



TURGUT ÖZAL PERIOD IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY: ÖZALISM

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*'People are not the servants of the state, but the state must
be servant of the people.'*
Turgut Özal, 1993

'The next century will be a Turkish century.'
Turgut Özal, 1992

'Turkey cannot be prisoner of the Misak-i Milli (National Pact) borders.'
Turgut Özal, 1992

Abstract

This study examines the factors underlying the Özalist approach, such as Özal's personality, the 1980 coup and the isolation of Turkey, the economic boom, change in the socio-economic structure, globalisation of the Turkish economy and finally Kurdish separatism. A special emphasis will be laid on the ideological background of Özalist foreign policy, with a view to demonstrating the close relationship between Özal's Ottomanist foreign policy and his domestic approach and its translation to foreign policy.

Keywords: *Turgut Özal, Turkish Foreign Policy, Ideology, Kemalizm, EU, Turkey*

RETURN OF KEMALISM AS IDEOLOGY AND THE COUP AS PRELUDE OF ÖZAL POWER

The developments of the 1970s literally invited the third military coup. After the terror and years of instability, the army intervened yet again on 12 September 1980 with four distinct aims in mind: to suppress terrorism and radicalism; to restore economic growth and stability; to introduce a new constitution and legal arrangements that would stabilise the system and prevent anarchy; to re-establish civilian democracy on a Kemalist

basis.¹ In other words, in line with previous take-overs, the 1980 coup was not envisaged as a permanent military regime but aimed at the eventual restoration of civilian parliamentary rule once the army had put the government's house in order.² The Army was not against the democratic political system but its results. Were the political system to be truly Kemalist, the army would not intervene in its affairs any more. Indeed, the constitution and other laws defined the army as the 'guardian of the regime'; however the rules had been re-written by the military leaders in 1960 and 1971. Similar to previous take-overs, General Kenan Evren declared that the 1980 coup had been carried out in accordance with Article 34 of the military by-law, charging the army with the defence of the Republic, the Kemalist regime and unity. Hence it is arguable that the Turkish military intervention was fundamentally different from the Latin American and indeed most Third World coups since the Turkish Army has been legalist and based its acts on the 'law'.

Having suppressed the internal anarchy and terror, one of the first acts of the military rulers was to revive the Kemalist doctrine.³ For the army, left and right-wing ideologies were alien to the Turkish people, responsible for the 1970s' catastrophe. Only Kemalism (*Atatürkçülük*)⁴ was a suitable ideology for Turkey that could foster national unity. Accordingly, a massive Kemalist campaign was launched: Kemalist books were published; 1981 was named the 'Atatürk Year' and new institutions were established or financially supported to boost Kemalism in society. Streets, roads and buildings were re-named after Atatürk. The various institutions were consolidated in one central Supreme Atatürk Society. Kemalism had been restored as the state ideology while all others were swept away from power. Yet the 1980 Coup's Kemalism was very different from previous versions of Kemalism. It was a neutral and pragmatic ideology lacking unchangeable principles, instead arguing that what was good for the Turkish nation was good for Kemalism. Secondly, this new Kemalism, contrary to İnönü's autocracy, was loyal to democracy. Third, unlike Ecevit's Kemalism, it was pro-Western and pro-American. For Evren, the coup leader, the United States was the most important ally and the Soviet Union still posed the greatest threat to Turkish security.⁵ Finally, this

¹ William Hale, 'Transition to Civilian Governments in Turkey: The Military Perspective', in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military, Turkey in the 1980s*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 166.

² Karpaz, 'Military', p. 149.

³ For the military's Kemalism see: Kenan Evren, 'Atatürk Yılı Açılış Konuşması', in *Kemalizm ve Türkiye* (Kemalism and Turkey), 6, 52, January 1981, pp. 5-8.

⁴ 12 Eylül 1980 Coup leaders used 'Atatürkçülük' term instead of Kemalism. It can be argued that they thought 'Kemalism' remind leftism, not Mustafa Kemal's ideology.

⁵ *Milliyet*, 23 October 1984, *Tercüman*, 21 October 1984.

Kemalism was capitalist in orientation viewing Turkey's future in the capitalist rather than socialist world.

The thing the generals understood least of all was the economy, and without economic success the coup could not be successful. Therefore, when Bülent Ulusu formed the first government, the Turkish National Security Council (NSC) announced that it would retain Turgut Özal, having been the spirit behind the last Demirel government's liberal economic reforms, as Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs. In 1981 inflation dropped, exports increased rapidly, the GDP increased by 4.5 %. Tourism revenues and Turkish construction activities abroad increased dramatically. As a result the current account deficit was sharply reduced.⁶ Özal's and the army's liberal policies showed them as closer to the capitalist world and more conservative than previous Kemalist military take-overs. In other words, the 1980 coup was a conservative-capitalist interpretation of Kemalism. Secondly, thanks to the government's success in the economy and the suppression of terrorism, the NSC gained credit before the people and continued its reforms. The military restored the regime's ideology of Kemalism; restored the economic system as a free capital market, yet the political structure remained unsettled. Some generals like Nurettin Ersin viewed this as proof that 'Our social structure is not suitable for an advance and open democracy. We need an autocratic administration.'⁷ However, the dominant opinion among the generals was that the civilian rule should be restored. American and European pressure gave further impetus to this view.⁸ The NSC was ready to do that, yet before handing over power it wanted to guarantee its favoured political structure. In the autumn of 1982 the constitution, written by the military and its favoured academics, was put to a national referendum. With the referendum, Kenan Evren became the President and the NSC gained extraordinary powers over government and parliament. As one of its first move, the NSC banned all political activities. It did not initially abolish the two major political parties (RPP and JP) or arrest deputies, but a few party leaders were temporarily detained and some deputies associated with radical groups and Kurdish separatists were taken into custody.⁹ However

⁶ Ahmet Kılıçbay, *Türk Ekonomisi, Modeller, Politikalar, Stratejiler*, (Turkish Economy, Models, Policies, Strategies), (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, 1991); Jeffrey D. Lewis and Shujiro Urata, *Turkey: Recent Economic Performance and Medium-term Prospects, 1978-1990*, (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Working papers, No. 602, 1983).

⁷ Cüneyt Arcayürek, *Demokrasi Dur, 12 Eylül 1980*, (Democracy Stops, 12 September 1980), (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1990), p. 150.

⁸ Ihsan D. Dagi, 'Democratic Transition in Turkey, 1980-1983: The Impact of European Diplomacy', in Sylvia Kedourie (ed.), *Turkey, Identity, Democracy, Politics*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996), pp. 124-141.

⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, 'Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey before and After 1980', in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military*, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 153.

in a short time the NSC understood that it could not reshape the Turkish political system with the old parties, abolished the two and banned all old political leaders from re-entering politics. Evren and his friends did not want to repeat the DP case, where the banned parties had re-established themselves under different names after the 1960s and 1970s coups against the DP. According to the new rules, the chairmen, general secretaries and all other senior office holders in the former political parties could not join or have 'any kind of relations' with future political parties, or run for election (even as independent) for the next ten years.¹⁰ Moreover, the new constitution forbade political organisations based on religion, a religious sect, regional considerations or Marxism. Having banned the old politicians and ideologies, the NSC encouraged new names. Before the elections the moderate right-wings *Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi* (Nationalist Democracy Party, NDP) and the moderate left *Halkçı Parti* (Populist Party, PP) were established. The leader of the NDP was a former general and Evren had implied that this party was the army's choice. The NSC hoped that with these moderate and Kemalist right and a left party a permanent democratic system could be established, and it was sure for the victory of NDP. When Özal, as a prestigious bureaucrat, formed a new party - *Anavatan Partisi* or ANAP (Motherland Party, MP) - the army's plans were spoiled. As the architect of the economic reforms Özal was a well-known person now, both inside and outside the country. Evren indicated that the military did not favour Özal's party, yet the NSC could not ban the party, and in the first elections Özal's Motherland Party won 45 % of the votes and 212 of the 400 seats in parliament. Thus the 1983 elections marked the beginning of the Özal era, which would last for some 10 years and would transform Turkey economically, technologically, educationally and politically. For the first seven years the military rulers provided the President with special authority to protect the system they had established, hence Özal could not carry out his all ideas, particularly in the field of social and human rights and foreign policy. However, when the military gradually lost its power over government, Özal implemented his revolutionary ideas.

During these years Özal also created a new foreign policy: Özalism or neo-Ottomanism, which in Çandar's words constituted the 'funeral' of Kemalism.¹¹ It is true, as Özal accepted that he came from the same school as Bayar, Menderes and Demirel, and that Özalism can be viewed as a representative of the neo-Democrat or neo-JP current. However, as will be shown, despite the continuity of the democratic-liberal-conservative current since the Ottoman Empire, Özalism is distinguished from these currents in domestic and foreign policy term.

¹⁰ *Provisional Article 4*, William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p.260.

¹¹ Interview with Cengiz Çandar in Metin Sezer and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları* (Second Republic Debates), (Ankara: Başak Publications, 1993), p. 91.

