhD from a British university. He openly expressed his sympathy for the PKK with the following words:

PUK and KDP have fought for years. They fought one another as well. They fought not for the Kurds but for their interests. However, the PKK has been fighting for the Kurds.

Whether this statement reflects the perception of the majority of Iraqi Kurds is debatable. However, together with recent developments with respect to the involvement of the PKK in the election process, it shows that the PKK tries to have an influence not only among Turkish Kurds, but also among Iraqi Kurds. It seems that the PKK is getting ready to play a regional role.

The KDP was fighting the PKK in the 1990s, but now, despite the growing relations with Turkey towards a strategic partnership in the Middle East, it is reluctant to fight or take any military measures against the PKK. It seems in this decision domestic politics, the growing influence of the PKK among Iraqi Kurds particularly in the region once controlled by the PUK, could have a crucial share. Fighting the PKK would decrease its popularity among the Kurds so it is avoiding a war with the PKK.

Natali also argues that change in PKK tactics in Iraqi Kurdistan is also related to the growing relations between the Erdoğan government and Barzani. Also she sees that Barzani's claim to be the "leader of all Kurds" is annoying the PKK. It is interesting that the Turkish elite seems to support Barzani as "leader of all Kurds" against the growing influence of the PKK among the Kurds in all parts. The Syrian crisis is verifying this. Also in the aftermath of the *Roboski* tragedy the Turkish side permitted Barzani's getting in contact with the families and providing financial support (GazeteDiyarbakır, 2013). Barzani's invitation to a general conference of the AKP, then to Diyarbakır, have symbolic meaning in this regard.

Goran's expression of its sympathy and support for the PKK and PYD, as the representative of Syrian Kurds, has been another factor which brought/pushed the KDP towards Turkey. PYD has emerged following the Syrian crisis with the

claim of representing and advocating Kurdish interests in Syria. In its website, the reason for establishing such an organisation is explained:

...the establishment of a popular organization that unites and forms an umbrella for the Kurdish people in Western Kurdistan and Syria has become an urgent necessity. Other Kurdish organisations that exist in Western Kurdistan have not been able to abandon their primitive nationalist ideology, which is based on adherence to the rules of the nation state.⁵⁴

Although it is not clearly stated on their website, the PYD has been regarded as “Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK).” Also on the website, Salih Muslim is shown as a leader struggling for the whole Kurdish nation, while Talabani and Barzani, traditional Kurdish leaders, are being portrayed as motivated by self-interest:

PYD leader Salih Muslim has passionately participated in this struggle and he has sacrificed a lot. Recently one of his sons was killed and he has two more sons on the front line, fighting against the fundamentalists. This is the first time in the history of Kurdish struggle that a leader has sacrificed his child on the front line. Talabani and Barzani never lost any kids in the Kurdish struggle (FiratAjans, 23 October 2013).

⁵⁴ “About the PYD” <http://pydinfo.com/about-the-pyd>

Following the loss of his son, he returned from his diplomatic visit to Europe to attend to the funeral. After the funeral, when he decided to fly to Europe from the Kurdistan Region, a diplomatic crisis appeared between KDP and the KRG in October 2013. Although KDP officials denied it (Rudaw, 30 October 2013), PYD leader Salih Muslim claimed that the KDP did not allow him to enter Kurdistan (Abdulla, Kurdistantribune, 23 November 2013). For this action the Kurdish political leaders who are close to the PKK condemned KDP. For example Gültan Kışanak, co-chair of the BDP, stated to Firat News agency, which is known as PKK's News agency:

If Salih Muslim can go to the whole of Europe, but cannot go to the south of Kurdistan, that will be a great humiliation to the Kurds. What Salih Muslim is doing as a politician is struggling for the survival of the Kurds in the west, so he needs all the support from us, but instead they close the door of the south of Kurdistan.

The same website quotes from a PYD representative the following statements, which indicate how the PYD and its block have been interpreting the recent rapprochement of KDP and Turkey:

First, the KDP is still in the hands of Turkish intelligence services and their Prime Minister Erdoğan. Second, the KDP would not like to see another region of Kurdistan become independent. They see this as threat to the

authority of their leader Masoud Barzani because the PYD does not follow Barzani's line.

The KDP could instead have supported Salih Muslim in his recent loss and also helped build support for the Kurdish cause in the west of Kurdistan. The KDP's shameful decision is a misjudgement and a missed opportunity. But it is not too late for KRG prime minister Nechirvan Barzani to adopt a better stance. Even at this stage the KDP can change course and reverse public opinion about this latest action of the party leadership.

Regarding any development in northern Syria, which is also known as *Rojava*,⁵⁵ Turkey at the beginning reacted with its traditional concerns and announced its opposition to any Kurdish development in the north of Syria. The word *Rojava* had been enough for the return of Turkish concerns regarding the possibility of the emergence of a Kurdistan and the division of Turkey. However, Turkey changed its stance and got in touch with the Kurdish PYD.

In June 2012 a PKK flag, which can be seen with the naked eye from the Turkish border, was hoisted on a hill in Ayn Al Arab, a town in northern Syria (Celik, Today's Zaman, 22 June 2012). According to the same source, the PKK was very active in the region, even opening schools for the purpose of ideological instruction and militant recruitment. In short, the region was fully under the control of the PKK.

⁵⁵ It literally means west in Kurdish. However, this discourse has double meaning, which also implicitly means Western Kurdistan, which points to the unity of Kurdistan.

In July 2012, under the mentorship of Barzani, the Kurdish National Council was formed and all Kurdish groups, including the PYD, were brought under the umbrella of this organisation. This step of Barzani was supported by Turkey as well.

In June 2013 Salih Muslim was invited to Turkey to inform relevant state departments of developments in northern Syria and their objectives.

In November 2013 Barzani was invited by Turkey to Diyarbakir. This visit showed the rivalry between the KDP and the PKK. Mesut Özcan of Ankara Strategy talked to Rudaw news website and pointed out:

“This visit is a message both for the PYD and PKK. ‘You are not the only Kurds in the region’ is the message...In Syria the PYD is bullying the other Kurdish parties and tries to be the sole representative of the Syrian Kurds, as the PKK once did in Turkey. On the other hand, the PKK is creating problems by blocking the peace process and putting pressure on the public before the local elections in March (Cağlayan, Rudaw 2013).

The picture of the Kurds in the Middle East in 2013 can be drawn as emerging two blocks. The PKK, BDP, PYD, and the Gorran sides constitute the first block. Against this block is the KDP with its close ties to Turkey.

Syrian Crisis; role of the KRG and the PKK obstacle

The Syrian crisis has been a kind of litmus test, which made the alliances and dissidences more visible in the region. Following the outbreak of the conflict in

Syria, Assad's regime was overtly supported by Iran and Maliki's regime, while the opposition was supported by Turkey overtly and Barzani's KRG covertly.

Barzani's efforts to bring 16 Syrian Kurdish groups together to marginalise the PYD, which has strong links with the PKK, and form and support a Kurdish front, Kurdistan National Council (KNC) against the Assad's regime, were very welcomed by Turkey and the West (Stansfield, 2013). In June 2012 Barzani invited Syrian Kurdish groups to Erbil and persuaded the PYD to integrate itself into the KNC. Following this action, the PYD reshaped its position and joined this front. In other words, the PKK was reshaping and recalculating its interests. Its being welcomed in the KNC, supported by Barzani and Turkey, might be interpreted as the beginning of the peace process between Turkey and the PKK, which was launched in March 2013. It seems that the first bargaining between the PKK and Turkey happened over Syria, under the mediation of Barzani. Barzani was well aware that to secure its gains and reach the global market independently of Baghdad, Kurdistan needed to approach Turkey. He also knew that this was possible only by appeasing Turkish concerns and whetting Turkey's economic appetite. Offering a market for Turkish companies and goods, promising rich oil and gas sources, would motivate Turkey to positively approach to existence of a region. Barzani also saw that the PKK in this process was the main obstacle that remained and threatened the energy corridor between Kurdistan and Turkey. Thus, he was very willing to play an active role in peace negotiations.

To put it differently, Turkey, as an economy integrated with the global market, would like to establish a “*liberal zone of peace*” in the oil-rich region. However, this is not possible with the Baghdad Government, in the short or middle term. Iraqi Kurdistan, an assertive new actor seeking a future in the West, similar to Turkey, is looking for such integration. It seems it is this intersection of interests that motivates the positive rapprochement between Iraqi Kurdistan and Turkey. Stansfield (2013:281) argues that:

...it will be the situation in Syria that ultimately dictates the Iraqi Kurds’ alliances and future alignments. Having been drawn into the conflict by ethnic kinship, the KRG leadership has had little option, given the critical importance of Turkey to the Kurdistan Region’s security and economic development, but to pursue policies that satisfy Ankara’s demands. In so doing, the Kurdistan Region is being brought into the grouping of countries that have emerged in the Middle East as the champions of the post-Arab Spring Islamist governments -namely Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab emirates; countries that, because of their religious identity, are fearful of Iranian ambitions in the Middle East. With representatives from across the Arab world now resident in Erbil, it seems to be the case that Erbil’s associations with a Sunni bloc in Middle East regional politics is strengthening, because of its relationship with Turkey and because the Kurdish leadership quickly supported the cause of the Arab transitions. This can only serve and further strengthen the prospects

of the Kurdistan region moving towards independence, particularly if Iraq once again becomes a front line in the sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shi'is.

It is necessary to note that the recent talk between the PKK and Turkey has taken place within this global context. **While looking at some documents leaked by the Wikileaks on Turkey**, I realised that before Abdullah Öcalan's letter to Qandil⁵⁶, officials and researchers tried to find an answer to the following question "Is Öcalan, jailed leader of the PKK, still an influence on PKK guerrillas?"

There is no doubt that Öcalan is the top charismatic leader of the PKK. He has a very high position in the eyes of the guerrilla. He established the organisation and started the insurgency against the state in the 1980s. Although he faced many claims, some with very strong evidence, that he had worked for the MIT (National Intelligence Agency) and the organisation, the PKK, was founded with the support of the "deep state" (Sakık and Günay, 2007), his followers did not give up. For the guerrilla, Öcalan is not only a commander or leader, but also an ideologue. On the eve of a peace process, Öcalan is playing one of the leading roles. The question is whether jailed Öcalan still has clout over the "incumbent" guerrilla leaders, whether he has the power and influence to persuade them to lay down the guns and leave Turkey. This has been the question in the minds of

⁵⁶ In 2013 a number of talks took place between the Turkish state and imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. Öcalan was asked to persuade the PKK to lay down their weapons and leave Turkey.

Western powers, that have an interest in settling the PKK problem, for their energy security (Demir, 2013).

It was leaked by the Wikileaks that Michael Wilson, Watch Officer at Stratfor, sent a report from his “iPhone” dated on 18.08.2010, about the position of Ocalan in the minds of active guerrillas in Qandil. He describes his source as a “Kurdish journalist, inhabiting in Erbil, well connected with PKK and Kurdish officials.” He notes that “sometimes he spends a few nights in Qandil with the PKK”. According to the source:

Öcalan is not just a leader, but is a spiritual one who has been able to hold the PKK together for years despite being in prison...Öcalan is just like Sheikh Ahmed Yassin of Hamas, despite being in prison, still he was the leader and his directives were considered...if Öcalan had died, the PKK would have long ago collapsed from the inside.

In the report he also mentions the PKK’s strategy. He reports that “PKK is following a new strategy, which is sanctioned by Ocalan, which is the strategy of fighting and then giving a temporary ceasefire to both make the government think that they are still there and make them talk to them, which gets international attention.” Time showed that the PKK applied the strategy exactly, which was sanctioned by jailed Öcalan until March 2013.

The other documents leaked again by the Wikileaks are a message from Emre Dođru of Stratfor to some other staff of the institution (Taraf, 9 March 2012).

Doğru in his mail talks about the necessity of some sources and studies that have the power to measure Öcalan's influence in the PKK. He writes down a number of questions⁵⁷ and states that:

It's really helpful to think about these questions and I think we will have very detailed information on the PKK (probably that no one else has) if we can answer even one third of the questions below. However, I've no idea how I can even start getting answers on this. Such a guidance requires an extensive research and preparation period, plus travels to (Diyarbakır, Şırnak, Ankara etc) to try to reach out to people who may be willing to share information with us.

⁵⁷ Some of these questions are:

What is the current command and control structure of the PKK? More directly, does Öcalan command as much authority as he used to over the movement?

How would you describe the PKK's traditional command and control structure? (how was the group organised between political and militant wings, what was the leadership structure, how are orders disseminated from the leadership to the rank and file members?)

How did Öcalan maintain authority while in jail? Who did he rely on principally to carry out his orders? Are there examples in the past of other PKK leaders competing for his authority? How was that dealt with in the past?

What are the main divisive issues that we see impacting the PKK? Is it possible to identify the developing factions within the group? What does each faction stand for? Who do they look to for leadership?

Is there a noticeable split in the group, for example, on whether the PKK should negotiate with the government or stick largely to a militant campaign? Are there serious tensions between the PKK and the BDP? Between the PKK and the KRG?

When did those splits start appearing? What is exacerbating such splits?

It seems that finally the AKP government noticed Öcalan's influence over the PKK and managed to convince him in March 2013. The US has been trying to secure an alternative energy corridor by supporting integration of one of the promising resources with an ideal route. However, the PKK poses a threat to the security of the corridor. It is also seen as the main obstacle in Turkey-KRG rapprochements. So it needs to be eliminated or persuaded to lay down its guns against Turkey. It seems that the latter option was selected.

[Erbil-Ankara Line: Emerging Block against Baghdad](#)

In 2012 the tension between Maliki and Barzani became evident. In April the KRG cut oil supplies to the Baghdad-controlled pipeline over a dispute on compensation and contract terms (Reuters, 1 April 2012). In May the Baghdad government announced that all energy agreements with Turkey are not valid until approved by the federal government (CNN Turk, 23 May 2012). However, Turkey and the KRG came together. Barzani called for the PKK to lay down its guns against Turkey and visited Turkey several times. In June 2012 Barzani attempted to form a coalition among opposition parties in the Iraqi Parliament, to unseat PM Maliki with a no-confidence vote. The question is 'Why?'

Since the early years of Iraq, the main fear of those who sit in Baghdad has been the Kurds having oil revenue. If Kurds controlled oil sources, they would gain their economic independence from Baghdad and then they would seek political independence. Thus before and during the Saddam era the Kurds were always kept away from oil-rich Kirkuk. This same policy was pursued by Baghdad in the

post-Saddam era too. Since coming into being the KRG has claimed the incorporation of Kirkuk and other intensely Kurdish populated parts along the KRG-Iraq border known as “Green Line.” Kurdish *peshmerga* already entered these “disputed” parts alongside US troops in 2003. Baghdad has been against such claims of the KRG. Even to balance the Kurdish *peshmerga* deployed in these disputed areas in 2003, Maliki formed a special military unit known as Djila/Tigris Operational Command, following the US military withdrawal in mid-2012, to “provide protection to Arab and other non-Kurdish communities from Kurdish forces in the area” (Park, 2014: 20). This step of Baghdad thoroughly heightened the tension and brought the KRG and the federal Iraqi government to the brink of war. An American general acted as mediator and the problem has been solved for the moment. However, in this post-Saddam era there have been new oil discoveries as rich as Kirkuk in the lands where Kurds constitutionally have control since 2005.

Dispute over a Hydrocarbon Law

Baghdad and Erbil have been at odds since 2007 over a federal hydrocarbon law. For the time being the main problem between Erbil and Baghdad seems to be over management of Kurdish oil and gas. Iraqi PM Maliki wants this revenue to be handled by the state-owned State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOM). However, Kurds seem sharply against this. They want to handle both export and revenue themselves and they see this as their constitutional right (Rudaw, 2014).

There is a lack of a federal hydrocarbon law because of certain disagreements over controlling the oil export and management of the revenue.

Contentions between Barzani and Maliki surfaced first in 2008. During a programme on a local TV channel Barzani revealed his anxiety and stated that Maliki was trying to “monopolise power.” In the same month Maliki made a statement and underlined that “the Kurds were pursuing unconstitutional policies, such as deploying *peshmerga* outside the KRG region and opening representative offices in foreign countries” (Katzman, 2010: 6).

In order to pressure the Kurds to accept its terms, Baghdad has been using the national budget as a weapon/card to threaten them. PM Maliki has threatened to cut the region from the budget, a step seen by the Kurdish administration as virtually a “declaration of war” (Rudaw, 2014). Following this Baghdad-Erbil dissension, in a ceremony Kurdish President Barzani underlined: “we have to reassess our relations with Baghdad...we cannot live under threat all the time...we do not want trouble for Erbil or Baghdad...we do not trade our trade for anything.”

All these statements indicate that the freedom of Iraqi Kurds is very much related to their ability to handle their oil exports and revenues. Iraqi Kurds do not only demand to be able to practise their ‘soft rights,’ i.e. socio-cultural rights, but also to keep and develop their political rights via controlling their sources.

Romano rightly argues:

The Erbil-Baghdad oil dispute is actually about **control of the oil industry** rather than division of its profits. Politicians in Baghdad want sole and exclusive authority over the signing of oil contracts, the managing of the industry throughout the country, export arrangements, determination of federal expenses and payments to provinces and regions. Kurdish leaders are not so naive as to accept such an arrangement, however. They know that whomever controls the purse strings of Iraq can come to control everything else as well (Romano, Rudaw, 2013).

The Kurdish entity wants to control the hydrocarbon sources it was endowed and concordantly it wants to have the right to sign direct agreements with states and oil companies, while Baghdad is displeased with this. In tandem with Romano's argument, Kurdish Premier N. Barzani, in an interview, talks about their intention to control their resources as follows:

The only thing we haven't agreed upon **is control over oil sales**, which Baghdad insists should be only done by SOMO [Iraq's State Oil Marketing Company]. And we say the Kurdistan Region wouldn't accept that. And after they cut the salaries of the people of Kurdistan, we stress more than ever before that their suggestion isn't acceptable, because what they are doing now could be repeated any time (Jamal, Rudaw, 28 April 2014).

Tension between Baghdad and Erbil became more visible in 2012, when Erbil signed a number of important contracts with oil giants such as Exxon Mobile,

despite Baghdad's strong opposition. Finally, there came the pipeline project between the Kurdish region and Turkey's Ceyhan port. This project aims to transport 1 million bpd. In the near future it is said that this will increase to 2 million barrels, from Kurdistan to Turkey's Ceyhan port (HDN, 20 June 2013). In an article written in 2012 Turkish minister of energy Taner Yıldız underlines that Turkey wants to be an "energy transportation hub." Offering better deals (production share agreements) and being relatively more secure compared to the rest of Iraq, it is drawing the interest of oil companies in the Kurdistan region.

By-passing the deadlock

Kurdistan's "newly" discovered resources require a huge amount of investment for production in line with its capacity (Natali, Al-Monitor, 5 June 2012). Disagreement over a federal hydrocarbons legal framework puts Kurds in a position to seek alternative ways to by-pass this handicap, so the Kurdish parliament legislated its own oil law in June 2007 (KRG, Petroleum Law of Kurdistan Region). Article 3 of this Kurdish hydrocarbon law refers to articles 111 and 112 of the Constitution, in order to show that the law is consistent with the Constitution.⁵⁸ The second paragraph of the article 112 states that:

The federal government, with the producing regional and governorate governments, shall together formulate the necessary strategic policies to

⁵⁸ Article 3: "Petroleum in the Region is owned in a manner consistent with Article 111 of the Federal Constitution. The Regional Government shall share Revenue derived from Petroleum with all the people of Iraq, pursuant to Article 112 of the Federal Constitution and this Law."

develop the oil and gas wealth in a way that achieves the highest benefit to the Iraqi people using the most advanced techniques of the market principles and encouraging investment.

Kurdish officials, with reference to this paragraph of article 111, claim that their law aims to achieve the “highest benefit to the Iraqi people using the most advanced techniques of the market principles and encouraging investment”(Romano, 2013). Their role in the relationship between Turkey and the KRG is certain.

The government in Baghdad is uncomfortable with the KRG’s oil policies. The central government declared that they are the only authority that can sign valid contracts.⁵⁹ Baghdad regards the oil contracts signed by the KRG as illegal and threatens the companies that sign agreements with the KRG that they will not be allowed in Iraq’s oil market in future. However, Western companies and even Turkish companies, despite this open threat, continue to invest in the region and sign contracts with the KRG.

All these disputes between the Kurds and the federal government over resource management might be, as Amin discusses, a consequence of differences between Kurds’ self-perception and Arabs’ perception of Kurds. Amin underlines that:

⁵⁹ Ref Shahrstani, Iraqi Minister of Energy, declared in April 2007 that all contracts signed by the KRG are illegal.

...the Kurds perceive themselves as a nation thus entitled to their national rights including the right to possess their territory and natural resources of that territory. On the other hand, the Arabs perceive the Kurds as a minority group to be satisfied with minority rights. It is because of these opposing perceptions that the Kurdish claims on Kirkuk and KRG's signing oil exploration contracts with international oil firms without Baghdad approval seem excessive demands while the Kurds perceive these as their natural rights (Amin, KurdishGlobe, 02 April 2010).

In 2012 the tension between Maliki and Barzani became evident. On **April 1** the KRG cuts oil supplies to the Baghdad-controlled pipeline network over a dispute on compensation and contract terms. Barzani's attempts to form a coalition among opposition parties in the Iraqi Parliament in order to unseat PM Maliki with a no-confidence vote was indirectly supported by Ankara. It is obvious from the exchange between Ashti Hawrami, Kurdish Minister of Energy, and Zainap Badevi that the Kurds' fear of Baghdad control were revitalised.

AH: We do not want to get back into a cage where everything is controlled by Baghdad, like we had for fifty years. Our revenue was being used to buy bombs, and bombing our people with chemical bombs....

ZB: Are you saying that could happen under this government?

AH: If you do not have checks and balances...

ZB: Are you seriously saying that this government might carry out something like the terrible *Anfal* massacre where the Iraqi...

AH: I am not saying that, I am saying that Iraqi people, the capability is there. Because the democracy is not mature that we are quite right to be cautious, to be worried about what we have witnessed in the past. And to be very careful of how we move forward into the future...(Hawrami, 2012)

The possibility of another Saddam has been the nightmare of Iraqi Kurds. The wounds from Saddam were still fresh.

Ankara-Baghdad

It is also important to note that Ankara has been at odds with Baghdad over a number of issues. All the problems Ankara faced and Baghdad's attitudes towards Ankara also played a role in Turkish-KRG relations. Among others, an unprecedented reaction by Baghdad has been against Turkish incursion into northern Iraq, against the PKK. During the Saddam era, Ankara had been granted the right of hot pursuit, or the right of cross-border operations into northern Iraq. Turkey had been practising this right since 1983 (Keskin, 2008). However, it seems the new government in Iraq does not view this as a right granted to Turkey. This reaction by Baghdad has been visible, particularly after the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. As Dodge argues, Maliki is more authoritarian and tried to concentrate power in his hands through placing all sorts of security forces under his direct control (Dodge, 2012).

This increasing authoritarianism saw the exclusion of Sunnis from the political sphere, leading to radical movements in 2014. The relations were first strained in 2010, during elections. Turkey supported Ayad Allawi and tried to persuade Sunni Arabs to unite under the banner of Allawi's front (Crisis Group, 31 July 2012). Although both of them were from the Shiite block, Maliki's relations with Iran made Turkey support Ayad Allawi. The main reason was because Allawi is Shi'ite, but secular, and did not have any ties with Iran, Turkey's main regional rival.

Following the elections, Allawi's *Iraqiya* block and Maliki closed a deal under the supervision of the US. The agreement predicted power sharing with Allawi's *Iraqiya* (Barnes, 2011). However, the decision taken by the US to withdraw its army from Iraq emboldened Maliki to take more unilateral decisions. The process turned him into an "authoritarian" in due course (Dodge, 2012: 147-168) (e.g in December 2011 US troops officially left Iraq and immediately after this Maliki issued an arrest warrant for vice President Hashimi from the Sunni side (CNN, 19 December 2011), which led to further sectarian conflict (cited in Karon, 2011). Not only Sunnis and Kurds, but also Shi'ite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr, whose support was crucial for Maliki's re-election, complained about Maliki's authoritarianism. He even went further to refer to Maliki as "the dictator" (cited in Karon, 2012).

Obama's decision to remove US combat troops from Iraq⁶⁰ has affected the regional balance and Turkey-KRG relations. In terms of its effect on the Kurds, in a way it isolated and left the KRG/Kurds vulnerable. On the other side, it increased the strength of Maliki's government against the Kurds.

