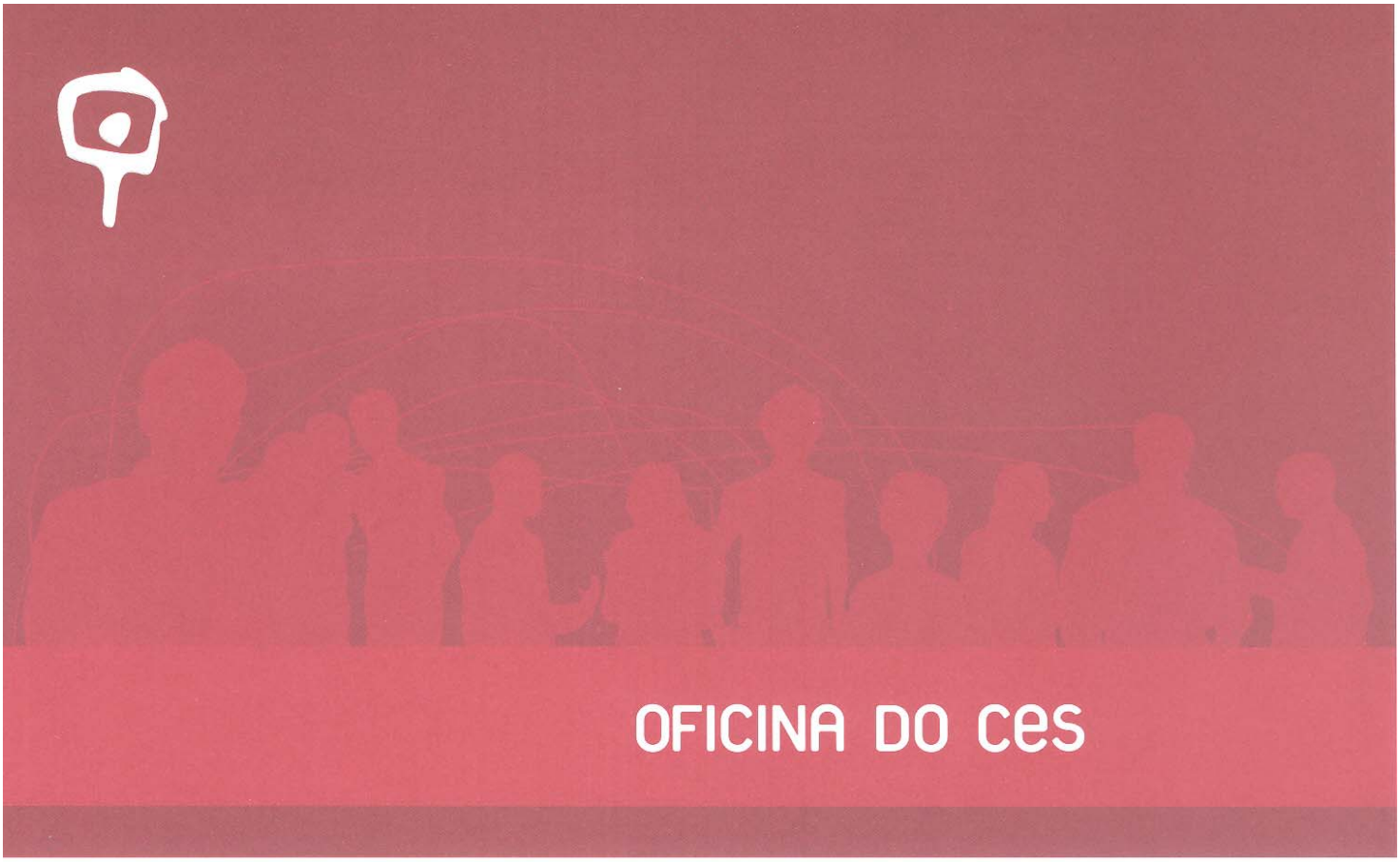

OFICINA DO CES

Centro de Estudos Sociais
Laboratório Associado
Faculdade de Economia
Universidade de Coimbra

ANDRÉ BARRINHA

THE COPENHAGEN SCHOOL IN US-TURKEY RELATIONS
THE 'WAR ON TERROR' IN NORTHERN IRAQ

Janeiro de 2008
Oficina nº 295

André Barrinha

The Copenhagen School in US-Turkey Relations
The 'War on Terror' in Northern Iraq

Oficina do CES n.º 295
Janeiro de 2008

OFICINA DO CES
Publicação seriada do
Centro de Estudos Sociais
Praça D. Dinis
Colégio de S. Jerónimo, Coimbra

Correspondência:
Apartado 3087
3001-401 COIMBRA

André Barrinha
PhD Candidate, Department of Politics, University of Kent

The Copenhagen School in US-Turkey Relations
The 'War on Terror' in Northern Iraq

Abstract: If the majority of Iraq has become a quagmire for Washington, the stable and prosperous North has become a regional problem, especially for Turkey-US relations. Turkey sees the possibility of an independent Kurdish region as a threat to its own territorial integrity and a haven for the PKK militants. The US sees Northern Iraq as the only island of stability in a chaotic context, and the Kurds as their main allies in the country. As both Ankara and Washington assess Northern Iraq within a regional security context it seems appropriate to make use of the Copenhagen School's Regional Security Complex Theory, which underlines the importance of the regional level in security analysis, as well as of its Securitisation theory, which highlights the discourse component in the definition of security threats. With these theories as a background, this paper will focus on the discourses from both Turkey and the United States in order to see how the two securitising processes regarding Northern Iraq developed, how they interplayed and how they were influenced by the regional factor. Due to space and time constrains, the analyses will be limited to a 12-month period (April 2006-2007).