The Army's Foreign Policy (1980-1983)

Before moving to the Özal era, we need to explore the military's foreign policy, because it deeply affected Özalist foreign policy. As noted earlier, Turkey had been isolated from the EC, from the Third World and from the United States due to the Cyprus crisis the American arms embargo, and the Kemalist block on relations with the Muslim countries. In addition, the Kemalist legacy and Turkey's NATO membership prevented the improvement of relations with the communist bloc while internal problems (terror, economic collapse) and the oil crisis exacerbated Turkey's isolation so did the 1980 military coup. The EC's reaction to the coup was very moderate in the first days because it stabilised the domestic situation. Yet when the military regime retarded the restoration of democracy, the EC toughened its policy towards Turkey. First the European Parliament suspended financial aid to Turkey on 22 January 1982. Then, the European wing of the Joint Turkish-European Parliamentary Committee was abolished. The Commission also froze the Fourth Protocol. As a result, ironically, the Kemalist generals saw the Muslim world as the only way to get away from this economic and political isolation. Bülent Ulusu, the Prime Minister of the military government, for example, announced that Turkey would continue to develop and consolidate its relations with the Muslim world. In December 1980 the Turkish Foreign Ministry declared the new government's decision to reduce diplomatic representation with Israel to a minimum level in order to underscore Turkey's support of the Arabs, as a member of the Islamic Conference.¹² In particular, Turkey looked for IOC members' support on the Cyprus issue and succeed in some degree. In the military period, Turkey joined almost all ICO meetings. Even Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu participated at the third ICO summit and made a speech underlining change in Turkish foreign policy towards détente. Despite this, Turkey rejected basing its relations on a Third World approach or Islamic values. Turkish Foreign Minister İtler Turkmen, for example, refused to sign some decisions of the 1981 Mecca Declaration regarding on embargo on Afghanistan, Islamic principles and values, and Third World movement.¹³

Turkey-Israel relations can be considered a perfect reflection of Turkish-Western relations. Since the West had closed all doors down against Turkey, it needed new political support and economic markets. The Arabs offered money, markets and political support for Turkey, while

¹² Aykan, *Ideology*, pp. 231-232.

¹³ Cumhuriyet (daily, Istanbul), 23 January 1981; *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanı Bülent Ulusu'nun Üçüncü İslam Zirvesi Konferansı'ndaki Beyanatu' (Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu's Speech and declarations in the Third Islamic Summit)*, Mekke and Taif, 25-28 January 1981, Ankara: Başbakanlık.

Israel's effect on the West's Turkey policy was extremely limited. In these years Turkey's reputation among the European states was low. The only countries that the Turkish President could visit were Pakistan, the Arab world and the Balkans. In short, when Özal came to power he found a country isolated from both West and East. Turkey needed a radical shift in domestic and foreign policy in order to escape this political and economical isolation.

1980's AS PRELUDE OF ÖZALISM AND FACTORS CREATED ÖZALISM

Özal's Personality

Turgut Özal's personality played a crucial role in the formation and success of Özalism. In the words of Zürcher, *'he had a foot in both camps: he had been a successful manager in the private industry in the 1970s and was very well connected in big business circles, which liked his liberalisation of the economy. On the other hand, he was known to have connections with the Nakşibendi order of dervishes.'*¹⁴ In fact he had a foot in more than two camps. He was not only a successful businessman, and a religious person with good relations with religious sects: he was a successful bureaucrat and had very good relations with the IMF, the World Bank (between 1971-1973 Turgut Özal was adviser to the World Bank on special projects) and the US administration. He was a religious, nationalist, conservative, liberal politician, businessman, economist and bureaucrat.¹⁵ Above all, Özal was a moderate who could do business with everyone regardless of their social or ideological background. For example, in the 1970s he was an Islamist NSP candidate, before becoming head of the economy under secular military rule. Özal's other key feature was his Americanism. Having graduated from Istanbul Technical University in 1950 as an electrical engineer, Özal studied in the United States, and during these years became an admirer of the United States. In his view, the United States owed its success to its liberalism. Özal further argued that the United States and the Ottoman Empire were similar political structures: Both allowed different cultures and gave people freedom to exercise their religion, nationality and economic preferences. From this perspective,

¹⁴ Zürcher, Turkey, p. 297.

¹⁵ Özal was a member of the technical Advisory Board of the Turkish Prime Ministry, and from 1967 to 1971 was under-secretary of the State Planning Organisation; also after returning from United States to Turkey he was appointed under-secretary to the Prime Minister in 1979. On 12 September 1980 he was made Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs.

Turkey had to desert its authoritarian official understanding, namely the Kemalist state ideology.

Coup, Isolation and Thirst for Economic Success

The military coups had put an end to the Menderes and Demirel governments. Ironically, the 1980 military coup provided a suitable political base for Özalist foreign, economic and domestic politics, though he was from the same school of thought as Demirel and Menderes. First, the coup eliminated Özal's political rivals by banning old politicians like Demirel, Ecevit, Türkeş and Erbakan. Secondly, Özal's co-operation with the Kemalist army legitimised his ideology in the system. Özal's co-operation with the Army and the authoritarian nature of the Army rule also contributed to implementation of the economic reforms. For Özal the coup provided stability and order which needed for economic success:

“In the past 32 months the sacrifices and courage of our nation, and its supreme ability to understand what was best for it, together with the restoration of peace and order through the successful war waged against anarchy and violence by the September 12 operation, has turned the bleak picture of the economy into a promising one.”¹⁶

Nevertheless the Army was a political rival for Özal too and the military elements were gradually banished from politics by the Özal governments.

Third, the lack of political rivals granted Turgut Özal a respite to concentrate on the country's problems. Thus, Özal became one of the most creative and productive political figures in Turkish politics. Until the 1990s Özal won the election with new projects. Finally, the unique environment of the 1980s provided enormous public support for Özal's governments. For example, in the 1983 elections his Motherland Party (MP) scored an overwhelming victory, with 45 per cent. Thus, MP received an absolute majority in the new assembly.

Economic Boom and Re-gaining of Confidence

In the 1980s, Turkey's political agenda was dominated by a high economic growth rate, and a revolutionary structural change towards an industrialised country. Thanks to Özal's liberal economic policies, the Turkish economy grew at an annual rate of over 5 %, the highest among

¹⁶ *Briefing*, 19-26 July 1982, as cited in Henze, *Turkey...*, p. 111.

the OECD countries.¹⁷ The volume of Turkish exports rose from \$ 2,910 million in 1980 to over \$ 20 billion in the early 1990s, with an annual increase of 15,6 %; a staggering 350 % increase in 10 years.¹⁸ Moreover, the share of industrial products in Turkish exports rose from 41,1 % to 84 % in 1990. Now only 14 % of the exports were agricultural. Likewise, imports rose from \$ 7,909 million in 1980 to \$ 22.5 billion in 1990 (a 182% increase) while tourism leaped from a marginal industry to a major earner of foreign currency with an increase from \$212 million in 1980 to about \$3 billion in 1990. For its part the Turkish construction sector dramatically increased its projects in the Middle East, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Despite this remarkable record, the real figures were even higher than the official statistics due to the underground economy. That is to say, Turkey in the 1980s was a miracle economy, or in the words of Mango 'a young tiger'.¹⁹ Moreover, the Turkish economy had by now been liberalised and globalised. The Turkish government adopted the EC's nomenclature for commodity classification and in 1988 initiated legislative adjustments for adopting EC legislation. The main aim was integration of the Turkish economy with the world economy. For some scholars, all these developments were 'the Özal revolution'.²⁰

The first effect of the economic success was the regaining of national confidence lost in the 1970s. Özal's slogan was 'again a great Turkey'. This also affected the conduct of Özalist foreign policy. With economic power, Turkey's foreign policy horizons were widened, as Turkey gradually became a regional power.

Change in Social and Economic Structures

Another effect of the economic boom was the radical change in economic and social structures. As noted earlier, economic power had been in the hands of the Kemalist bureaucracy and state-sponsored businessmen. Although the Menderes and Demirel governments supported the conservative Anatolian capital, their success was limited. Thanks to Özal's policies, the periphery, villagers, workers and traditional religious groups

¹⁷ R. Hine, 'Turkey and the European Community: Regional Integration and Economic Convergence', in S. Togan and V.N. Balasubramanyam, *The Economy of Turkey since Liberalization*, (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1996), p. 146.

¹⁸ 'General Outlook of Turkish Economy', via internet, <http://www.foreigntrade.gov.tr/ENGLISH?ECONOMYYECONO.htm>, visited May 1997, p. 2.

¹⁹ Andrew Mango, 'Unfriendly Neighbours', *The World Today*, Vol. 50, No. 3, March 1994, pp. 60-61, p. 60.

²⁰ Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled, Atatürk and After*, (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1997), pp. 158-179.

entered the economy, and as a result, strengthened their autonomy against the core, namely the bureaucracy, the military and the state-created industry. During these years, industrialisation of many towns increased immigration from the rural areas, and the portion of those who lived in urban areas rose to 75 %. These developments, together with the high economic growth, urbanisation and Özal's liberal reforms accelerated the restoration of democracy. Many non-democratic rules were abolished, and the masses gained legal rights to resist pressure from the establishment. When ordinary Turks and minority ethnic groups gained power they insisted on good relations with those with whom they shared common values, namely the Muslim and the Turkish worlds.

