

Central Intelligence Agency

DOC NO EUR M 87-20077

OIR 3

P & PD 1



Washington, D.C. 20505

FILE

Directorate of Intelligence

18 May 1987

Turkey-US: Old Issues, New Strains

Summary

Recent developments in US-Turkish relations have the potential to create what could be the most serious row in US-Turkish relations in years. These include Congressional consideration of an Armenian Genocide Resolution, restrictions on Turkish use of US-supplied arms on Cyprus, and cuts in US aid to Turkey. To the Turks, these Congressional actions underscore what they see as the vagaries of the US political system, which makes it impossible for the Executive Branch to fulfill all of its commitments. We do not believe, however, that this criticism will lead Turkey's leaders to curtail US-Turkish defense cooperation significantly. Thus far, Ankara's dissatisfaction has been limited to less costly diplomatic displays -- recalling the Turkish ambassador and postponing President Evren's visit -- and to the suspension of the side letters accompanying the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA), renewed in March. If the offending legislation is passed without being watered down, however, Ankara may respond by refusing to permit the modest increase in US military operations called for in the new DECA and may even cut US military operations somewhat. More ominously in the long term, however, the latest row is likely to strengthen Turkish forces that favor a loosening of ties to the West in general and the US in particular. [redacted]

25X1

-----

This memorandum, prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis, updates and expands an article that appeared in the EURA Review on 8 May 1987.. Questions and comments can be directed to [redacted] Chief, West European Division [redacted]

25X1

25X1

EUR M87-20077

25X1

25X1

## The Issues

This new tension in bilateral relations has been caused primarily by three old bones of contention that have re-emerged in the last few months:

- o The Armenian Genocide Resolution. A bill commemorating the death of hundreds of thousands of Armenians during and immediately after World War I has made its almost-annual appearance in Congress, proposing 24 April as a day of memory to honor those who died at Ottoman hands during the forced migration from their homeland after an unsuccessful attempt to establish an Armenian Republic. This is perhaps the most emotional and least substantive of the current disputes. Turkish spokesmen claim that the atrocity is yet to be proven, which makes it a matter for historians, and that today's Republic should not be held accountable for events that occurred before its time. In addition, Turkish officials claim that passage of the resolution would only encourage Armenian terrorism against Turkish diplomats abroad and alienate the Turkish public.
- o Amendments by the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees. These bills--prompted by the recent augmentation and modernization of the Turkish tank force on Cyprus--prohibit the use of US-supplied arms on the island for offensive purposes. Particularly galling to the Turks is the Senate version, which cites only the Turks by name, a point they believe underscores the distorted view US legislators have of the Cypriot problem. Both bills, however, touch a raw nerve in Turkey by linking US aid to events on Cyprus, apparently ignoring Turkey's legal rationale for being there and the country's role in defending Western interests in NATO. Many in Turkey even equate these amendments with a new arms embargo. Ankara also fears that one-sided restrictions on the use of US equipment could lead to additional prohibitions in the future.
- o Foreign Aid Cuts and the 7-10 Ratio. The Turks claim that the Senate and House Foreign Affairs Committee cuts in foreign aid for Turkey--to meet the

traditional 7-10 ratio in assistance to Greece and Turkey, respectively--contravene assurances made by the administration when the DECA was renewed that the US Government would exert its "best efforts" to acquire over \$900 million in aid for the modernization of Turkey's armed forces. The Turks also resent having their assistance tied to Greece's.

25X1

While most of these complaints sound familiar, the confluence and timing of the three issues has created a more serious rift. In the first place, Turkish expectations are higher this year following renewal of the DECA. Moreover, Turks are feeling particularly aggrieved because they believe they have been more forthcoming than the Greek side toward UN negotiation efforts on Cyprus. Another complicating factor is that these Congressional developments have emerged as the Turks have become even more sensitive than usual to Western perceptions of their country and its government. On 14 April, Turkey formally applied for membership in the European Community, a move that is likely to revive West European scrutiny of Ankara's human rights record and the country's rollercoaster-like experience with parliamentary democracy. At the same time, Turkey has been competing with its archrival Greece in the courts of Western opinion to assign blame for the latest flareup in the Aegean.

25X1

### Turkish Reactions

Initially, Turkish criticism was limited to the press and opposition parties. Although the press directed most of its criticism at the United States, much of the opposition's attack was aimed at the government of Prime Minister Turgut Ozal. Opposition spokesmen were quick to point out, for example, that they had criticized the government's performance in the negotiations for the DECA's renewal from the start for not safeguarding Turkish needs and interests sufficiently. Party leaders will probably play this theme repeatedly in coming months, and they are not likely to be deterred by the government's rejection of their demand for a parliamentary debate on the DECA. Some of the criticism has been extreme, either echoing the call of Social Democratic Populist Party leader Erdal Inonu for Turkey to withdraw from NATO or advocating the closure of Turkish bases to US forces. Even the moderate critics have suggested restricting US use of the bases or renegotiating the DECA

should the US Congress pass the resolutions now before it.

