

**“The Future of Democracy in the Black Sea Area”**  
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today and share my views on the progress the countries of the Black Sea have made in their democratic reform process and on the impediments to further reform these countries face. I will also present some suggestions on how the United States can continue to advance its own security interests in this strategic region.

I will not discuss developments in all the countries of this region, which includes the three South Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), Moldova, Ukraine, new NATO allies Bulgaria and Romania, and the two big powers, Turkey and Russia. I will concentrate on four principal issues:

- I. The recent revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. Georgia’s November 2003 Rose Revolution and Ukraine’s 2004 Orange Revolution have inspired people and countries from throughout the region (especially Moldova) and around the globe.
- II. Russian energy monopoly over the European and Eurasian countries. This is one of the main impediments to the future success and prosperity of Georgia and Ukraine, as well as to the democratic future of the Black Sea region as a whole.
- III. The dangerous trend in Armenia and especially Azerbaijan. If Azerbaijan does not hold democratic parliamentary elections in the fall of 2005, Islamist forces may gain ground. Moreover, if there is no solution to the Karabakh issue over the next several years, Armenia and Azerbaijan may once again go to war.
- IV. The deterioration in the US-Turkey bilateral relationship. Turkish mistrust of US long-term objectives in the Black Sea region dramatically hinders American initiatives in this area.

## **I. Georgia: Inspiration for Change**

Mr. Chairman, I was an election observer during the November 2003 parliamentary elections in Georgia and saw firsthand how tens of thousands of people refused to accept the theft of their votes and the silencing of their voices. More than anything, the Georgian people no longer wanted to live in a “failing state”; they feared that if the post-Communist regime stayed in office any longer, the damage would be such that they would forever lose the prospect of reuniting with Europe, where they believed they belonged.

The Rose Revolution was not a movement led or even inspired by the United States; it was a domestic uprising against a corrupt and weak regime that was rotting internally and could not deliver on any promises to restore stability and economic growth and bring Georgia closer to the transatlantic community. Its internal weakness was exploited by Russian companies as they took over strategic assets, tying the country’s economy and future directly to Moscow—just as they had previously done in Belarus and Armenia.

Yet, over the course of a decade, American assistance was essential, especially to preparing a cadre of reformers, both inside and outside government. Current president Mikheil Saakashvili received training and strong support for his overarching reforms in the judicial sector when he was minister of justice. Former prime minister and parliamentary speaker Zurab Zhvania, who recently died in a tragic accident, similarly benefited from his close work with the American assistance community. These are just some of the many Georgians who, over this period, developed personal relations with American leaders, while discovering that both sides shared the same values and principles. Based on these experiences, these Georgians took the initiative to move their country in a positive direction, both while in government and in the opposition. Following this example, then, I strongly urge that the United States assist reformers *within* governments, not just those in NGOs or in opposition parties.

The Georgian revolutionaries were indeed committed to the ideal of a democratic revolution, and wanted to share it with their country’s strategic partner, Ukraine. Soon after the “Rose Revolution” of November 2003, even before he was inaugurated as president, Saakashvili made Kyiv his first foreign destination in January 2004. In fluent Ukrainian, Saakashvili confidently predicted that Ukraine would become democratic over the next year, while pledging his support for his friend, Viktor Yushchenko. While few in the West (or in Russia) noticed, over the next year Georgians and Ukrainians, in government as well as in civil society, worked together to ensure Ukraine’s democratic triumph. While many in the West (and in Russia) looked down on the state of Ukrainian civil society, Georgians knew that they had helped inspire this European nation and reawaken its quest to reclaim its place in the West on the basis of the same shared values and principles. When the Georgian president, prime minister, and other officials met with their American counterparts over that period, they urged US support for Ukraine’s democratic voices. They knew that if Georgia remained the sole island of democratic

change in the Black Sea region, it would be very tough to succeed, especially given the Russian pressure.

Now Saakashvili and Yushchenko want to support others who want to move in a pro-democratic direction by aggregating their voices to obtain more attention from the EU and the US. This is precisely what happened with the Moldovan parliamentary elections on Sunday, March 6. Both Saakashvili and Yushchenko met with President Voronin just ahead of the elections in order to provide support for a leader who seeks to reintegrate Moldova into Europe. It is no coincidence that Saakashvili and Voronin were the only presidents of the former Soviet countries who did not accept the falsified second-round election results that declared former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych as the winner of the Ukrainian elections in November. Nor is it surprising that they in turn were also the first to congratulate Yushchenko for his eventual victory.