Introduction

Whether an "indispensable NATO ally" (Holbrooke, 2007) or a "strategic ally and a global partner" (Condoleezza Rice *apud* Enginsoy, 2007b), Turkey has been, at least since the Eisenhower doctrine in 1947, one of United States most relevant international partners.

Ankara's accession to NATO signified the structuring of Turkey's foreign policy in line with the West. For the US, Turkey was the tip of NATO's spear both regarding the Soviet Caucasus and the Middle East. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Turkey's strategic importance was naturally converted. Turkey's support and active participation in the First Gulf War showed the US that even in the New World Order as defined by George H. Bush, Ankara wanted to be an active US ally. According to Ian Lesser (2006: 84),

> In the United States, the experience of 1990-91 reinforced the image of Turkey as a strategic ally, at the forefront of new security challenges emanating from the Middle East. Turkish policymakers sought to reinforce this impression with American policy audiences, although the

notion of Turkey as a key to Middle Eastern ally was always an uncomfortable fit with Ankara's European aspirations.

With 9/11, American allegiances were redefined according to the 'Global War on Terror'. Turkey was once again side by side with the US, giving its full support within the NATO framework and contributing significantly to the subsequent mission in Afghanistan.[1] The war on Iraq would, however, change that harmony of interests and actions.

Turkish Parliament rejection of a bill that would approve the deployment of US troops from northern Iraq obliged the Americans to rethink their strategy. As a consequence, the US relied on the Kurdish *peshmerga* to help in the Iraqi invasion from the North. The US empowerment of the Kurds in the region was not well received in Ankara.

In reality, if the US has been Turkey's most important ally, the Kurdish question has arguably been the most relevant issue in Ankara's relations with the other neighbours in the Middle East region. Since the creation of the Turkish Republic, its relations with Iraq, Syria and Iran have been deeply influenced by the fact that all these countries share the existence of a Kurdish minority within their own borders. The Kurdish issue has become intrinsically linked to a threat to Turkish existence; it has become a security problem and a regional issue.

With the end of the cease-fire declaration by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in June 2004, northern Iraq acquired an even more visible importance, and Turkey began to demand that the US act in order to remove the group's bases of support from the region. The relations between both countries deteriorated to the point that today the Turkish population considers the US a less friendly country than Iran (*Transatlantic Trends*, 2006).

More than a decade after the Gulf War (1990-91), the Kurdish issue returned to the top of the Turkish-US agenda. In order to address Turkey's security problems regarding the region, the US appointed retired Air Force General Joseph W. Ralston as Special Envoy for the fight against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) in August 2006.

This paper will focus on the discourses of both Turkey and the United States during that period regarding terrorism perception in northern Iraq, starting with the visit of the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, to Turkey in April 2006.

As these discourses have developed within a security framework for both actors, I have chosen the Copenhagen School securitisation and Regional Security Complex (RSC) models to analyse US and Turkish discourses. This theoretical framework will provide an

[1] Turkey has been one of the major contributors to Operation Enduring Freedom. It has participated in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) since its inception, and undertook a leadership role in ISAF II in 2002 and ISAF VII in 2005 (Ibas, 2007).

examination of how these two securitising processes have developed, how they interplay, and how they are influenced by the 'regional' factor. Although the RSC theory includes several different dimensions, this paper will only focus on the relationship between superpower, region and insulator, as they seem to be the main features of the US-Turkey relationship regarding northern Iraq.

Discourse analysis, defined according to the grammar of securitisation (cf. Vuori, 2003), will be the methodology used. For that purpose, more than 50 news and opinion articles from both Turkish and international newspapers, as well as public statements collected from official sources were considered for the period from April 2006 to April 2007.
The paper begins with an introduction to the Copenhagen School framework, which will provide the basis for the analysis of the case study. After the explanation of the theoretical framework, attention will centre on the US concerns regarding its 'Global War on Terror'. Following a brief introduction to the northern Iraq context, the discourses of both sides will be explored. First, Turkey's security perceptions will be considered, followed by those of the US. After taking into account both sets of discourses, the paper will conclude with some remarks on the Copenhagen School's contribution to the analysis of this case study as well as potential theoretical contributions taken from US-Turkey relations in northern Iraq.

The Copenhagen School's Securitization and Regional Security Complexes models

Developed by a group of researchers from the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI), including Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, the Copenhagen School security framework was one of the critical schools of security studies that developed in Europe in the early 1990s. The work developed by these authors was groundbreaking[2] and controversial.[3] The fact that ten years after the publication of the seminal *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, these authors' theoretical findings are still widely discussed (cf. C.A.S.E. Collective, 2006; Alker, 2006; Taureck, 2006), proves both points.

A security issue is, for the Copenhagen School, a self-referential practice. It is created, not necessarily because a threat exists, but because the issue is presented as such (Buzan *et*

[2] By incorporating researchers from different International Relations theory backgrounds, the Copenhagen School ended up creating a theory appealing enough to different sectors of International Relations and Security academia, especially within Europe.
[3] The debate in the *Review of International Studies* (1997-1998) and many other supportive and critical articles that followed have been fundamental in the re-definition of Security Studies.

al., 1998: 24). Security, ultimately, rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but *among* the subjects (*idem*: 31) – it is always inter-subjective and socially constructed.

The Copenhagen School is defined by three main ideas: sectors, securitisation, and regional security complexes. *Sectors* refer to the distinction between different types of security interactions: military, political, economic, environmental and societal sectors. As this paper focuses mainly on the regional level and not so much on a sectoral analysis', this dimension of the theory will not be taken into consideration.

Securitisation is "what defines most distinctly the school in a metatheoretical sense" (Wæver, 2004: 8). According to the Copenhagen School theorists every threat is securitised in a process that includes referent objects, securitisation actors and functional actors. A *referent object* is what is perceived as existentially threatened, with a legitimate claim to survival, like the state, the nation, or the community. On the other hand, *securitisation actors* are the ones that declare something to be a 'real threat', that indicate the referent object. Finally, the *functional actors* are actors that influence decisions in the process but that are neither a referent object nor a securitising actor.