<i>Changing Turkish Economy Changes in Sectoral Shares (%) 1970-1985²¹</i>			
Year	Agriculture	Industry	Services
1965	34.1	17.8	48.1
1970	28.5	20.2	51.3
1975	24.8	22.3	52.9
1980	24.1	21.8	54.1
1985	22.1	24.5	53.4

Re-emergence of Ethnic Pluralism and Its Impact on Foreign Policy Pressure Groups

Indeed, the restoration of democracy and a growing income enabled the political and ethnic minorities to join the democratic system fully. Bosnians, Albanians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Chechens and Turkmens in particular brought their problems to the foreign policy agenda. No government could any longer ignore these groups because they sponsored or supported the main political parties both through financial assistance and voter power.

Already during the Ottoman epoch Turkey had been a migrant-country. With the collapse of the Empire millions of the Ottoman subjects, particularly Muslims and Turks poured into Anatolia from Russia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece. This trend continued throughout the Republican era. In addition to the Turkish and Kurdish population the number of Caucasian, Balkan and Russian immigrants was very high. However these people were not allowed to use their ethnic

²¹ T.C. Maliye ve Gümrük Bakanlığı, *1985 Yıllık Ekonomik Raporu*, (Ankara: 1986), p. 4; Z. Y. Hershlag, *The Contemporary Turkish Economy*, (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 65.

identity in politics, and were seriously warned not to interfere in the affairs of the country of their origin. The early Republican policy was based on the Turkification of these people, and this policy continued until the end of the Cold War. In the 1980s the leftist and Kemalist groups perceived the outside Turks and the problems of the ethnic groups in Turkey as endangering Turkish independence. For them, any connection between Turkish citizens and any other country was unacceptable. However there were millions of them.

By now their numbers had grown substantially. According to Edward Shvardnadze, the President of Georgia, the number of the Georgians in Turkey was about 2 million.²² There was similar number of Azerbaijanis and Chechens. Though most of these people had been Islamised and Turkified, they still spoke their language and had a different identity awareness. As a result, thanks to the democratisation and economic growth, each of these minorities came to its own lobbying organisations, publishing houses and established links with political parties. Particularly active were the Azerbaijanis and the Chechens. Another large migrant group, Balkan migrants, settled down in the Bursa, Adapazarı and Istanbul provinces. Millions of them had come during the Ottoman years, like Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, Bulgarian and Macedonian Muslims. With the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece in the 1920s and in subsequent years, their numbers dramatically increased and they became an important pressure group. In the 1980s, the ethnic cleansing campaign in Bulgaria forced about 300,000 Bulgarian Turks and Muslims to move to Turkey which made the Balkan community as one of the biggest lobbies in Turkey. As a result the Balkan migrants became one of the largest pressure group in Turkey. Apart from the Balkan and Caucasia migrants, there were Central Asian migrants as well, like the Kazaks and Uygurs Turks, who came to Turkey after the communist revolution in China, and the Kyrgyzs and Afghanis, who came after the Soviet occupation.

The effect of these ethnic groups on foreign policy was dramatic. With the increasing role of ethnic groups, Turkey's relations with the region intensified. These ethnic pressure groups forced Turkish policy makers into a more sensitive foreign policy towards these countries. As a result, the problems in these countries became Turkey's own problems, as witnessed by the Bosnian War and the Nagorna-Karabagh problem between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In other words, the ethnic groups created their own foreign policy aims, which were different from the state's Kemalist foreign policy. Turgut Özal saw this change and sought to develop a foreign policy covering all these sector demands.

²² *Milliyet*, 26 June 1996.

Globalisation of the Turkish Economy

Apart from the structural change and the rapid development of the Turkish economy, the share of exports in the economy was dramatically increased. In the first years, when the difficulties with the EC markets increased, Turkish businessmen focused on the Middle East countries, notably Iran, Iraq, Libya and Saudi Arabia. Thus, for the first time in Republican history, the Turkish economy became dependent on economic conditions in the Muslim world. In addition to the oil trade, Turkey attached great importance to export, tourism and the construction sectors. Moreover, in time, the European Community, became the first and most important export area for Turkish goods, with over a 50 % share. In addition to the EC and the Middle East, trade with the US, the Balkans, Central Asia and the Russian Federation markets became vital for Turkish businessmen, and the dependant classes. Thanks to the Özalist economic measures of the early 1980s, by abandoning its inward-oriented economic policies Turkey succeeded not only in diversifying its exports but also in becoming an important market for direct foreign investment.²³ The Istanbul exchange was now considered one of the most important financial markets in south-eastern Europe, together with that of Athens. That is to say, contrary to the small Turkish market in the 1920s-30s, Turkey was now one of the most rapidly developing international markets, with billions-dollars of foreign investments. Hence, an isolationist policy, like Kemalist foreign policy of the early Republican years, was virtually impossible. Turkey became the third biggest market among the non-EC European countries, after Switzerland and Russia. All these factors affected and sometimes forced the Özal administration to improve Turkey's economic and political relations with the EC and other economic partners. Thus, for example, Turkey was very careful not to annoy Germany, its biggest economic partner. Similarly, contrary to the early Republican indifference towards the region Turkey's growing economic interests in the region and new export-oriented policies inevitably raised Turkish consciousness toward the Middle East.²⁴

In short, with the internationalisation of the economy, Turkish businessmen imposed their agenda on the state or manipulated the official foreign policy.

²³ Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, (New York: Rowman, 1998), p. 164.

²⁴ Graham E. Fuller, 'Turkey's New Eastern Orientation', in Fuller and Lesser (eds.), *Turkey's*, p. 39.

Kurdish Separatism and the Need for a New Identity

Kemalist nationalism let many Kurdish nationalists down after the Independence War. As a Turkist, Kemal sought to establish a homogeneous country and eliminated other ethnic and cultural differences from the state machinery. Kurdish was banned and Kurdish names of towns were changed into Turkish names. In the Seyh Sait Revolt (1925) and in the Dersim (Tunceli) Revolts (1937-1938), the Kemalist state suppressed the Kurdish-Islamist separatists by using violence. Many were hanged. The main factor that united the Kurds and Turks was Islam. The secular and nationalist Republicans undermined that, hence, the unrest in the region continued. Yet the separatists were too weak to launch a general riot. However, thanks to the anarchic environment of the 1970s, the separatist Kurds united groups and claimed an independence or autonomy for the Kurdish people. In 1980s the separatist Kurdish became a significant armed movement under the PKK's leadership. In a decade the PKK gathered about 10,000 armed men and thousands more sympathisers. By the late 1980s, the Kurdish question dominated the political agenda, and all political parties searched for a solution. Kemalist Turkish identity, thus, was no longer satisfying for some parts of Turkish society, and the Kurdish problem underscored this problem. Kurds and other ethnic and political groups (Islamists, socialists etc.) demanded a new identity and citizenship definition that would include ethnicity, cultures, religion, political ideas and minority languages. Özal claimed that the main pillars of the Republic needed to be re-considered, notably Turkish citizenship, unity, individual rights and the state's rights and responsibilities.

This policy created a Second Republican current in domestic politics.²⁵ In foreign policy matters it created neo-Ottomanism or Özalist Foreign Policy understanding. This manifested itself in a wider identity abroad, Ottoman rather than Turkish covering all neighbouring Muslim peoples (like the Kurds in the northern Iraq) and all minorities in Turkey. For example, after the Gulf War Özal claimed that Turkey was the protector of the Iraqi Kurds and Turkmens in its capacity as the 'big brother' of these peoples, arguing that a federation between these peoples was possible under Turkish sponsorship. In sum, the Kurdish problem not only increased the political liberalism of Özalism but also nourished its Ottomanist elements.

²⁵ The leading Second Republicanists are: Mehmet Altan, Ahmet Altan, Asaf Savaş Akat, Ethem Mahçupyan.

IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF ÖZALIST FOREIGN POLICY: DEMOCRAT, WESTERN, MUSLIM AND TURKISH

A New Civilisation Understanding and Özalist Westernism

It will be recalled that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his friends had aimed at creating a mostly religious-free and European Turkey by changing the civilisational mode of the country, as they viewed Islam and Ottoman tradition as responsible for poverty, political corruption and economic collapse. For Özal there was no compulsory relationship between progress and Western civilisation. Contrary to the positivist *İttihatçılar* and Republicanists, Özal argued that Western civilisation was not the only civilisation on earth, and that Turkey did not have to choose between either the European, Turkish or Islamic civilisations. For Özal, the Turks were European Muslims; therefore Turkey did not need to change its mentality or civilisational mode to be European. In his book '*Turkey in Europe, Europe in Turkey*'²⁶, he argued that Turkey had always been, still was, and would be a part of Europe. In brief, the main difference between Kemal and Özal's European vocation was that the former internationalised the European values while the latter did not see any problem with Turkish civilisation. For Özal, responsibility for Turkish backwardness lay in the lack of liberalism and scientific thinking. He formulated his understanding as '*çağ atlamak*' (skipping an age), whereby Turkey did not have to re-experience the enlightenment process undergone by the West because the fruits of the enlightenment could easily be adopted by today's Turkey. These, in his view, were liberalism, human rights, democracy, technological and scientific developments and Turkish culture was not an obstacle to receive all of them. Özal even claimed that if Turkey tried to re-experience the European positivist, autocratic past, it would never reach these aims. In other words, Özal's Western vocation, contrary to Atatürk's, was based on the assumption that the Europeans must accept the Turks as they were. Undoubtedly, the reason for this confidence was Özal's ideological background and dramatic economic performance, which led to the stability and co-existence between Islamic values and modernity witnessed in the 1980s.