But the situation in Moldova is complicated. While Voronin is head of the Communist Party of Moldova, he has distanced Moldova from Moscow in recent years in pursuit of Moldova's European vocation. His underlying goal may have been to preempt any democratic revolution by playing Moldova's European card. In contrast to Georgia and Ukraine, Moldova is thus pursuing an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary reform process. But the country's progress towards democracy is no less real.

As Saakashvili stated, Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova now together believe that "we can complete democratization's third wave in Eastern Europe".<sup>1</sup> Completing this wave means that each country has committed to fighting crime, corruption, and the influence of clans that has led these countries to internal weakness and external vulnerability; it means that each country must consolidate democratic gains and move closer to the Euro-Atlantic institutions; and it means that each country needs the continued support of the European Union and the United States to succeed.

The sustainability of the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions is essential for others in the Black Sea region to follow a reformist trend, whether revolutionary or evolutionary. For this sustainability, Georgia and Ukraine have submitted their EU action plans—plans that need to be seriously considered, as the prospect of eventual EU membership will provide the necessary incentive for both countries to undertake tough but necessary reforms. The US needs to support, and to urge its European allies to support, both Georgia and Ukraine in their EU process as well as in their implementation of the NATO Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAP), which pave the way for their eventual alliance membership.

Second, the US needs to work closely with its European allies to urge the resolution of the separatist conflicts in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as the Moldovan region of Transnistria. It is encouraging to see Ukraine and Romania cooperating on the issue of Transnistria, and to see the recently-founded New Group of Friends of Georgia (consisting of Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Socor, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, "The Moldovan Front: Next Test for Post-Soviet Democratization." March 4-6, 2005.

Lithuania) taking the lead in urging Brussels and Washington to pay attention to these issues. In fact, these former Soviet-bloc states that have now joined the EU (Bulgaria and Romania are expected to join in 2007) and NATO have become the most visionary and constructive of America's European allies. They are also helping the Europeans to better understand Russia and are urging the resolution of these frozen conflicts, without which further democratic reforms are difficult, to say the least. As long as these conflicts remain, they will be sources of potential instability and of potential Russian pressure.

Senator Richard Lugar's resolution on Russian troop withdrawal from Georgia and Moldova, urging it to implement the 1999 OSCE agreement to withdraw its troops from these two countries, is extremely timely and very important as the existence of the Russian military forces have become a hindrance to peace. One of the four Russian bases in Georgia has been vacated, the status of the second is in dispute, and talks are ongoing regarding the remaining two. Yet after six years, Russian troops still remain in both countries, and discussions on troop withdrawal are often held in parallel with other political concessions.

The US also needs to at the high levels engage the EU and NATO to ensure a new Border Monitoring Mission (BMO) in Georgia to replace the OSCE mission, which, following the Russian veto, will terminate in May. The BMO has been critical to the effort to obtain credible information on Georgia's borders with the Russian republics of Chechnya, Daghestan and Ingushetia. Moreover, in the past, it was thanks to these monitors that the West found out that Russian planes had bombed Georgian territory. The US needs to help find a mechanism to replace the BMO; there are several European countries that are willing to step up to the task, but none wants to take the lead for fear of drawing Russia's wrath.

Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova are also eager to revive the GUUAM organization, consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova, an effort for which they need US political support. As GUUAM is perceived in Moscow to be an alliance against Russian interests, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan at this point are not interested in reviving it in a political form; they instead want to increase cooperation in the economic sphere, especially regarding east-west transportation corridors. While Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova may prefer to include security and democratization issues in GUUAM, in order to avoid a breakup of the organization and to instead utilize it as much as possible, an initial focus can be energy—an area in which the United States can be particularly helpful.

## **II. Russian Energy Monopoly**

Mr. Chairman, a very important yet often ignored hindrance to further reform in Georgia, Ukraine, and the Black Sea region is the effects of the Russian energy monopoly in Europe and Eurasia. The West ignored the clear intentions of Anatoly Chubais, head of Russia's RAO UES, who declared in September 2003 that "Russian business ought to be allowed to expand...with the aim of creating a liberal empire" in the former Soviet

sphere. In addition to such an expansion of Russian energy monopolies, over the last year Russia's largest oil company Yukos has been dismantled and through Rosneft its assets consolidated under Kremlin control. When Rosneft merges with Gazprom, Putin will be in direct control of the world's largest integrated oil and gas company.