The process of securitisation is a *speech act*: it is the utterance itself that is the act – by saying the words something is done (such as when a judge declares his sentence). It is by labelling an issue as a 'security issue' that it becomes one. This process is not merely one of uncontested utterances. It is as much a process of claiming as it is of convincing.

Conditions for a successful speech act are twofold: (1) the internal, linguistic-grammatical condition – to follow the rules of the act; and (2) the external, contextual and social – "to hold a position from which the act can be made" (Buzan *et al*., 1998: 32). As such, a successful speech act is a combination of language and society. Regarding the first, the grammar of security, it should contain, according to Juha Vuori (2003), an existential threat for a referent object, which should exist (Claim); a point of no return, whereby the threat's materialisation will change things forever (Warn); and a possible way out that will guarantee that the threat will be extinguished (Request). The external conditions have to do with a) the social capital of the securitisation actor, who should be in a position of authority, although not necessarily defined as official authority; and b) the threat condition.

The other side of a securitisation process is a desecuritisation process, which is a process in which the issues are moved "out of [a] threat-defence sequence and into the ordinary public sphere" (Buzan *et al*., 1998: 29). As the Copenhagen School regards in a

mainly negative way the labelling of an issue as a 'security' problem, they point to desecuritisation as the "optimal long-range option" (*idem*), where an issue can be discussed within the realm of 'normal politics'.

Regional Security Complexes underline the importance of the regional level in security analysis, providing "a conceptual frame that captures the emergent new structures of international security" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 40). Regional Security Complexes (RSC) are defined by "durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of subglobal, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence" (*idem*: 45). In this context, *region* "refers to the level where states or other units link together sufficiently closely that their level is where the extremes of national and global security interplay, and where most of the action occurs" (*idem*: 43).

In the first edition of *People, States and Fear*, Barry Buzan (1983) defined a RSC as "a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently close that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another" (1983: 106). In 1998, in the collective work *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, the RSC was rephrased as "a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another" (1998: 201). This linkage between regions and securitisation theory would be further developed in the 2003 *Regions and Powers*. In this work, Regions were no longer seen as deterministic variables, but functional actors in securitisation processes: "Regions have analytical, and even ontological, standing, but they do not have actor quality" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 27).

Taking as a background the last definition of RSC, regions are not pre-determined givens, but instead the consequence of security dynamics (*idem*: 44). Geographical proximity does not determine behaviours but demands some kind of interaction. In this sense, "[s]imple physical adjacency tends to generate more security interaction among neighbours than among states located in different areas" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 45).

Although interoperable with realist thinking, this theory has, according to the authors (2003: 40), 'constructivist roots' as the

> formation and operation of RSCs hinge on patterns of amity and enmity among the units in the system, which makes regional systems dependent on the actions and interpretations of actors, not just a mechanical reflection of the distribution of power.

Issues and historical relations are also extremely relevant in the definition of an RSC. As stated by Buzan and Wæver, they "take part in the formation of an overall constellation of fears, threats, and friendships that define an RSC" (*idem*: 50). In that sense, understanding and analysing those dynamics is essential for the understanding of a RSC.

The authors distinguish between standard and centred RSCs. The first ones are "broadly Westphalian in form with two or more powers and predominantly military-political security agenda" (2003: 55); whereas centred RSCs can have three (potentially four) different forms: The first two concern cases in which the RSC is unipolar, but the power is either a great power or a superpower, rather than just a regional power. The third form involves a region integrated by institutions, rather than by a single power, the EU being the best example (2003: 60). The fourth form is when the RSC is centred around a regional power.

Regarding the distribution of power, Buzan and Wæver distinguish between three different types of relevant actors: superpowers, great powers and regional powers.

Superpowers. These are actors with the most far-reaching military, political and economic capabilities. Their actions and policies have a global reach, influencing or determining securitisation and desecuritisation processes in all, or almost all regions of the international system (2003: 34-35). The US is currently the only superpower.

Great Powers. They do not have the same global reach superpowers have and their capabilities are more limited. Nonetheless, a great power is "treated in the calculations of other major powers as if it has the clear economic, military, and political potential to bid for superpower status in the short or medium term" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003: 35). Since the end of the Cold War, Britain/France/Germany-EU, Japan, China and Russia are, according to these authors, the current great powers of the international system (*idem*: 36).

Regional Powers. These are actors with a great reach at the regional level, but with very limited capabilities and capacity of action at the global level. In regional terms, they define the polarity of the RSCs (2003: 37), such as India or Brazil.

For Buzan and Wæver, global powers and regional dynamics are interlinked by the mechanism of 'penetration' (2003: 46). As defined by these authors, penetration occurs "when outside powers make security alignments with states within a RSC". Still, these outside powers cannot change the region. If the inter-regional dynamics do override the regional ones, then the most probable outcome is the formation of a new, potentially larger RSC (2003: 61). If the great (or super) power interests and actions transcend penetration and control the regional dynamics, then the RSC ceases to exist and we are in presence of an

'overlay' condition. According to Buzan and Wæver, "the strongest examples of overlay are European colonisation of Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and the situation of Europe itself during the Cold War" (*idem*).

Outside the RSC, we have what Buzan and Wæver defined as 'insulators', a "location occupied by one or more units where larger regional security dynamics stand back to back" (2003: 41). According to these authors, an insulator should not be confused with a buffer state, "whose function is defined by standing at the centre of a strong pattern of securitisation, not at its edge" (*idem*). Turkey, Burma, Nepal and Afghanistan are given as examples of insulator states.