For Özal, the Islamic awakening was also on advantage in integrating Turkey with the rest of Europe and the Western system because the Turkish version of Islam was different from the Iranian or the Arab Islam. He claimed that the Turkish Islamic outlook could provide peace between

²⁶ Turgut Özal, *Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey*, (Nicosia, Northern Cyprus: K. Rustem & Brother, 1991).

Muslims and the others, since religion and progress could go hand in hand.²⁷ As a Westernist and a pious Muslim, Özal accommodated his Islamic understanding to Westernism:

“I have demonstrated that Turkey has never abandoned secularism. In this context one can refer to Ghazali’s distinction between faith and reason. The Turks are aware that faith in itself does not affect secularism, nor does prevent him from being rational, provided that their respective realms are not encroached. In life today there is no difference in this respect between the Christian European and the Muslim Turk. Thus a synthesis has been achieved between the West and Islam, a synthesis which has put an end to the identity crisis of the Turks... the universal humanism created by secularised Islam, together with the concept of the brotherhood of mankind, a product of Turkish Sufism.”²⁸

For Özal, Turks do not need to be shamed of their civilisation, because Turkish civilisation was not a lower civilisation, but one of the many advanced civilisations in the world:

“The Turks living in this territory for a thousand years, have inherited some part of culture of every civilisation which flourished here since prehistory. They have evolved a synthesis derived from the cultural legacy of Anatolia, from the culture they brought with them from Central Asia, and from the Muslim religion. Their talent for synthesis and their ecumenical character have enabled them to blend these three strands together.”²⁹

Apart from his different civilisation understanding, Turgut Özal, contrary to Kemalist Western scepticism, believed that Turkey could solve its security problem only through integration with the West, because Turkey and the Western countries were opposed to any possible conflict or instability. If Turkey managed to enter the EC, it would be far away from any war risk: ‘Like the founding members of the EC, we favour integration primarily in order to eliminate any possibility of war between the constituent nation-states. Turkey like all European countries, has suffered enormously from wars.’³⁰

In line with this view, Özal made efforts to convince the Europeans to accept the Turks as Muslim Europeans into the European political system.

²⁷ Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled, Atatürk and After*, (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1997), p. 163.

²⁸ Özal, *Turkey*, pp. 296-297.

²⁹ Özal, *Turkey*, p. 345.

³⁰ Özal, *Turkey*, p. 343.

On the other hand he tried to demolish the Turkish Western scepticism, were Turkey to be integrated with the West, it would be advanced in terms of democracy and economy:

*“Political integration with Europe will further ease the institutionalisation of democracy in the Turkish political system. A secular and pluralist culture has been gradually taking root in Turkey. Integration with the EC will only enhance its ability to persist into the twenty-first century.”*³¹

A New Look at the Ottoman Past and the Region

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had sought to eradicate anything reminiscent of the Ottoman-Islamic past. For Özal, Turkey’s past was its most important advantage in entering the Western club. Moreover, while Mustafa Kemal saw the Ottoman heritage as the source of problems in the region, Özal claimed that Turkey could solve the regional problems due to the Ottoman past. He even argued that the Ottoman heritage granted Turkey great power to control the region, saying that ‘Turkey cannot be prisoner of the *Misak-i Milli* (National Pact) borders’. He further implied that the only solution to the Kurdish problem and other matters in the Middle East was a federation between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, which was considered as the resurgence of the Ottoman Empire by the leftist groups in Turkey. For Özal, Ottoman political and cultural systems could be a perfect model for 20th century Turkey. For example, his *eyalet sistemi* (state system), the localisation of the administration, and the presidential system suggestions were all inspired by the Ottoman past.

Turkish Islam and Turkish-Islamic Synthesis

In spite of Kemalism’s anti-religion stance, Özal was known as a pious Muslim, if not an Islamist. As noted earlier, he was one of the candidates of Islamist NSP in the 1979 elections. However, his Islam was different from either the Kemalist or the NSP Islam. His friend and follower Cengiz Çandar spelled out the difference:

Republican secularism was inspired by French and Soviet atheism. Therefore, in the 1920s Republican secularism became atheism. In time, Kemalist secularism became an anti-religion and anti-Islam concept. When Turkish Islam, rooted in the Ottoman and Seljuki Islamic cultures was suppressed by the State, Arabic Islam, which is a less moderate, more radical version, became the leader in the world. Now when Özal and me

³¹ Özal, *Turkey*, pp. 330-331.

visited the Turkish communities in the Balkans, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Central Asia, in Azerbaijan, in Kazakhstan, we saw a completely different Islam from the Arab version: a Turkified Islam. A more moderate Islam. An Islam which is suitable for liberalism and democracy. I mean Turkish Islam is so different. Kemalists cannot accept that a country needs religion as well, because their ideology was an imported ideology and not suitable for Turkish cultural structure. We have to accept that Turkey is a Muslim country.³²

In other words, Özal was against the Kemalist interpretation of secularism and Arab Islamism. He argued that Turkey needed an Anglo-Saxon secularism and a Turkish version of Islam, which was much more tolerant of other religious groups and more moderate than French and Soviet secularism, or rather atheism. He searched for a middle-way between Islamism and Turkism, his aim being to formulate a religious understanding which was suitable for democracy, liberalism and capitalism. The answer was *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (Turkish-Islamic synthesis). Originally developed by the Turkist *Aydınlar Ocağı* (Hearts of the Enlightened Society), this synthesis was seen by Özal as the answer for 1980s Turkey, hence it became the guiding principle of his policies. According to this approach, Islam held a special attraction for the Turks owing to a number of striking similarities between their pre-Islamic and Islamic cultures. 'They shared a deep sense of justice, monotheism and a belief in the immortal soul, and a strong emphasis on family life and morality.'³³ However, despite these similarities, Turkish culture was not merely based on Islamic or pre-Islamic culture but on both of them. Therefore, Turkish Islam is more tolerant, more liberal and democratic than the other interpretation of Islam.

Özalist Turkism

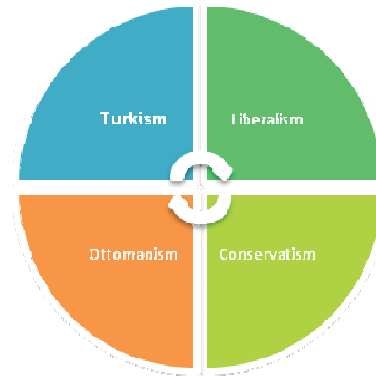
Turkism constituted one of the main elements of Özalism. However, his Turkism was neither irredentist, like Enver Pasha's Turkism, nor isolationist, like Kemal's. For Ottoman Turkists, the ultimate aim was a Turkish Empire covering all Turkish tribes who were under Russian, Chinese and Iranian rules. On the other hand, as a reaction to adventurist Turkism, Atatürk developed an isolationist Turkism, viewing the outside a danger for the Anatolian Turks. Hence Atatürk's Turkey had no interest in the outside Turks, and gave no support for Turkish resistance against any power, like the Azerbaijanis against the communist attacks in the 1920s.

³² Interview with Cengiz Çandar in Metin Sezer and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları* (Second Republic Debates), (Ankara: Başak Publications, 1993), p. 101.

³³ Zürcher, *Turkey*, p. 303.

Conversely, for Özal Turkism was an important element in Turkish citizens' identity and in Turkish foreign policy particularly after the Cold War, when the new world order was based on economic alignment and solidarity among kin states. As a result Özal saw Turkism as one of the cornerstones of Turkish modernisation inside and of the transformation of Turkish foreign policy. However, territorial nationalism or an irredentism did not match his Turkism. Özalist Turkism was a cultural concept aimed at economic and cultural domination of the Turks rather than territorial expansionism. The Turkish states were relatively poor and weak countries, therefore possible co-operation among them would be useful to overcome their problems. Özal saw Turkey at the heart of a possible Turkish bloc and he predicted that it would benefit from the leadership of a Turkish alignment.

Moreover, unlike Kemalist Turkism, Özalist Turkism was not a reactionary movement in domestic politics. As noted earlier, Atatürk's nationalism was a reaction to the minority separatism, Western antagonism and Ottoman Islamism. However Özal's Turkism was not against the West or any minority group in Turkey. On the contrary, it was a search to accommodate all different ethnic and political groups under a wide Turkish concept. Özal's Turkism can be likened to Americanism in United States.