After US withdrawal from Iraq, relations between Tehran and Baghdad improved and became more apparent during the Syrian crisis, indirectly leading to the emergence of one of Turkey's regional concerns, the Iranian-Iraqi "Shi'ite axis" (Burch, Reuters, 18 May 2012). Regarding the US military withdrawal and increasing influence of Iran in Baghdad, Kurdish leader Nechirvan Barzani, in an interview to NYT, underlines that withdrawal of the US forces boosted Iran's influence in Iraq. He stated that:

N. Barzani: We knew that after the withdrawal of the American troops, things would change and this would be a normal thing to happen in Iraq. America came to this country, spent huge amounts of money and have sacrificed lives. But they **handed over the keys to others**.

TIME: To the **Iranians?**

N. Barzani: I said to others, okay [laughs]. Whatever problems, whatever you like, they have left all these problems behind (Barzani, 2012).

⁶⁰ However, it is necessary to note that this was not specific to Iraq, but to the whole region as part of US military shift to the Pacific. This aspect of the US military, withdrawal from the Middle East was discussed in the previous chapter, to uncover the nature of the emerging rivalry between China and the US.

During the same interview he also revealed the Kurds' discomfort with a powerful Maliki regime. He argued that in terms of his approach to Kurdish demands on disputed territories he resembled Saddam, waiting to impose a solution on Kurds:

How does Baghdad act? Baghdad believes or perceives that they will be stronger, but especially I'm talking about Prime Minister Maliki, he's waiting for F16s and M1 tanks, and being in that strong position to come and talk to us. To impose a solution on us. Imposing any kind of solution would create a problem on the ground. There has to be an agreement, a compromise. Compromise for talk, for everything (Barzani, 2012).

He saw the US as responsible for this "*Saddamisation*" of Maliki. Regarding US responsibility, he replied:

I'll pose a question: Why did you come to Iraq? What's the reason? If the only intention was to hand over Iraq's keys to others, then why did you come? Why? This is really the question for Americans. Therefore, America is also responsible for the situation and what happens now. There is a moral responsibility on the United States. Because, until the last moment when then Americans were here they did not help us to solve these problems. And they knew that these were problems that would linger (Barzani, 2012).

In short, the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq both strengthened Maliki and led to increased Iranian influence in Baghdad. This situation left the Kurds isolated and negatively affected their ambition to integrate their sources with the western energy markets. Also the problems with Baghdad after US withdrawal led Kurds closer to Ankara.

The recent problem between Ankara and Baghdad has been the transportation of Kurdish oil via Turkey. In the beginning Turkey used a very constructive language towards Baghdad and stressed that no oil exportation would be done without the approval of the central government in Baghdad. However, despite guaranteeing that “no oil exportation would be done without approval by Baghdad,” Turkey signed a number of agreements with the Kurdish government in Erbil. Turkey action increased the tension and the criticism in Baghdad. Upon this, Turkey offered an alternative solution to Baghdad. According to this solution, the oil revenues would be deposited in an escrow account in Turkey at Halk Bank, a state bank, and would be released only once Baghdad approved. However, once it became clear to Turkey that this approval would never come, the first Kurdish oil flowed to Turkey in January 2014. This has been viewed as Turkey’s intervention in a domestic issue. The first reaction from Baghdad came on the 10th of January, from Oil Minister Sahrastani as “deep regret and astonishment” (HDN). "The only side in Iraq that is in charge of exporting oil is SOMO [the State Oil Marketing Organization]," said Ali Musawi, the spokesperson for Maliki" (Lnado and Staff Iraqioilreport, 13 January 2014). Iraqi

PM Maliki even went further and stated “Turkey must not interfere in an issue that harms Iraqi sovereignty” (Al-Salhy and Lyon, Reuters, 12 January 2014).

Growing Turkish Economy; KRG as Market and Energy Supplier

Kurdistan as Energy supplier for Turkey

Another regional motive behind the Turkey-KRG rapprochement has been the growing Turkish economy and the increasing demand for oil.

Ankara, by taking part in the pipeline project, directly or indirectly would support the Kurdish bid to control hydrocarbon resources in the region. This means that the developments in Iraq once regarded as Ankara’s red lines have changed a lot.

There are mainly two incentives identified behind this recent position of Ankara. These incentives are increasing domestic energy/oil & gas demands stemming from a fast growing Turkish economy and creating a new image of Turkey as regional energy hub (Aras and Görener, 2010; Yıldız, 2010). These two points might be seen as both principal reasons and causes of peace negotiations,⁶¹ regional alliances and disputes between Turkey and Iraq (Demir, 2012). Alongside these points, growing trade levels between Turkey and the KRG are

⁶¹ Regarding the relationship between global energy game and peace negotiation between Turkish government and Ocalan started in 2013 see Mustafa Demir, “Energy Security, Turkey, and the PKK or Obama, Erdogan, and Ocalan”, *GlobalFaultlines*, 26 March 2013. Available at: <http://globalfaultlines.org/2013/03/26/energy-security-turkey-and-the-pkk-or-obama-erdogan-and-ocalan-by-mustafa-demir/>

facilitating growing relations. Being both energy supplier and market for the Turkish economy, the Iraqi Kurdish entity has incited Turkish officials and decision-makers to change their negative conception to a positive one.

Turkey is an energy dependent country. It is mainly dependent on Russian gas and Iranian oil (see the tables below, figure 1). In this respect, Kurdish oil with a capacity of producing 2-3 million bpd by 2020 means diversification of energy sources and freedom from being dependent on Iran and Russia for the fast growing Turkish economy.

Currently Turkey's main oil provider is Iran with a share of 44% (table below, figure 1). As for natural gas, Russia fulfils 58% of Turkey's need. Diversity of resources and finding cheap sources are the priority of Turkey in its energy policy. Taner Yıldız, Minister of Energy and Resources, in his article written in 2010, underlines the diversification of energy supply and becoming an energy hub for Western markets as Turkey's long-term energy policy.⁶² He remarks that:

Turkey can contribute constructively to the world's energy security and more specifically play an important regional role in that regard Turkey can be more than a bridge; it has the potential to become a regional center between Asia and Europe. The core of Turkey's energy policy is circular and diameter of his circle is equal to the world's diameter.

⁶² Taner Yıldız, "Turkey's Energy Policy, Regional Role and Future Energy Vision," *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 3 (2010): 36.

The minister very openly reveals the extent of Western centrism in Turkey's foreign and energy policy. For example, although above he is using the expression "world's energy security", he is implying/talking about Western energy security. As discussed before, geographically Turkey is playing an important role in terms of becoming a transit country for the suppliers in the Middle East to the Western markets, not to the Eastern consumers with reference to China and India. In other words, existing and possible pipelines might be a threat to the Chinese and Indian energy security vis-à-vis EU's energy security. After all, in the very same article, the Minister discusses energy geopolitics of Turkey and added value of this to the European Union. He highlights that "Turkey represents one of the most important energy transportation routes carrying hydrocarbons from the Middle East and the Caspian Basin to the European Union," with reference to existing and planned oil and gas pipelines.

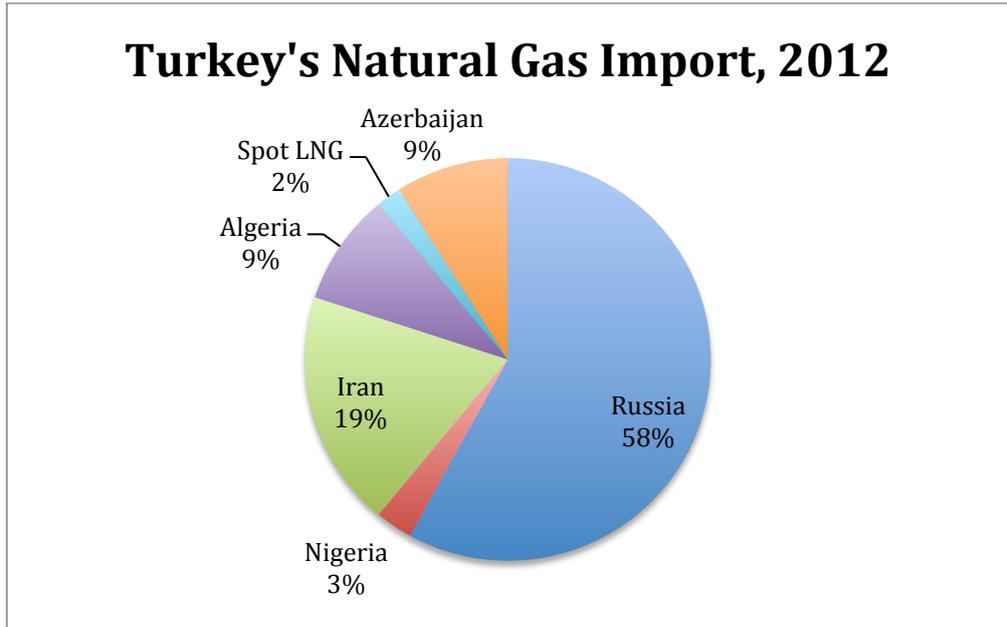


Figure 9. Turkey's Natural Gas Import, Source: eia, PFC Energy

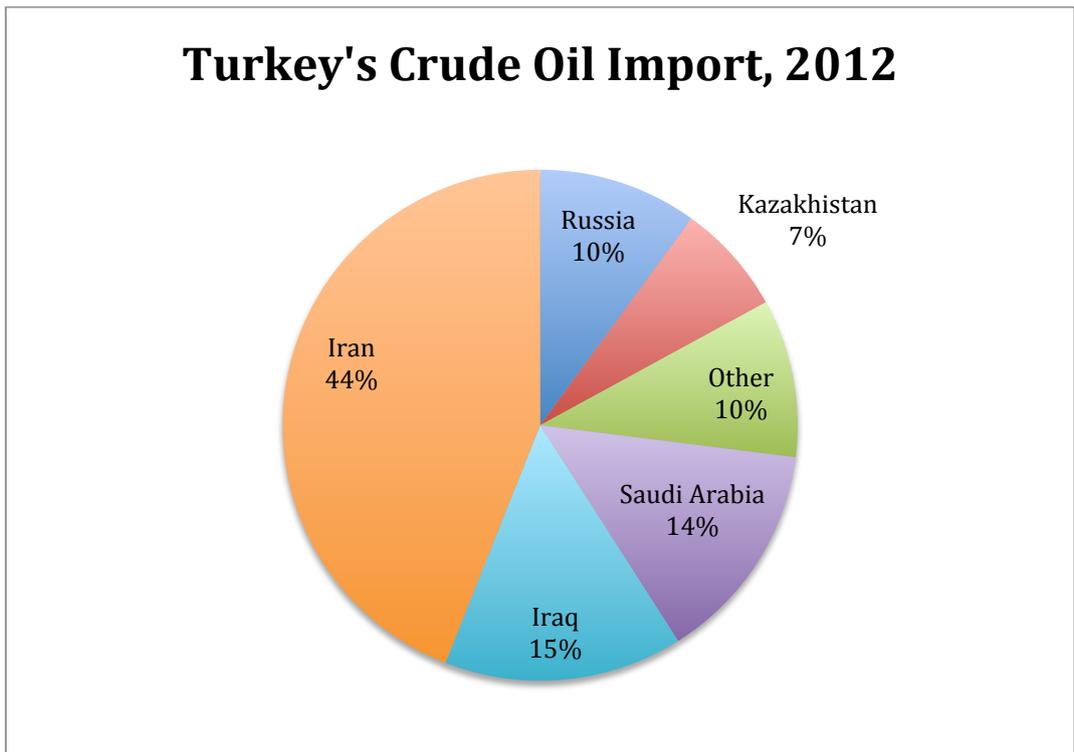


Figure 10. Turkey's crude oil imports by country, January-September 2012, Source: eia, PFC Energy

Growing economy means increased oil consumption.⁶³ Therefore, fast growing Turkish economy also raises the strategic importance of oil and gas. Turkey has been one of the fastest growing economies in the first decade of the 21st century. Currently the Turkish economy is the 16th biggest economy. According to data from the World Bank (table x) the size of the Turkish economy has more than doubled in the last decade. The recorded GDP per capita was around 3,500 dollars in 2002 and it exceeded 10,000 in 2012 (Table 2 above). The Turkish economy used to be based more on import rather than export. However, this picture seems to be changing. Export level increased nearly 4 times. According to data presented by the Turkish foreign ministry, export level has increased from 36 billion dollars in 2002 to 152,600 billion dollars in 2012.⁶⁴ In this change in export, foreign policy and increasing political and economic relations with neighbouring countries such as Syria and Iraq, have played a crucial role (Altunisik, 2010; 2011).⁶⁵ This export-oriented growth also comes to mean a dramatic increase in energy demand.⁶⁶ This increasing oil demand is also becoming a “carrot” for Turkey to play its given role.

⁶³ Correlation between economic growth and oil consumption.

⁶⁴ “Economic Outlook of Turkey,” *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/prospects-and-recent-developments-in-the-turkish-economy.en.mfa> retrieved 17/04/2014.

⁶⁵ Meliha Altunisik wrote a number of articles 2008-2010 regarding the increasing political and economic relations between Turkey and some neighbouring Arab countries, with particular reference to Syria and Iraq.

⁶⁶ the correlation between energy consumption and economic growth.

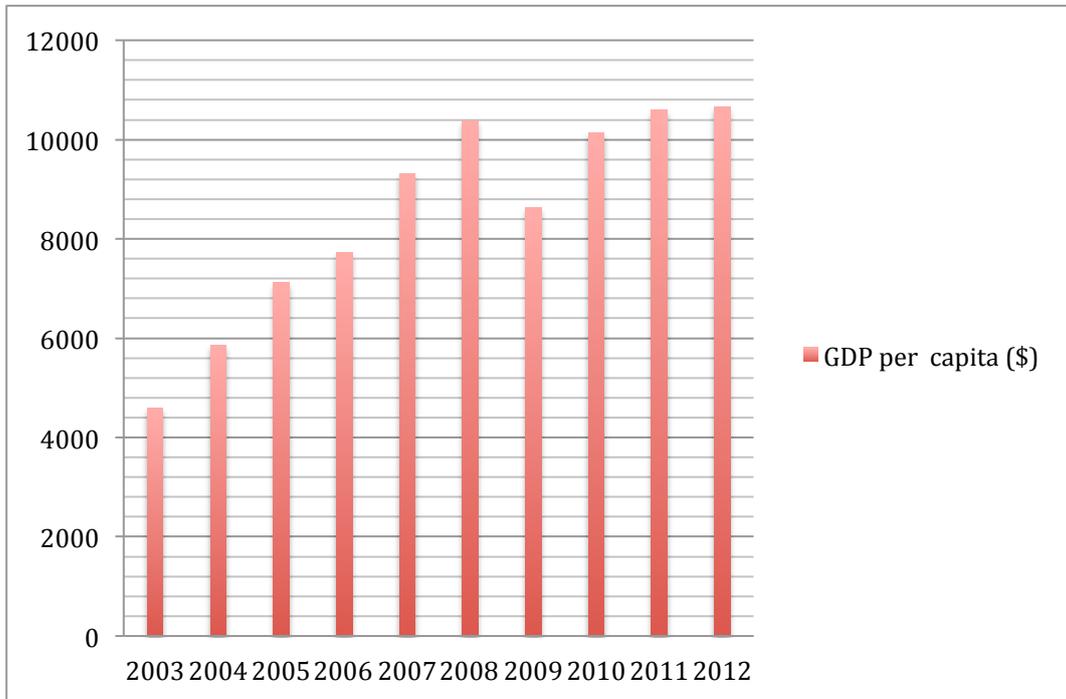


Figure 11. Turkey's GDP per capita from 2003 to 2012

In short, Turkey has been trying to form a “liberal zone of peace” or “*lebensraum*” for its burgeoning economy with respect to Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s motto of “zero problem with neighbours policy”. Iraq in general, Kurdistan in particular, has been the second biggest export market, after Germany, for Turkey.

Turkey; A Hungry Customer and Gate/Bridge for the International

Western Markets

As discussed above, Iraqi Kurds seem ready to be eminent supplier for the Western energy market and Turkey. They are working hard to take their place “on the world energy map.” Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, High Representative of Kurdistan to Turkey, during her speech at a conference in 2013 stated that:

In ten years time oil and gas ...we will be firmly on the world map for oil and gas. We will be major energy provider to Europe and some of our neighbours [Turkey]. We will be contributing to Iraq’s budget as well as to our own (Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, Cambridge Conference 18-19 October 2013).

She particularly underlines that Kurdistan “will be major energy provider to Europe,” which means that their face is turned to the West, which brings Kurdistan and Turkey close to each other, despite their historic problems.

We have a pipeline that we hope will be operational by the end of the year. This pipeline will take oil north through Turkey and to Turkey, and eventually and hopefully will be providing energy to Europe. This will really put Kurdistan on the world energy map. This is significant not just for our economy but also geopolitically for Kurdistan. We are no longer a backwater, which can be forgotten, our people can at least look ahead more optimistically that their future will be decided by their leaders and not

leaders of other countries who have their interests... (Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, Cambridge Conference 18-19 October 2013).

Although the Kurdistan region of Iraq had oil resources, it was never explored before, because of its political statute. Following establishment of a no-fly zone over Kurds in Iraq, they began to sell their hand-collected oil in exchange for food.

The region began its oil exports in July 2009 via tankers. Since 2009 they have been trucking around 50,000 barrels of oil per day to Turkey.

The Syrian crisis has revealed that energy dependence on Iran and Russia might restrict Turkey's room for diplomatic manoeuvre. This is where the Iraqi Kurdish energy supply comes in handy. The Kurdish region sits on significant, nearly untapped oil and gas reserves. The KRG would offer high quality, low cost energy alternative to Iran and Russia while Turkey might serve as a conduit for KRG energy export to Europe (Gönül Tol, Foreign Policy, January 29, 2013).

Some contend that they have been trying to gain their own economic independence via producing and exporting their oil (Stansfield Natali Anderson). This claim is supported by some leading figures (Barzani, October 2, 2010). KRG Energy Minister Ashti Hawrami announced that northern Iraq was prepared to contribute up to 60 billion cubic meters of natural gas to the energy

hub at Ceyhan, Turkey. This has been a turning point in Turkey's approach to the region.

2012 oil contracts

In 2012 the KRG government signed a number of oil exploration and drilling contracts with great oil giants, including Exxon Mobile, one of the pioneer national oil companies of the US (Engdhal, 2010). The Kurdish Regional Government has been the most secure and generous in terms of Production Sharing Contracts. Thus, these companies, despite Maliki's direct threats (Lando and Staff, 2012), took the risk of being kicked out from the rest of the Iraq and signed the contract with the KRG.

Turkey and the KRG reached an agreement on energy, despite the opposition of the central government. Also CHP (Republican Public Party), the main opposition party in Turkey, issued a censorship motion against Foreign Minister Davutoğlu. Refik Eryılmaz, MP from CHP, described the agreement as illegal and stated that it was "against the international law". He further stated that "there is an active central government in Baghdad that handles agreements. The Turkish government has no right to deal with other parties". One of the other MPs from the CHP, Aytun Çıray, described the agreement as "negative". He stated, "The deal would benefit the companies involved in the plant energy import...state privilege is being used to serve the interests of certain companies". The party revealed its main concern, that the agreement "could lead

to disintegration of Iraq and spark instability in the Middle East” (presstv).⁶⁷

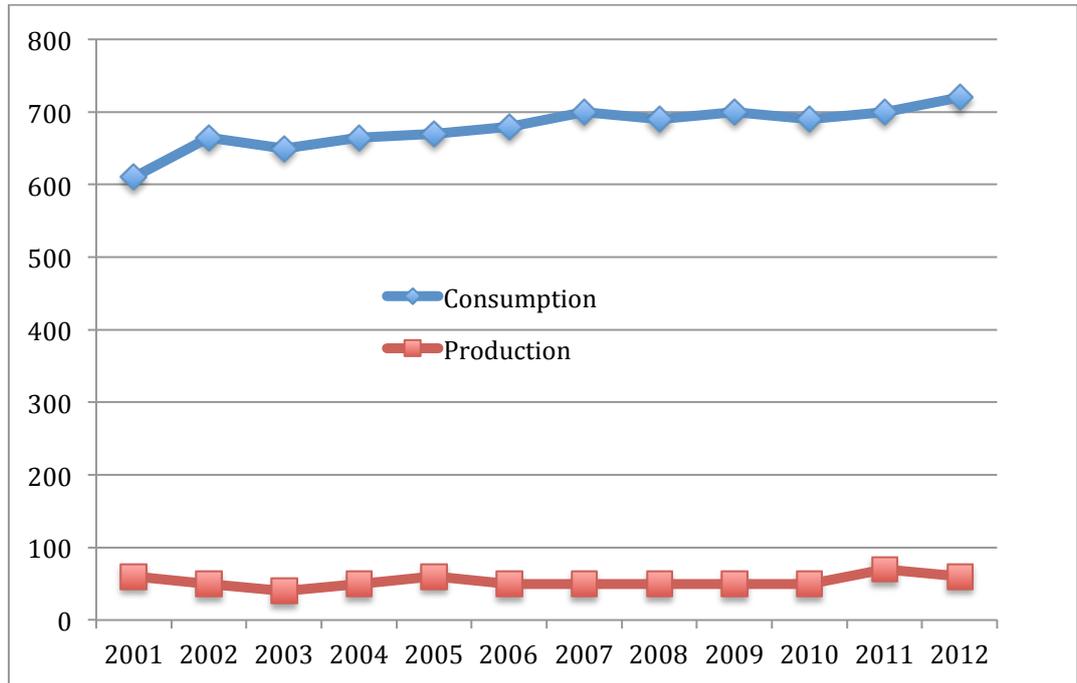


Figure 12. Turkey's liquid fuels consumption and production, 2001-2012 Source: US Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics Database and Short-term Energy Outlook

⁶⁷ “Turkish FM Davutoğlu under fire over oil deal with Iraq’s KRG” <http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/fa/295605.html>

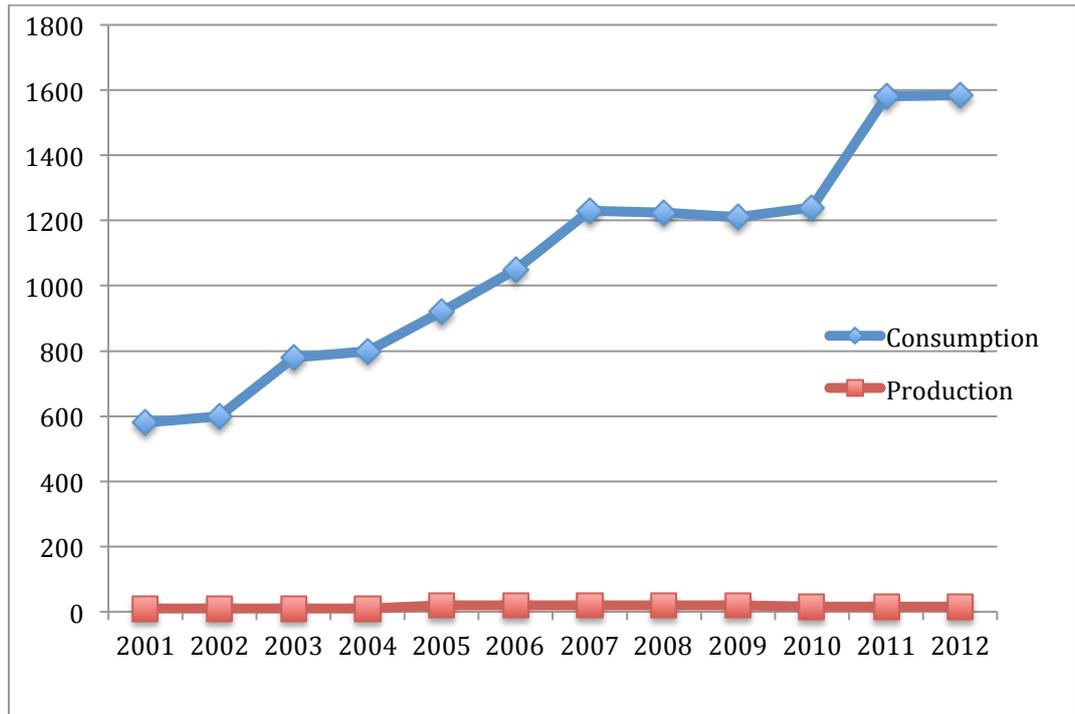


Figure 13. Natural gas consumption and production in Turkey, Source: U.S Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics Database

Kurdistan as Market to Turkish Economy

Kurdistan is not only an energy supplier for the Turkish economy, but also an emerging market. This is another “carrot” for Turkey.