Although an insulator state, Turkey is surrounded by three regional security complexes: the Middle Eastern RSC (including the sub-complexes of the Levant, Gulf and the Maghreb); the European RSC (with the sub-complex of the Balkans); and the ex-Soviet RSC (including the Baltic; Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova; the Caucasus; and Central Asia) (cf. Kazan, 2003: 90-91).

According to Isil Kazan, Turkey's position as an insulator means that "Turkey risks being isolated from the core politics of its three RSCs, the European, the Ex-Soviet and the Middle East" (2003: 92). As acknowledged by Buzan and Wæver, Turkey is a special kind of insulator. Whereas insulators usually play a passive role, Turkey is a very active actor in the RSCs that surround it. Still, as the authors recognise, "Turkey is not able to bring the different RSCs together, to make them form one coherent strategic arena, of which it is part" (2003: 485).

With this framework as a background, this paper will now examine how the 'insulator' Turkey relates to the US 'superpower', focusing on securitisation and the regional dynamics present in the US-Turkish relations in northern Iraq.

US-Turkish relations in Northern Iraq (2006-2007)

The US "War on Terror" and the global and regional level

September 2001. President George Bush declares war on terrorism. The Global War on Terror would from then on define US global policy, overtaking and subjugating all other aspects of its foreign policy, especially regarding the Middle East. As argued by Ian Lesser (2006: 90),

> the overwhelming focus on counter-terrorism has led to the subordination of many traditional foreign-policy priorities and has spurred greater activism in areas seen as directly related to national security in the narrow sense. In the Middle East and Eurasia, American strategy is now essentially one of extended homeland defence.

The war in Iraq was another phase in the war that had started after 9/11. Its goal was to destroy any Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) capability of Saddam's regime and to eliminate Iraq's 'terrorist links' with Al-Qaida. In his 'victory' speech after the end of the major military operations in Iraq, on May 1, 2003, US President George W. Bush would say: "The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September the 11, 2001 – and still goes on."

As already mentioned, the Turkish Parliamentary rejection regarding the authorisation of US troops' deployment in Iraq from Turkey was a shock for the US, who had relied on the 'Turkish ally' for several decades. Turkey, which had been the tip of the NATO spear in the Cold War era, was now the only US ally in two simultaneous but different contexts: Europe and the Middle East.

On March 1, 2003, with public opinion overwhelmingly opposing the war and with the fear of the unintended consequences of a major invasion in Iraq quite present in the political sphere, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government failed by a narrow margin[4] to gather the parliamentary majority needed to allow US troops deployment in Turkey (Mango, 2006: 77). The proposal was to allow the US to deploy around 60,000 troops, 225 warplanes and 65 helicopters in Turkish territory. In exchange, Turkey would receive a multi-billion dollar aid package and Turkey would be allowed to send a substantial number of troops to northern Iraq as a precaution against the establishment of an independent Kurdish state and to prevent a potential refugee flow.

Although Turkey would eventually open its airspace to coalition warplanes, and offered to participate in a post-Saddam Hussein peacekeeping mission (which was eventually rejected by Baghdad), the spectre of the Turkish Parliamentary refusal would persist in US-Turkish relations.

Turkey was essentially placing US regional and global priorities one against the other: on the one hand, the maintenance of Turkey as an important bi-regional ally; on the other, the success in the next phase of the Global War on Terror – the removal of Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and the reconstruction of the country along more democratic lines. This clash of interests was going to be played in northern Iraq.

[4] There were actually 264 votes in favour of the resolution, 250 against and 19 abstentions, but it required the approval of an absolute majority in order to be authorized.

The Northern Iraq context

According to William Hale (2007: 26-27), only with the Gulf War did the Turkish government start to have contacts with the Iraqi Kurds. Relations with neighbouring Iraq were defined according to the Baghdad Pact and not even the rebellions led by Mustafa Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) in 1961-3, 1964-6, 1968-9, and 1974-5 had led to any kind of reaction by Turkey, which was "happy to stand aside, since events in Iraq at the time did not appear to have had any significant effect on the Turkish Kurds" (*idem*: 24).

After the Gulf War, in order to avoid a refugee crisis in its own territory, Turkey would actually be one of the main supporters of the autonomy of the northern Iraq region. The Kurds had tried to rise up against the Saddam regime, and their failure led more than one million people to seek refuge close to the Turkish and Iranian borders. In order to avoid a repetition of the 1988 crisis, when around 60,000 Iraqi Kurds looked for safety in Turkey, during the bloody Anfal operations (in which more than 100,000 Kurds died at the hands of Saddam's regime), Turkey now supported the creation of a safe haven and a no-fly zone in Northern Iraq.

UN Security Council Resolution 688 was adopted and Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) launched. OPC was a tripartite arrangement between Washington, Ankara and London that enabled US and British planes to fly regularly over northern Iraq to prevent Saddam Hussein's forces from entering the region.

In the absence of the 'state', the Kurds became progressively more responsible for the region's administration and Turkish military presence was increasingly felt, with frequent incursions into the region in order to find PKK operatives. In 1997, OPC was replaced with Operation Northern Watch. After the initiation of that operation, Turkey established a significant permanent military presence in the region, up to 5,000 troops, according to some estimates (Lundgren, 2007: 81).

With the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, Turkish control over the region was significantly weakened. The US needed the support of the Kurdish authorities to overthrow Saddam and Turkish security preoccupations in Iraq were not on the top of the US agenda. As explained by Asa Lundgren (2007: 118),

> Turkey was not able to prevent the entry of Kurdish *peshmerga* forces into Kirkuk. Turkey has also had to accept that its military presence in northern Iraq has been substantially reduced, that the US Army has not moved against the PKK, that the Kurds have gained increased importance as political actors and that the Kurdish *peshmerga* has been allowed to retain weapons captured from the Iraqi Army.