Özal fused the previous Turkism, Ottomanism, Conservatism and Liberalism into a new kind of Ottomanism or rather Özalism

Liberalism and Americanism

As mentioned, during his studies in the United States Özal became an admirer of the American political, cultural and economic system. His dream was to make Turkey another America – his role model. It can be

argued that Özal's ideology consisted of American secularism, American democracy, American capitalism and American liberalism. Therefore, Turkish-American relations were vital for Özal's domestic and external policies.³⁴ When comparing the American and the Turkish system, Özal argued that Turkey had a communist system in bureaucracy and economy. For him the Kemalist *etatist* principle was one of the culprits for the failure of the Turkish economy. He further argued that protectionism had made the Turkish industry inefficient, un-competitive and expensive. Moreover, from the Özalist perspective there was a very close relationship between economic liberalism and democratisation. He gave special importance to individual rights in contrast to the Kemalist approach which gave the state the first priority. In 1979 Özal said:

*“A strong state does not mean a patriarchal state. The aim is not richness of the state but richness of the nation. If people are rich, it means that the state is rich. In economy or political spheres the state should not compete with the people, but support them. The people are not the servants of the state, but the state must be servant of the people.”*³⁵

It can be said that one of the main pillars of Özalism, with its Turkism and Islamism, was liberalism and American-type democracy. For Özal, all these principles were compatible, not contradictory.

Özalism vs. Kemalism?

Against this backdrop it is hardly surprising that Özal was not happy with the Kemalist establishment and its principles. Çandar argues that although he was Prime Minister, then President of the Turkish State, Özal was an anti-state person:

*“He was opposed to almost all the principles of the regime dominating the state. While he was the President he opposed the state, and when he died he was buried not in a state cemetery. He now lies near by those who were hanged by the state, like Menderes.”*³⁶

Çandar claims that Özal represented the people's anti-Kemalist and anti-regime feelings, having attacked virtually all Kemalist principles, like

³⁴ Özal pursued an EC-type relation with United States in economics and politics.

³⁵ Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları (Second Republic Debates)*, (Ankara: Başak, 1993), p. 17.

³⁶ Interview with Cengiz Çandar in Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları (Second Republic Debates)*, (Ankara: Başak, 1993), p. 103.

secularism, etatism, nationalism and populism. His civilisational understanding was completely different from the Kemalist Western-centred civilisation understanding. Mustafa Kemal had dreamed of a Turkified, secular, Western society in Europe. Özal's dream was of a Muslim, democratic, liberal, capitalist society with multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religion aspects and with a secular state which respected its subjects' cultural and religious differences.³⁷

ÖZALISM IN FOREIGN POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION

Having provided the ideological and political background of Özal's foreign policy, his actual policies can now be examined. The Özal era in foreign policy can be divided into two separate periods: during the early years (1983-1989) the Özal government had to focus on the domestic problems, notably the economy, competition between the civilian politicians and the coup leaders and political stability, while in the second period (1989-1992) Özal concentrated on foreign policy and democratisation.

Top Decision Makers in Turkish Politics 1982-1990		
President	Prime Minister	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kenan Evren (7 Nov. 1982-9 Nov. 1989)	Saim Bülent Ulusu (Ulus Government 20 Sep. 1980-13 Dec. 1983)	İlter Türkmen
	Turgut Özal (1. Özal Government 13 Dec. 1983-21 Dec. 1987)	Vahit Melih Halefoğlu
	Turgut Özal (2. Özal Government 21 Dec. 1987-9 June 1989)	Ahmet Mesut Yılmaz

³⁷ Özal's critics for Kemalism produced two theoretical prescriptions: inside, Second Republicanism and in foreign policy issues neo-Ottomanism and Second Republicanists formulated Özal's ideology as re-establish the main pillars of the Republic on democracy, liberalism, a moderate secularism, a pluralist nationalism and free market economy instead of the Kemalist Jacobinism, absolute positivism, revolutionarism, laicism, etatism and Turkism. Since the details of the Second Republicanism fall outside of the limits of this study, we will just note its impact on foreign policy.

Prelude to Neo-Ottomanism (1983-89): First Özal Period

It is difficult to talk about Özalist foreign policy understanding in most of the 1980s because, thanks to the effect of the military coup, Turkey had been isolated from the democratic world, and the internal economic and political transformation prevented it from opening to the world. Therefore, Özal's first task in foreign policy was to restore Turkey's external relations.

In the first years of the Özal government, Turkey was under heavy European and American pressure on human rights and democratisation issues. Despite Özal's efforts, the European Community in particular refused to normalise relations. This raised formidable obstacles in addition to the traditional and structural problems. The most important barrier during these years was the lack of communication, as the institutions and instruments for communication were removed by the EC. Also, the negative propaganda of Turkish deportees and exiles in Western Europe, who escaped after the coup, fortified the historical image of the Turks in European mind. Meanwhile, anti-European feelings in Turkey were dramatically increasing. Turkey was overcoming its problems despite the EC, and now the EC did not even want to listen to it. The second barrier to improved relations was the Greek factor. While Turkey had been isolated from Europe, Greece had become the tenth member of the Community. Greece, which had always viewed Turkey as a hostile country, used the EC as a weapon against Turkey.³⁸

Relations with the United States

Turkish-American relations had been under severe tension since the 1964 Johnson Letter. The Poppy Growing Crisis the Turkish Cyprus Operation and Arms Sale Embargo worsened the relations. However with the 1982 military coup the tension in the relations abated markedly.³⁹ Several developments and factors in the 1980s contributed to put the relations back on stronger footing.⁴⁰ First of all the United States was more understanding about the coup and its domestic 'anti-democratic' policies compared with the EC's intolerance. The Americans even said that the Turkish military coup was no ordinary coup but a necessary intervention in politics. The ideological background of the 12 September Coup leaders also helped to improve relations. Most of the coup generals were pro-Western. For Evren and friends, communism was one of the deadly threats

³⁸ Mehmet Ali Birand, *Türkiye'nin Ortak Pazar Macerası: 1959-1985*, (*Turkey's Common Market Adventure*), (Istanbul: Milliyet, 1986), p. 412.

³⁹ Hale, *Turkish Foreign...*, p. 163.

⁴⁰ Sabri Sayarı, 'Turkey and the United States: Changing Dynamics of an Enduring Alliance', in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (eds.), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century, A Changing Role in World Politics*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 30.

to Turkish security and Turkish-American friendship was vital to prevent the Soviet threats outside and communist activities inside. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and rise of radical Islamism in Iran with 1979 Revolution were also common concerns of the US and the military regime in Turkey. After the Iran Islamic Revolution Turkey became the only Western ally in the northern ties.⁴¹ With the increasing possibility of Soviet advance towards the Middle East after the Afghanistan occupation, Turkey became much more important in American politics while Turkey felt more Soviet threat in its eastern borders. Finally the rise of Turgut Özal in Turkish politics impacted Turkish-American relations more positively. Özal was an US admirer and considered the Reagan and Thatcher liberalism as a model for the new Turkey. Apart from these factors, the arms embargo had been repealed and the US military bases were functioning again in the beginning of 1980.⁴²

The signature of a new Defence and Economic Cooperation agreement (DECA)⁴³ in March 1980 was a clear sign of the new period in American-Turkish relations. Negotiations for anew DECA were started in 1979 Winter yet with the failure of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit in the 1979 October Elections the new Demirel Government continued the negotiations. Süleyman Demirel was very enthusiastic to reach an agreement, however as a result of the disagreements over some issues the negotiations continued for months. The draft agreement covered three main areas:

- US security assistance to Turkey,
- Turkish provisions of electronic and other facilities to the US
- Co-production of defence hardware and supplies.

The only problem-free area was hardware and supplies co-production. After the arms sale embargo Turkey wanted more financial commitments from Washington to cover several years and concrete presidential guarantees for long-term promises.⁴⁴ With the compromises the agreement was signed on 29 March 1980 in Ankara. However as the Turkish Parliament was busy with the presidential elections for the months, the agreement was ratified on 18 November 1980 by the Cabinet after the 12 September military coup.⁴⁵ With the new DECA the American assistance

⁴¹ Hale, *Turkish Foreign...*, p. 163.

⁴² James W. Spain, *American Diplomacy in Turkey, Memoirs of an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*, (New York: Praeger, 1984), p. 30.

⁴³ *Savunma ve İşbirliği Anlaşması*, SEİA.

⁴⁴ Spain, *American...*, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Çağrı Erhan, 'ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler' (*Relations with the US and NATO*), in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşı'ndan Bugüne Olgular*, Bel-

to Turkey increased and Turkey became the third largest recipient of U.S. military assistance, after Israel and Egypt.

U.S. Aid to Turkey 1980-1990 <i>million U.S. dollars</i>												
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1980-1990
Security Assistance Grants	-	-	57	110	130	215	206	312	312	410	412	2.164
Security Assistance Credit	208	250	343	290	585	485	409	178	178	90	86	3.102
Total Security Assistance	208	250	400	400	715	700	615	490	490	500	498	5.266
Economic Aid	198	201	300	245	175	185	119	100	32	60	14	1.629

Another problem was that Demirel Government did not give any commitment regarding to Greece's entrance into the NATO's military wing.⁴⁶

The DECA with the reduction tendency of conventional forces in Western Europe also contributed to development of the Turkish national defence industry. The U.S and some other NATO members transferred surplus military material to Turkey, Greece and Portugal.⁴⁷ Apart from the weapon transfers, Özal government made enormous efforts to establish its own defence industry. There is no doubt that the main reason for this was the traumatic experience of the American arms embargo of the 1970s. Though the first coup leaders had attached great importance to a national defence industry, it was Özal who devoted huge budgets to defence development projects and encouraged Turkish businessmen to invest in the security industry. The humble efforts resulted in a sophisticated national defence industry in the late 1980s and Turkey became a supplier of anti-craft weapons, small arms, communication equipment, military vehicles and other equipment to NATO members and some other friendly countries,

geler, Yorumlar (Turkish Foreign Policy), (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001, Second edition), Vol. 1, p. 712.