One of the main dynamics, which motivates Turkey and the KRG to come closer, is economy. The region, although small in size and population, is the biggest trade partner of Turkey in the Middle East (see table below). Thus, the majority of the literature on Turkey’s relations with the KRG focuses on this dimension of the relations and presents economy as the driving force behind the positive engagement between Turkey and the Kurdish administration.

While in 2003 the Iraqi Kurds in general, Barzani and his party in particular, were entirely against Turkey's (military) presence in their region, since 2007 this stance has been changing. The polity has opened its doors to entrepreneurs from Turkey. The region is the second biggest trade partner of Turkey after Germany (see figure 6 below) and Turkey is the biggest trade partner of the entity, competing with Iran.

Since 2003 there is a continuum in economic relations between Turkey and Iraq. The data of the chart below, which shows the increase in trade volume between Turkey and Iraq, was taken from the Turkish Statistical Institute (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, TUIK*). The chart indicates the dramatic increase in trade volume between Turkey and Iraq and, according to information given by the state, approximately 70 % of this trade is with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

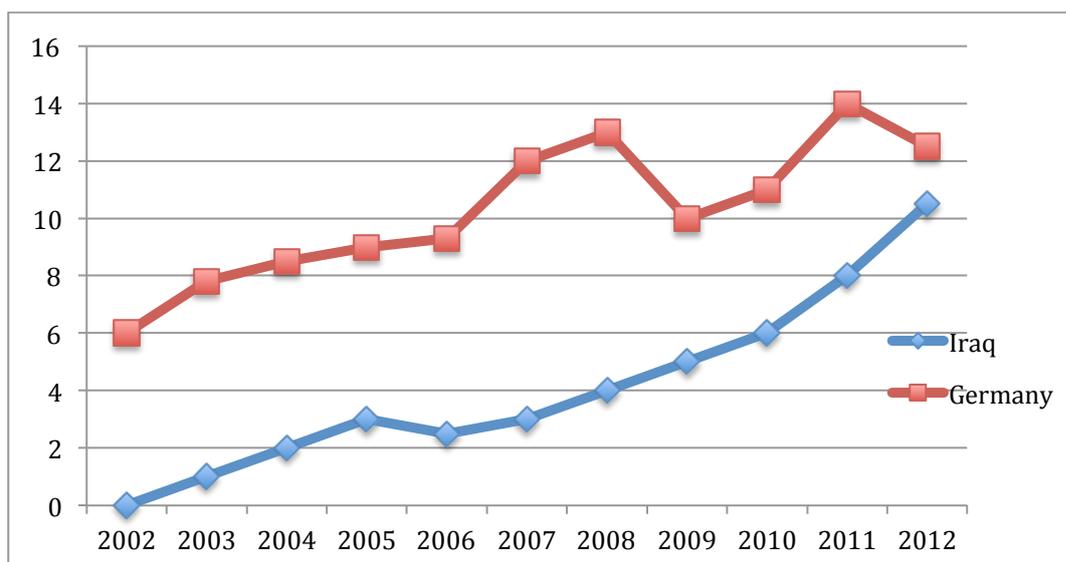


Figure 14. Turkish Exports (Iraq vs Germany) 2002-2012, Source: TurkStat, 2013

Abdullah Bozkurt (2012) of Today's Zaman daily argues that "since 2006 Turkey has been benefitting from a valuable foreign policy tool to promote economic, political and other ties with a number of countries." Then he points to "high-level intergovernmental conference or summit" as the tool. It might be argued that these high-level conferences or summits are a reflection of this new identity that prioritises economy in foreign policy. In other words, foreign relations have been used to facilitate trade. These high-level summits are for overcoming some invisible or bureaucratic barriers, such as visa requirements. He then argues that this mechanism is based on two pillars: "visa-free travel and free movements of goods supported by a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)." Until now Ankara has signed such agreements with 13 countries, including Iraq in 2008. It seems economic interests are bringing state leaders together and building the bridges of dialogue. He also notes that:

...the agreements cover a wide range of fields including commerce, science technology, industry, energy, defence, banking, visa procedure, tourism, health, agriculture, infrastructure, transportation, development, education, communications, culture and environment. Depending on the country, these summits work at different paces, but surely they help move relations forward faster than with another country that has no similar mechanism with Turkey in place.

Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's visit to Erbil in 2009 with 80 businessmen and

Minister of Trade Zafer Çağlayan can be interpreted as one of these summits. There are about 600 Turkish companies currently operating in the region, 20,000 Turkish citizens living in the region, and dams mostly built by Turkish companies.

Turkish Consul in Erbil, Aydın Selcen, points out:

The volume of business between Iraq and Turkey, including oil and gas, trade and contracting was \$10 billion in 2010, putting Iraq fourth among Turkey's economic partners worldwide. Once Iraq starts to produce its full potential of oil and gas, it could easily become Turkey's No.1 partner. More than half the business is with the KRG, which puts the region in Turkey's top 10 trade and business partners (KurdishGlobe, 3 April, 2011).

October 2, 2010. KRG energy minister Ashti Hawrami announces that Northern Iraq is prepared to contribute up to 60 billion cubic meters of natural gas to the energy hub at Ceyhan, Turkey. This was a turning point in Turkey's approach to the region. This announcement would have motivated Turkey, as a thriving, energy hungry and depended country, to change its perspective on Kurdistan.

The US position is remarkable in this pipeline issue. The US seems, at least in rhetoric, against this project, so as to not risk the rest of the Iraqi oil with an estimated capacity of 9 million barrels per day. Within US political circles it is thought that construction of such a project might lead to the dismemberment of Iraq. Dismemberment of Iraq could lead to its getting closer to Iran and the

alternative Chinese market. Thus, the US seems to stay silent, although it seems to be against the project. Ultimately having an extra pipeline would facilitate long-term transportation of Iraqi oil, if Iraq manages to stay united. Concerning the US position, Ashti Hawrami's answer to Badevi during Hardtalk program was also remarkable:

ZB: It is the opinion of American Administration, Exxon Mobile, this kind of thing. These are American companies you can't just dismiss it... But it comes with a health warning ... what I am saying is your perspective is not one that is shared. It is not shared by the government in Baghdad, that you have the right to do what you were doing, striking these contracts with these companies, also, a big supporter of Iraq, like the United States state department...

AH: what they say publicly is different from what we hear behind the scenes.

Conclusion

The chapter argues that the economy has been the main driving force in Turkey-KRG relations at regional level. Dramatic increase in trade volume and new oil and gas discoveries in the region pushed Turkey to take concrete steps, such as opening the Consulate in 2011, signing oil contracts and constructing a pipeline in 2013.

The chapter above mainly identified five regional factors, which have facilitated Turkey-KRG rapprochement in the post-Saddam/2003 era. These were, i) resurrection of the PKK's armed campaign against Turkey in 2004, ii) the disguised contention between PKK and Barzani's KDP, or emergence of the PKK as rival to the KDP iii) the rising dispute between Erbil and Baghdad over control of resources, iv) new oil discoveries in the Kurdish region and v) the growing Turkish economy. Actually all these are reflected in the regional faultlines shaping Turkey's policy towards the KRG.

CHAPTER 6. THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to draw a picture of the global politics within which Turkey and the KRG have been constructing a strategic and economic partnership. In other words, it aims to put all regional developments discussed in the previous chapter into a global perspective.

The chapter will benefit from “Global-Faultlines” as an analytical framework to understand possible impacts of shift in global political economy on Turkey-KRG relations. In line with this objective, the chapter will make an attempt to explain what the Global Faultlines and emerging powerhouses in the world/global politics come to mean for the existing US dominant global system. Then it will discuss what oil means in the existing system and for the US, the hegemon of the system with reference to petrodollar.

The second part of the chapter will look at emerging powers and their booming economies. It specifically looks at increasing demands for oil and gas with particular reference to China. This discussion aims to address how the emergence of a new rival(s), as a potential challenger, has influenced US and Europe’s foreign policy, at least psychologically, towards oil reserves (the Middle East) and “alternative” transportation routes (Turkey).

The final part will discuss Turkey's geopolitical role within the global picture; what Iraqi oil means for the existing and new powerhouses; what Kurdish oil means for energy companies; and in conclusion recent Turkey-KRG rapprochement will be contextualised at global level.

Global Faultlines and Global shift

Global Faultlines is a framework used by Bülent Gökay and Vasilis Fouskas to identify the historical reasons behind the current global-economic crises and power shift from West to East, from Global North the Global South. The concept has been built upon world-system theories and the late works of Andre Gunder Frank, with particular reference to his book *Re-Orient* (Frank, 1998). In the words of Gökay:

Global Fault-lines is a post-Hegelian notion that does not separate/break the totality into instances (economic, ecological, political, geo-political, ideological, cultural, ideational), while at the same time placing class (Marxist) analysis as a core analytical tool of that totality. Thus, class and social struggle cut across social formations and historical epochs and develop the elements of totality unevenly causing great disruptions, discontinuities and breaks. The global point of view, moreover, is one that has no historical point of departure and registers historical development as

societal development in which economics may determine in the first, but not in the last analysis.⁶⁸

This approach is essentially structuralist and looking at global level, contextualising any developments, subjects (object) of enquiry, within shifting global contexts. It requires adopting a truly globalist approach in order to fully grasp political phenomena. The canvas of the structure of the global system dictates that there is only one world-system and nothing remains outside it. The concept presumes that the existing structure, which is unipolar, has been changing/shifting towards a multipolar one. Furthermore, a new power balance has been emerging with reference to rising powers, the so-called BRICS countries, with particular reference to China. For this very reason it shares similarities with neo-realist presumptions about the structure (Waltz, 2000). This approach is based on a historical materialist understanding of the world. Therefore, the flow of material power towards the Global South, the emerging economic powerhouses with booming industries and energy consumptions, with reference to Martenson's (2013) correlation between real economic growth and energy consumption, would change and has been changing the existing structure of the international system. Therefore, changing structure would result to a new distribution of power. Thus any object of enquiry even at a local or regional level, would require examining at a global one first. In other words, change in

⁶⁸ This definition is available on <http://globalfaultlines.org/about/a-definition-of-global-faultlines/> (last accessed on 09 April 2015).

policy of any actor within the system could be analysed through this globalist approach to understand and better explain.

If the uneven development of the elements of the totality (economic, political, ideational, cultural, the dominant structures and impositions of empires on their vassals etc.) is extreme, then this leads to severe disruptions, crises and even wars (whether local – conflict over a pipeline project in Chechnya – regional – the eight years war between Iran and Iraq – or global – WWI and WWII). Just like the movements in the tectonic plates being originated in Earth's radioactive, solid iron inner core, the vast shifts in the structures of the international system are the outcome of changes that have been taking place beneath the surface of social life for decades, if not centuries and millennia. In historical periods that the elements of the totality are into a kind of symbiosis, then there is relative peace and the totality balances out, yet without undoing the system's faultlines (Fouskas and Gokay, 2012).

Global faultlines as a concept mainly draws on world history and adopts a holistic approach to explain sudden and uneven changes in world politics. It benefits from the movements of tectonic plates as a metaphor to explain its argument. The world consists of plates and where they meet they sometimes clash and push one another. These movements either cause mountains to form or they break up and some vacuums occur. This means that every little mountain or faultline is a product of a bigger tectonic move. So while

analysing/investigating the emergence of a mountain or a faultline, it is necessary to look at bigger tectonic moves. In line with this metaphor, the emergence of BRICS, or some rival political houses, seems to cause some tectonic movements, challenging the US dominant world order in global political economy. Some plates advanced and moved a bit further, with reference to China and the emergence of other BRICS since the end of the Cold War, towards the dominant one and in the places where they meet, generally in transitional regions such as oil-rich Middle East or trade routes such as the Pacific, Ukraine and Turkey, it causes some tectonic movements. These movements and faultlines made not only some regional actors more visible with more leverage or some more room in global politics, but also gave birth to “new” actors. Turkey being more visible in the world politics and the emergence of the Turkish-KRG friendship, might be explained from this perspective.

Peter Dicken argues that there is a “global shift” taking place in the world economy. Faultiness and tectonic movements beneath the surface of social life resulted in shift in geographies of production, distribution, and consumption from Global North towards Global South/Asia. New economic powerhouses are emerging within the system and geographies of global economy are changing (Dicken, 2013:13-47).

Another sign of this Global shift has been the economic crisis the Western world has gone through in the beginning of the 21st century. Gökay and Fouskas argue that although the economic crises have become discernible at the

beginning of 21th century, their roots lie in the collapse of the Bretton Woods system (see Fouskas and Gökay, 2005):

Modern world system has gone through several rounds of hegemonic shifts and several cycles from uni-centric to multi-centric organisations for centuries... All indications point out that the current financial crisis, and economic downturns is going to confirm, and possibly accelerate another major shift in economic power to emerging economies, in particular to China and India.

In short, Global Faultlines as a framework recognises that there is a power shift in the world system, which is more noticeable in the beginning of the 21st century. There is an emerging, rich literature on this shift (Kennedy, 1987; Frank, ; Kupchan, 2012 ; Fouskas & Gökay, 2012 ;Zakaria, 2008). A number of new economic powerhouses with burgeoning energy needs, particularly China, that have the potential to challenge the US hegemony, have been emerging within the present system (Engdhal, 2010: 5). The rise of China has also been recognised by Kenneth Waltz (2000) as a ground-breaking development reflecting the changing structure of the global system. This means that the number of clients for resources have been increasing and attempting to re-order the system in line with their interests (Waltz, 2000). Within this picture, Iraq in general, Kurdistan in particular, with their untouched “sweat” resources have been taking their place as major energy producers.

The new World Order

The end of the Cold War brought the end of the bi-polar structure of the Cold War era. Thus, the question in the early years of the post-Cold War era has been about the nature of the newly emerging world order. Some predicted that in the new system the US would remain the only pole in the system. Furthermore, some of these observers rather assertively regarded the emerging system under the unipolarity of the US and its capitalist values, as the natural/awaited order of the world. Thus, according to them, since the world found its “natural” path, this order would last forever and so “it is the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992). Contrary to this idea, some other experts argued that although the system in this new era seemed like a uni-polar system under the hegemony of the US, it would not last long and this was a transitional period. The new coming system would be chaotic and difficult to predict. In this prospective chaotic atmosphere, new allies may emerge to challenge the hegemon (Layne, 1993: Waltz, 2000). Brzezinski, contrary to Fukuyama, argues that “History has not ended but has compressed.” In his book, instead of predicting a model, he is focusing on uncertainty in the twenty-first century. He argues:

The interaction between the acceleration of our history, our increased capacities to shape the world, our rapidly expanding material desires, and our moral ambiguity is thus generating unprecedented dynamics of uncontrolled change. We are all racing into the future but it’s increasingly the pace of change, and not our wills, which is shaping that future. The

world is rather like a plane on automatic pilot, with its speed continuously accelerating, but no defined destination (Brzezinski, 1993: xiv).

The first tangible shift in the system occurred in the global economy. While the economic depressions in the first decade of the 21st century badly damaged the developed western political economies, a number of countries, especially those coded as BRIC countries/ (rising stars), benefited from the depression and emerged as challenging powers against the existing hegemonic power (Layne, 1993; Gökay, 2005; Lenger, Schneickert and Schumache, 2010). Periodic financial crises in this decade, mostly in 2008, have given signals that the existing order needs to be reorganised.

As “defined destination”, the developments in the post-Cold War era were read by some as signs of a shift in the system from uni-polarity to multi-polarity that would bring emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil, Mexico forward as new assertive actors of the system (Gökay, 2005: 2011: Lenger, Schneickert and Schumache, 2010). Henry Kissinger, on the nature of the existing global economic order, argued:

Any economic system, but especially a market economy, produces winners and losers. If the gap between them becomes too great, the losers will organise themselves politically and seek to recast the existing system-within nations and between them (Kissinger, 2008).

Kissinger in the same article also points out that in the formation of the new world order, despite being less powerful, the US will still be one of the most powerful and essential players.

Not only the critics of the US but also pro-US neo liberals accept the emergence of rivals. For example, Joseph Nye, an important figure of pro-US neo-liberals, gives some statistical data from the US economy and argues:

I have argued in the books I have written the United States is not in decline. But we have the rise of the rest. China, Brazil, India are increasing their growth economically and politically...(Hard Talk, 2013: 3-5 mins).

However, Nye does not see any attempts by China or other emerging powers seeking to revise the existing global system. Against this argument some claim that China and other powers intend to revise the global economic order known as Breton Woods system, reflecting Western interests. According to them, the emerging powerhouses are attempting to revise the system and make it “reflect the “major shift in the global system towards the Emerging Powers.” The recent attempt to establish an International Bank alternative to the World Bank can be valid evidence of this intention (Global Faultlines, 2014: 11 July).

The rise of the emerging powers has been one of the hot debates, which has moved beyond academia. In the words of US President Obama, “accepting new world and sharing values with China”. This new reality has been publicly accepted and discussed by a number of academics, such as Fareed Zakaria and

Charles Kupchan. Fareed Zakaria regards this as a “post-American world,” while Charles Kupchan called this “no one’s world” (Kupchan, 2012). Fareed Zakaria (2008) in his book discusses the decline of the US and the emergence of a “post-American World” order. He argues that the US will continue to be one of the most powerful actors of world politics. However, its position will change by the “rise of the rest,” with reference to BRIC countries plus Mexico. According to some data taken from Goldman Sachs, a financial cooperation at global level, analysed in the book, by 2040 the economic output of these BRIC countries plus Mexico will outcompete the seven Western states’ economic output put together. In his book, he also argues that the production sectors are leaving the US and the West for the rest of the world. He states that the largest factories, shopping malls etc. are leaving for emerging and more beneficial markets and investment areas.

All these are arguments on the transition of the world order towards a multi polar world. The literature on the decline of the US, some of them already mentioned above, argues that it is the rise of the rest that decreases the power of the US and challenges its position at global level, not the decline of its military power.

The term Global Shift was first used by Peter Dickens (2011). He wrote about a shift from the “old geographies of production, distribution and consumption” to a new one:

Most important have been the transformations in the where and the how of the material production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (including, in particular, finance). Old geographies of production, distribution and consumption are continuously being disrupted; new geographies of production, distribution and consumption are continuously being created” (Dickens, 2011:6).

He also looked at the global economic map of the world and pointed out a constant geographical shift in the circle of production, distribution and consumption.

The global economic map is always in a state of ‘becoming’; it is always in one sense, ‘new’. But it is never finished. (Dickens, 2011:14).

This power shift has to be understood in the context of resource degradation. The high dependency of the power (in any form, military, political, economic etc) on resources dictates that we examine global competition over access to scarce resources. This aforementioned shift requires all actors to review their interests and policies towards the land of resources. The number of actors identifying their self-interest and seeking power at global level has been rising, e.g. China, Russia even Germany. Thus, a new demand on resource sharing is on their agenda. In a way sustainability of booming economies hinge on their ability to access energy. They need to access more resources and cheap resources to

maintain their growth. On the other hand, US domination in world economy depends on the continuation of the “petrodollar”.

There are several ways to measure and count power. Alasdair Young (2010) measures material supremacy of a country by looking at its economic size, technological sophistication and military strength. He uses a number of statistical information, such as GDP per capita, patent shares, military power, sizing by both military expenditure and military forces (their number and nuclear capability), to measure the change or shift in power distribution after the end of the Cold War. This study shows that there is a remarkable increase, especially for China and India. After analysing this statistics he adds another table which shows the US', EU's, Japan's and BRIC countries' ideational power. The table indicates the hidden power of the actors to give form to international governance compatible with their interests (Young, 2010). He claims that the data given in this table are “the core ideological agendas” of these countries. The information for China is really important. For China Young (2010, table 3, p.10) states, “democratising the international order, alternative model of development, sovereignty/non-interference, redefining norms.” Regarding Brazil and China, there is emphasis on “democratisation of international institutions.” Young argues that they would like to have a voice at global governance. In other words, they are trying to move towards the ‘core’ with reference to Wallerstein’s “world system,” within which all the developments related to any agents are taking place (Walerstein, 1974). Global Faultlines explains this movement. When we combine

Dickens' notion of geographical shift in production, distribution and consumption of materials with Wallersteins notions of core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral states, we come to Global Faultlines, which describes the shift from the periphery to the core in the capitalist world system.

BRICS

In this new century the rising powers are not just India and China. Brazil, Russia and South Africa are also emerging economies. James O'Neil codes these countries as BRICS (James O'Neil, 2001). While the weight of these countries is increasing in world economy, they are also gradually getting noticed and are recognising each other as emerging BRICs. This helps them set up a network (Lenger, Schneickert and Schumache, 2010). In the Stern Review report (2006), published in 2006, the term E-7 is used to refer to emerging economies. These countries, in addition to countries coded as BRICS, are Turkey and Mexico. According to the report, by 2050 the E7 countries will have larger economies than the G7 countries.

Gökay is looking at the economic aspect of the global system. He points out that change in the global economic system and he reads the current financial crisis (2008-2011) as indicator of the end of the world order constituted after the Second World War. He also writes that the crisis has irrevocable "geopolitical consequences". He states that the powers, G7 countries, previously dominant at global economy are losing their power, whilst the emerging economic powers,

E7 countries, are getting stronger. Also Gökay is reading these developments as a shift from a uni-polar system to a multi-polar system:

What is underlying the current situation is this historical shift: the 'unipolar' phase of US dominance is being replaced by a 'multipolar' phase, in which the US will continue to remain one of the most prominent powers, but has to share this position with China and India as the biggest and fastest growing rising powers. One of the most interesting results of the global crisis, so far, is the acceleration of the global economic power shift toward emerging economies. The economies to watch now are the E-7 (Emerging Seven): China, India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey. The rest of the 21st century will be increasingly dominated by this relationship between the US and China, India, Russia and other rising powers. (Global Faultlines, 2011).

Meanwhile there are also some academics that reject the change. One of them is Ikenberry (2004):

The debate on empire is back. This is not surprising, as the United States dominates the World as no state ever has. It emerged from the Cold War the only superpower, and no geopolitical or ideological contenders are in sight. Europe is drawn inward, and Japan is stagnant. A half-century after their occupation, the United States still provides security for Japan and Germany -- the world's second- and third-largest economies. U.S. military

bases and carrier battle groups ring the world. Russia is in a quasi-formal security partnership with the United States, and China has accommodated itself to U.S. dominance, at least for the moment. For the first time in the modern era, the world's most powerful state can operate on the global stage without the constraints of other great powers. We have entered the American unipolar age.

It might have been seen as though “China has accommodated itself to U.S. dominance” in 2004. However, the recent developments in the Pacific, in the Yellow Sea (Reuters, 26 December 2013) in late 2013, show that China’s position is not as Ikenberry depicts. Change in information technology, increase in the number of cross-country multinational companies, global innovation in technology, increasing amount of production in India and China, not only in cheap manufacturing and toys but also in heavy industry and advanced technology, are some of the aspects of the economic change that has been taking place in China over the past few decades. The rise of the giants in Asia with respect to their economic advance has been increasing the energy demands of Asia (Figure 16). It seems that the increase of this demand would bring contestation over oil-rich lands.

The eminent neo-realist scholar Kenneth Waltz wrote (2000) that the structure of the existing system has been changing. He predicted that the US, dominant/hegemonic power, would be challenged by some emerging power, such as China. The concept of GF also posits that the emergence of the new

block, BRICS, particularly China, marks the changing structure in which world politics takes place. In other words, the emerging structure is not bipolar, as it was in the post-Cold War period, or unipolar, as it was in the immediate post-Cold War era.

The rise of China and its attempt to challenge US hegemony in 2013 will be discussed later. However it is noteworthy that within this picture the Middle East is very important, as the heart of cheap and quality oil and gas for the US and the West. Turkey, within the picture, is also important as energy corridor to transport this wealth to the Western markets.

All in all, from this globalist perspective, if uneven development of the elements of the totality is extreme, this would not only lead to crisis and wars, but would also provide opportunities for some actors taking initiatives that could lead to some previously unexpected rapprochements and alliances in the system. I would therefore argue that within this picture Turkey's affirmatively changing policy towards Iraqi Kurdistan is the result of an uneven development at global level. Therefore this uneven development has been taking place at global politics, in which agents, emerging competitors, are in a struggle to set a new balance in line with the new realities, i.e. the emergence of new powerhouses, the BRICS countries. In the case of the Turkey-Kurdistan rapprochement, the emergence of China and its becoming one of the biggest clients of Middle Eastern resources is significant. This will be discussed in the following part.

Emerging Political Economies and Energy Security

“Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone.”

Sir Winston Churchill (cited in Yergin, 2006).