Turkish security problems became more visible when the PKK declared the end of the cease-fire after Abdullah Ocalan, their leader, was arrested in Kenya and handed over to Turkish authorities. The Turkish authorities' fear that a US invasion over Iraq would provide the necessary conditions for the return of the PKK seemed to be confirmed. According to Cagaptay and Koknar (2004), there are direct links between both events:

> In summer 2003, the PKK made a strategic decision to infiltrate back into Turkey. Since then, an estimated 1,500 PKK terrorists have joined their 500 comrades already in Turkey, with some 300 of these operatives crossing the border between April and June 2004. These terrorists are well armed with weapons from the old Iraqi army (e.g., surface-to-air missiles), obtained in northern Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the war in April 2003. On the Iraqi side of the border, the PKK maintains around 5,300 terrorists at nine bases near Haftanin, Hakurk, and the Iranian and Iraqi sides of Mount Qandil.

In support of that same link, Turkish police authorities reported in August 2004 that, in 2003, the number of smuggled weapons seized while they were being crossed from the Iraqi border to Turkey corresponded to the total amount for the two previous years combined (Mango, 2006: 78).

As stated by Isil Kazan (2003: 231), "the Kurdish issue is fully securitised. This has meant that it has taken priority over all other issues". It is, in that sense, the core aspect of Turkish policy towards Iraq, and broadly towards the Middle East region. The fight against the PKK spreads to other issues regarding northern Iraq, constituting a constellation of security threats for Ankara in the region. Besides the direct military approach to the PKK, Turkey is also worried about the status of the oil rich city of Kirkuk, as well as the status of the Turcoman minority in the region. Ankara is afraid that the Kurds would take total control of Kirkuk, which used to be an ethnically diverse city. That would mean a potential financial boost that could guarantee the viability of a possible Kurdish independent state, something Turkey sees as a threat to its integrity, as it could enhance separatist feelings in southeast Turkey. It is in this context that Turkey has securitized the Turcoman issue. Based on allegedly 'ethnic' affinities, Ankara as affirmed itself as a defender of the Turcoman minority in northern Iraq. They are a counter-balance to Kurdish hegemonic aspirations, and, as such, constitute another issue to deal with in the context of US-Turkey relations.

Northern Iraq has had, over the years, the capacity to create odd bedfellows. At different periods in time it has put together Kurdish parties and Turkish leaders, Kurdish parties and Saddam Hussein, Iran and Turkey, and recently, even the AKP and the opposition parties. It is against this volatile background context that attention shall now turn to how the relations

between the US and Turkey have developed in the last year, especially regarding their security discourses of terrorism in the region.

April 2006- April 2007: The US and Turkey in Northern Iraq

In the 12 months from April 2006 to April 2007, there were relevant developments linked to US-Turkey relations regarding northern Iraq. After several already mentioned turbulent periods, such as the 2003 Turkish Parliamentary rejection of authorization for US troops' deployment in Turkey, or the arrest of Turkish military forces by US soldiers in the same year,[5] and after years of ineffective Turkish pressure on the US to counter the PKK, 2006 and the beginning of 2007 appeared as a time of necessary outcomes. The PKK attacks and Turkish response in the southeast were intensifying; electoral dynamics were starting to loom both in the Turkish and US political horizons; and the internal and international pressure on the Bush Administration regarding Iraq was mounting.

At the end of April, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Turkey to discuss several issues, including northern Iraq. As a positive measure, it was announced that both countries were preparing a 'Strategic Vision' document establishing the basis for the relationship between Washington and Ankara. That document would be presented in the following July when the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Washington. A brief reference to the PKK was included in the text: "Turkey and the United States pledge themselves to work together on all issues of common concern, including […] countering terrorism, including the fight against the PKK and its affiliates" (US State Department, 05/07/06). Shortly before Abdullah Gul's visit to Washington, US Ambassador to Turkey Robert Wilson declared he was "unsure" that the US had done its utmost regarding the PKK, but that Turkey should refrain from using force against the group in Northern Iraq. As a response, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared Turkey was "losing patience" and that an operation in Northern Iraq, which had the support of opposition parties ("Opposition Gives", 19/07/06), was being prepared. US President George Bush called Erdoğan shortly after asking Turkey to refrain from intervening, and promising at the same time to do "whatever he could" to defeat the PKK. Again, on the 1st of August, Erdoğan declared that "the limits of our tolerance have been reached" ("Erdoğan Warns", 1/08/06), regarding PKK in northern Iraq.

[5] On July 4, 2003 US troops arrested a number of Turkish Special Forces troops together with operatives from their ally Iraqi Turcoman Front. They were accused of preparing an assassination attempt on the governor of Kirkuk province. The Turks were given the al-Qaida treatment and were hooded and transported to Baghdad. This event was seen in Turkey as a serious humiliation (Barkey, 2007: 26).

This time it was the Iraqi Prime minister that reassured Ankara that Iraq would "not allow the PKK to shelter anywhere in Iraq" ("Talabani Reassures", 03/08/06). This ping-pong of declarations between Turks and Iraqis would continue throughout the following months, with Ankara constantly calling for action and threatening to attack and Iraq replying with promises of action. In the meantime, Ankara was also pressuring Washington, whose answer would inevitably point to the tripartite mechanism in development between the US, Turkey and Iraq, though clearly stating: "The PKK is a terrorist organization, and we are dedicated and have dedicated ourselves to working with both governments, Iraqi and Turkish, to see that this terrorist organization is dealt with" (State Department spokesman Sean McCormack quoted in "US Stresses", 11/08/06).