⁴⁶ Omer Goksal Isyar, 'An analysis of Turkish-American Relations from 1945 to 2004: Initiatives and Reactions in Turkish Foreign Policy', *Alternatives*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Fall 2005, p. 28.

⁴⁷ Hale, *Turkish...*, p. 165.

like Egypt and Pakistan. On 10 June 1987, in co-operation with an American consortium, an F-16 project was started and Turkey entered the aircraft industry as a producer. Some of the Turkish F-16s were exported to other countries, like Egypt. That is to say, despite Özal's Americanism, Turkey had learned the lessons of the arms embargo and realised importance of being independence on defence industry. As a result, unlike Menderes and Demirel, Özal did not rely solely on the West in the security matters.

American Bases in Turkey after the DECA 1980

İncirlik Air Base, Adana
 Sinop Electro Magnetic Surveillance Base
 Piriñçlik Radar Warning and Space Surveillance Base
 Yamanlar, İzmir
 Şahintepe, Gemlik
 Elmadağ, Ankara
 Karataş, Adana
 Mahmurdağ, Samsun
 Alemdağ, İstanbul
 Kürecik, Malatya
 Belbaşı Seismic
 Kargaburun

During Ronald Reagan's first administration, relations between Turkey and the United States improved significantly. President Reagan saw the Soviet Union as 'the focus of evil in the modern world and took a firm anti-Communist line against Moscow.⁴⁸ The competition between two blocs was dramatically escalated and Turkey was a valuable partner in the increasing tension. However, in the second Reagan term, the change in the international balance of power and increasing pressure from Armenian and Greek lobbies in the American Congress prevented the expansion of close relations. The Greek and Armenian lobbies tried to limit U.S. aid to Turkey. The Congress adopted a 10:7 ratio policy in aid to Turkey and Greece which allowed 10 US dollars in aid to Turkey for every 7 US dollars to Greece. The Congress under the anti-Turkey lobbies for example cut the proposed aid package to Turkey for 1988 from 914 million dollars to 570 million dollars.⁴⁹ Another source of frustration and dismay in Turkey was the congressional and executive treatment of the Armenian issue.⁵⁰ Although no resolution was officially accepted, Turkey was continually insulted by American politicians and media. The Armenians named the 1915 Relocation decision as 'genocide' against the Armenians. When the pro-Armenian congressmen in 1984 made campaign to declare 24 April as an official day of mourning for the Armenians who they

⁴⁸ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism, American Foreign Policy since 1938*, (New York: Penguin, 1993), p. 303.

⁴⁹ Hale, *Turkish...*, p. 166.

⁵⁰ Ian O. Lesser, 'Bridge or Barrier? Turkey and the West After the Cold War', in Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkey's New Geopolitics, from the Balkans to Western China*, (Boulder: Westview, 1993), p. 122.

claimed had been killed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915⁵¹ Turkish Premier Özal blamed the Congress of encouraging Armenian terrorism:

*“ We see all these resolutions and attempts in the U.S. Congress are thoughtlessness. We are shocked that some follow such a dirty and chip policies aiming short term gaining before the local elections. This kind of decisions provide a clear support to ASALA and other (Armenian) terrorist organizations bloody activities which also target the U.S. citizens too. If tomorrow one more innocent Turkish diplomat is massacred by these murderers will those, who accepted this resolution, feel any responsibility for such murders?”*⁵²

The Armenian resolutions increased anti-American reactions in Turkey and the main opposition party RPP (Republican People’s Party) called to withdraw from the NATO.⁵³ Armenians continued their anti-Turkey efforts in the U.S. and after another Armenian resolution attempt in 1987, Turkish President Kenan Evren called off a long-planned trip to Washington. In addition the government restricted the use of the İncirlik air base in Adana. As a result the Armenian resolution caused a crisis in DECA negotiations. The new DECA was eventually signed in 1988 for four more years yet the relations continued to be exposed to the bad effects of the anti-Turkey lobbies in the Congress.

Obviously the most important reason for weakening Turkish-American relations in the second Reagan term was the decline in the Soviet threat. The rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, the gradual thaw in US - Soviet Union relations, the impending Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, all these made Turkey’s defence needs less urgent from the American

⁵¹ When the Ottoman Armenians in the eastern provinces rioted against the Ottoman Empire and many Armenians joined the Russian occupying forces the Istanbul Government decided to relocate the Eastern Armenian population to another Ottoman province, Syria. However the war circumstances, communal clashes and bad weather caused a tragedy and thousands of Armenians died. In the armed Armenian nationalist attacks more than 520.000 Turkish and Kurdish were massacred in the same years. However the Armenian nationalists accused the Ottoman Empire of committing ‘genocide’. Thanks to about 1-million Armenian population in the U.S. and strong Armenian lobby in the Congress, pro-Armenian approach dominated the American politics. For the Armenian issue see: Sedat Laçiner, ‘Türk – Amerikan İlişkilerinde Ermeni Faktörü’ (*The Armenian factor in Turkish – American Relations*), *Avrasya Dosyası* journal, Vol. 11, No. 2, May-June-July-August 2005, pp. 82-125; Sedat Laçiner, *Türkler ve Ermeniler, Bir Uluslararası İlişkiler Çalışması (Turks and Armenians, An International Relations Study)*, (Ankara: USAK Press, 2005).

⁵² ‘Özal’dan ABD’ye Sert Tepki: İlişkiler Zedelenebilir, Çirkin Politika’, *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul daily), 15 September 1984.

⁵³ ‘Özal’dan...’, *Cumhuriyet* (İstanbul daily), 15 September 1984.

standpoint. Under economic and social pressures, the Congress cut the defence budget. The decreased American aid to Turkey with the Greek and Armenian lobbies' anti-Turkey campaigns worsened relations. Nevertheless, Özal continued his efforts to develop a special relationship with the United States and the Gulf War gave a special opportunity to restore the relations.

Turkey-US Trade										
1980-1989										
<i>million US dollars</i>										
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Export to U.S.	127	267	251	231	368	506	549	713	760	971
Total Export	-	4.703	5.746	5.728	7.134	7.958	7.457	10.190	11.662	11.625
Import from the U.S.	442	589	813	695	1.073	1.150	1.176	1.365	1.519	2.094
Total Import	-	8.933	8.842	9.235	10.757	11.343	11.104	14.157	14.335	15.800

Relations with the Middle East

Although, Özal continued to see integration with the West as a prime foreign policy goal due to its isolation from the West, he had to make efforts to develop relations with the region. Also, the growing Turkish exports forced Turkish policy makers to look at the neglected regions such as the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Middle East. Despite the crisis with Bulgaria, Greece, Lebanon and Syria in the 1980s, Turkey's relations with these regions were improved, particularly in the economic sphere.

Turkish Export to the Middle East Neighbour Countries									
1981-1989									
<i>Million U.S. Dollars</i>									
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Iran	233	791	1.087	751	1.079	564	439	546	561
Iraq	559	610	319	934	961	553	945	986	445
Syria	129	63	59	62	56	62	60	143	177
Export to 3 ME Neighbour Countries	921	1.464	1.465	1.747	2.096	1.179	1.444	1.675	1.183
Export to Middle East	1.894 (40,3%)	2.544 (44,3%)	2.442 (42,6%)	2.826 (39,6%)	3.247 (40,8%)	2.306 (30,9%)	2523.8 (24,7%)	3321.1 (28,4%)	
Total Export	4.703	5.746	5.728	7.134	7.958	7.457	10.190	11.662	11.625
Turkish Import from the Middle East Neighbour Countries									
1981-1989									
<i>Million U.S. Dollars</i>									
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Iran	514	748	1.222	1.565	1.264	221	948	659	233
Iraq	1.564	1.417	946	926	1.137	769	1.154	1.440	1.650
Syria	19	14	3.75	18	16	19	5	4.4	17.7
Import from 3 ME Neighbour Countries	2.097	2.179	2.175	2.509	2.417	1.009	2.107	2.103	1.900
Total Import	8.933	8.842	9.235	10.757	11.343	11.104	14.157	14.335	15.800

Although exports to all regions grew substantially, trade with the Middle Eastern countries exploded.⁵⁴ Thus the economic factors became more important role in shaping relations with the Middle East. With the rise of oil prices and growing Turkish consumption Turkish dependency on

⁵⁴ Tercan Baysan and Charles Blitzer, 'Turkey's Trade Liberalization in the 1980s and Prospects for Its Sustainability', in Tosun Arıcanlı and Dani Rodrik, *The Political Economy of Turkey, Debt, Adjustment and Sustainability*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 24; Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1991), p. 101.

the Middle East oil continued to increase in the 1980s. Turkish import from the Middle East rose from about 64 million dollars in 1970 to 2.8 billion dollars in 1985.⁵⁵ Turkey needed to find new markets in the region in order to balance its energy imports and Turkish export boomed to the region. Turkey's export to the region was only 54 million dollars in 1970. The Turkish export figure to the region dramatically rose and reached 3 billion dollars in 1985.⁵⁶ 40.8 % of Turkish export goods went to the regional countries in 1985. The Middle East and Islamic countries in general became main consumer of Turkish industrial goods while Turkey exported to the West chiefly agricultural and textile goods.⁵⁷ The share of Middle Eastern countries in Turkish manufactured exports rose from 15.1 % in 1979 to 33.2 % in 1981, 40.3 % in 1983 and 41.9 % in 1985.⁵⁸

Apart from foreign trade, Turkish companies won about 18.3 billion dollars worth contracts from the Middle Eastern countries between 1974 and 1990. In 1978 there were 22 Turkish contracting companies in the region. The number first increased to 113 in 1981 and 242 in 1982. More than 300 Turkish companies poured into the Middle East during the 1980s and made billions of dollars business. Libya became the biggest market for Turkish contracting companies. Saudi Arabia and Iraq were also popular markets. The Government supported Turkish contracting and trade companies with low interest credits in the Middle East region and Turkey became one of the significant creditors especially for Iraq and Iran. Iraqi debt to Turkey was about 2 billion dollars in 1989.⁵⁹

When the contracting companies demanded more Turkish workers for their Middle East businesses, the number of Turkish emigrant workers in these countries reached 250.000 people.