Studying Kurdistan requires having an understanding of energy policy, which has been one of the top agendas of national security of global and regional powers. For such powers securing their energy needs has been a national security issue. This has been more discernible since the end of the Cold War. Suzan Strange argues that in this era powerhouses, existing and emerging ones, have “more directly engaged in the competition for shares of the world’s wealth [particularly oil and gas].” Therefore, “the last 10 wars in post-cold war were for oil.”

The above-mentioned shift in global political economy and politics, the emergence of “new” booming political economies, with reference to BRIC countries, have compelled the existing powerhouses to reshape their policies towards the lands of oil and gas. In this section, the energy security of global powers and its effect on Kurdish oil, and the effect of Kurdish oil on the energy security of existing and emerging powers, will be discussed. Before that, the concept of “energy security” will be put under scrutiny.

It is clear that energy security is one of the main interests of the Great Powers and consumers, so it is necessary to understand what energy security is and what it comes to mean for the global actors. To explain the appearance of energy

security as one of the top issues on the agenda of industrialised states, Yergin reminds us that:

On the eve of World War I, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill made a historic decision: to shift the power source of the British navy's ships from coal to oil. He intended to make the fleet faster than its German counterpart. But the switch also meant that the Royal Navy would rely not on coal from Wales, but on insecure oil supplies from what was then Persia. Energy security thus became a question of national strategy. Churchill's answer? "Safety and certainty in oil," he said, "lie in variety and variety alone (Yergin, 2006).

Using oil in transportation spilled over other sectors at a breakneck pace and now it is used nearly in every sector, from transportation to textile. It is the most traded and most essential material for national economies.

Oil fuels the economy. It is the largest single traded product in the world. It provides about 95 % of all transportation fuels and 40 % of the global energy. Oil is also determinant of national security. Today's modern armies are entirely dependent on oil-powered ships, planes, helicopters and armoured vehicles. Oil also supplies feedstock for thousands of manufactured products and is vital for food manufacturing: 17 % of our energy is used for producing food. Modern agriculture makes heavy use of

oil in a variety of ways. We use oil for fertilisers, pesticides, and for the packaging and distribution of food (Gökay, 2009).

Thus, the industrialised world is dependent on oil and gas and this dependency has been increasing. Thus, “oil is also determinant of national security.” International Energy Agency defines the term energy security as follows:

Energy security refers to the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. The need to increase energy security – the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price – was the main objective underpinning the establishment of the IEA in 1974...The IEA works towards improving energy security by promoting diversity, efficiency and flexibility within the energy sectors of the IEA member countries; remaining prepared collectively to respond to energy emergencies; and expanding international co-operation with all players in the global energy markets (Yergin, 2006).

All members of the IEA are Western and consumerist countries. For these countries “uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price” means energy security. “At an affordable price” means cheap oil, “sweet oil” in the literature. Sweet oil refers to high quality oil, very close to surface to drill and produce at a cheap price. On the current energy map sweet oil is only available in the Middle East and particularly in Iraq. Newly discovered untouched sweet oil reserves in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq also draw the attention of oil

companies. As for “uninterrupted availability of energy,” it means security of the region/geography, which is used as corridor to transfer the oil and gas.

With reference to Churchill, “safety and certainty of oil”, for the consumerist actors, means energy security. However, it is more than this. Controlling energy resources and routes means controlling the system (Gökay, 2005). In this era it is observable that some states, in order to control the energy sector and meet their demands, have either state-owned energy companies (e.g. Russia and China), or some private companies (e.g. US’s Exxon Mobil) functioning to fill this “need”. Some argue that in some cases the state has developed/shaped policy in pursuit of these oil companies’ interests. In other words, the interests of these companies have become the National Security of states (Engdhal, 2012:45-47).

Following the end of the Cold War, the world has entered a new phase. The collapse of the USSR has meant the change of geopolitics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This change influenced national policies towards the regions, particularly the hegemon’s. Zibigniew Brzezinski, in his article published in 1997, less than a decade after the collapse of the Soviets, argues:

Eurasia is home to most of the world's politically assertive and dynamic states. All the historical pretenders to global power originated in Eurasia. The world's most populous aspirants to regional hegemony, China and India, are in Eurasia, as are all the potential political or economic challengers to American primacy. After the United States, the next six

largest economies and military spenders are there, as are all but one of the world's overt nuclear powers, and all but one of the covert ones. Eurasia accounts for 75 percent of the world's population, 60 percent of its GNP, and 75 percent of its energy resources. Collectively, Eurasia's potential power overshadows even America's.

This quote from 1997 shows that end of the Cold War brought the US face to face with “potential political or economic challengers to American primacy”, China and India. Brzezinski goes further and regards the region called Eurasia as a control tower of global political economy. He puts forward:

Eurasia is the world's axial supercontinent. A power that dominated Eurasia would exercise decisive influence over two of the world's three most economically productive regions, Western Europe and East Asia. A glance at the map also suggests that a country dominant in Eurasia would almost automatically control the Middle East and Africa. With Eurasia now serving as the decisive geopolitical chessboard, it no longer suffices to fashion one policy for Europe and another for Asia. What happens with the distribution of power on the Eurasian landmass will be of decisive importance to America's global primacy and historical legacy.

Energy resources, particularly oil and gas, have never been as important as they are now in world politics. Economic Analyst Chris Martenson argues that there is a correlation between oil consumption and GDP growth. He argues, “If you

want to have economic growth you're going to need growth in oil consumption...Oil is the lifeblood of any economy" (Martenson, 2013). He also points out that since 2007 oil consumption in the US and Europe has been declining, while in fast growing economies, China, India and Brazil, it has been sharply increasing. He further underlines that demand for oil in these fast growing economies has exceeded the demands of Europe, the US and Japan combined.

In this new picture of the 21st century, demand for oil has been dramatically increasing, stemming from the rise of booming global/ political economies in Asia. However, oil production has already reached its peak.⁶⁹ Consequently, these global actors have had to re-shape their interests in line with the developments in energy areas and sectors. Resources and routes of transportation have been instruments of foreign policies and have been used as tool in foreign relations to manipulate, threat, launch war or reward (e.g.

⁶⁹ The term "peak oil" was first coined by King Hubbert, an American geophysicist in 1956. Thus, it is also known as Hubbert's peak. By peak he meant the point at which supply of oil begins to decline. He predicted that the supply of oil in the US would reach its peak by 1970 (Wochner, 2005:191).

Gökay argues that "Like any fixed non-renewable resource, oil is limited, and its consumption will rise, peak (the point beyond which oil production will irreversibly start declining), and decline. Oil production follows a bell curve, and after the production reaches its peak (meaning when half the oil is taken out), oil production will inevitably fall. On the upslope of the curve, there is the first oil, the oil closer to the surface, which is also called 'cheap oil' or 'easy oil', because it is easier and cheaper to take that oil out and also it is better quality ('light', low-sulphur oil, therefore cheaper to refine). On the upslope of the curve, oil production costs are lower than on the down slope, when extra effort (and cost) is needed to extract the remaining poorer quality oil from deeper in the reservoirs, and extra cost needed to refine this 'heavy oil' (which is high-sulphur, very viscous and does not flow easily). Thus, once oil production reaches its peak, global demand for oil is most likely to exceed the capacity to produce it, prices will rise, oil-dependent economies will face serious problems. 'An increasing body of evidence suggests that the era of "easy oil" is over and that we have entered a new period of "tough oil" (Gökay, 2009).

Chechnya, Gulf Wars) (Gökay, 2005, Chomsky, 2008). This indicates that American international military interventions since the end of the Cold War were “opportunistic response[s]” to the geopolitical and geo-economics changes, the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviets.

In a nutshell, reaching cheap and sustainable oil resources is being perceived or understood as energy security by the oil dependent countries. Regarding this issue, Daniel Yergin argues:

Although in the developed world the usual definition of energy security is simply the availability of sufficient supplies at affordable prices, different countries interpret what the concept means for them differently. Energy-exporting countries focus on maintaining the “security of demand” for their exports, which after all generate the overwhelming share of their government revenues. For Russia, the aim is to reassert state control over “strategic resources” and gain primacy over the main pipelines and market channels through which it ships its hydrocarbons to international markets (Yergin, 2006).

The number of actors producing strategy for their energy security, in another words number of countries/agents seeking for energy security, has been increasing. Some actors from the Global South are in a process of economic booming. Thus, they need energy more than ever and in the near future it is anticipated that the demands of these new actors will exceed those of existing

industrialised states, the US, Europe and Japan. The consumption of oil as energy is booming, while parts of the world already reached their peak with reference to resources in the Global North.

The once oil rich global north has reached its peak. Therefore, these newly discovered resources in the Middle East, Iraq and Kurdistan are needed by global powers. Since 1976⁷⁰ oil production in the Global North has been decreasing, while new rich resources are discovered in the Global South and particularly in the Middle East. The importance of the region, not only for the US and Western oil markets, but also for the other consumerist/client countries, has been increasing. The existing energy security system, which was established following the 1973 oil crisis, is not responding to the current context with reference to emerging BRIC countries. China was consuming around 3 million barrels per day at the beginning of the 21th century, but ten years later the Chinese economy needs around 13 million barrels per day. Thus the client countries with their increasing number need to agree on a new accord, taking the decreasing nature of “easy oil” into consideration (peak oil). Otherwise, the oil-rich region seems to become the ground and grass for the wrestling elephants.

⁷⁰ Since 1977 no refineries have been constructed in the US, and since the oil close to the surface is already used, there is a new attempt to extract the oil from deep inside the land, fracking. However, it is a very expensive way of producing oil.

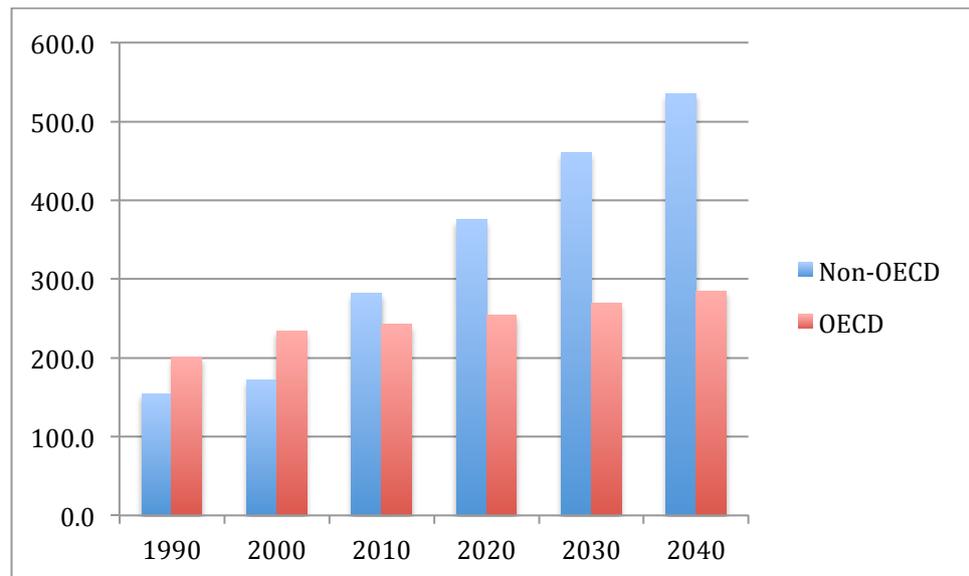


Figure 15. World Energy Consumption, 1990-2040 (Forecast), Source: eia, International Energy Outlook, 2013

According to US Energy Information Administration (EIA)'s report, International Energy outlook 2013, as also seen on the above cited chart (figure 15), between 2010 and 2040 world energy consumption is going to increase by 56%. It also predicts/calculates that much of this increase would come from non-OECD countries. Energy consumption outside the OECD countries escalates 90 % while in OECD the escalation is around 17%. These numbers indicate the shift in geographies of production towards non-OECD countries.

The study identifies three global actors affecting regional developments in oil-rich Middle East and Turkey-KRG relations in particular. These are, i) the US, ii) Europe, and iii) China. The following part looks at the impact of these actors' energy policies on the Turkey-KRG relationship.

i) The US, Oil, and the Middle East

“If you control the oil you control entire nations.”

(Henry Kissinger, cit. Engdhal, 2012:6)

The United States, as the leading consumerist state, according to data from the Energy Information Administration (eia), is consuming 18.9 million barrels of oil per day. Only around 10.13 million of this has been produced domestically, while the rest is imported.

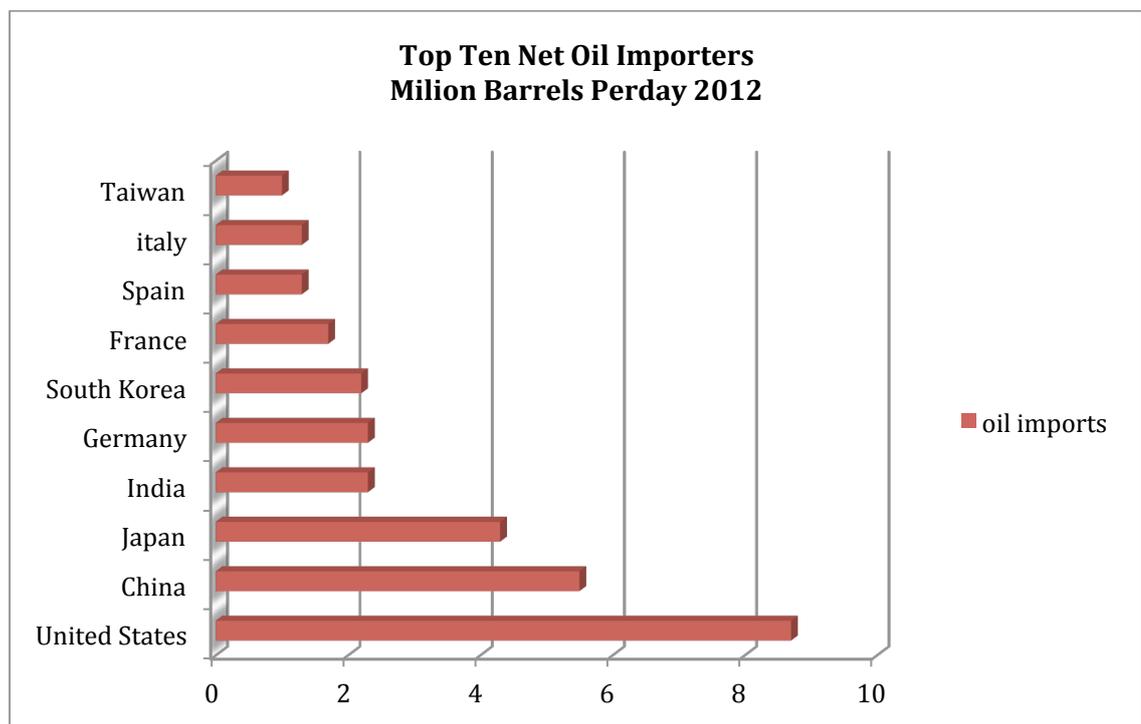


Figure 16. Top Ten Oil Importers, 2011 Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration Short-Term Energy Outlook (August 2012)

Since the Second World War, American reliance on oil as source of energy has been increasing. The data presented on the website of the US Department of Energy shows that consumption increased from 6.5 million barrels per day in the 1950s to 17.1 million in 1980. In parallel with the increasing consumption, domestic production increased from 5.4 million barrels per day in the 1950s to 9.4 million barrels in the 1970s. Klare (2008:2) points out that, although the consumption dramatically increased, the rise in domestic production helped them keep the price low (Klare, 2008). However, since the production in the north arrived at its peak, dependence on the oil in the south is expected to increase. Although there are alternative attempts to decrease oil import to meet the increasing demand, such as fracking, producing from the resources in the north is becoming difficult and expensive (Dutzig and Ridlington, 2012).

Oil is the most traded commodity in the world, and also the “valued commodity” value of currency measured by, in the “new world of global carbon economy”, says Darrel Whitman (Whitman, 2006: 24). In the existing international market oil is only sold by the dollar. Its being priced in dollar comes to mean hegemony of the dollar in the global market as international “reserve currency.” Since the 1970s, after the end of the Bretton Wood System (Engdhal, 2004: 87-88),⁷¹ which also means the end of the dollar as gold system,

⁷¹ Bretton Wood is an economic order set after the WWII, in which gold was the exchange of dollar. In the WW2 era, the U.S. was in a position of vendor that provided requirements to its allies and the allies made their payments in gold. Thus the aforementioned order provided the US with a huge amount of gold reserve. This way 80% of the world’s gold reserve was stored in the US by 1945. In this context, reserving dollar meant reserving gold. But this could not last forever. The dollar crisis started with the Vietnam War.

maintaining oil-backed economic order has been the main driver of US foreign policy, especially towards the oil-rich regions, particularly the Middle East. Whitman further argues that the US “focused its attention on strategies to ensure that the dollar remained as the key international reserve currency” (Whitman, 2006: 23). This economic change also influenced its foreign policy that started to use of its coercive power more dominantly. This “new” strategy gave birth to an agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia, according to which Saudi Arabia would sell its oil only in exchange of dollar not with any other currency (Engdhal, 2012: 65-66). Thus, the dollar has become the most needed currency in the world to buy oil. The dominance of the dollar has relied on oil, which is why this order is called “petrodollar system’ (Whitman, 2006: 11-30). To keep this new system effective the US would need its military might more than ever. Fouskas and Gökay remark:

The persistent use of US military power can be viewed as a reaction to its declining economic power and not merely as a response to the post-Cold War geopolitical picture (Fouskas and Gökay, 2005: 21).

The abrupt and unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from the Bretton Woods System, following the Vietnam War in 1971, and replacing gold with oil to back its dollar hegemony, turned the US to a more belligerent country to maintain the

oil-backed dollar system. The oil-backed dollar and economic domination of the US can be challenged by the Euro and the growing China, who is uncomfortable with the US dominance in the international energy market (Kupchan, 2012).

America's dependence on Middle Eastern resources has been guiding its foreign policy since 1980. This policy is known as the Carter Doctrine (Gökay, 2006: 136). In January 23, 1980 US President Jimmy Carter during his address underlined:

Let our position be absolutely clear. An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force (Carter, 1980).

For some, the invasion of Afghanistan illustrated this Doctrine in the 21st century (Engdhal, 2012). Iraq might be viewed as a promising rich, cheap source, while Afghanistan as a possible land route to China (figure 23). Thus, both countries needed to be under its control, according to the Carter doctrine, or its updated version, the Bush doctrine, pre-emptive war. The US applied its coercive power and practised its hard power to keep its economic domination, the basic tool of which has been the dollar, over the world economy (Gökay, 2005).

Following the collapse of the dollar as gold system, a new system was set up of dollar as oil. The US has kept its military ready to keep oil resources and

transportation routes under its control. Frank (1999) argued that the US has used its military “as a trump card that can be employed to prevail over all its rivals in the coming struggle for resources.” This has been the prior interest of the US in the oil-rich Middle East (Gökay, 2006: chapter 1). As some argue, plotting a coup to overthrow Iran's nationalist government of Mohammed Musaddiq in 1953 (Curtis, 1995: chapter 4), invading Iraq and Afghanistan were the results of this new “habit” (Gökay, 2006). On the role of the military in maintaining US interests across the world, Gökay and Fouskas argue that:

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has been facing a decline in its economic strength relative to the European Union, and East Asian economic group of Japan, China and the Southeast Asian “tigers”. The major US interventions since 1989 should, therefore, be viewed not only as reactions to “ethnic cleansing” or “international terrorism”, but opportunistic responses to this post-Cold War geopolitical picture. This is one central reason why military power is now so often the choice of the US administration.

Engdhal assesses aggressive attitudes of the US in Iraq and Afghanistan as a continuation of the Carter doctrine. He contends that the Carter doctrine is the continuation of the Monroe doctrine, from early 19th century. Therefore it might be said that, in terms of using or keeping ready to use its military, there is continuity in US foreign policy (Engdhal, 2012, p.124-126). These doctrines,

including the most recent Bush doctrine, give the US the “right” to unilaterally intervene, when its interests are at stake, particularly its economic interests.

The cover letter of the 2002 US National Security Strategy reveals how the US maintain this dollar as oil system. Critical reading of some points in this document would be enough to see that the US is ready to use every means to re-shape global politics to comply with its capitalist interests. For example, “We will **extend the peace** by [sic] encouraging **free and open societies on every continent.**” By “free and open societies” it might mean societies trading in dollar and using the dollar as reserve currency. The same article regards this as ‘peace’ and underlines the imperialist desire of the US to “extent this peace.”

Another point from the same document identifies the tools that can be used to establish peace. The tools/measures offered are generally extraordinary and rely on military power. To legitimise using these unusual tools securitisation is applied. In other words, the agents targeted for invasion are constructed as threats to internal security of the US. Securitisation of Saddam on the eve of the invasion shows this. Part of the same national security document states that:

...shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank...[sic] To defeat this threat **we must make use of every tool in our arsenal—military power, better homeland defences, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing.**

The term “shadowy” is ambiguous and open to manipulation. It was and is possible to construct an individual’s or networks’ image as threat via using media or similar channels to manipulate perceptions of the masses, in a similar way to the scenario told in George Orwell’s 1984.

The order the US wants to set up and maintain in the Middle East is briefed by retired US soldier Gen. John Abizaid, former CENTCOM commander:

We've treated the Arab world as a collection of big gas stations. Our message to them is: Guys, **keep your pumps open**, prices low, be nice to the Israelis and you can do whatever you want out back (Huffington Post, 2007).

ii) Europe and the Middle East

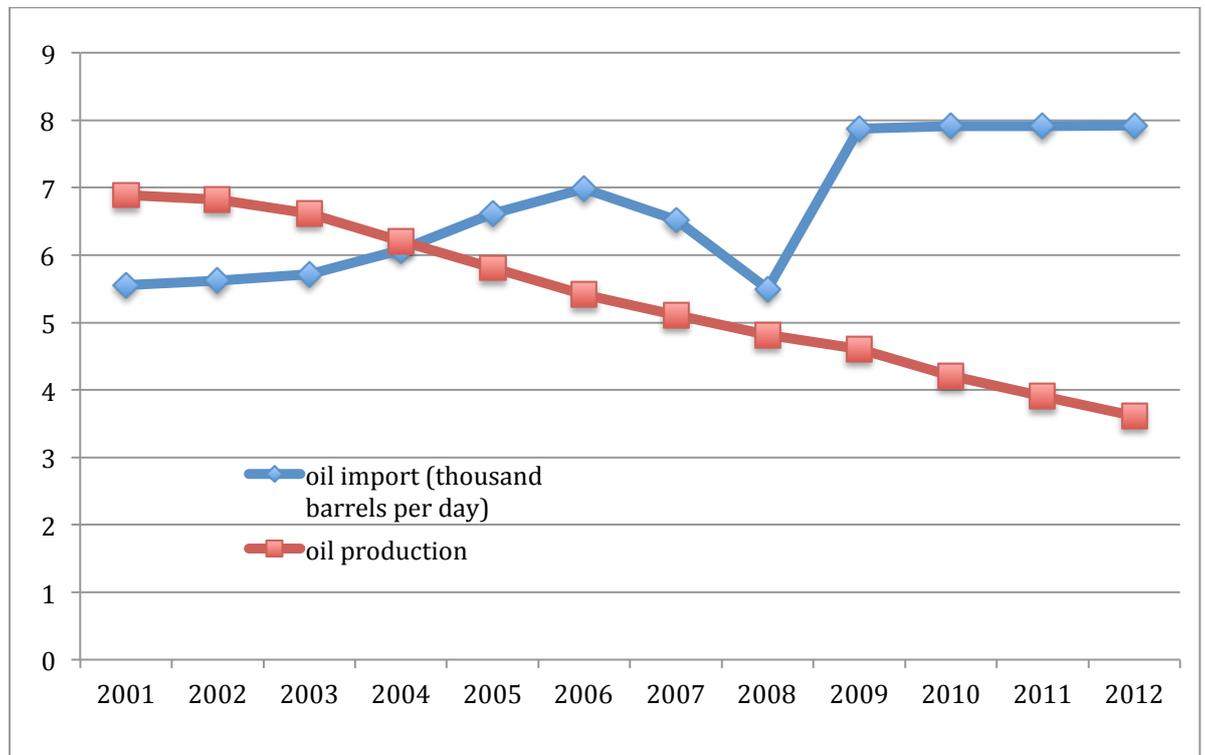


Figure 17 Europe's total import of Refined Petroleum Product 2001-2012, Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Energy is the Achilles' heel of the industrialised Europe, particularly the 27 EU countries. Energy import of Europe is increasing every year. According to the estimation of the International Energy Agency in 2015, EU oil imports will surpass the US (Werdieger, NY Times, 2011). Europe in 2012 imported around 8 million barrels of oil per day and this amount seems to increase year by year (figure 17). However, production seems to fall every year. In 2001 total oil production in Europe was around 7 million barrels (per day), but when we come

to 2012 this number falls to 3 (see figure 17 above). These figures make European countries more import dependent.