Putin's policies indicate a desire to strengthen Russia's already strong position in the Eurasian and European energy markets. If Russian monopoly power increases across the Eurasian region, then countries will have difficulty resisting Russian political and economic pressure. Similarly, if Russian market power within the European gas sector increases, then the Europeans will be even less willing than they are now to lean on Russia when Moscow's policies toward the Eurasian countries undermine the sovereignty and independence of these states.

Armenia and Belarus are already facing this problem of Russian energy leverage. Post-revolution Ukraine and Georgia, as well as the Central Asian and even the Baltic countries, are beginning to grasp the need to quickly come up with comprehensive energy security plans.

While many of these countries want to ensure their energy security by diversifying their sources away from Russia, without strong political support from both the US and the EU, they will not be able to resist the Russian pressure. Moreover, those individuals and corporations who currently benefit from non-transparent energy deals with the Russian firms currently have no incentive to give up their power, which would make Western support for democratic governance even more important.

The US needs to be aware that Gazprom wants to control the gas markets of Georgia, Turkey, and Ukraine to form a strategic ring around the Black Sea, which would then be under permanent Russian energy control. Georgia is the gateway through which Caspian gas will be able to enter to Turkey and then be transported onwards to the European markets. However, it is also the weakest link in this Black Sea chain. The difficult economic conditions prevailing in Georgia have given Gazprom a great opening to try and acquire the title to the Georgian gas pipelines, thus bolstering its monopoly power. If Tbilisi unintentionally helps Gazprom in this effort, then Georgia will only be enhancing the company's long-term leverage over European gas consumers, and thus discouraging Europeans from taking a firmer line with Russia on political issues, such as the frozen conflicts mentioned earlier.

The US should therefore include Eurasian energy strategy in its transatlantic dialogue. The US helped Georgia and Azerbaijan with their energy diversification by supporting the East-West energy corridor, by which Azerbaijani oil and gas will soon be transported via Georgia and Turkey to world markets, thus breaking up the Russian monopoly. Now, the US ought to further extend the East-West corridor from Central Asia to Europe, a corridor with the Black Sea region at its heart.

While gas is more directly relevant to strategic considerations in the South Caucasus and European countries, the situation is similar in the oil sector. Ukraine needs the most help

in this area; it had constructed the Odesa-Brody oil pipeline to transport Caspian oil to European markets; yet, under Russian pressure, the Kuchma government last year agreed to its reversal so that Russian oil could be transported to the Black Sea. While commercial reasons were presented as justification for the reversal, it is more likely that it was done in consideration for Russian political support to the Yanukovych presidential campaign. This is apparent by the fact that, over the past several months, the Russians have not put enough oil into the line to make it profitable; expectations were that it would supply half the amount it originally pledged for 2005.

The Yushchenko government recently announced—at a joint press briefing of the Ukrainian and Georgian prime ministers—that Odesa-Brody would be reversed back to its original direction. On March 4, the Ukrainian and Polish prime ministers also agreed to the extension of the pipeline to the Polish city of Plock. In this way, Poland will also be able to diversify away from Russian oil. Despite its intentions, Ukraine will be unable to make the reversal happen on its own; it needs American political support, which can help facilitate an intergovernmental agreement between Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Poland that will ensure supplies on one end of the pipeline, and markets on the other end, thus making it commercially viable.

### **III. Armenia and Azerbaijan: Time is on Neither Side**

Mr. Chairman, I have followed developments in Armenia and Azerbaijan closely since 1996 and believe that until the Karabakh issue is resolved it will be very difficult to see real progress in democratic and economic reform. Both countries' politics are totally consumed by this issue and both sides believe time is on their side; as a result, neither one wants to make a concession—which is a dirty word in that part of the world. The main losers are the youth of these countries, who are spending their most productive years waiting.

Azerbaijan is told by the West that it lost Karabakh in the war and needs to give up this piece of land for the sake of peace and prosperity and move on with its EU and NATO integration process. This kind of talk only hardens the nationalists, who believe that with massive oil and gas revenues starting to flow into the budget over the next several years, they can strengthen their military, and take back their land. Given that there are already four UN resolutions supporting Azerbaijani territorial integrity, if they play the oil card well, they may have a chance in getting diplomatic support. Hence, they believe the best strategy for them is to bide their time.