The economic ties strengthened the political relations and Ankara made more efforts for more co-operations. Decline and crash of oil prices in 1985 and the end of the Iran-Iraq War caused greater competition for Turkish companies yet the region did not lose its special place in Turkish economic and political relations. The economic slow down of the Arab economies badly affected Turkish contracting sector and the number of Turkish workers in the Arab world shrank to 151.860 in 1987.

⁵⁵ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*..., p. 170.

⁵⁶ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*..., p. 170.

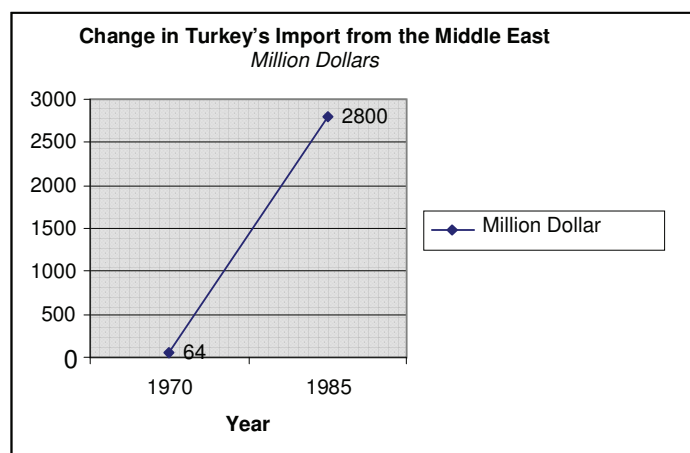
⁵⁷ Z. Y. Hershlag, *The Contemporary Turkish Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 84.

⁵⁸ Fikret Şenses, 'An Assessment of the Pattern of Turkish Manufactured Export Growth in the 1980s and Its Prospects', in Tosun Arıcanlı and Dani Rodrik, *The Political Economy of Turkey, Debt, Adjustment and Sustainability*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 64.

⁵⁹ Robins, *Turkey*..., p. 110.

Turkey in the coup regime and Özal period sought to avoid taking sides in the regional disputes. It for example maintained strict neutrality in Iran-Iraq War.⁶⁰ The booming economic relationship with both sides was one of the reasons. Another reason was that Turkey still saw the Middle East problems as source of instability. Turkey, different from the Menderes period, also became more cautious in supporting the U.S.' and European powers' policies in the Middle East. Turkish and Western interests in the region were not considered identical although the similarities and common interests were accepted.

Turkey became more pro-Palestinian under the 12 September Military regime. Özal Governments continued this policy. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had opened its first Turkey office in 1976. However the close relations between some of the PLO groups and the Armenian ASALA terror organization⁶¹, some far left Turkish terrorists and Kurdist separatist terrorists made Turkey more careful. The Syrian and Lebanon support for the Turkish Marxist and Kurdist terrorists also undermined Turkey-Arab relations during the 1980s. The disagreements over the flow



of water from Euphrates (*Fırat*) and Tigris (*Dicle*) also deteriorated Turkish-Syrian and Turkish-Iraqi relations.⁶² The construction of huge dams in the South-eastern region of Turkey angered the downstream countries, Syria and Iraq, and they made political pressure to get legal

⁶⁰ Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999), p. 62.

⁶¹ For Armenian terror see: Michael M. Gunter, 'Pursuing Just Cause of Their People', *A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*, (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1986); Francis P. Hyland, *Armenian Terrorism, The Past, The Present, The Prospects*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991).

⁶² Çelik, *Turkish...*, p. 65.

guarantees on the water. Almost all Arab countries supported Syria and Iraq as part of ethnic solidarity. Greece and some other countries also abused the water issue to weaken Turkey's position in the region. Greece (and Greek Cyprus) also tried to establish an anti-Turkish bloc with Syria and other countries. Terrorists, especially the PKK, abused this international competition and the eastern provinces of Turkey became more destabilised in these years.

Relations with the Balkan Countries

In the first Özal period, in spite of a significant détente, the Cold War circumstances continued to shape Turkey-Balkan relations. Bulgaria, Romania, Albania and Yugoslavia were the socialist countries while Turkey and Greece were in the capitalist bloc. Ironically Turkey's relations with Greece thanks to the Cyprus and Aegean issues, were worse than its relations with the other Balkan countries although Turks and Greeks were allies in the NATO defence system.

Although Bulgaria was a Soviet ally in the Balkans; Turkey sought Bulgarian friendship since 1964. The reason was partly economic and partly political. Turkey saw Bulgaria as an important balancing power against the Greeks in the region. Bulgaria was also a strategic country for Turkey because it with Greece is one of the only two territorial border gates to other European countries. However the assimilation and discrimination of the Bulgaria Turks caused serious problems. The subsequent repressive measures and discrimination against the Turks and some other Muslim groups like Pomaks in Bulgaria during the 1980s became a subject of international outrage (*Bulgarize Campaign*).⁶³ The crises erupted at the end of 1984, when Bulgaria began a sudden and violent campaign to compel all members of the Turkish minority to change their Turkish names and adopt Bulgarian names. In 1986 Amnesty International said it had received the names of more than 100 ethnic Turks reported to have been killed and more than 250 arrested.⁶⁴ The Sofia Government repeated denials of such violence and at the same time did not recognise the Bulgarian Turkish and other Muslim groups' separate identity. For Bulgaria all Muslim Bulgarians had to change their name to 'true Bulgarian names', and they were forced to deny their basic minority rights. Those who resisted the racist campaign were arrested and some of them were even tortured by the Bulgarian police. At the end of 1984 the repressive measures and official racist attacks became an obvious

⁶³ J. F. Brown, 'Turkey: Back to the Balkans?', in Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkey's New Geopolitics, From the Balkans to Western China*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), p. 149.

⁶⁴ Henry Kamm, 'Bulgarian-Turkish Tensions on Minority Rises', *The New York Times*, 4 October 1987.

assimilation campaign. The Turkish people were forbidden to speak Turkish language. Many Turkish Bulgarians resisted the decisions in the northeast and southeast of Bulgaria and many of them were arrested and injured. The racist campaign lasted for years and Todor Zhivkov regime in 1988 strongly encouraged the Turks to leave the country for Turkey.⁶⁵ More than 350.000 Bulgarian Turkish crossed the border as a result of state terror and repressive policies against the minorities.⁶⁶ With the deposition of Zhivkov in November 1989 in Bulgaria the new regime officially encouraged the Turkish refugees to return to Bulgaria because the Turkish immigration had badly affected Bulgarian economy and caused labour shortage. As a result about half of the Bulgarian Turkish refugees returned to Bulgaria and 'the situation of the Turks continued to improve in the post-communist Bulgaria despite the difficulties of many returning Turks in regaining their land and property'.⁶⁷ The Bulgarian Turkish refugees crisis nourished the public interest towards the former Ottoman societies in the Balkans. The Bulgarian Crisis also witnessed the Özalist activism: Prime Minister Turgut Özal harshly criticised the Zhivkov regime and even threatened Bulgaria.⁶⁸

Relations with the EC

The last significant Turkish initiative in foreign policy, in the first Özal period, was its application for full EC membership. Turkey had been an associate member of the EEC since September 1963 and according to Özal, there were three requirements for full membership: being European, democracy and a developed liberal economy. As he saw it, Turkey had met these criteria. The increasing share of the EEC countries in Turkish economic relations also convinced Özal that Turkey's economic future lay with the EEC.⁶⁹ However Özal's enthusiasm for membership was not shared by the EC, notably by Germany. As a result, the Community warned Turkey unofficially that the timing for membership application was not right.⁷⁰ Ignoring these warnings, Turkey applied for full-membership on 14 April 1987, being confident of the acceptance of its application. Turkey the following day also applied for full membership in the West European Union. Özal asserted that 'according to the written agreements,

⁶⁵ Brown, 'Turkey....', p. 149.

⁶⁶ 'Göç Çığ Gibi' (*Immigration Avalanche*), *Cumhuriyet*, 14 June 1989.

⁶⁷ Brown, 'Turkey....', p. 149.