On the 28th August, General Joseph Ralston was appointed as the US Envoy to Counter the PKK, a step taken by Washington as a follow-up to Rice's visit to Ankara. This decision was made in order for the US to show Turkish authorities that concrete steps to face the PKK threat were being taken. Two weeks later, Gen. Ralston would visit Ankara, being 'received' by the PKK with three coordinate bombings. Four days later, an explosion in Dyiarbakir, southeast Turkey, would kill 10 people, the biggest incident in Turkey since Al-Qaida's terrorist attacks in Istanbul in November 2003. The PKK was supposedly behind the attack, although it never claimed responsibility for it. Four days later, Iraq appointed Gen. Amir Amet Hassun, a Sunni Arab, as the special envoy to counter the PKK. At the end of that month, Gen. Ralston would, in a briefing at the Foreign Press Center in Washington declare the he would not meet with the PKK because "we [the US] do not meet with terrorist groups" (Ralston, 2007).

The issue in Turkey would acquire a new dimension, in late September, when Ocalan, the former PKK leader, called for a cease-fire, later declared by the organization and immediately rejected by both politicians and the military. Jalal Talabani, Iraq's President, declared that he was behind that decision, taking the opportunity to appeal for an amnesty in Turkey for PKK combatants. As a reply, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gul, would say: "A president should be more careful while speaking. The United States may be showing interest in him now, but he will ultimately return to the region. We will always be together" (Ulker, 2006). It is worth highlighting the presence of the inevitability of neighbourhood relations in the face of the volatile presence of the superpower in Abdullah Gul's words.

For Turkey, the PKK is not a state and, as such, has no authority to call for cease-fires. Total disarmament and surrender is, for Ankara, the only way out for the PKK, as stated by the Turkish Prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ("Erdoğan rejects", TDN, 30/09/06):

> A cease-fire is agreed between states. It is not something for a terrorist organization to do… The terrorist organization must lay down its arms. That is what we are waiting for to restore peace in the region.

At the beginning of 2007, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan ("Turkish PM", 4/01/07) would severely criticize America's behaviour towards the PKK by saying that:

> The US appointed a special envoy but there is no concrete step. We could cooperate with the US and Iraq in combating the terror network but this did not take place. They say they will stifle the terrorist organization's financial resources. They say there are troubles in other areas and they cannot focus on northern Iraq. Are these delay tactics? We expect serious steps.

On the 11th January George W. Bush presented his new Iraqi plan, following the Iraq Study Group report. Although presenting several different measures in order to restore order and stability in the country, the PKK only merited a vague reference in the report (Cagaptay, 2006), as well as in the US President's plan.

Abdullah Gul visited the US in early February, for the second time in less than one year, shortly followed by the Turkish Chief of Staff, Gen. Buyukanit. Amid constant tense declarations especially from Turkey and northern Iraq Kurdish leaders,[6] the beginning of Spring (the time of the year Turkey usually resumes military operations against the PKK) saw Turkey intensifying calls for a military intervention in northern Iraq. Both the US (once again) and the European Union (EU) reacted negatively to the prospects of a Turkish military intervention.

This was the scenario until the end of April 2007. It shall now be seen how this narrative could be translated into an analysis of both sides' security discourses.

Turkish security discourse regarding Northern Iraq

For Turkey, northern Iraq is part of a more complex issue regarding the Kurdish minority in its own country. However, Turkey has managed to externalise the problem, by placing the solution largely outside its own borders. This discourse follows a line of argument sometimes used in Turkey, where the PKK is a proxy movement created and supported by outside forces in order to divide the country. The unity of the Turkish state is, in that sense, the referent

[6] Barzani declared that he did "not fear their [Turkish] military power" and that if Turkey intervened in the issue of Kirkuk they would "interfere in the issue of Diyarbakir and other cities" (Çandar, 2007).

object of this securitisation process. The fact that northern Iraq could signify for Turkey a threat to its integrity led Ankara to define a second-degree referent object. The second-degree referent object refers to the unity of the Iraqi state: claims for an independent northern Iraq are as dangerous for Turkey as they are for Iraq. For Turkey, its territorial integrity is greatly related to the integrity of the Iraqi state. According to Gen. Buyukanit, "The terrorism problem in northern Iraq, the terrorism problem in Turkey and the issue of Iraq's territorial integrity cannot be separated from each other" (Enginsoy, 2007c).

Defining it according to the grammar of securitisation, the threat is, in this case, clearly identified – the PKK. However, whereas it is usually defined as a major internal threat, it is now also presented as a regional menace, as stated by Air Force Colonel Selahattin Ibaş:

> Under any name, the PKK is a regional threat. Since its establishment, it has created trouble in Turkey, as well as in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, challenging peace and security across the Middle East.

Unlike Colonel Ibaş' discourse, which highlights the PKK's potential destabilizing capacity for the Middle East, in most cases, this second part of the grammar of securitisation (Warn) is not even mentioned. Usually, Turkish authorities do not talk about what happens if nothing is done. Instead, they focus on the request (third part of the grammar of securitisation), on what they want to see happening: the removal of PKK bases from northern Iraq.

The request for extraordinary measures is made to both the US and Iraqi authorities. They are, in this sense, the audience. This is an interesting point for the securitisation theory, as this securitisation move seems to be built on a previously existent internal one, which is, in itself, institutionalised in Turkey – the already mentioned securitization of the PKK. This slightly changes the grammar of securitisation, as some of its features are already included in the previous process. The PKK is, in Turkey, accepted as a threat. The threat it represents has been sufficiently clear and the audience has given the consent for the Turkish authorities to act. This second securitisation has an inter-state dimension, in the sense that includes other state actors within the process. As we have already seen, the referent object is multiplied. The warning frequently becomes a demand for action (the request), and that demand is made externally. In this sense, it is not an internal audience that needs to be convinced, but an international one.