Europe's gas import is similar. It appears to be even more important than oil.

The main energy supplier of the EU is Russia, due to the existing pipelines.

Conversely facing the geopolitics effect of its growing dependence on external energy suppliers especially for the highly preferred Natural gas, the EU is trying to vary both its supplies and suppliers. The uncertainty of gas imports from Russia and the deficit between energy consumption and production in Europe has led the European states to pursue other supply options besides Russia. However, other countries like India and China are also potential long-term customers for the EU's alternative suppliers. Intense competition between Asia and Europe and the long term deals between Asian powers and energy suppliers could cause considerable decrease in the share of the Union in the regional supplies (Coşkun and Carlson, 2010: 4).

For the EU energy security this means “diversification of the sources.” In relation to this strategy, Iraqi resources have always been on the agenda of the EU economies. To understand the importance of Iraq's resources for the EU, it is enough to look at the positions taken by France and Germany against the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. They were categorically against any type of invasion. In January 2003, two months before the invasion, France and Germany held a joint

cabinet meeting in Paris. Following the meeting French President Chirac remarked, "'For us [Germany and France], war is always the proof of failure and the worst of solutions, so everything must be done to avoid it.'" In line with President Chirac's statement, German Chancellor Schroder, with reference to Germany's position in the Security Council of the UN, stated, "'Don't expect Germany to approve a resolution legitimising war'" (Guardian, 22 January 2003). Following the collapse of the Baath regime in Iraq, it was revealed that both these countries had signed contracts to purchase oil and gas from Saddam for a period of 30 years. Bringing an end to Saddam's regime also brought an end to these contracts.

The main strategy of the EU is to diversify resources and routes for the sake of its energy security. Under the guidance of this strategy, within the context of global competition over sources, Turkey has always been an alternative route for EU needs. For this reason the EU has supported a number of trans-Turkey oil and gas pipeline projects e.g. TANAP and Nabucco.



Figure 18. TANAP | Source: RWE

iii) Emerging Giant in Asia: China and “Sweet” Oil

A long run observer of rise of China, Thomas J. Christensen, regarding the emergence of China in world politics suggested “China may well be the high church of realpolitik in the post Cold War world” (Christensen, 1996: 37). Taking this as a theoretical base, I argue that US policy towards the oil-rich Middle East is being shaped by concern over the emergence of a revisionist China in the Pacific.

For more than a decade China has been the fastest growing economy in the world. As reflection of this growth since 1993 both the Chinese economy and its energy consumption have been increasing incrementally. At present the Chinese economy relies on coal to meet its energy needs (see chart). However, its share

of oil and gas, particularly oil, has been increasing every year, as shown on BP's statistical review below. As corollary of this, it has become a net oil importer since 1993. "The trend towards increasing dependence on fuel imports is irreversible," as Kreft (2006:64) noted.

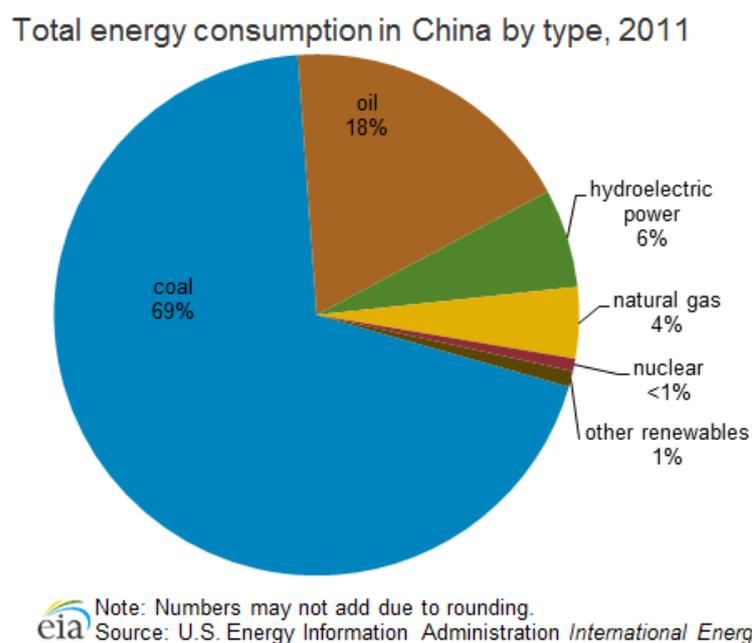


Figure 19. Total energy consumption in China 2011

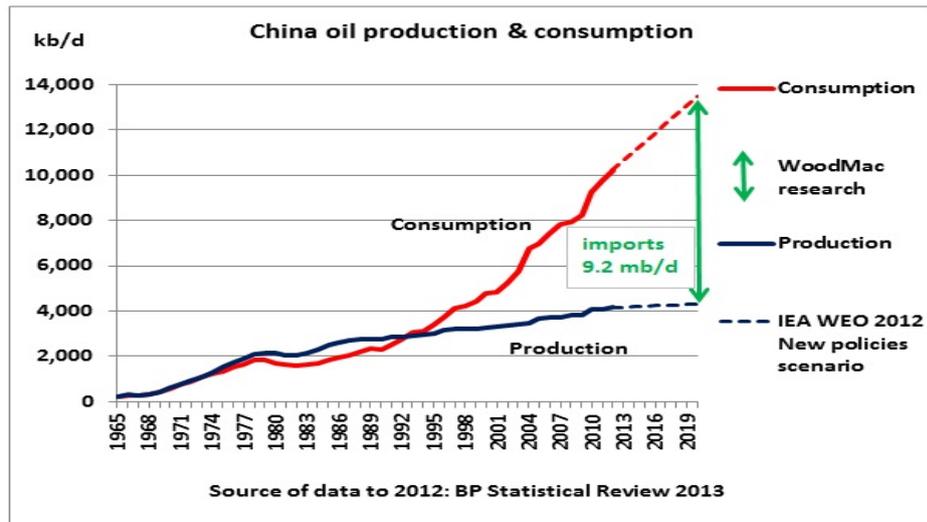


Figure 20. China oil production and consumption 2012

It is estimated that by 2020 China will be consuming around 13 million barrels of oil per day, while daily domestic production is going to stay below 5 million barrels (see figure 20). This means that China will need to import more than 8 million barrels of oil to meet its growing oil demand and sustain its growth. Similar to China, India is another booming economy, its energy need increasing day by day. Currently India is consuming around 3.5 million bpd (eia). China is the second largest oil consumer and importer, and according to EIA's estimation it will surpass the US and become the largest oil importer in 2014 (eia).

Daniel Yergin, eminent expert on oil politics and author of *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, draws attention to the geographical shift in oil consumption, which might be a good indicator of global faultlines from North America to Asia.

In the 1970s, North America consumed twice as much oil as Asia. Last year

[2005], for the first time ever, Asia's oil consumption exceeded North America's. The trend will continue: half of the total growth in oil consumption in the next 15 years will come from Asia, according to projections by Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) (Yergin, 2006:72).

The above cited quote and information from Yergin signify a shift in the geography of consumption (oil) and production from North America to Asia, with reference to Martenson's (2013) correlation between oil consumption and economic growth. Daniel Yergin, in his article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 2006, underlines:

The last decade has witnessed a substantial increase in the world's demand for oil, primarily because of the dramatic economic growth in developing countries, in particular China and India. As late as 1993, China was self-sufficient in oil. Since then, its GDP has almost tripled and its demand for oil has more than doubled (Yergin, 2006: 71).

The continuously growing Chinese economy after 2006 and dramatically increasing oil consumption show a shift in both geographies of consumption and production.

Many observers and academics working on China argue that the future of the regime relies on the continuation of economic growth. China, to maintain its economic growth, needs to meet its rapidly growing energy/oil demand. Its

economic growth, “depends to a large extent on how far Beijing succeeds in meeting its expanding energy needs,” says Kreft (Kreft, 2006: 64).

China’s “oil-diplomacy”

French and Chambers (2010:18) underline the increasing “fear of the depletion of the world reserves of oil, the number of points at which oil is being sourced from around the world are actually growing.” Fear of depletion and increasing need of energy have led China to source oil from various points all across the world (see figure/map 21). For this purpose, its state-owned oil companies, such as Sinopec and Cnoo, seek resources abroad, in order to invest in and secure some contracts from South America to the Middle East. This has also been one of the main, if not the most important, priorities of Chinese foreign policy. Yetiv and Lu (Yetiv and Lu, 2007: 199) underline:

...10th five year plan (2001-2005) refers explicitly and for the first time publicly to energy security, which is defined as guaranteeing and securing oil supplies from abroad as essential to China’s continued economic growth and modernization (Yetiv and Lu, 2007: 199).

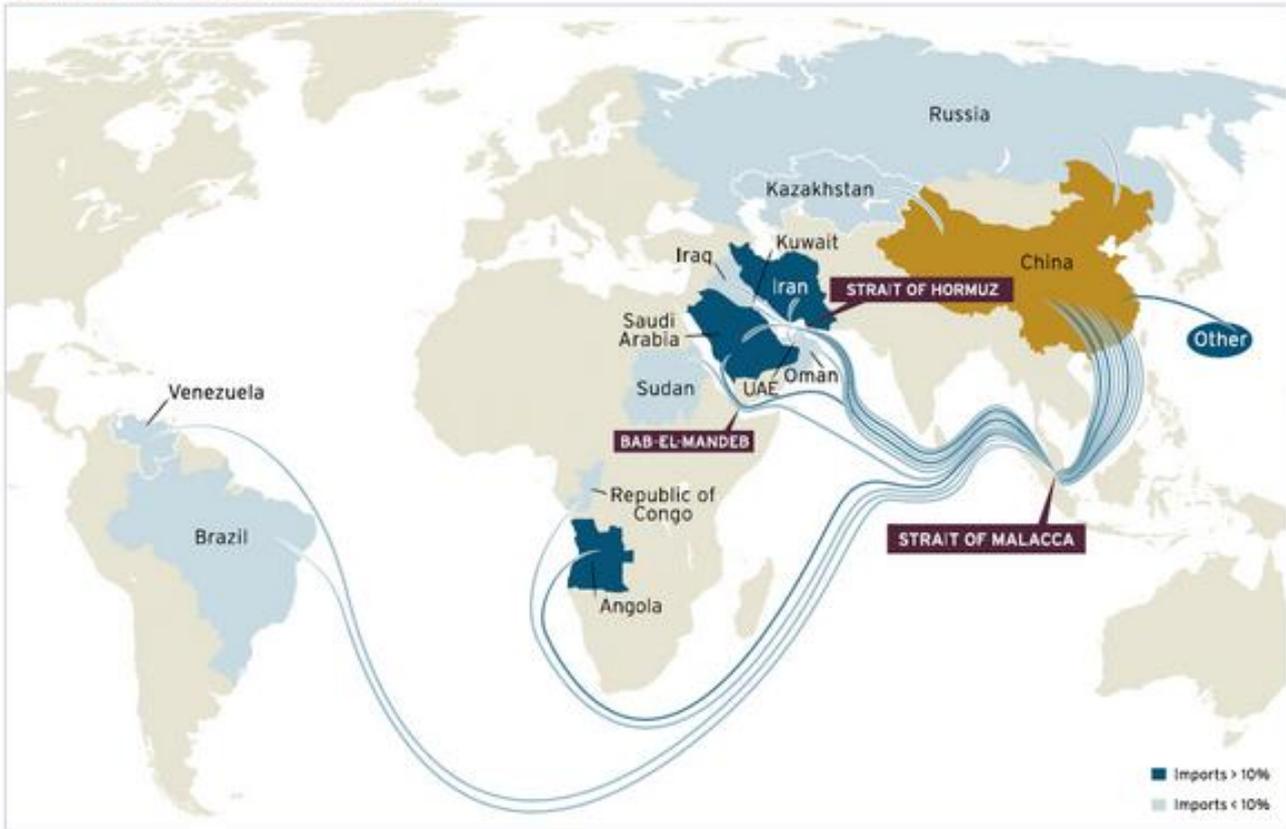
Facilitating securing oil contracts and investment in such resource rich countries has been a strategic priority of China’s foreign policy. Therefore, the Chinese since the late 1990s initiated an “oil diplomacy” to serve this purpose (Alves, 2011; Kreft, 2006: 64). Also the Chinese government has been giving subsidies for inciting these state-owned companies to invest in certain countries listed by

the government (Zweig and Jianhai, 2005: 26). The majority of these states are either marginalised by sanctions imposed by the US and its western allies, or seen as risky by the western oil companies to invest in. Thus, Angola, Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Venezuela are among the top ten oil suppliers to China (see map below).

Some claim that China has prioritised investing in such “pariah states” [Iran, Sudan], because these states are marginalised by international sanctions, and tries to tie them to its market to overcome the disadvantages of the existing system. Some even claim that Chinese investment in Africa is giving rise to a sort of neo-imperialist China. Chinese state-owned companies invest particularly in mining and energy, in raw materials, to supply China’s increasing energy and raw material needs (Probsting, 2012).

It is clear from recent developments/steps taken by the US in the Middle East, that the US is following China and taking such developments into account. For example, the US initiated a process towards Iran to ‘normalise’ and ‘integrate’ Iran into the system. Also the agreement recently struck between Russia and China illustrates the opportunist approach taken by China’s in its energy policy.

China Import Countries, 2011



Country	Saudi Arabia	Angola	Iran	Russia	Oman	Iraq	Sudan	Venezuela	Kazakhstan	Kuwait	UAE	Brazil	Republic of Congo	Other
Percentage of Imports	19.8	12.3	10.9	7.8	7.2	5.4	5.1	4.5	4.4	3.8	2.7	2.6	2.2	11.3
Thousand Barrels	366,825	227,395	202,575	144,175	132,495	100,740	94,900	83,950	81,760	69,775	49,275	48,900	41,245	208,780

Created by Marcia Underwood of the Brookings Institution with data compiled from the U.S. Energy Information Agency's China Country Report 2012. <http://www.eia.gov/countries/cab.cfm?fips=CH>.

Map 7. China's Import Countries and transportation routes

China's crude oil imports by source, 2011 thousand barrels per day

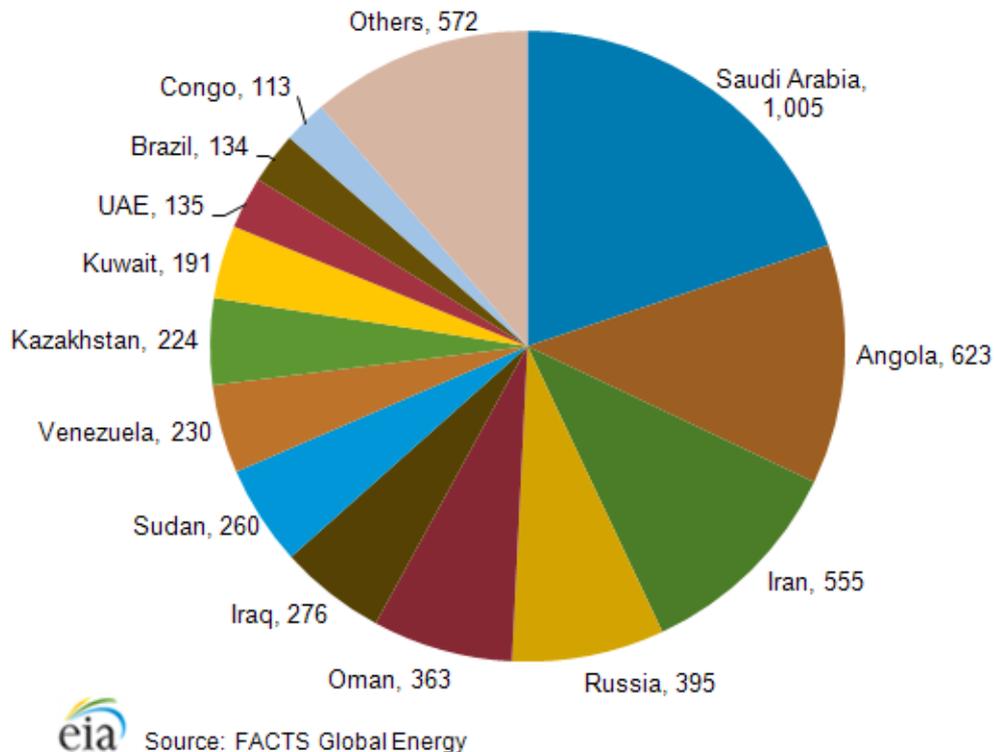


Figure 21. China's crude oil imports by source, 2011

Its distrust of the international market, or perhaps its discontent with the global system, motivates China to approach resources seen as risky by the IOCs to invest, in countries such as Iran and Sudan that were excluded from the system, either by sanctions, or because of regional or internal security issues.

In 1999 China and Saudi Arabia signed a memorandum of understanding.

China is particularly approaching those countries excluded by the US. For instance Iran, and recently with Russia, following imposition of sanctions. There are also some arguments about the start of nuclear talks with Iran, as it legitimised its relations with China (Ünver, 2014).

China and the Middle East

China's relations with the Middle East can be traced back to the Cold War Era. However, the region has been of interest to China since the end of the Cold War, when China rose as a net oil importer and the Chinese economy started to grow. Chietigj Bajpae, regarding China's approach to the Middle East argues:

...events in these two regions are not mutually exclusive. China's growing economic influence has proceeded in tandem with a growing military capability and more proactive political and diplomatic policy on the world stage, including in the Middle East. Its policy toward the Middle East has emerged as a microcosm of its foreign policy throughout the world, being driven by a desire to maintain a stable international environment in order to focus on its internal development, forming a close bond with the developing world, gaining access to raw materials and markets, and elevating its status on the world stage (Bajpae, 2006).

“Gaining access to raw materials and markets” involves China getting closer to the land of cheap and sweet oil, the Middle East. In the article written in 2006 Bajpae underlines that China has been importing half of its oil need from the region. In 2006 China was consuming around 7.2 million bpd (table above), and it was importing roughly 3 million bpd from the region. In 2014 this number nearly doubled. Now China is consuming around 12 million bpd.

China's Crude Imports, 2011

- During 2011:
 - Middle East: 51% (▲15%)
 - Africa: 24% (▼15%)
 - Asia Pacific: 3% (▼2%)
 - Elsewhere: 22% (▲17%)

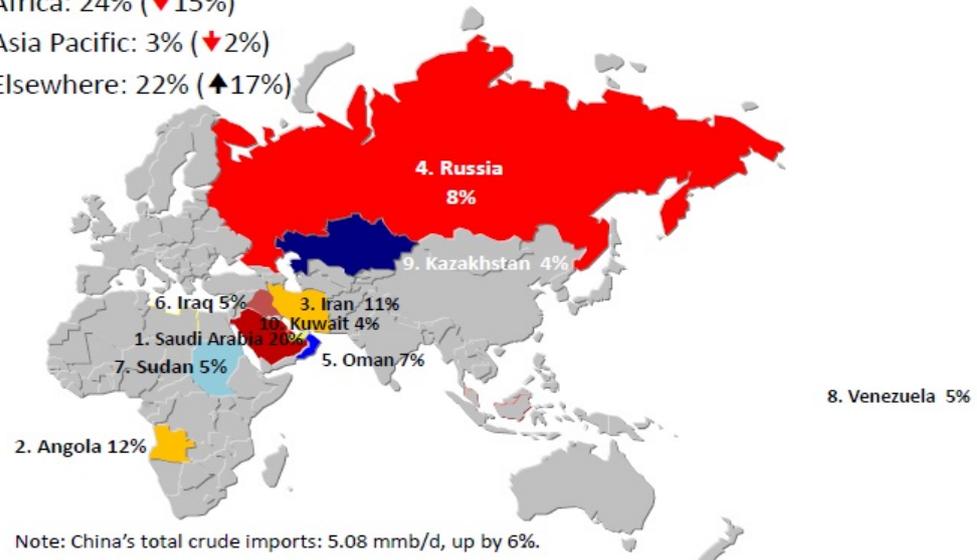


Figure 22. China's crude imports

China's primary interest in the Middle East has been to gain access to the region's vast oil and gas supplies. While China is trying to diversify its energy import supplies, it still depends on the Middle East for more than half of its oil imports, with Saudi Arabia and Iran providing more than 30% of China's oil imports (see map above). Iraq is only catering for 5% of China's consumption. China's increasing demand and the new resource discoveries in Iraq will probably bring China closer to Iraq. Iraq's potential is discussed in the following chapter.

Any possible marginalisation of Baghdad could incite China to approach and invest more in Maliki's Iraq. After all marginalisation of Baghdad would bring

security matters to the forefront of Western oil companies to invest in. They have already been abstaining from investing in Maliki's Iraq, or transferring their investment to the north, the Kurdistan region. Despite Baghdad's threat to blacklist and expel the companies forging relations/signing oil contracts with Kurdistan, oil giants like Royal Dutch Shell and Exxon Mobil have risked their investments in West Qurna and engaged with the Kurdish north to explore and extract oil (Yee, 2011). Therefore, this could be an opportunity for China, who is ready and has already been investing in risky countries. Massoud Daher, regarding China's position towards Middle Eastern resources, underlines:

Given the increasingly severe worldwide competition for Middle Eastern oil [sweet oil], the age of Chinese passivity in the Middle East is over. China will play an increasingly active role in the region, with the goal of securing its own energy security (Yee, 2011).

What Iraq means for China

It is necessary to note that Chinese companies have been dominant actors in the energy sector in Iraq. China has been investing in developing oil fields in Iraq since the overthrow of Saddam's regime. Currently the biggest investor in Iraq is the state-owned China Petroleum Company (CNPC). The company is particularly investing in the southern part of the state. Also following the exclusion of Exxon from the southern region, for signing oil exploration contracts with the Kurdish government in the north, a Chinese state-owned company has replaced it. The field is rarely touched. Currently around half of

Iraqi output (1.4 million barrels per day) is being produced by Chinese state-owned companies (Roberts, 2013). According to some analyses by 2035 Iraq's oil production could reach 8 million barrels per day and 80% of this production would go to China (Roberts, 2014). All these facts and estimations show that China's stakes in Iraq are untradeable.

Particularly considering China as alternative consumer/client for the resources makes Iran an option to transport Iraqi oil through a possible pipeline. Also it is said that China has been yearning for such an initiative. Philip Andrews-Speed, Professor of Energy Policy at the University of Dundee and Director of the Centre of Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy, argues:

China has long dreamed of building an overland energy supply corridor from the Middle East to western China, following the old Silk Route. China's oil companies already have significant oil and gas assets in Iran and Iraq. In Central Asia, the companies have fields in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as pipelines to bring oil and gas from these countries to western China. But a major gap still exists between the Middle East and Central Asia. Any pipeline between the two regions could traverse either Afghanistan or Pakistan (Andrew-Speed, 2011).

However this option would make the KRG more dependent on the central government and blight all Kurdish dreams of independence. Thus, Turkey seems to be the most suitable option for the KRG for now.

In conclusion, the emergence of China as second largest oil client after the US, its approach to oil rich/producing actors across the world, and its recent assertive attitudes in the Pacific region, in tandem with its increasing military capability, create a different context or fear for the US and the West in their relations with oil-rich countries in the Middle East.

What Turkey Means for China

Looking at the world oil and gas map it is clear that for China Turkey, with its strategic location, might be seen as an energy route that need to be blocked, the way Afghanistan might be seen by the West, in order to maintain the flow of oil and gas to western markets (see figure 23).

Construction of pipelines and flow of energy via Turkey would facilitate and motivate regional resource-rich actors in the Middle East to see western markets as a first option to sell their resources. To play this role, Turkey needs to provide a secure corridor for the companies investing in the region. On the other hand, if Turkey fails to provide these investing companies with this security, the companies could be discouraged and give up investing in turbulent risky places such as Iraq, and particularly its Kurdistan region, which is landlocked. However, actualisation of such scenarios would create a sort of opportunity for Chinese state-owned companies to engage and invest in such turbulent marginalised places. In other words, a marginalised Baghdad would be an option for China to invest more and secure the oil it increasingly needs.