25X1

After hesitating briefly, the Ozal government joined the fray. Turkish spokesmen, including the Prime Minister, have vehemently criticized the Congressional measures in their discussions with US officials, drawing on well-worn arguments about Congress's failure to appreciate Turkey's contributions to Western security. Ozal also decided against forwarding the side letters accompanying the DECA to the cabinet for ratification--although the impact this will have on the agreement's legal standing remains an open question. Foreign Minister Halefoglu has been more explicit, threatening to delay fulfillment of the obligations cited in the agreement until 1990, when it is due for renewal. In addition, the Prime Minister has written to American firms involved in joint defense projects, such as General Dynamics, saying that Turkey is having second thoughts regarding the utility of such projects.

25X1

A variety of factors are probably motivating the Ozal government. The government may be seeking to boost popular support for its policies by taking action now in order to deflect criticism of itself--and the US--when next year's national election campaign begins in earnest. At the same time, the government clearly sees public indignation as a handy tool for use in working a better deal with Washington on the aid package, and for gaining a more sympathetic ear on future aid requests. Ozal doubtless surmises that his and the public's response will help--or prod--the administration in its discussions with Congress, particularly over aid. The decision to go public, however, has added a new variable in the US-Turkish equation, and the impact of public opinion will have to be assessed in this and succeeding disputes as Turkey democratizes further and its politics become more freewheeling. For his part, Ozal may find that by raising popular expectations he has painted himself into the proverbial corner.

25X1

#### Outlook

Turkey's response will depend mainly on the ultimate fate of the offending legislation -- particularly the Armenian Resolution and the one-sided reference to Turkey in the Senate version of the amendment restricting use of US arms -- and how actively the Executive Branch is perceived

to have weighed in on Turkey's behalf. One opinion [redacted] which may be partly designed to influence US thinking on these issues, suggests Ankara will react vigorously if the legislation becomes law.

25X1  
25X1

[redacted]

25X1

More recent reporting from Ankara, as well as government statements, however, suggest a more measured approach. US diplomats believe that at present the Ozal government has adopted a more cautious strategy pending developments in Washington.

[redacted]

25X1

At this point, it is unclear what effect the military will have on the government's thinking

[redacted]

25X1

One high-level officer told a US official recently that the military supports the decision to defer ratification of the side letters.

[redacted]

25X1

US diplomats report, however, that they have not encountered any moves by the Turkish military to restrict ongoing projects, including those cited in the DECA side letters.

[redacted]

[redacted]

25X1  
25X1

In view of the benefits the Turks derive from NATO membership and the US presence, we believe it safe to discount the more drastic moves, such as suspension of US activities at bases in Turkey. The current dispute simply

[redacted]

25X1

does not match the crisis engendered by the US arms embargo following the 1974 Cyprus conflict, when the Demirel government took such a step. And Ankara almost certainly will agree to the joint defense production projects currently under discussion with US firms for similar reasons --they will bring sorely needed assistance to the Turkish economy. Ozal is doubtless hoping, however, that these firms will at least help argue his country's case in Washington. [redacted]

25X1

The Turks still have several, less drastic alternatives, which give Ankara the option of responding on a graduated level. They have already postponed President Evren's trip and recalled their ambassador for consultations. Other, more costly, alternatives involve the DECA. Some Turkish politicians have spoken of revoking it. SDPP leaders have announced that any government they join--not an immediate prospect, admittedly--will have to do just that. The Ozal government is unlikely to go that far, however, and Defense Minister Yavusturk has stated publicly that the DECA will not be cancelled. But the decision to halt ratification of the side letters and the hint at suspension of the agreement suggest Ankara might be willing to demand its renegotiation on the grounds that the US failed to live up to commitments made in the letters accompanying the agreement. This would offer Ankara the opportunity of sending a clear signal without committing itself to ending military cooperation. [redacted]

25X1  
25X1

If Ankara eventually feels compelled to act, the Turks could proceed with some modest restrictions on US military activity--with or without suspension of the DECA. The Turks, for example, could place limits on US operations in the country or the US use of Turkish facilities. Ankara could also rescind agreements made on improving US military operations in the letters accompanying the DECA. [redacted]

25X1

If Congress fails to pass the bills under discussion or makes them sufficiently anodyne by removing offending references to Turkey, the retaliatory mood in Ankara will pass and the dispute will fade. Yet, even if the Ozal government does not take steps against the DECA or military cooperation with the US, the controversy will reinforce the Turkish belief that US commitments cannot be taken at face value, given the persistent divisions in Washington over these issues. While this does not mean that the Turks will turn their backs on the West or the US alliance, the

[redacted]  
experience may tarnish the image of the US as a friend of  
Turkey and those Turkish leaders who promote that image. [redacted]  
[redacted]

25X1  
25X1

SUBJECT: Turkey-US: Old Issues, New Strains

Distribution:

External

- 1 - Bruce Rickerson, State
- 1 - Barry Lowenkron, State
- 1 - Rusty Ingram, State
- 1 - Mark Lissfelt, State
- 1 - Col. Mike McNamara, Defense
- 1 - John Kachold, Defense
- 1 - Fritz Ermarth, NSC
- 1 - Peter Sommer, NSC

Internal

- 1 - DCI-DDCI Executive Staff
- 1 - DDI
- 1 - NIC/AG
- 4 - CPAS/IMC/CB
- 1 - MPS/PES
- 1 - D/EURA
- 1 - DD/EURA
- 1 - C/EURA/WE
- 1 - DC/EURA/WE
- 2 - EURA Production Staff
- 1 - EURA/WE Production File
- 1 - EURA/WE Branch Production File
- 1 - NIO/Econ
- 1 - NIO/WE