Armenia too believes time is on its side to turn Karabakh's de-facto separation from Azerbaijan to de jure acceptance. They do not think Azerbaijan would risk a war when its oil and gas pipelines may be attacked and its economy devastated. Armenia also can wait, as its economy has grown despite having no trade with two of its neighbors—Azerbaijan and Turkey. While Armenia wants to resume economic relations with Azerbaijan as a best confidence building mechanism, Azerbaijan claims that the refusal to have economic relations is the only peaceful mechanism they have to keep Armenia at the negotiating

table. Azerbaijan's strategic partner Turkey has also closed its borders with Armenia, and will also not open them until the Karabakh issue is resolved.

To change the political and economic conditions on the ground and the calculations of the two sides, the US needs to get engaged at the highest levels. In 2002 Presidents Bush and Putin issued a joint statement on the need to resolve the frozen conflicts of Abkhazia and Karabakh, but no further steps were taken. The Karabakh process has been left to the OSCE Minsk group, which cannot deliver a solution, as the issue requires top level discussions. While it is good to keep the dialogue going between Armenia and Azerbaijan, failure to deliver a solution is leading to massive frustration among the people and hurting the image of the OSCE.

In addition to a committed Bush-Putin discussion, the solution to Karabakh requires democratic progress in both Armenia and Azerbaijan so that the governments have legitimacy in the eyes of their people, which is essential for support for the final agreement. The US therefore needs to encourage the leaders of these two countries to embrace the democratization process as essential to regional security and stability.

I will not spend much time on Armenia, as issues relevant to Armenia are well known here thanks to the work of the strong Armenian diaspora. I will simply mention that the strength of the diaspora cuts both ways, as it also limits US ability to encourage democratic change in this country. The US simply cannot put the same kind of pressure on President Robert Kocharyan as it was able to do with President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine; it is inconceivable to think that Washington would threaten to keep senior Armenian government officials out of the US in case of a falsified elections.

Azerbaijan, unlike Armenia, has fewer friends in the US as it does not have a major diaspora; however, potentially it can be a great strategic partner. Azerbaijan is the only Muslim country with troops in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo. It is a secular democracy with a Shiite majority neighboring Iran. As many Azerbaijanis proudly state, theirs was the first secular democratic republic in the Muslim world. Though short-lived, the 1918 republic included opposition parties in the parliament and allowed women to vote. It is an oil and gas rich country and if it manages to spend its energy wealth wisely, Azerbaijan can become a great example for the rest of the oil-rich Muslim world.

The November parliamentary elections could be a turning point in the U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship. The Bush Administration has made a commitment to pro-democracy forces throughout the region to support their calls for free and fair elections. Many in the opposition and civil society have been inspired and energized by recent events in Georgia and Ukraine and expect the US to deliver on its promises of democracy and freedom. The government, however, is nervous that opposition will receive support from the US and possibly try to have a revolution as well. Given that there is no fundamental difference between President Ilham Aliyev and the leaders of the pro-Western opposition groups, with a correct engagement strategy, the US can help move the country in a positive direction.

At the same time, many people are many benefiting from the current corrupt, clan based system in Azerbaijan and these forces will try their best to avoid free and fair elections in November, which will be a turning point for Azerbaijan. In fact, since Aliyev succeeded his father in the October 2003 presidential elections there has been crackdown on media and opposition activists; this has led many to wonder whether Aliyev is not fully in charge of his government or whether he himself sanctions these policies. The most brutal incident so far occurred last week, when Elmar Huseinov, the editor in chief of the Azerbaijani opposition magazine Monitor was shot dead in front of his home in Baku. Aliyev blamed “internal and external forces” that want “to deliver damage to Azerbaijan’s international image, to discredit it before the parliamentary elections and present the country as an unstable and non-democratic state, where freedom of speech is violated and acts of terrorism are committed”.<sup>2</sup> It is highly unlikely that Aliyev himself was involved in this murder, and it is critical for him to make sure the killers of Huseinov are found and properly punished so that neither his nor his government’s image is further damaged.