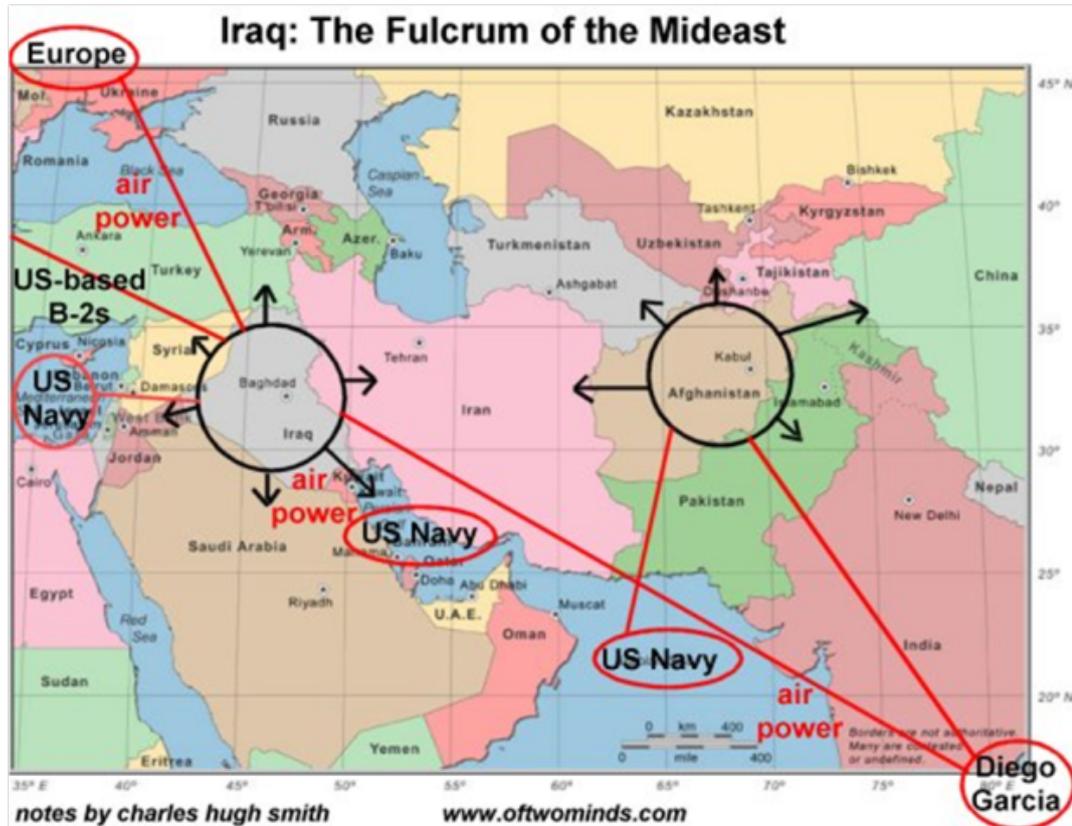


Figure 23. Iraqi oil and transportation routes

Emerging Rivalry between China and Europe

Putting all these numbers and statistics related to production, consumption, import and export of oil and gas in the energy sector into a global perspective appears to show that most probably Europe will enter a rivalry with China in the near future, over energy, oil and gas resources.

Both polities have already attempted to find alternative solutions to provide their economies with supply security. The deal struck recently between China and

Russia, following the crisis in Ukraine, illustrates this opportunist energy policy of China. This poses a significant threat to European energy security. While the recently imposed sanctions on Russia negatively affect the EU, China benefited and struck a 30-year contract with Russia, worth an estimated \$400 billion. Keith Kohl reminds us that China and Russia have been talking on this contract since early 2000s and could not agree on price. However, this crisis turned the process in China's favour. She also explains the impact of this deal on EU energy security: "To put it bluntly, the EU will have to start looking somewhere else to meet its gas supply in the coming decades" (Kohl, 2014).

Within this context it seems that for a long-term supply security Europe would invest or speed up the alternative projects, with special reference to TANAP (see figure 18). As evidence of this, despite the dispute between the federal Bagdad government and Erbil, and even despite the opposition of the US government, the first buyers of Kurdish oil transported through Turkey are leading EU countries France and Germany (Leff, 2014, Reuters).

However, for the US oil has a double meaning. Oil is not only the life sustaining commodity the US needs to import, but also the life insurance for the hegemony of its currency.

US reaction to China

The rising China in the Pacific has concerned the US and this concern has been discernible since 2009, when US President Barack Obama assumed power. Since

Obama came to power the US has directed its attention to the Pacific to maintain its position in the region via militarily containing China. Alongside military expenditure in Iraq, financial crises taking place in the first decade of the 21st century, particularly in 2008, negatively affected the US economy and made it difficult to sustain military presence across the world. The US economy made it clear that it would not be possible for the US to finance its military both in the Middle East and the Pacific at the same time. Thus, when Obama came to power the US decided to withdraw its military from Iraq, which it did in December 2011.

In October 2011 Secretary of State Hilary Clinton wrote an article in *Foreign Policy*, “America’s Pacific Century; The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the centre of the action” (Clinton, 2011). In the article Clinton first underlines some points regarding the past decade for the US. She points out that the US war expenditure in Afghanistan and Iraq was immense and it negatively influenced the budget.⁷² Then she writes about the US strategy in the forthcoming decade as follows:

In the next 10 years, we need to be smart and systematic about where we invest time and energy, so that we put ourselves in the best position to sustain our leadership, secure our interests, and advance our values. One of

⁷² It is estimated that the Iraq War has cost around 2 trillion so far. Daniel Trotta, “Iraq” *Reuters*, 14 March 2013. Available at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/14/us-iraq-war-anniversary-idUSBRE92D0PG20130314>

the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade will therefore be to lock in a substantially increased investment -- diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise -- in the Asia-Pacific region (Reuters, 2013).

Hilary Clinton, in the same article, demarcates the borders of the region as follows: “Stretching from the Indian subcontinent to the western shores of the Americas, the region spans two oceans -- the Pacific and the Indian -- that are increasingly linked by shipping and strategy.” Following this depiction of the region she points out its importance:

It boasts almost half the world's population. It includes many of the key engines of the global economy, as well as the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. It is home to several of our key allies and important emerging powers like China, India and Indonesia (Clinton, 2011).

What kind of engagement does the US want to set up in the region? The answer is in Clinton’s article:

...just as our post-World War II commitment to building a comprehensive and lasting transatlantic network of institutions and relationships has paid off many times over -- and continues to do so. The time has come for the United States to make similar investments as a Pacific power, a strategic course set by President Barack Obama from the outset of his administration and one that is already yielding benefits (Clinton, 2011).

She answers the domestic demands to return home. She considers these demands “understandable,” but “misguided.” She responds:

Those who say that we can no longer afford to engage with the world have it exactly backward -- we cannot afford not to. From opening new markets for American businesses to curbing nuclear proliferation, to keeping the sea-lanes free for commerce and navigation, our work abroad holds the key to our prosperity and security at home. For more than six decades, the United States has resisted the gravitational pull of these "come home" debates and the implicit zero-sum logic of these arguments. We must do so again (Clinton, 2011).

She points out the overseas interests of the US in the second decade of the 21st century. These are 1) “opening new markets”, 2) “curbing nuclear proliferation” and 3) “keeping the sea lanes free for commerce and navigation”. These three pillars have been pointed out as the key to “prosperity and security at home.” Two out of these three pillars, first and third, are directly related with economic hegemony of the US in the global market. These show that its economically hegemonic posture in the global economy has been perceived as a must to maintain “prosperity and security at home.”

Pacific China and the US

In June 2012 US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta revealed a new strategic plan by the Pentagon to reposition US naval power. According to this new plan, the

US will deploy around 60% of its warships in the Asia-Pacific region by 2020. The question is why the US wants to be so dominant in the Pacific.

Some sources report that Chinese naval power has been rapidly growing. They gained the technology to produce better warships in the last decade. In this they exceeded the technological giant Japan, Western European and Korean shipbuilders “in terms of both the types and numbers of ships they can build” (Collins and Erickson, 2012).

If Beijing prioritizes progress, China’s military shipbuilding technical capabilities can likely become as good as Russia’s are now by 2020 and will near current U.S. shipbuilding technical proficiency levels by 2030...China’s large state-backed military shipbuilders are approaching their Russian and U.S. peers in terms of the number of warships built. China’s large submarine and surface warship build out will, in a decade, likely have it become second only to the U.S. in terms of total warships produced since 1990. More importantly, the ramp-up of China’s construction of large warships in recent years will mean the PLA Navy will likely be taking delivery of larger numbers of modern surface combatants and submarines annually than the U.S. Navy.

It is clear that these developments are making the US anxious regarding its interests in the Pacific. As reflection of this concern in 2014 the US took a number of concrete steps in the Pacific. For example Japan, the principal ally of

the US in the Pacific, with the support of the US, decided to “re-interpret” pacifist articles of its constitution, which were injected by the US into the Japanese constitution drafted following the Second World War “to curb Japanese militarism.” According to the resolution accepted by the Japanese Parliament in July 2014, Japan will be allowed to use its “collective self-defence right” and will be allowed to militarily help an ally under attack (McLannahan, 2014). Actually this development shows that the US via Japan and some other allies in the region are making preparations to challenge or balance possible revisionist actions of China. Within this context China may look for global allies to form a front. The BRIC developments bank established in August might be a reflection of this intention (Guardian, Eichengreen, 2014). This means that the US policy to surround China might be counterproductive and trigger a big war in the long term.

Turkey within this picture

Rising powerhouses/rivals such as China have been challenging the US, particularly economically, making it hard for the US economy to carry the burden of a massive military presence around the world. Thus, for a long-term solution they need to reduce this dependency on oil. The following quote from Obama reflects this intention:

I want to emphasize that this announcement is part of a broader strategy that will move us from an economy that runs on fossil fuels and foreign oil to one that relies on home-grown fuels and clean energy. And the only way

this transition will succeed is if it strengthens our economy in the short term and the long term. To fail to recognize this reality would be a mistake” (ENS, 2010).

However, as discussed previously, oil is not only needed for industry. It is also a means/tool that underpins dollar domination in the global market. The US dollar has been the only currency in which oil transactions are conducted in the global energy markets since the 1970s. This made it the global reserve currency. So even if the US does not import any oil, the oil, particularly from the Middle East, will still be important for the US. Therefore, the US is seeking a solution that maintains its control over resources and routes of transportation without using its military.

The US, to maintain its hegemony, which is on shoulder of the dollar’s domination, has been adopting a more belligerent policy towards such lands. Keeping control of energy resources and routes of transportation has been the primary strategy of the US. Security of its economy in a way relies on the petrodollar system. To pursue this strategy it has been keeping its coercive power ready and has not hesitated to use it. It seems that the US during the Bush administration used its military power too much, and its economy was damaged. Obama, to rebuild the economy, tried to withdraw the military as much as possible and divert efforts inwards and also towards the Pacific to control the trade routes and China. In this understanding of US interests in the Middle East,

Turkey is expected to play the role of corridor for Middle Eastern oil to global energy markets.

Within this global context Turkey is an important ally for the US in the Middle East Region, more than ever. Zanotti (2011) in his report to US Congress writes:

Given Turkey's increasing relevance as a Middle Eastern actor, U.S. officials seem to have viewed Turkey as well-positioned to be a facilitator of U.S. interests in the region as the United States has begun winding down its troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu appear to have encouraged this approach by articulating a vision through which they have indicated that Turkey could help maintain regional stability while also promoting greater political and trade liberalization in neighboring countries. This vision—aspects of which Davutoğlu has expressed at times through phrases such as “strategic depth” or “zero problems with neighbors”—draws upon Turkey's historical, cultural, and religious knowledge of and ties with other regional actors, as well as its soft power appeal as a Muslim-majority democracy with a robust and dynamic economy.

In short, Turkey, due to its “cultural and religious knowledge,” being Muslim-majority democracy etc. also cited in the quote above, is viewed as the right agent to entrust US interests in the region, mainly the flow of energy resources

to the international market in US dollar. Providing a role for Turkey to be an energy corridor would motivate Turkey to play this designated role ungrudgingly.

Conclusion

The chapter argues that the energy or supply security of the West and US concerns regarding the maintenance of the system, in which oil is exclusively sold in dollars, revived Turkey's geopolitical value. Turkey has been playing its role to balance emerging political economies and maintain the existing system.

The chapter specifically argued that the increasing number of clients for oil and gas, with particular reference to China and its rocketing oil and gas consumption, increased this anxiety of the West, particularly Europe. The discontent of these emerging clients with the system, which is based on the hegemony of the dollar, fuels US concerns about the sustainability of the system. China's oil diplomacy, particularly in those countries excluded from the system, such as Sudan, Iran and Angola, illustrates the validity of those concerns. To overcome this concern, the US has been applying its half-century long policy, keeping oil reserves and transportation routes under its control, according to the Carter doctrine.

The research does not investigate whether China poses a real threat to US interests, or more clearly whether China is revisionist or not. However, it attempts to analyse the impact of this possibility, China's being revisionist, on US policy towards the energy regions and transportation routes. In other words,

the impact of a possibly revisionist China on US foreign policy in the oil-rich Middle East.

The chapter argued that the main goal of the US in the energy market is to maintain the system in which its currency is reserve currency. Therefore, the possibility of a revisionist China or block, whose signs have become discernible in the Pacific (McLannahan, 2014),⁷³ led and motivated the US to continue its century-long policy of keeping energy resources and routes of transportation under its control. So until now it supported maintenance of Ankara-Baghdad relations in general, Ankara-Erbil relations in particular. However, the recent regional developments compelled the US to compromise its dream of maintaining the Baghdad-Ankara line in favour of an Ankara-Erbil line.

On the other hand, the emerging rivalry between China and European countries over oil and gas, that has been very discernible during the Ukraine crisis, led European countries to seek and invest in alternative resources and routes in the Middle East. This has also facilitated the emergence of an Ankara-Erbil line.

⁷³ The US support alteration of Japan's constitution FTimes, increased its naval force in the Pacific.

CHAPTER 7. IRAQ'S "SWEET" OIL AND GLOBAL POLITICAL ECONOMIES

Introduction

This research argues that all regional and domestic factors are too sensitive and fragile, they can easily be reversed. Therefore, it is difficult and unreliable to regard any regional or domestic motives as the basis of a long-term Turkey-KRG rapprochement. However, as this thesis argues, the 'sweet oil' or supply security factor seems to have the potential to maintain a long-lasting Turkey-KRG rapprochement. It is, perhaps, for this very fact, that adopting a globalist perspective is essential to have a better grasp of a Turkey-KRG rapprochement.

The chapter starts with some possible limitations of the globalist perspective for those who want to benefit from the concept. Then it focuses on the sweet oil factor, which required adopting the globalist perspective, as the most important basis for a lasting Turkey-KRG rapprochement.

Some Limitations of the Globalist Perspective

The main contribution of this research to the literature has been the adopting of a globalist perspective to explain the motives behind the Turkey-KRG

rapprochement. This part aims to present the points the globalist perspective may fall short of explaining.

The globalist perspective is an important framework to understand and explain the object of those enquiries when located in sensitive geographies or flashpoints of the political map of the globe. It is probably the interface of global and regional factors, not solely the global one, that help the understanding of an object of enquiry.

The globalist perspective, it may be argued, focuses too much on international ups and downs. Putting so much emphasis on the international dimension weakens the explanatory power of the globalist perspective for some cases, or objects of enquiry. Thus, instead of putting sole focus on global ups and downs, it would be better for an analyst to look at and identify the intersection/interface of domestic, regional and global dimensions/levels, in order to have a better grasp of a case. Thus, the globalist perspective we adopt, inspired by Andre Gunder Frank, does not neglect developments at regional and internal levels, but focuses on the interface of developments at these levels with the global one. As Frank underlines, there is a 'unity' in diversity (Frank, 1998: 3).

Before adopting the perspective, the case needs to be examined in terms of its relations or potential relations with the global or emerging powers. In this, the strategic importance of resources and political geography vis-à-vis the burgeoning demands of global power houses need to be worked on and

identified clearly. For example, new and rich oil or gas discoveries in a particular region of the world would mean possible relations or interactions of this entity with oil/energy depended global economies. Political problems with an energy supplier might cause interruption in energy flow and might require finding alternative sources or routes. Thus, it might be said that adopting this globalist perspective is particularly useful for those objects of enquiry that are strategically important for global political economies, either by their location or the sources they were endowed.

Although the present research focuses on 2003-2013, the period during which the global developments that formed the basis upon which the Turkey-KRG relationship was built occurred, it argues that regional factors may also come to play a significant role in shaping/directing relations between Turkey and the KRG in the future. Although so far oil and economic factors have played the leading role in shaping Turkey's foreign policy towards the KRG, in the future not solely oil and trade, but also regional dynamics/politics might play their role in shaping Turkey-KRG relations. The emergence of ISIS, YPG, and a stronger PKK, as discussed in chapter 5, the rivalry between Kurdish groups and such regional factors may require the establishment of a new status quo in the region.

Identity and ideology are still important in shaping domestic politics and affecting international relations. However, they are not essential anymore, but instrumental, particularly for those agents that are located in sensitive regions/flashpoints.

Ideology has also been playing an important role in global politics. The emergence of ISIS shows this. However, its being ‘successful’, to an extent, cannot be explained only through its ideology. International developments such as the invasion of Iraq, then Washington’s decision in 2011 to remove its soldiers from Iraq, the emergence of sectarian politics in Iraq and in the region, the **vacuum** created in the region with the Syrian crisis etc, all these developments located in the intersection of regional and global created a climate suitable for the rise of violent extremism (Chulov, 2015).

The emergence of new regional actors has also influenced the policies of those global powers that have a stake in the region. Despite its 2011 decision to remove its military from Iraq, recent developments pushed the US to maintain its military presence in the region. As for Russia and China, since the onset of Syrian crisis, they have been more visible in the Middle East. Within the regional context Turkey had to cooperate with the PYD, seen as an offshoot of the PKK, to rescue its soldiers and relocate the tomb of Suleiman Shah⁷⁴, in Syria in early 2015 (Coffey, 2015). Baghdad and Erbil have been getting closer due to the threat posed by ISIS. Shite groups once regarded as radical are now being normalised in the fight against ISIS.

Can domestic internal ‘ideational changes’ in Turkey or in the KRG alone account for a long-term Turkey-KRG rapprochement? To what extent is an

⁷⁴ Suleiman Shah was grandfather of Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. His tomb was in northern Syria. The tomb is considered sovereign Turkish territory by the treaty signed with France in 1921, when Syria was under French rule. Since then the tomb has been considered Turkish territory and is protected by the Turkish army.

explanation of the rapprochement at the internal level reliable for an analysis of a long-term rapprochement?

The potential of the region as economic/trade partner and supplier, with reference to new oil discoveries in the post 2007 era, has played a significant role and became a sort of impetus for the decision-making elites of the ruling AKP. The question is, what if a more nationalist government comes to power in Turkey, or the nationalist elements within the ruling party become more effective? Similarly for the KRG, the current ruling party, Barzani's KDP, favours good relations with Turkey. However, it is not the only party in the region. There are alternative parties with diverging agendas with respect to relations with Turkey. For example, the emergence of *Goran*, the second biggest party of the region, close to the PKK in Iraq and YPG in Syria, might change the balance of power.

Significance of 'sweet oil' to the Globalist Perspective

As discussed before, an explanation of change in Turkey-KRG relations from an identity perspective might/will be misleading. There are important internal and regional motives behind the Turkey-KRG rapprochement. However, all these factors are observable and relevant within the given period of the research. As for a long-term rapprochement, energy, energy security (route and source), in other words the integration of Iraq as one of the potential strategic promising energy suppliers, with particular reference to its 'sweet oil,' to the global political

economies, would determine Turkey-KRG relations. To put it differently, as it is discussed in part one, in the securitisation of Kurdish identity ideational factors played a crucial role. However, in desecuritising the Kurds in Iraq, it has been material interests of the global political economies, with particular reference to their increasing energy (oil and gas) needs, that have shaped the Turkish government's policy towards the KRG.

The global power shift towards the East resulted in growing dependence on oil globally, and energy security has been not only on the agenda of the industrial Western world, but also on the agenda of emerging powerhouses in the Global South.

In the near future, Europe's dependence on and demand for oil and gas will continue. The region may become even more important as an exporter, alternative to Russia, as a result of the Ukrainian crisis. Growing economic ties between Russia and China, as discussed before, have also compelled Europe to invest in alternative energy projects. New and 'sweet oil' and gas discoveries in the region might be an alternative for the European economies. Consequently, the thesis argues that the Turkey-KRG rapprochement should be understood within this climate. In other words, this rapprochement seems inevitable as long as the demand for oil and gas continues. At this point, it is essential to understand the energy potential of the region and put it into global perspective. The following pages attempt to put the potential of the KRG as energy source into the global context.

Oil and Iraq

Oil has played a significant role in all developments in the history of the Middle East and Iraq. It played an important role in the creation and demarcation of Iraqi borders and some other new countries in the post-WWI era, under the mandate of the British Empire (see Yergin, 2008; Engdhal, 2010; Pirinci, 2007 : Ari, 2004; Ayhan, 2009). Energy resources in Iraq, particularly oil, not only in this century, but also throughout the 20th century, has played a crucial role in shaping the interests of global powers. For instance, in terms of the right of self-determination, some argue that this was a strategy that served geostrategic interests of the big powers, rather than an ethical stance (Lambert, 1997; Engdhal, 2010: 7-20). Following WWI the main reason for the USSR for supporting a Kurdish state in Iran, *Mehabad*, was the strategic and political importance of the geography where the Kurds were living. Since the geography was suitable for creating a buffer zone to cut ethnic and cultural ties between Turkey, autonomous Azerbaijan and Central Asia, Turkic speaking geography/world, creation of this state was supported by the Soviets at the time (Olson, 1992). This assertion by Lambert appears to be valid in the present political world, especially to understand the problems and developments in the Middle East. Another good example of this is the agreement between the German Empire and the Ottomans in 1899 to build the Berlin-Baghdad railway.

In the Muslim world it has been presented as a big service for religious people to visit the holy places. However, the Germans wanted to facilitate oil transportation from the region to Germany (Engdhal, 2012:10).

In Iraq, under successive Arab governments, oil has played its role in internal/domestic politics. Arab governments tried to increase the Arab population in the oil-rich regions of the country, to maintain Arab rule, which led to the “Arabisation” of some important cities, such as Kirkuk and Mosul (Talabany, 2001). During the Saddam era oil again was an important tool and goal. Saddam’s nationalisation of oil resources in the 1970s resulted to him sharing the fate of Iran’s Mussaddiq. The policy of nationalisation of oil brought an end to his reign following two big wars with the US (Ayhan, 2009). Tony Blair’s recent speech on oil reflects this. Oil plays a crucial role in Western policy towards the Middle East (Anderson & Stansfield, 2009: 235-36):

...why the Middle East remains of central importance and cannot be relegated to the second order...First and most obviously, it is still where a large part of the world’s energy supplies are generated, and whatever the long term implications of the USA energy revolution, the world’s dependence on the Middle East is not going to disappear any time soon. **In any event, it has a determining effect on the price of oil;** and thus on the stability and working of the global economy.

He stresses the impact of the rich and cheap oil reserves in the Middle East on the price of oil and, consequently, on global economy. Therefore, new discoveries of “cheap oil” in Iraq and particularly in Kurdistan, which has currently the sixth largest oil reserves in the world, deserves particular mention, in terms of the increasing importance of Middle Eastern resources. The next section discusses Iraq’s and Kurdistan’s potential and, the final section, the impact of this potential on Turkey-KRG relations from a globalist perspective.

Iraq’s oil capacity

According to recent surveys and reports the geographical area currently called Iraq has the most promising cheap/sweet oil reserves in the world (EIA, April 2013). The estimates are increasing every year. In surveys conducted in 2005, it was estimated that Iraq had around 150 billion barrels of reserves; however, recent surveys say that, although the discovered oil deposits are around 115 billion barrels, the estimated deposits are more than 300 billion barrels (Shah, 2007). The US energy information administration (EIA) in its recent report (2013) reveals that there are 70 discovered oil fields in Iraq and only 24 of them are functioning. The report states that the reserve of these fields is around 141 billion barrels, while the rest is estimated to have 214 billion barrels. The report says the country has become the second biggest oil producer among the OPEC countries, following Saudi Arabia. According to the report, “Iraq may be one of the few places left where much of its known hydrocarbon resources has not

been fully exploited.” These new discoveries and hardly ever tapped⁷⁵ proven oil and gas reserves, because of sanctions imposed on Saddam’s regime, increased the interest of international companies and oil addicted countries in Iraq’s reserves. The chairman of Petrel Resources, an Irish exploration company, John Teeling, remarked in 2007:

Iraq has 70 discovered, undeveloped fields. You'd die for any one of them. Even the small ones have a billion barrels. If this isn't the Holy Grail, it's right next door to it (cited in Shah, 2007).