US security discourse regarding northern Iraq

The biggest doubt in Turkish-US relations towards Northern Iraq is whether the US has indeed securitised the PKK or is simply part of an audience that Turkey is trying to convince. For the US, the PKK question is a problem within the context of stability in northern Iraq. Although the Iraqi territorial integrity could be seen as essential for the US security, through the War on Terror discourse (Bush, 2007), it seems they do not extend the link to the PKK, as Turkey suggests.

US officials usually talk about "our [the US and Turkey's] shared battle against the PKK" (Bryza, 2006). Nonetheless they do not have a clear line or a strong discourse on how to defeat the PKK. In security terms, words like 'patience', and 'multilateral mechanisms', which are frequent in the US officials' discourses, are more common to desecuritisation discourses than to intense securitisation appeals.

The usual attempts to securitise the issue are either a) by stating Turkey's importance for US foreign policy or b) by considering the 'Global War on Terror' as a war against all terrorist groups. Matthew Bryza, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs (1/02/2007), synthesises both attempts in the following words:

> The PKK is a serious terrorist threat to one of our most important allies in the world so we're obligated [to do something]. But we're also obligated to do something against PKK by our own vision for Iraq and our own global policy on terrorism.

Regarding the same issue, Matthew Bryza goes even further, constructing a narrative of intentions regarding the US Iraqi invasion, that is suitable for his argument of linking the PKK to the Global War on Terror:

> If you go back and read the statement that President Bush, Prime Minister Blair, and then Prime Minister Barroso of Portugal and President Aznar of Spain issued just a couple of days before the Iraq war began you will see in it – it's called the Azores Declaration – one of the goals we outlined is that there will be no haven for terrorists of any sort in Iraq. We meant the PKK. I know, having been involved in the drafting of that document, what we meant when we wrote that in there. We meant the PKK. So even before any U.S. troops set foot in Iraq that was our goal.

In reality, the US seems to have these two competing processes going on at the same time, led by the same people. On the one hand highlighting the link between the PKK and the War on Terror, in which they admit the poor results obtained so far (Bryza, 2007); on the other, arguing for multi-level, multilateral approaches that have not so far consider the military option. Apparently, the US accepts the Turkish international securitisation of the

PKK but is not willing to concede them special powers, which, in this case, would be to agree on a military operation against the PKK bases in northern Iraq.

Conclusion

For both the US and Turkey, there is no doubt that the PKK is a terrorist group and that Iraq must remain a unitary state. However, taking into consideration Ankara's disappointment with Washington, those common aspects do not seem strong enough to produce a consensual solution to the problem.

Compared to March 2003, the US and Turkey are playing seemingly reversed roles. Back then it was the US that was trying to convince Turkey of the need to wipe out Saddam Hussein, his WMDs and his terrorist links from Iraq (Menon and Wimbush, 2007: 7). From April 2006 to April 2007 it was Ankara's turn to try to convince Washington of the terrorist problem that the PKK represents.

The absence of an understanding between Washington and Ankara regarding the PKK and northern Iraq could be related to three different aspects of their relationship: the non-belonging to the Middle East RSC; the US contradiction between its global and regional policies; and the ambiguities of the international securitisation processes.

Non-belonging to the Middle East RSC. It is worth noting that both countries are dealing with a region to which none of them fully belong. The US is a 'penetrator', a superpower with great influence but not with enough capacity to overlay the region. Proof of this can be seen in the way events have unfolded in the region, differently from Washington's plans. Turkey, on the other hand, is an 'insulator'. Its main purpose has historically been to step aside from the region's security problems (Kazan, 2003). The main problem in the relationship between both countries regarding northern Iraq could perhaps be partially answered by this involvement in a region to which none of the actors really belong. Should the US be able to change the security dynamics there, then the Middle East would no longer be a RSC; the region would shift to an 'overlay' condition. In the same sense, should Turkey be able to have a deciding say in the Middle East security dynamics, it would not be an insulator, but a member of this RSC.

US global and regional policies. US President George Bush defined very clearly what the US global policy would be from 9/11 onwards: to undertake a 'Global War on Terror'. This is a framework into which all other dimensions of US foreign policy should fit. One problem with such a policy is that the definitions of terror and terrorism, and especially the identification of the threat, are not clear.

US officials have, at least regarding northern Iraq, decided to apply the 'Global War on Terror' discourse according to their needs, as we can see in Matthew Bryza's words (2007). The result is an incoherent discourse from the US, at least in relations to northern Iraq. The identified global war has as its main focal point Iraq and the direct fight against the US defined Al-Qaida militants. In that context, northern Iraq is the only element of stability in the country and the Kurdish regional leaders are useful actors in that global war. Nonetheless, Turkey also advocates to be fighting their own war on terror against a group, which is based, and according to Ankara, even supported by those same leaders the US needs in their 'Global War on Terror'. In that sense, there seems to be a profound incompatibility between the global strategy and regional implementation of it.

Ambiguities of the international securitisation process. This case study has shown the potential existence of international securitisation processes in which all the steps in a securitization move are taken at an inter-state level. In this case, Turkey has identified various referent objects, various dangers coming from the same threat (the PKK) and has an audience composed of two international actors. On the other hand, the US, which has internally securitised the 'Global War on Terror', has an ambiguous stance regarding Turkey's own 'war on terror'. Along with the two problems identified above, the US also seems to have a policy for the issue (based on the trilateral mechanism, together with a multi-level approach), which it has found difficult to transform into discourse. As we have seen, it often mixes desecuritisation features with securitisation features commonly found in the 'Global War on Terror' discourses. This incapacity has also been met by Ankara's incapacity to construct a strong international securitisation discourse. Its main weakness resides in the almost absence of justification for action. What is at stake for regional stability? Why is it more necessary to intervene now than ever? In the context of the grammar of securitisation, Turkey has not been able to warn its audience in an efficient way. Both sides have, in this sense, communication problems.