Over the next eight months the US needs to both assure Aliyev that Washington does not want his ouster, and at the same time be firm in supporting free and fair elections. As a start, the US, together with the EU, can ask Azerbaijan to allow the operation of at least one independent television station, and to let the opposition hold meetings. In Georgia the so-called Baker Plan, which was delivered by James Baker to his friend Shevardnadze and the leaders of the opposition, provided the framework for the critical November 2003 elections. Such an approach can also work in Azerbaijan

The US should also be concerned about the November elections in Azerbaijan because if the secular parties in and outside the government loose more ground, the Islamists are likely to fill their place. As the leader of the opposition Popular Front Party, Ali Karimli stated in his talk at the Nixon Center on February 15, 2005, with the secular political opposition’s activities restricted, Islamists are getting stronger. As Karimli put it, “on Fridays more than three or four thousand people turn up at services in every mosque, in a country where I cannot gather fifty people together for a meeting!” He also mentioned, and as I have observed in my recent visits, the Islamists are gaining ground because they exploit the Karabakh issue, arguing that even though Azerbaijani territory is invaded and there are four UN resolutions about it, “because we are Muslim, our rights are not respected;” second, the Islamists highlight the “extreme poverty and the huge inequality between the average person and the top one or two percent who own everything;” and third, they take advantage of the fact that “no one seems to care” about democracy in the country.<sup>3</sup> These are all worrisome signs in a country neighboring Iran, which experienced a similar development that brought in the Islamic Republic.

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<sup>2</sup> *Baku Today*, “President Calls for Speedy Investigation into Journalists Murder.” March 3, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> *Nixon Center Program Brief*, “Getting Azerbaijan Right.” February 15, 2005.

#### **IV. Turkey: Growing Mistrust of the US**

After decades of NATO alliance and strategic partnership, Turkish-American relations began deteriorating with the Turkish Parliament's refusal to allow US troops to transit Turkey and into Iraq in March 2003, and deteriorated as the war in Iraq unfolded. There had been ups and downs in the relationship before, but the level of anti-Americanism in Turkey today is unprecedented. A recent BBC survey found that about 82 percent of Turks have a negative view of the Bush administration's policies and consider today's America to be one of the biggest threats in the world.

This Turkish anger is primarily a result of the Iraq war, which many in Turkey opposed. They initially feared their neighbor turning into an ethnic and religious war zone. Turkish concerns have focused on the presence of the several thousand PKK terrorists in Northern Iraq. The US has promised to eliminate the PKK terrorist threat in Iraq, but so far has not made a move. After a brutal civil war with its Kurdish population that lasted a decade and cost over 30,000 lives, Turks are angered with the US for not taking action against a group that already began terrorist operations inside Turkey. They are therefore wondering whether the "global war on terror" is waged only on groups that threaten the US and excludes groups that threaten only US allies.

In addition, Turks fear the Kurds in Iraq may eventually establish an independent state that would also appeal to Turkey's own Kurds living in the border areas; such a development could once again lead to separatism and instability inside Turkey, potentially rekindling civil war and even undermining Turkey's territorial integrity. The perception that the oil-rich city of Kirkuk is gradually coming under Kurdish control and the Turkmen—their ethnic brethren—living in Kirkuk are being discriminated against, further causes suspicion and mistrust towards the US.

Turks now associate Iraq with chaos and damage to their national interests, while the US hails Iraq as a test case for spreading democracy and freedom in the world. This has led many Turks to associate American democracy and reform initiatives in the Middle East with an expansionist policy that will weaken Turkey, but cloaked in the rhetoric of "freedom" and "justice". Fearing further chaos and change in its southern neighborhood, Turkey has even pulled closer to Syria and Iran.

This is part of the context for the Turkish reluctance to support US or European initiatives for democracy in the Black Sea region. Many in Turkey were skeptical of the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions, which they believe were managed by the US. They fear that under the rubric of "democratic alliance," the US is creating an anti-Russian alliance in the Black Sea region, which will lead to instability and undermine Turkey's security in this region. Second, when the US talks about democracy in the Black Sea region, Turkey hears American naval presence. Turkey is strongly opposed to any foreign military presence in the Black Sea, which it fears will undermine the Treaty of Montreaux of 1936, which designated the Turkish Straits as an international waterway but afforded Turkey rights to impose safety regulations. Retaining some jurisdiction over

the Bosphorus and Dardanelles remains one of the highest priorities of Turkish national security policy, as it has since 1453.