Some sources underline that if it functions at full capacity Iraq has the potential to produce 12 million barrels (Manuel, 2013), more than the amount Saudi Arabia is currently producing, and can be the leading actor in oil production in the Gulf Region, even in the world (see figure world oil production by country). Researchers underline that deposits in Iraq are very close to the surface, making it easy and cheap to extract, cheap oil.⁷⁶ Also it is estimated that, with the necessary infrastructure/investments, Iraq could lead the market until 2035. Hill underlines:

Iraq is perhaps the only country left in the world that has huge stores of what insiders call “cheap oil” — untapped reserves that can be extracted

⁷⁵ Despite the proven crude oil until 2012, throughout the 1990s and first decade of the 21st century Iraq was producing less than 3 million bpd.

⁷⁶ The cost of producing a barrel of oil in Iraq is around \$1. Compared to other parts it seems the cheapest in the world. Patrice Hill, “Iraq’s flood of ‘cheap oil’ could rock world markets”, *The Washington Times*, 3 February 2013.

Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/3/iraqs-flood-of-cheap-oil-could-rock-world-markets-/?page=all>

through relatively inexpensive, traditional drilling techniques rather than having to employ costly technologies such as hydraulic fracturing and deep-sea exploration — as in the U.S. — to tap reserves of oil found offshore or in deep underground shale formations (Hill, 2013).

Iraqi oil being vast, easy and cheap to access, executive director of International Energy Agency (IEA) Maria van der Hoeven argues that “Iraq has a potential as a game-changer” (cited in Patrice Hill, 2013) in the global energy market. In parallel with Maria van der Hoeven, Patricia Hill underlines that Iraq would play “a pivotal role” in energy markets:

Given its access to vast resources at low costs, Baghdad is poised to play a pivotal role in determining whether the world’s growing thirst for oil drives up fuel prices to debilitating levels in coming years (Hill, 2013).

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein have drawn the interest of International Oil Companies (IOCs) to the sources in the region. The invasion “liberated” oil resources **nationalised** in the 1970s. Dodge argues that “the invasion and regime change in 2003 was motivated by a desire in Washington to eradicate the Ba’athist regime, and to curtail the autonomy that Iraq had accumulated since 1968” (Dodge, 2012: ch 6, p. 181). Why the US did not like the autonomy Iraq had since 1968 is linked to the nationalisation of its oil industry.

Iraq's problems related to resources are lack of infrastructure and capital to finance the necessary industrial development. The Energy Information Administration's (EIA) report points out the lack of oil industry in Iraq and urges that it achieves its production potential by invest in infrastructure (EIA, 2013). It is estimated that the country needs around \$30 billion yearly investment in energy infrastructure to reach its potential. This amount makes IOCs' involvement indispensable. Its GDP is around \$210 billion (World Bank GDP, 2012). Thus, there is interdependence between Iraq and IOCs that seek cheap oil. Iraq needs huge investment in the field for high-level production and this requires financial and technical ability, which Iraq does not have. So developing oil fields in Iraq depends on Foreign Oil Giants. Saeed Shah states:

The former president Saddam Hussein cut Iraq off from foreign oil technology, first by pursuing the war with Iran in the 1980s, then the international sanctions of the 1990s. Advanced oil recovery techniques, such as water injection, passed the country by (Shah, 2007).

It is not only well known Western energy companies that are interested in the land, but also companies from China, India and Russia that are struggling for a share of this promising "cheap oil" source.

In recent years big oil companies have conducted important research (BP, 2013; Exxon Mobile, 2012; IEA, 2012). Recent reports interestingly deal with the

future of the energy sector, underlining the rising demand of Asian economies and the increasing importance of Gulf petrol, particularly Iraq's oil reserves.

Following the invasion, big western oil companies such as BP, Chevron and Exxon, due to lack of security, did not directly invest in the region. However, since 2007-8 the oil giants are engaging with Iraq and its most secure part, the KRG, to secure contracts.

The companies have been trying to engage with this promising land with exploration, development and production contracts. However, the absence of a "National Oil Law" is another handicap for the IOCs. Since 2007 there have been drafts on a National Oil Law, which brought the federal government and the sub-federal Kurdistan region in Iraq against each other. Domestic actors in Iraqi politics, Shiites and Kurds, have different interpretations of relevant articles (articles 111 and 112) of the Constitution and diverse tactics on oil related issues. This issue raised the tension, particularly in 2012, as the Kurds engaged with the IOCs despite opposition by the Iraqi central Government (IOC). Relative security in Kurdish controlled areas, generous offers by the Kurdish government, Production Sharing Contracts, and promising resources have been whetting the Oil Giants' appetite.

In 2012 the world's known oil giants such as Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Total signed agreements, exploration and exploitation contracts with the KRG, despite harsh criticism and opposition by both the federal Iraqi government and the US.

Signing oil exploration contracts with such oil/energy giants was a decisive moment for the Kurds. Drawing such interests and investments was a diplomatic step guaranteeing the security of Kurdistan in the long term.

Iraqi Oil and International Market

Experts on the oil sector agree that what Iraq's oil industry needs, in order to produce in its capacity, is infrastructure, a proper oil industry, capable of extracting Iraq's oil wealth. That means investment in order to raise production from 3 million to 9 million barrels per day (Lee, 2013). The existing oil industry was very old, out of date and also destroyed to a considerable extent by the war in 2003. According to data from 2009, Iraq was the 12th largest oil producing country, with a production of around 2.5 million bpd in the world, though in the same year it was ranked 3rd richest, in terms of proven oil reserves with a capacity of producing 9 million barrels per day. New exploration could make Iraq the world's second largest proven oil reserves with an estimated "200+ billion barrels" (*Global policy*). However, absence of a federal hydrocarbon law disheartened international investment.⁷⁷ Iraq is still producing under its capacity.

⁷⁷ *Hydrocarbon framework law* is about managing oil wealth. This law should define/outline how and by whom oil exploration (OEC) and production-sharing contracts (PSC) can be signed.

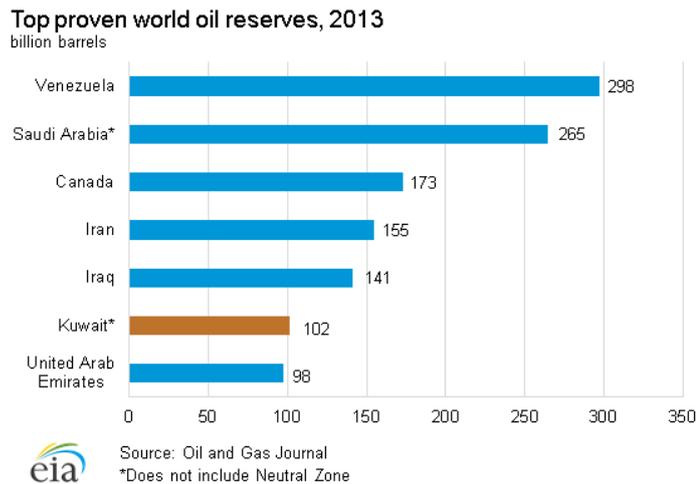


Figure 24. Top proven world oil reserves, 2013

Kurdish Oil

Kurds in Iraq, in this new era, are trying to utilise their resources to gain economic independence. As Anderson points out, the geopolitics of Iraq and the Kurdish entity in Iraq have significance for global powers. Being an oil-rich country, third or fourth largest,⁷⁸ increases the significance of Iraq in general and Kurdistan in particular. According to formal sources of the KRG, its land can produce roughly 45 billions barrels of oil, nearly equal to 1/3 of Iraq's proven reserves, and around one to three tcm (trillion cubic meters) of gas, according to US Geological Survey's estimates. This amount of oil reserves makes the Kurdistan Region of Iraq the fourth largest in the world (Black, 2013) and "a new actor on the Middle East [energy] map" (Transmissions, 2012). In the words of Tony Hayward, Genel Energy CEO (also former BP CEO), the

⁷⁸ As for some sources, it is the third largest in terms of proven oil reserves, for this see:

Kurdish region is the “last frontier” of untapped onshore reserve of the world (Reuters, 2012). Ambassador Matthew J. Bryza tries to put these numbers in perspective:

Putting those numbers in perspective, the giant Azeri-Chirag- Guneshli field, whose revenues transformed Azerbaijan’s stagnant economy into the world’s fastest growing one during 2006-8, contains six billion barrels of oil; and Azerbaijan’s Shah Deniz natural gas field contains approximately one TCM, which is sufficient to launch the “Southern Corridor”, the network of pipelines that will help Europe diversify its supplies of natural gas away from dependence on Russia’s state-controlled natural gas company, Gazprom, and change Europe’s strategic energy map (Bryza, 2013: 56).

This means that oil resources in Kurdistan are larger than those of the Azeri Chirag- Guneshli field, roughly by a factor of 8, while gas resources are larger by a factor of 2 or 3. To understand the importance of this amount for the energy dependent countries, it is important to show how much oil and gas Europe is consuming per year. According to sources, Europe is consuming around 14 million bpd (barrels per day), which means more than 5 billion barrels of oil are consumed in a year by European states. As for natural gas, the EIA reveals that in 2013 EU member countries plus Turkey, Norway, Switzerland and the non-EU Balkan states, consumed 18.7 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas (EIA).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=15411>

The Kurdish entity is on the agenda and energy map of global powers and oil companies that want to increase their influence in the region. Due to the amount, it will be important not only for energy dependent countries, but also for the global energy market. This means it will influence oil producing and trading economies. As the oil sources are “sweet,” or cheap to produce, it will have the power to affect world oil prices. Thus Kurdish oil is important for the US, for its currency to be used as mediator in the oil trade.

Saddam’s regime had tried to keep the Kurds away from the oil and gas sources as much as possible. However, following the establishment of a no-fly zone over Kurds in Iraq in the 1990s, they began to sell their hand-collected oil in exchange for food (Human-Rights Watch, 1995), benefiting from the hydrocarbon they sat on. After 2003 the KRG was formally recognised by the Baghdad government and allocated a share in the national budget of 17%. However, this allocated share has always been cut or withheld by the central government.

Kurdish oil is roughly 1/3 of the whole Iraqi reserve, with proven 45 billion barrels. However, since the region offers good deals, production-sharing contracts (PSCs) compared to the rest of Iraq, International Oil Companies (IOCs) prefer the Kurdistan region, despite the opposition and threats of the

government in Baghdad. This was expressed by the company representatives attending the Erbil Conference in 2012. They praised the friendly environment for investment the KRG has created and transparent production sharing contracts (PSCs) were published on the official website of the KRG. Having borders with Turkey and willingness to be integrated with the Western market are other important factors that attract companies to invest in Kurdistan. Investing in Kurdistan would allow these companies to export the oil they extracted via Turkey. This requires making the Kurdistan Region and Turkey a secure and integrated route for the interests of these companies and their European clients.

Regarding developments in the Energy sector in Kurdistan, Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, at a conference, remarked that there was no such a sector in Kurdistan before and in a very short time it has been the target of the big Oil Giants.

Another big area that has changed or has seen a dramatic change is the oil and gas sector. In 2003 there was nothing, absolutely nothing. By 2006 and 7 we had a law in place and we were beginning to build our oil and gas sector from scratch. Today we have over 50 contracts signed with companies from across the world. Some of those companies are household names; Chevron, Exxon Mobile, Gaz Prom and others (Abdurrahman, 2013).

Since 2008 big oil companies are approaching the Kurdish Region, the most stable part of Iraq, to have a stake in one of the most hydrocarbon-rich part of the world. The resources in this region are very close to the surface and easy to produce. Joe Steins, Operations Manager at TTOPCO, describes Kurdish oil as “the champagne of Kurdistan...It's very light. It's very good for refineries. It's high grade and easy to produce. It's **golden oil**” (cited Black, 2013).

The region began its oil exports in July 2009. During the opening ceremony Minister of Natural Sources Ashti Hawrami assessed the capacity of the region and its possible contribution to the Iraqi economy in his remarks, saying:

The oil export today is for the benefit of all of Iraq. Everyone will share that benefit. At today's oil price, KRG's efforts will generate \$2 Billion in revenue within a year. This will increase to \$5 Billion next year; and to a staggering \$20 Billion in just 4 years from now (Hawrami, 2009).

He also addressed oil companies and underlined how profitable investing in Kurdistan was:

Investors are rewarded for spending less and achieving more. For example, Taq Taq oilfield has been discovered and developed with a cost of less than \$500 million. It will produce at least 180,000 barrels per day;... The investor gets a gross profit share after cost recovery of around 10% to 12%. After allowing for exploration risk factors, the risked profit for the investor is less than 5%. All the costs of not finding oil are born by the

investor;... As an example, Ahdab, which is a low-risk discovered field, is expected to produce 100,000 barrels per day. But, the contractor is allowed a massive \$3 billion in cost allowance, 10 times higher per barrel of production as compared to Taq Taq (Hawrami, 2009).

All these technical arrangements in the region made investing in Kurdistan more attractive than investing in the rest of Iraq. Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, the KRG High Representative to the UK, underlines that Kurds are very well aware of what they have and what it might bring to them:

I am going to focus a little bit on oil and gas since this is one of the key, will be one of the key drivers of our economy. Kurdistan has 45 billion barrels of oil reserves, 3 trillion cubic meters in gas. As I said we have signed many contracts. Their production sharing contracts for one perspective these contracts offer a win-win situation. The companies that have taken the risk frankly to come to Kurdistan particularly in the early years should be rewarded. There is no shame in that. We also are benefiting, our people are benefiting, our economy is benefitting and we will continue to benefit in the future (Abdurrahman, 2013).

During his speech, Hawrami also talked about the rich natural gas reserves of the region. He underlined their intention to reach the Western market via *Nabucco*.⁸⁰ “As for gas, we are planning a strategic pipeline to link up with the *Nabucco* pipeline. This will generate even more revenues for Iraq” (Hawrami, 2009). This

⁸⁰ *Nabucco* is a trans-Anatolian pipeline project carrying gas from the Caspian basin to Europe.

plan shows the western centrism of the Kurdish decision-makers. It is this western centrism that brings Turkey and the KRG closer.



Figure 25. KRG-Iraq production potential | Source: *Oil Research*⁸¹

At the Energy Conference held in Erbil in 2012, Ian McDonald, Vice President of Chevron Europe, in his speech, remarked on the potential of Kurdistan:

Until recently, the potential of Kurdish oil and gas seemed like a distant dream. But in the space of a few years, **a score of discoveries [sic]** have silenced the skeptics. It is almost as if the region, stretching and growing,

⁸¹Kurdistan Investor Field Trip, Kurdistan Region Overview, *Oil Research*, March 2014. P.9. Available at:

[http://www.oilsearch.com/Media/docs/1403%20Kurdistan%20Investor%20Field%20Trip%20\(Final\)-e8d29958-ced7-4b03-a220-470bbc7210ef-0.pdf](http://www.oilsearch.com/Media/docs/1403%20Kurdistan%20Investor%20Field%20Trip%20(Final)-e8d29958-ced7-4b03-a220-470bbc7210ef-0.pdf)

has wakened from a sleep. Like a spring uncoiling, Iraqi Kurdistan is releasing its own pent-up energy.

He also revealed the intention and role of IOCs with respect to the Kurdish authority:

I'm told of an old Kurdish proverb that goes, "The Kurds have no friends but the mountains." Speaking for Chevron and our business colleagues here today, I hope and believe we can build on the very evident desire of Kurds to engage with the **outside world**.

It is clear that by 'outside world' he means the international energy market. As Kurdistan is a landlocked region, in order to transport its resources to the western markets, they need to rely on a secure route. Within this context Turkey as a NATO ally has become the most secure route in the region and the only option for the Kurds and IOCs.

In short, thanks to international investments, the Kurdistan region will soon reach a capacity to produce more than 1 million bpd (see figure 24 above). So far fifty oil companies, including oil giants Chevron, Exxon Mobil and Total, have invested about \$20bn in Kurdistan. Before completing the Kurdistan-Ceyhan pipeline project, the region had been exporting its oil to Turkey's Ceyhan port via trucks, in order to bypass the Baghdad controlled Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline. They viewed the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline as unreliable (and fly-by-night) and experienced some problems with the Baghdad government. The British-Turkish

joint venture, Genel Energy, one of the first companies investing in Kurdistan, started its first oil shipment in January 2013 via trucking to Ceyhan and from there to the international markets.⁸² Before construction of the Kurdistan-Ceyhan pipeline Genel Energy was exporting a daily 1,000 tons, which meant 8,000 barrells of oil via trucks (Payne and Mackey, 2013),⁸³ although the Baghdad government had severely criticised this as smuggling.

The Global Base of Turkey-KRG rapprochement

.... It is true that before the war the oil companies had lobbied for US support for Kurdistan's oil policy, for the betterment of ties between Washington and Erbil and to put pressure on former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki (Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to the Kurdistan Presidency, Rudaw, 2014).

The above quote and the history of US relations with the oil-rich Middle East show that US policy towards the Middle East has been shaped by the interests of the IOCs (Engdhal, 2012; Yergin, 2008; Gökay, 2006). It seems that these companies are again directing US policy towards Iraq and Kurdistan, in particular, despite opposition by the State Department.

⁸² Julia Payne and Peg Mackey, "Update 2-Iraqi Kurdistan Starts Independent crude Oil Exports", in *Reuters*, 8 January 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/08/kurdistan-crude-exports-idUSL5E9c843r20130108>.

⁸³ "Greater Kurdistan: a New Actor on Middle East Map?" *Transmission*, 29 November, 2012. Retrieved from <http://transmissionsmedia.com/greater-kurdistan-a-new-actor-on-middle-east-map/>

Regarding the trucking of the oil from Kurdistan to Turkey, Victoria Nuland, US State Department Spokesperson, answering a reporter's question, stated: "We don't support oil exports from any part of Iraq without the appropriate approval of the Iraqi government" (US Dept. of State, December 2012). Following regional developments contradicting this statement, another warning came from the State Department, a year after the first warning, in November 2013. This time the message was more obvious and directly addressed the Kurdish government of Iraq. Spokesperson, Jen Psaki, told reporters:

We don't support oil exports from any part of Iraq without approval of the Iraqi federal government. We continue to urge the federal government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to reach a constitutional solution, and that has consistently been our position. And it also has not changed (US State Dept, November 2013).

These press statements sparked a discussion on why the US oppose oil exports to international markets via Turkey. The answer was that the US does not want to see a disunited Iraq, which could marginalise one side, probably Baghdad, and could increase the influence of Iran and China on Baghdad and in the region. Increasing the influence of Iran over Baghdad would give a momentum to the formation of the Shiite Crescent, which is a threat to Western energy security. Thus, the US has been seen hesitant to support any steps that would marginalise Baghdad. The US has been trying to reintegrate some marginalised oil and gas rich countries to the system with direct reference to Iran (Khalilzad, 2013).

Marginalisation of Baghdad comes to mean that a daily potential of 9 million barrels of oil would become uncontrollable by International Energy Market's mechanisms, its rules set by the US.

On the other hand, China tends to engage with resources that are "marginalised" or excluded from the market and system. These potential 9 million barrels could feed the Chinese burgeoning energy demands, if Baghdad is marginalised, as depicted in the graph below. Thus, construction of a direct pipeline from Kurdistan to Turkey, because of its potential to disunite Iraq, was not welcomed by the US, which has been trying to keep control of Iraq's cheap oil reserves under its control. Accepting this pipeline without consent by Baghdad would/could *Berlinise* the region between China and the US, as Berlin had been divided between the Soviet Union and the US in 1945. However, stability and the necessary infrastructure tying the whole Iraq, 12 million bpd, to the international market is the dream of the US, which is turning a blind eye to the engagement of international companies with the KRG.

Barzani's statements regarding this concern of the US and Ashti Hawrami's account in *Hardtalk* made it clear that the Kurds were determined to contact Turkey to the detriment of Erbil-Baghdad relations, to reach Western oil markets. Barzani pointed out that the withdrawal of US troops "gave Baghdad's key to Tehran." Silence by the US regarding the recent pipeline agreements might be an indicator of a de-facto acceptance of this reality, as Hawrami argues.

Ashti Hawrami talked to Zainab Badawi during *Hardtalk* in September 2012.⁸⁴

As answer to Badawi's question regarding the US objection to Kurds exporting their oil, he replied:

⁸⁴*Hardtalk*, conversation between Hawrami and Badawi:

ZB: You know the government in Baghdad is extremely angry. Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki complained to Obama earlier this year. Victoria Nuland, a spokesperson at the US State Department, said: "The American Government is informing and will inform U.S. companies that signing contract for oil exploration and production with any region of Iraq without approval of federal authorities exposes these companies to potential legal risk. So how you see it is not how Americans see it.

AH: That is their opinion, no problem we respect...

ZB: It is the opinion of the American Administration, Exxon Mobile, this kind of thing. These are American companies you can't just dismiss it... But it comes with a health warning ... what I am saying is your perspective is not one that is shared. It is not shared by the government in Baghdad, that you have the right to do what you were doing, striking these contracts with these companies, also, a big support of Iraq, like the United states state department...

AH: **What they say publicly is different from what we hear behind the scenes.**

ZB: So they say to you "carry on what you're doing"?

AH: Very simply there are 50 companies working there, they support the Constitution and believe that it is on our side. Every company has a number of lawyers to look at the Constitution of Iraq and satisfy their client to say that it's safe to invest in there.

ZB: They are telling you one thing behind Baghdad's back?

AH: I am not saying exactly that, the State Department can say what they like. **They are not deterring any single investor, that is what is important.** Secondly, I will put it very nicely- if I have a millions barrels of oil in two years' time, the market needs it, Iraq needs it, we will win the battle.

what they [the US officials] say publicly is different from what we hear behind the scenes... they are not deterring any single investor, that is what is important (BBC, Hardtalk, 2012).

This graph below shows the global ups and downs discussed in this chapter in Turkey-KRG relations.

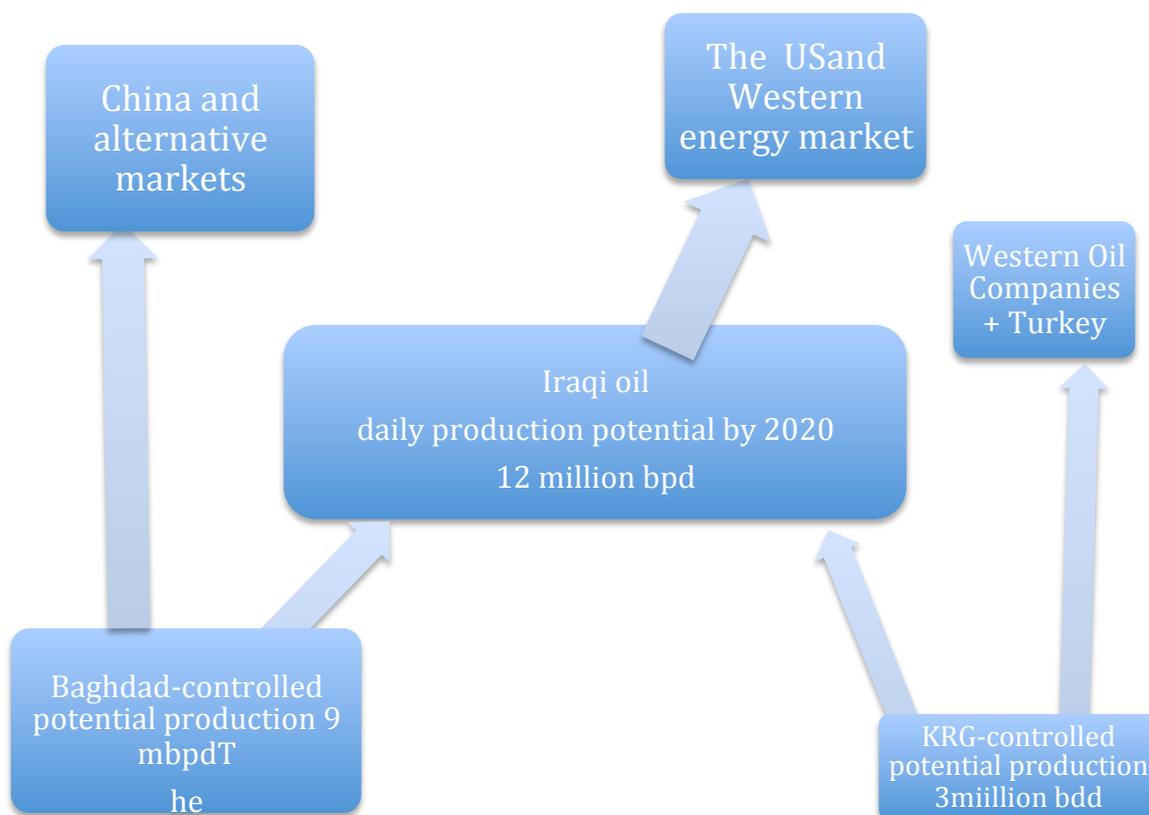


Figure 26. Potential of Iraqi oil and calculations of powerhouses

Since the invasion of Iraq the US has been the main ally and protector of the Kurds. Why did Kurds go ahead, despite opposition by Washington? The answer comes from Ashti Hawrami, “what they say publicly is different from what we hear behind the scenes...” It seems that the main incentive are the resources in the rest of Iraq, 9 million from 12 million barrels of daily production. Openly approving Kurdish demands might alienate the federal government towards alternative clients, like China (see graph above) similarly to Iran’s alienation towards China. In 2010 China signed a \$100 billion contract with Iran to buy gas and crude oil from Iran for a period of 25 years (Ghafouri, 2009). Iran is a significant supplier in the Middle East. Deteriorating relations between Iran and the US facilitated the signing of the agreement. There were prior attempts by China to establish ties with Iran. In 2004 there was a memorandum of understanding allowing China’s national oil company Sinopec to invest and develop *Yadavaran* oil field, “Iran’s largest undeveloped oil field.” In exchange, Iran was going to provide 10 million tons of liquefied natural gas every year for a period of 25 years (Zweig and Jianhai, 2005).