In short, during this period, both Turkey and the US were not able to find a common strategy (or a common language) for the fight against the PKK in Northern Iraq. The fact that neither of them belongs to the Middle East RSC, the restrictions and incoherencies imposed by the US Global War on Terror, and the fact that both US and Turkey have been finding it difficult to create strong and coherent security discourses were the determinant factors in such an outcome.

References

Alker, Hayward (2006), "On securitization politics as contexted texts and talk", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 9, 70-80.

Barkey, Henri (2007), "The US, Turkey, and the Iraq Conundrum", *in* Rajan Menon; S. Enders Wimbush, *Is the United States Losing Turkey?*. Washington: Hudson Institute.

Bryza, Matthew (2006), "Readout from Recent Trip to Turkey, Greece and Cyprus", Foreign Press Center Briefing, US State Department, 21/07/06.

Bryza, Matthew (2007), "U.S.-Turkish Relations", Roundtable with Turkish journalists, US State Department, 01/02/07.

Bush, George W. (2003), "President Bush Announces Major Combat Operations in Iraq Have Ended", The White House, 01/05/03.

Bush, George W. (2007), "President Bush Discusses the Global War on Terror in Tipp City, Ohio", The White House, 19/04/03.

Buzan, Barry (1983), *People, States and Fear. The National Security Problem in International Relations.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books.

Buzan, Barry; Wæver, Ole (2003), *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buzan, Barry; Wæver, Ole; de Wilde, Jaap (1998), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Cagaptay, Soner (2006), "The Iraq Study Group Report and the PKK: Dealing with an American Problem", *Policy Watch*, 1174, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy.

Cagaptay, Soner; Koknar, Ali (2004), "The PKK's New Offensive: Implications for Turkey, Iraqi Kurds, and the United States", *Policy Watch*, 877, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy.

Çandar, Cengiz (2007), "A strong and measured reply to Barzani", *Turkish Daily News*, 10/04/07.

C.A.S.E. Collective (2006), "Critical Approaches to Security in Europe: A Networked Manifesto", *Security Dialogue*, 37(4), 443-487.

Edelman, Eric (2006), "Three Legacies: Ataturk, Inonu, and Ozal and the Making of the U.S.-Turkish Relationship", *Policy Watch (Special Forum Report)*, 1115, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy.

Enginsoy, Umit (2007a), "Rice: US failure would lead to Turk-Kurd conflict", *Turkish Daily News*, 13/01/07.

Enginsoy, Umit (2007b), "Gul does not rule out military action in N. Iraq", *Turkish Daily News*, 08/02/07.

Enginsoy, Umit (2007c), "Buyukanit warns separatists, Iraqi Kurds and 'regime change seekers'", *Turkish Daily News*, 15/02/07.

"Erdoğan rejects call from Ocalan, seeks US steps against PKK", *Turkish Daily News*, 30/09/06.

"Erdoğan Warns on PKK and Lebanon in Televised Address", *Today's Zaman*, 01/08/06.

Fried, Daniel (2006), "Appointment of Special Envoy for Countering the PKK", Interview with CNN Turk TV, State Department, 30/08/06.

"Gul's tough warning on terror: 'We'll eliminate PKK on our own, if friends don't help'", *The New Anatolian*, 02/10/06.

"Gul sees PKK as seed of discord between Kurds and Turks", *Today's Zaman*, 23/02/07.

Hale, William (2007), *Turkey, the US and Iraq*, London: SAQI.

Holbrooke, Richard (2007), "Opportunity for Turks And Kurds?", *The Washington Post*, 12/02/07.

Ibas, Selahattin (2007), "Fighting Terrorism: A Chance to Improve Bilateral U.S.-Turkish Ties, *Policy Watch*, 1203, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy.

"Iran leader: Wipe Out Israel", CNN, 27/10/05, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/meast/10/26/ahmadinejad/index.html> [26/04/06].

Kazan, Isil (2003), *Regionalisation of Security and Securitisation of a Region: Turkish Security Policy After the Cold War*. Copenhagen: Institute of Political Science, University of Copenhagen 2003, PhD Series.

Lesser, Ian (2006), "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics", *Survival*, 48, 83-96.

Lundgren, Asa (2007), *The Unwelcome Neighbour. Turkey's Kurdish Policy*, New York: I.B. Taurus.

Mango, Andrew (2006), *Turkey and the War on Terror. For Forty Years we Fought Alone*, London: Routledge.

Menon, Rajan and Wimbush, S. Enders (2007), *Is the United States Losing Turkey?* Washington: Hudson Institute.

"Opposition Gives Full Support to Cross-border Operation", *Today's Zaman*, 19/07/06.

Ralston, Joseph (2007), "US-Turkish Relations and the Challenges Ahead", Testimony Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Europe, US State Department, 15/03/2007.

"Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership", Media Note, US State Department, 5/07/06.

"Talabani Reassures Turkey on PKK", *Today's Zaman*, 03/08/06.

Taureck, Rita (2006), "Securitization theory and securitization studies", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 9, 53-61.

Transatlantic Trends 2006 (2006), Washington: German Marshall Fund, Compagnia di San Paolo, Fundação Luso-Americana and Fundacion BBVA.

"Turkish PM: US makes no concrete steps against PKK", Today's *Zaman*, 04/01/07.

Ulker, Emrah (2006), "Ralston to Talabani: Cease-fires take place Between Two States", *Today's Zaman*, 28/09/06.

"US Stresses Complete Dedication Against PKK", *Today's Zaman*, 11/08/06.

Vuori, Juha (2003), "Security as Justification. An Analysis of Deng Xiaoping's Speech to the Martial Law Troops in Beijing on the Ninth of June 1989, NACS Conference, Oslo 19-21 June 2003.

Wæver, Ole (2004), "Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen. New 'Schools' in Security Theory and their Origin between Core and Periphery", Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Montreal, March 17-20, 2004.