US-Turkish tension is aggravated by a lack of dialog. There have been few discussions on the Black Sea region at governmental levels; the first one in several years took place only in the last week of February when Ambassador Halil Akinci, the Turkish Foreign Ministry's Director for Russia, Caucasus and Central Asia visited Washington. In his meetings Akinci stated that Turkish policy in the Black Sea region is based on four pillars: "contributing to the consolidation of state building; supporting political and economic reforms; promoting the Black Sea states' integration with the international community; developing and enhancing bilateral relations on the basis of equality, mutual interest and respect for sovereignty."<sup>4</sup> Given that this Turkish vision and the American vision are at the core complementary, more bilateral discussions need to be held between diplomats, military and the civil society so that the Turks can understand these interest are shared.

At the same time, the US needs to understand a much deeper psychological issue is at play, and this is why Turkey has been moving closer to Russia. The US should not ignore the psychological hang-ups of former empires like Turkey and Russia, which still suffer from the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century views of strategic factors and do not share Bush's vision of advancing democratic change in pursuit of freedom. Turkey and Russia still pine over lost lands and fear being surrounded by a West hostile to their interests. Both oscillate between feelings of insecurity about their waning influence in global politics, and a sense of strategic indispensability in Eurasia. Both have in varying degrees resented growing American presence in the Caucasus and Central Asia, where they had historic, ethnic and religious ties and a sense of entitlement. The last thing they want is to see the US also enter the Black Sea region, which Turkey and Russia feel is their "special zone of influence" where they are the major powers. Ultimately, both are status quo powers in terms of foreign policy who oppose change in the Black Sea region, mainly because in their recent past any change meant losing territory or influence.

What Turkey now needs more than anything is a carefully balanced message from the US that Washington appreciates Ankara's importance and seeks partnership, but that Turkey's strategic importance will not shield it against the consequences of nasty behavior. In the Black Sea region, this means that Turkey needs to hear that Turkish and American interests overlap in terms of shared NATO values. But Turks also need to understand that the unchecked growth of anti-Americanism is not acceptable. Anti-Americanism has grown in many countries since the Iraq war, but the tone and the depth of the anger in Turkey is a result of a number of other factors that have created a perfect storm. In fact, today Turkey's secular military, Islamists, leftists and nationalists—forces that often oppose each other—have united in their common opposition to the US. Why?

Maybe the best example for understanding what is happening inside Turkey is a brief look at the best selling fiction in Turkey today, *The Metal Storm*. While it is fiction, Turkish and American government leaders' real names are used and the context is based

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<sup>4</sup> *Nixon Center Program Brief*, "Turkish View of Russia and Eurasia." February 25, 2005.

on actual events. *The Metal Storm* is about a war the US launches against Turkey in 2007 under the name “Operation Sevres,” which is the much-feared agreement signed at the end of the World War I whereby the Western powers hoped to dismantle the Ottoman Empire. In the book Armenians, Greeks and Kurds are once again portrayed as fifth columns of Turkey who the West can use to destabilize Turkey.

The American operation against Turkey begins when the Turkish military enters northern Iraq after the attacks in Kirkuk on non-Kurds, i.e. Turkmen, have increases significantly. The US does not diplomatically oppose the Turkish move as it is about to attack Syria. Moreover, the US has been running a psychological campaign against Turkey for some time and uses this opportunity to portray the Turks as the aggressors, even though it is the US that launches a brutal attack on them. It is interesting to note that the book makes clear that by that point in 2007, Nicholas Sarkozy has become France’s President, and afterwards the EU ended talks with Turkey, which in turn has moved away from the West. The Turkish government has withdrawn its Ambassador to the US as a result of the Armenian genocide resolution that passes the US Congress. As part of the campaign against Turkey, the US was also portraying Turks are wrong in Cyprus.

Now while for many in the US such scenarios may be far-fetched, to say the least, in the Turkish context they are quite believable. Since this book was published a few months ago, there have been several TV shows in the US where the Turks were portrayed as terrorists, which was taken as a sign of a psychological operation against Turkey. Only a few days ago Sarkozy, who is the most likely candidate to be France’s next president, received a huge applause when he objected to Turkey’s EU membership. The list goes on.