What do Iraqi resources mean for the US? Noam Chomsky, in an article written in 2003, argues that controlling Iraq’s oil resources has been the dream of the US since WWII and it was this dream that prompted the US to invade Iraq in 2003 (Chomsky, 2008).

The US does not want to see a broken down Iraq. What the US would like to see is an Iraq united and completely integrated with the markets under the control of

the US, with its 12 million barrels daily oil production capacity. Thus, it supports any positive engagement of the Kurds with Turkey, which will carry resources as much as possible to the international markets, but not threaten the unity of Iraq.

Turkey provides “the most suitable route” to transport Kurdish oil and gas. Kurdistan’s Minister of Energy points to Turkey as “the only route” (Zulal, 2012). In Premier Nechirwan Barzani’s words, “Turkey for us is the gate way to the West” (cited in Jamal 2014). Thus, after the invasion of Iraq the US asked Turkey to positively engage with both entities; Iraq and Kurdistan. In response to the question about US opposition to Kurdish oil exports to Turkey, on his way to Washington to discuss the Syrian crisis in May 2013, Then Prime Minister Erdoğan told reporters:

Countries from various parts of the world are taking steps to explore and produce oil in different parts of Iraq, and then deliver it to world oil markets. There’s nothing more normal, more natural than Turkey, which provides all kinds of support and aid to its next-door neighbor, to take a step that is based on mutual benefit (cit in Peker, 2013 TWJ).

The rapprochement between Turkey and the Kurdish entity ‘met domestic scepticism in Turkey’ (Okumuş, 2014). To bypass this ‘domestic scepticism’ about relations with the Kurdish government in Iraq, diplomatic steps since 2009, as discussed in chapter 4, have been helpful. These diplomatic exchanges and constructive language towards one another facilitated normalisation of the

entity in the domestic sphere and lessened the scepticism stemming from these agreements. It might be because of this that there have been no serious reactions, even among nationalist circles.

From this point of view, opposition by the US might be interpreted as the US asking Turkey to be the corridor not only for Kurdish oil and gas, but for the whole of Iraq's resources. It is for this reason that Premier Barzani, regarding the increasing tension between Erbil and Baghdad, and the role of the US as mediator says, "America encourages both sides to reach an understanding. This is America's true policy. It does not force one side upon the other" (Interview, *Rudaw*, 28.04.2014).

Conclusion

Iraq and its Kurdistan region with new, sweet and rich oil and gas discoveries have been whetting the Eastern and Western powers' appetite. The Kurds decided in favour of Western markets and this decision makes them positively engage with Turkey, putting all their eggs in Turkey's basket.

The emergence of China as a rich, oil-hungry political economy revitalised the geopolitical value of Turkey as a bridge/corridor to transport alternative resources to the continent, in the eyes of the West. European political economies. Turkey, as an emerging and oil dependent economy, seems ready to play this role, which resembles the role it played for the Western alliance/NATO

during the Cold War in containment of the USSR. During the Cold War Turkey's geographic location had been valued as base for Jupiter Missiles.

Also, the emergence of a possible revisionist China has put US interests in the Pacific at risk. It seems to be for this reason that US decision-makers decided to deploy the majority of their military, especially their naval force, in the Pacific. For the Middle East and Iraq this meant US withdrawal from the region for financial reasons, a reflection of the global shift in the Middle East. The thesis argues that this US decision to withdraw from Iraq in 2011 and then reveal a strategic plan to reposition its naval power have been the main motives at global level bringing Turkey and the KRG closer to each other.

Within this picture Turkey, not just for the Kurdish but also for Iraqi oil, is the only way for the Western markets/European clients. Since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has been playing a role for the Western block similar to the one it had played during the Cold War.⁸⁵ This role is playing the bridge/corridor or, in the words of Turkish Energy and Resource Minister Taner Yıldız (2010), becoming an “energy hub” to the Western energy markets. The existing pipelines and projects going to Europe through Turkey are testament to this role of Turkey. Despite some variations since 1923, the general direction of Turkish foreign policy has always been towards the West, particularly after joining NATO in the 1950s. There are recent agreements and cooperation between

⁸⁵ Turkey has been in NATO since 1953. During the Cold War it was regarded as a wing country in containment of the Soviet Union. Throughout the Cold War its foreign policy was guided by NATO. US/NATO's ballistic nuclear weapons, known as Jupiter missiles, were based in Turkey in 1961 as part of a containment policy. In those years the only exemption was the invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

Turkey, Russia and China. However, in Gokhan Bacık's words, "It is best to describe Turkey as being attracted by the Western world but flirting with alternatives to it" (Bacık, 2013: 772). So this thesis, on this point, agrees with Bacık and does not consider this shift a major policy change.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to uncover the extent and motives of Turkey's foreign policy shift towards the KRG during 2003-2013. The research has attempted to provide an alternative perspective to the existing literature on Turkish-KRG relations by adopting a globalist perspective.

The existing literature sheds light on the impact of the internal, regional and economic structure over the emerging partnership. However, this research brought the global dimension to the discussion and further suggested that the developments at global level play a significant role in shaping the regional and internal contexts in which the partnership between Turkey and the KRG has been established. To put it bluntly, it argues that Turkish foreign policy towards the KRG shifted due to the intersection of regional and global faultlines between the US and the Global South, particularly China, over energy resources.

The research is original/unique in terms of adopting an eclectic approach. It applies the concepts of 'securitisation' and 'de-securitisation' to display the extent, and a globalist perspective to reveal the motives of Turkey's policy modification towards the KRG. Chapter 2 provided a historical account of

Turkey's approach to Kurds and Kurdistan. The existence of a Kurdish political unity has historically and traditionally been constructed and viewed as an 'existential' threat to the political unity of the Republic. It is observed through some archival documents and secondary sources that the founding fathers of the Republic projected a western style, French type nation state. Furthermore, these ruling elites believed in the importance of being a nation state to 'survive' in the global system. This project required them to deny the existence of non-Turkish Muslim minorities, with particular reference to the Kurds, and create a Turkish Republic. For this reason, the Kurdish identity was constructed as an existential threat, in other words securitised, and extraordinary measures, such as military raids and dislocation, were taken against any Kurdish political claims. Not only Kurds living in Turkey, but also any Kurdish political move in any part of the world has been conceived as a threat to the unity of the Republic, out of fear that the emergence of a Kurdistan in any part of the region would have a spillover effect on the Kurds in Turkey. This perception persisted until the beginning of the 21st century.

Chapter 3 focused on the 2003 invasion of Iraq and its aftermath. It covered the period 2003-2006. It looked at diplomatic cables leaked via *Wikileaks*. This era witnessed the revival of traditional state concerns regarding the possibility of a "Kurdistan." The chapter also uncovered Kurdish concerns regarding Turkey. It concluded that the current incumbents until very recently were reacting in line with the traditional concerns.

Chapter 4 focused on the 2007-2013 era. It identified a shift in Turkey's discourse towards the Kurds in general and Iraqi Kurds in particular. It argued that Turkey has been normalising a Kurdish polity within the borders of Iraq, a significant shift from the traditional approach. The chapter selected some dislocatory events occurring in the period 2008-2013 and analysed them chronologically, as moves towards normalisation. It particularly looked at diplomatic exchanges, official statements and visits. It also examined the image generated from these moves, which demonstrate the extent of foreign policy change (see figures 4, 5, 6). Going through these dislocatory moves identified two main drives behind Turkey-KRG relations. The first one is the economy, Turkey's increasing visibility in Kurdish markets. The second is "US withdrawal and Western energy security."

In part III, which consists of chapters 5, 6 and 7, the thesis focused on the current drives of Turkey-KRG relations identified in the previous chapter.

Chapter 5 addressed regional and internal dimensions. The existing literature points to the burgeoning Turkish economy and increasing energy needs as a particular motive behind the emerging strategic partnership between Turkey and the KRG. However, this research identifies some more motives/dislocatory moves affecting Turkey-KRG relations in the given period of the study. These identified dislocatory moves are the re-emergence of PKK attacks after 2004; the burgeoning Turkish economy and its increasing need for energy and market; the rivalry between the KDP and the PKK; the escalating tension between Erbil and

Baghdad. The thesis, without denying their impact, finds these regional and internal moves inadequate to motivate Turkey-KRG rapprochement. Furthermore, it points to a wider image/picture, in which these regional developments have taken place.

Chapter 6 discussed the shift in geographies of production and consumption. It argued that this shift constitutes faultlines at global level. A new block of powerhouses has been emerging and they are not content with the existing system (Kupchan, 2012; Zakaria, 2008). Oil is the most traded commodity in the world and this makes the dollar the reserve currency in the global political economy. Within this context, the main interest of the US is to maintain the system in which the dollar is the reserve currency (Gökay, 2006; 2005; Engdhal, 2004:90). However, it appears that the emerging economies are not content with this. The recent attempt to establish BRICS Development Bank as alternative to the IMF and World Bank might be a significant indicator of this tendency. There is an emerging literature about the discontent of the emerging political economies with the system (Kupchan, 2012; Zakaria, 2008; Fouskas and Gökay, 2012; Ikenbery, 2005; Bacık, 2013). The research does not claim or aim to investigate whether or not China or any other emerging block poses a real threat to US interests. However, it attempts to analyse the impact of this possibility, a revisionist China, on US policy towards the energy regions and transportation routes. In other words, it claims that the possibility of a revisionist China or a block headed by China impacts on US foreign policy in the oil-rich Middle

East.⁸⁶Recent US policies towards the Pacific are shown as evidence of this anxiety (Financial Times, 2014). The chapter argued that in the second decade of the 21st century this anxiety has been shaping/driving not only US Pacific policy, but also its policy regarding energy resources and transportation routes. In a nutshell, the US is readjusting its “traditional” policy of controlling resources and routes, that is doctrines of the Carter era (Engdhal, 2010).

The possible emergence of a revisionist China has put US interests in the Pacific at risk. For this reason US decision-makers decided to deploy the majority of their military, especially their naval force, in the Pacific. This meant US withdrawal from Iraq for financial reasons in 2011. The global shift in the Middle East has been the 2011 withdrawal of the US military from the Iraq, to deploy in the Pacific, where it shifted 60% of its naval power. It has been one of the main factors at global level that brought Turkey and the KRG together, leading to a strategic partnership.

It is also possible to observe this discontent through the energy policy of these emerging powers. Shifts in global political economy have compelled existing and emerging powerhouses to re-adjust their policies towards energy producing and transporting geographies and actors. This has created new faultlines and equilibriums in sub-regions and in oil-rich Middle East. The emerging rivalry between China and European countries over oil and gas, discernible during the

⁸⁶ The impact of a rival, revisionist China is seen in recent US policy in the Pacific.

Ukraine crisis, led European countries to seek alternative resources and routes in the Middle East. This has also facilitated the emergence of an Ankara-Erbil line. The thesis does not deny the impact of regional and internal moves on the emerging partnership. However, it sees these regional and internal moves correlated with and results of the shift in global political economies.

Within this global picture, chapter 7 argued, Turkey has again been emerging with its geopolitics and Kurdistan with its emerging rich ‘sweet’ oil reserves. Both actors have formed a new equilibrium/strategic partnership in compliance with the interests of the existing system. An Ankara-Baghdad line would serve the sustainability of the existing system, however the regional developments made maintenance of this line impossible and led to the emergence of an Ankara-Erbil line, which relies on the intersection of regional and global motives.

Final note

Since I started my academic venture at Keele University in 2010 and as I witnessed developments in relations between Turkey and the KRG, I thought there was an “identity” change in Turkish domestic politics and the shift in its foreign policy was reflection of this ‘new’ identity. Therefore I thought Turkey’s engagement with the KRG would be a good case to examine this identity change. However, after completing its inquiry, this research identifies that there is a change in Turkey’s policy towards the KRG, but it finds the shift in global political economy more significant than any identity change. This research

identifies the changing global context in a Waltzian sense (Waltz, 2000) as the main motive behind Turkey's policy change towards the KRG.

Concordantly the thesis, although indirectly, argues that Turkish foreign policy still conforms with and is guided by Western/NATO interests. The growing Turkish economy and the increasing oil consumption have been inciting Turkey, offering a "carrot", to execute its role properly. In other words, Turkey has been benefiting from this partnership as well. However, having ignored or overlooked global motives in the existing literature, this benefit has been seen as the main motive behind the improving Turkey-KRG relationship. Therefore, this thesis argues that although this account, focusing on regional motives only, explains the rapprochement to some extent, it falls short of addressing the global picture which produced this strategic partnership.

For Further Research; Global Developments in 2014

Thanks to its engagement with Kurdistan, Turkey's deep-seated fear of "Kurdistan" seems to be assuaged. It is now acceptable to use the word, even for Turkish officials. There has been a policy change in the language. Iraqi Kurds do not like the term 'northern Iraq' and their regional strategic partner, Turkey, does not want to upset them, for the sake of their energy partnership.

This research identified a shift in geographies of production and consumption. New powerhouses have been emerging and they see the existing system,

established by the global north in the 20th century, working against their interests. Therefore, they need to re-organise the existing system. This has led to a new type of proxy war across the world. The crises in Ukraine, Syria, and Iraq, key strategic countries in energy politics, indicate this global competition.

Recent Sanctions and Emerging Line: Russia and China

Following the Russian invasion of Crimea the West imposed sanctions on Russia. However, these sanctions damaged the Western, particularly EU economy, rather than the Russian.

The sanctions pushed Russia to the emerging clients in the East. A few weeks after the imposition of sanctions, Russia and China struck a 30-year energy deal worth \$400 billion, according to which Russia's national energy company Gazprom would deliver Russian gas to China for 30 years, with an annual 38 billion cubic meters (Anishchuk, 2014). This is a good example of how Chinese oil/energy diplomacy works.

This agreement means that the major energy/gas supplier to the region would divert some of its resources to a new client, China. It is very clear that this would have a huge impact on EU countries.

According to the IEA, the EU consumes around 16.774 billion cubic meters of gas and imports around 90% of it (14.314 billion in 2012). Furthermore, 30% of this amount is being supplied by Gazprom. The recent Ukraine crisis, and China's approach to Russia in the aftermath of the crisis, perhaps made it clear

that EU countries would need to find some alternative routes urgently, to have leverage over Russia as client of its oil and gas. EU countries might have realised that, to secure their energy, they must look not only for alternative routes, but also for alternative sources. The recent step to buy Kurdish oil through Turkey, despite the opposition of both Baghdad and America, is a good sign of this.

In conclusion, it is clear that competition over energy sources is not only between the US and China, but also between China and the EU. Especially over natural gas sources. The recent rapprochement and agreement between China and Russia pushed EU countries to seek “alternative” ways to diversify their energy supplies. These developments would increase the value of Middle Eastern, Iraqi, and particularly Kurdish resources for the EU and consequently the role of Turkey as energy corridor, allowing the passage of Kurdish oil and gas alongside Azeri gas to the EU.

There seems to be a “new” Cold War among the global powers on energy in the Middle East. In this War Iraq is the battleground, with its huge reserves, 4th or 3th largest in the world. Iraq is turning into Cold War’s Germany; we may call this the ‘Berlinisation’ of Iraq. While Kurdistan is getting closer to the West, the rest is getting away. Western oil companies are consolidating in Kurdistan, while Chinese companies are gradually replacing them in Baghdad. In 2012 a number of Western companies, such as Exxon Mobile and Chevron, struck deals with the Kurdish Government and ended their business with the rest of Iraq.

Turkey has a key location in the global energy map and the importance of its location is growing. The US Energy Information Administration refers to Turkey “both as a regional energy transit hub and as growing consumer.” In parallel with its booming economy, its energy demands are also increasing.

It is clear that this rapprochement between Turkey and the KRG, alongside some regional and domestic factors, has been guided by Western interests since the Gulf War. The reason why the US is a bit suspicious of the pipeline project seems to be about the rest of the resources in Iraq, 9 million barrels of oil per day, and gas. This is very clear in Ashti Hawrami’s response to Badevi’s question:

ZB: It is the opinion of American Administration, Exxon Mobile, this kind of thing. These are American companies you can’t just dismiss it... But it comes with a health warning ... what I am saying is your perspective is not one that is shared. It is not shared by the government in Baghdad, that you have the right to do what you were doing, striking these contracts with these companies, also, a big support of Iraq, like the United States state department...

AH: what they say publicly is different from what we hear behind the scenes...

Turkey's Red Lines Turned Into Green

The year 2014, although not included in the present study, has witnessed crucial developments with respect to Turkey-KRG relations. Nearly all 'red lines' regarding the developments in Iraqi Kurdistan were 'violated.' Kirkuk was guarded by Kurdish *peshmergas* against ISIS attacks and annexed. Iraqi flags were removed and the Kurdish flag was flown in Kurdish controlled cities, including Kirkuk. Over these developments there was no significant reaction or threats from Turkey. With respect to these developments, deputy chair of the governing AKP Hüseyin Çelik told Kurdish website *Rudaw*, "The Kurds of Iraq can decide for themselves the name and type of the entity they are living in" (Rudaw, 2014). This meant that Turkey's traditional 'red lines' regarding the Kurds in Iraq turned into green. Turkey has dreamed of an authority, friend with Turkey, controlling resources and providing security to the two existing pipelines. Western powers and active members of the global energy market, oil giants, supported Turkey. **This context incited Turkey to abandon its traditional red lines and give the green light to the existence of a Kurdistan in Iraq, including the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.**

All in all, it might be said that it was the intersection of global western interests and Turkey's regional interests that enabled Turkey and the KRG to develop such a strategic partnership, not an identity change.

To show the global basis of future relations, figure 27 would need to be updated:

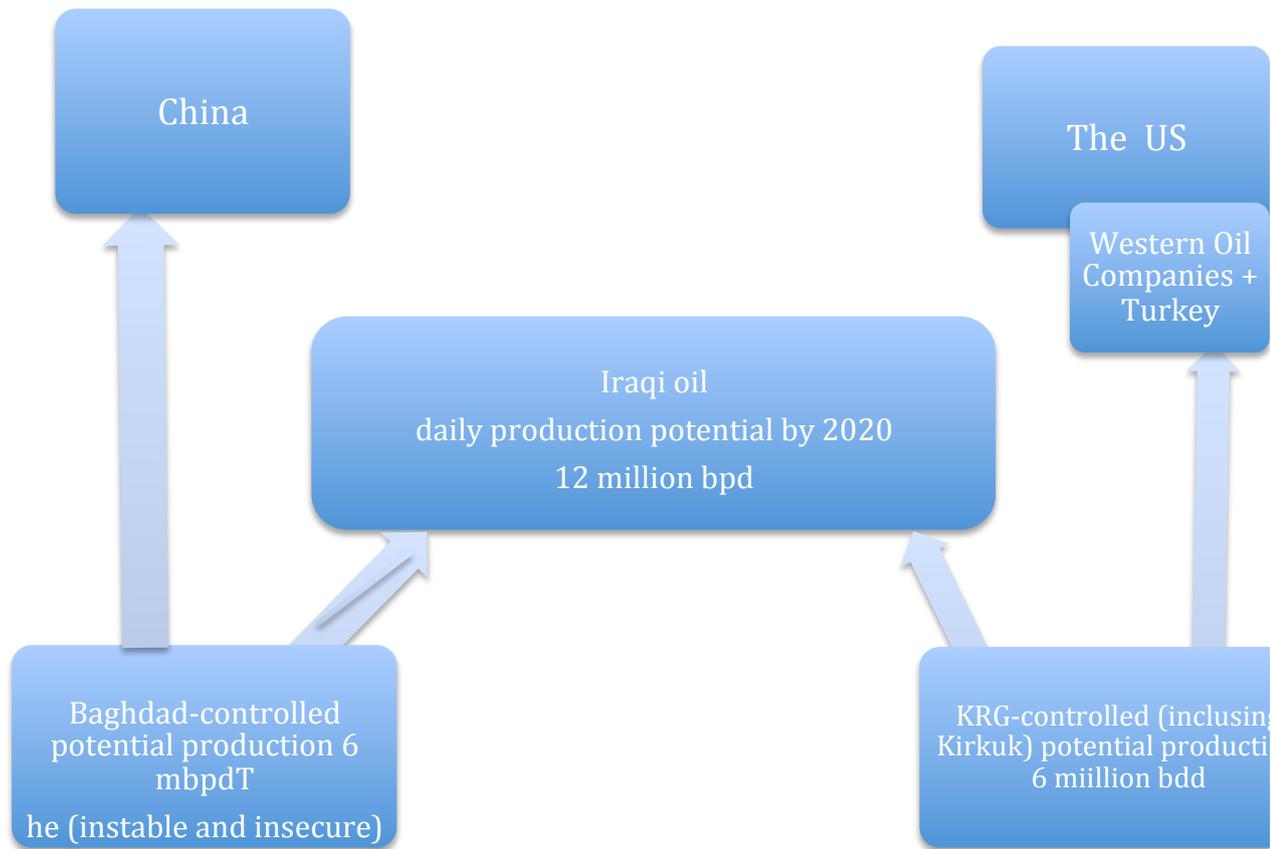


Figure 27. Regional developments and shifting calculations of Iraqi and Kurdistan's oil respectively

The crisis in Ukraine, the Russian invasion of Crimea and the energy deal between China and Russia made it clear to the West that Turkey, because of its geographic/strategic location, was the natural part of Western energy security (see figure 23). Thus, the West promoted directly or indirectly Turkey's proactive policy to engage with regional actors to export energy resources from the region to the West. For example, the disputed oil produced by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was bought by France and Germany (Reuters, 2014).

As a final thought, I was expecting Turkey's support to Iraqi Kurds in their bid for independence, but not in such a short time. Support came early because of some unpredicted developments in the region. The Turkish government was almost certain that the Assad regime in Syria would be gone in a very short time. In the words of Davutoğlu, "in a week." However, things did not go as Turkey predicted. Within this context the emergence of *ISIL*⁸⁷ in the region led Turkey to support the Kurds in Iraq, under the leadership of Barzani. Deputy chair of the ruling AKP Hüseyin Çelik's statement to the Financial Times indicated this new reality. The emergence of a new Kurdish actor with close relations to the PKK in the north of Syria, following the Syrian crisis, concerned Turkey. Assad stayed in power more than Turkey predicted and the decreasing influence of Turkey over groups in the region pushed Turkey to support or stay silent to the proactive role Barzani had been playing.

During a press conference Hüseyin Çelik, senior member of the AKP and special advisor to the Prime Minister, told reporters, "the Kurds and Turkmen of Iraq are our relatives and now that they are facing difficulties we will not stay silent." Before only Turkmen were relatives, but now Iraqi Kurds are also recognised as relatives. Actually, Iraqi Kurds are not only relatives, but also owners of a political entity neighbour to Turkey. Çelik, during the same press conference, called Iraqi Kurds 'strategic neighbours.'

⁸⁷According to some claims in the beginning Turkey put its support behind ISIS against Assad's regime. However, in due course it has seen its uncontrollability and the threat it poses in the region.

As a strategic neighbor the stability and security of the Kurdistan Region is important to Turkey and to keep that stability Turkey will do whatever falls on its shoulders... (Rudaw, 7 August 2014).

Turkey has gone even further and has tried to put pressure on the US to allow Kurds to sell their oil to customers in the West independently of Baghdad (Daniel & Raval, 2014). In terms of its foreign policy, Turkey now resembles the US, with its emphasis, focus and reliance on oil.

The recent rise of ISIL and the more general Arab turmoil in the Middle East, has allowed not only the US and coalition powers, but also Turkey to play its part in re-designing the Middle East.

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