In the book there are two more reasons for the US to launch a war on Turkey. The first is to “liberate Istanbul from 500 years of occupation by the Turks” and let the Evangelical Church construct the biggest ever church in this city. At secret meeting in Vatican called “The New Byzantium,” the church decides to re-Christianize Anatolia, which has many holy Christian sites. Again, while this theory sounds almost insane, many in Turkey do not understand the role of the Evangelical church in American politics and fear that President Bush was serious when he announced the beginning of a new crusade after the attacks of September 11, 2001. On top of this comes the EU’s religious freedom reform pressure, which again, is perceived in Turkey as a way to “Christianize” Turkey. Consequently, those in Turkey promoting interfaith dialogue have been accused of serving American and Western interests, not Turkish ones. (This is of course very unfortunate since Turkish moderate traditions and long history of interfaith acceptance can be the best antidote against the radicalism prevalent in many Muslim societies).

A second reason for the US attack in the book is the American desire to move away from dependence on Middle Eastern oil and the need to develop new energy sources. Turkey has rich borax, uranium and thorium mines; it has monopoly in borax, which is mainly used for space and weapons technology and therefore is a strategic mineral. While few in the US ever think of these mines, many in Turkey, starting several years before this novel was published, have feared an eventual US attack to take over these mines. It is probably

not surprising that in the end of the book, Russia and Germany help Turkey by taking on a common diplomatic position against the US—simply because they do not want the US to control these mines and become even more powerful.

Throughout the book honorable Turkish military and political leaders wondering how and why the US would attack Turkey after decades of partnership. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and others are often portrayed as having difficulty grasping that the US is indeed attacking Turkey. In several parts, the book states “For a long time there was speculative news about the US plans on Turkey. Many people ignored these as fiction because it was considered so insane;” clearly this language is intended to make the story even more believable.

I have spent a significant part of my testimony on *Metal Storm*, because it is essential in understanding the Turkish mindset today. What can the US do when many Turks read this book and daily articles in the press that play on the softest spots in the Turkish psyche to create a sense of insecurity and fear of US intentions?

The average reader in Turkey has difficulty in separating fact from fiction and reports indicate many read the book as a prophetic one. With the EU reform process forcing fundamental changes in Turkey that exacerbate many people’s sense of insecurity about their future and sense of certainty, this book has brilliantly captured the mood in Turkey. It further clouds fact and fiction by hinting at current issues of contention in US-Turkish relations, including whether the tragic events of 1915 constitute the “Armenian Genocide,” the unresolved Cyprus issue, and developments in Iraq.

Getting US-Turkish relations back on track in the Black Sea and beyond requires the Turkish leadership to put an end to the breed of wild and destructive speculation portrayed in *Metal Storm*. Turkish political leaders need to step back and contemplate whether they truly believe the United States would contemplate the outlandish actions concocted by the authors of *Metal Storm*, who use references to actual American leaders and a deep familiarity with US military technology to convey a sense of authority in their writing. Turkish leaders must then decide whether they must clarify to the Turkish people that wild speculation about a US plan to dominate Turkey are divorced from reality. Perhaps this will lead to a genuine debate about the future of US-Turkish relations, including in the Black Sea. Instead, Turkey’s civilian and military leaders are silent, allowing thousands of Turkish readers to misperceive the book’s ruminations as plausible, if not fact, and causing potentially serious damage to US-Turkish relations. There is a danger that, as Turkey proceeds with democratic reforms required to advance its quest for EU accession, and as the hallowed role of the military decreases in Turkish politics, Turkish society may compensate these developments with growing anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism

Hopefully, Turkey can come out of the process much stronger and as a valuable EU member.

In the short term, there are three specific steps the US can take to try to reverse these negative trends and restore a sense of partnership in relations with Turkey. First, together with the Iraqi government, the US needs to find a formula to assuage the Turkish irritation with the continued PKK presence in Northern Iraq. Until and unless the PKK issue is resolved, Turkish-US relations cannot move to a better phase, and Turkey would continue to resist any US initiatives in the Black Sea region.

Second, given the prevalent Turkish view that the US is running a campaign against Turkey, it would be very damaging if the “Armenian Genocide” resolution passed Congress this year. This year is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic 1915 massacre and certainly the Armenian diaspora groups would like to get recognition. However, such a resolution would play right into the hands of the growing set of anti-Americans and ultra-nationalists in Turkey. For the Black Sea region, it will mostly hurt the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement.

Third, the US needs to continue raising Turkish EU membership as part of the transatlantic dialogue and insist that Turkey should be accepted into the EU on the merits. Turkey needs to be assured that it will not be swapped with Ukraine; this certainty is necessary for Turks to support Ukraine’s (and Georgia’s) ongoing democracy reforms, and make the fundamental mental and institutional changes at home.