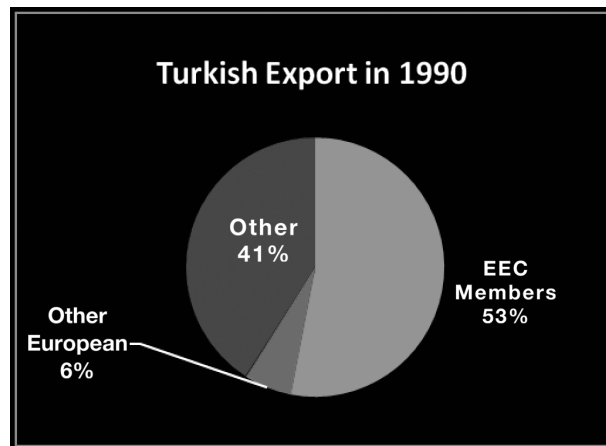
⁶⁸ 'Binlerce Hançereden Tek Ses Yükseliyor: Ordu Sofya'ya' (*Thousands: Army to Sofia*), *Hürriyet*, 18 June 1989.

⁶⁹ Paul B. Henze, *Turkey and Atatürk's Legacy*, (Haarlem, NL: SOTA, 1998), p. 118.

⁷⁰ A. Bozer, 'Turkey's Relations and Prospects with the European Community', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest*, Summer 1997, pp. 9-14, p. 10.

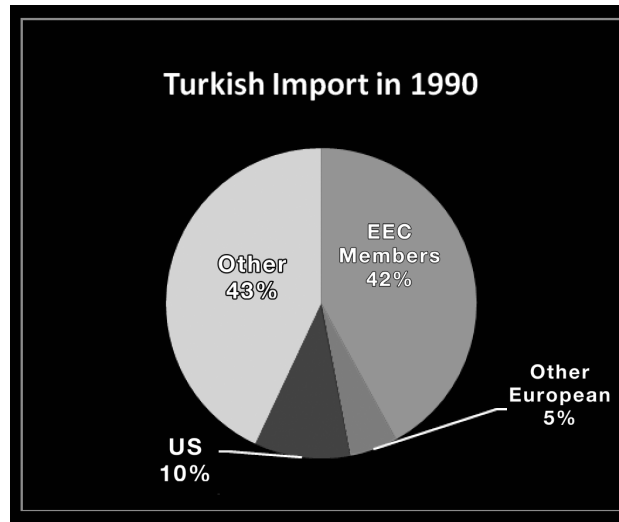
there is no other way, they can delay it, but they cannot refuse it.⁷¹ The Commission's response took thirty months and it issued the official Opinion in December 1989. The Council of Ministries accepted the Opinion in February 1990. The reluctance of the EC was clear though the Commission tried not to spell out its negative opinion. For the EC the official obstacles were economic gap and the political problems, notably human rights issues and Turkey's problems with Greece. The disappointed Özal, in contrast, argued that the real reason was cultural differences and European biases about the Turks. Paul Henze argues that the real reasons to reject the Turks were the German fear that Europe will be flooded with Turkish workers and the reluctance of the many EEC members to accept a state with a large and growing Muslim population as a full member.⁷² Many studies in these years concentrated on Turkish identity crisis, yet the EEC decision vividly showed that Turkey was not alone who faced an identity crisis.

The EC Commission recommended that no accession negotiations should begin until after 1993 at the earliest.



⁷¹ 'Turkey's EEC Full Membership Can Be Delayed But Not Refused', Interview with Turgut Özal, *Turkish Review*, Summer 1987, pp. 15-24, p. 15.

⁷² Henze, *Turkey...*, p. 119.



As has been seen, thanks to internal problems and the international environment Özal could not apply his principles to foreign policy as much as he wanted during this period. Nevertheless, with the growing exports, Turkey became much more directly connected with the world during the 1980s. Also the international developments in the 1980s prepared Turkey for the radical changes of the 1990s. In these years Turkey for the first time in Republican history turned its face towards its region, in contrast to Kemal's 'escape from the region policy' and Menderes' Cold-War-obsessed policies. Moreover, unlike previous policies, with the growing economic ties with the region, Turkey set permanent relations with its neighbours.

Post-Cold War and Neo-Ottomanist Foreign Policy After 1989

In the second period of his rule two important factors emerged. First, Özal felt increasingly free to focus on foreign policy issues, as the military's effect on politics decreased. Second, with the end of the Cold War, Turkey found itself facing a new environment -alone philosophically, politically, and militarily and uncomfortable in such an isolated position.⁷³ Thus Turkish leaders sought ways to extricate Turkey from its

⁷³ Many in the West, including some Western leaders, saw Turkey as no longer of vital importance claiming that the expensive Western ties constructed with Turkey to contain the former Soviet Union were no longer affordable. Steve Coll, 'The Turkish Question: How Important is it?', *The Washington Post*, 24 May 1993.

predicament.⁷⁴ As has been seen throughout this study, despite some differences, the path all Turkish governments have chosen was integration with the West. The axis of the Kemalists' (The Army and leftist-Kemalists) and liberal-conservative right-wing parties' (Democrat Party, Justice Party, Motherland Party etc.) foreign policy was a fully integration with the West. That is to say, except for the Islamists, the radical left and the ultra-nationalists, all moderate political groups in Turkey solved Turkey's historically isolated position with integration with the West. Even some of the radical groups were arguing partly Westernism. Particularly for the Westernist Kemalists integration with the West was a matter of life and death. It was not only base of Turkish security and foreign policy but also a security for the secular regime. Therefore the end of the Cold War made most Turks panic. The simplest explanation was that: 'Now the West does not need us. Hereafter they will not give any financial, political and military aid. Similarly, the EEC, which had implied cultural biases in its Turkey policy, will close down its doors to Turkey. Turkey separated from the 'civilised world' (the West), will be alone with the traditional enemy, Russia, and the regional conflicts, poverty, instability. Regional instability will undermine Turkish economy and integrity and all the foreign powers will work to disunite Turkey.'⁷⁵

Kemalists, who believed that the end of the Cold War threatened the Turkish economy, security and democracy, suggested returning to the early Republican policy of isolation. They further argued that after the Cold War the West's aim was to disintegrate Turkey as witnessed in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. For the Kemalists and other isolationists, Kurdish problem and the European refuse for Turkish application were clear signs for the Western intention. Kemalists (leftist and traditional) argued that separatist Kurds were encouraged by the EU countries.

Islamists, on the other hand, were happy with the developments, because for them the end of the Cold War confirmed their ideas. They, as a result, re-suggested a common market between the Muslim countries.

However, Turgut Özal's prescription was quite different from the Kemalist and Islamist prescriptions. Özal saw the end of the Cold War as an opportunity for Turkey. From his perspective, the collapse of the communist block freed the Turkish Republics and dissolved the system in neighbouring regions, which had prevented Turkey from developing good relations with these regions. In other words, now not only the Turks turned to these regions, but also the peoples of Bosnia, Azerbaijan, Albania,

⁷⁴ Stephen J. Blank, Stephen C. Pelletiere and William T. Johnsen, *Turkey's Position at the Crossroads of World Affairs*, (Washington: Department of Defense, 3 December 1993) via the net, Part IV.

⁷⁵ *Cumhuriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 27 December 1989; *Hürriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 2 January 1990.

Kosova, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kirghizistan and Uzbekistan turned towards Ankara. In the words of Sezer,

*“new geopolitical developments mobilised mutual awareness and sympathy among the Turks of Turkey, their ethnic and linguistic kin in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the Balkan peoples of Muslim heritage who look to Turkey as a source of moral and material support in the formidable task of transition to post-communist societies.”*⁷⁶

One of the reasons for this mutual awareness was the eruption of regional conflicts, like Karabagh and the Bosnian crisis which motivated these countries to look for Turkey's support. Now there was no communist-capitalist competition, and therefore they could not get support from the superpowers. Thus, the cultural and ethnic similarities became important to get political and military support. Fuller argued 'neo-geopolitics' activated psychological and cultural dynamics among nations.⁷⁷ Thus group identity of a cross-national and cross-cultural became very important in international relations. Especially in the Balkans and Caspasia these factors were more important due to these regions' multi-cultural structures. Apart from Fuller's neo-geopolitical formulation, Huntington argued that the end of the Cold War implied a clash of civilisations and cultures.⁷⁸ According to this approach, a cultural polarisation was inevitable and Turkey's region was the most dangerous era in the world. Whether these theories are right or wrong falls out of the scope of this study, yet it is obvious that Turkey became an attraction centre for the Turks, Muslims and former Ottoman Empire's peoples. For example, while the Serbs took the Greek and Russian support Turkey appealed as a natural ally for the Muslim population of the former Yugoslavia. Likewise, in Caspasia in the face of Russian-Armenian co-operation the Azerbaijanis looked to their 'Muslim, Turkish brothers' for support. While in the wake of the Cold War, almost all leaders of the Turkic world, Bosnia, Albania and Macedonia rushed to Ankara for support over their economic and political problems.

Moreover, the strategic withdrawal of the Soviets changed the balance of power in the region. The centuries-old Turkish-Russian border ceased to exist. This was a development of historic significance for Turkey, because

⁷⁶ Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, 'Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkan and Black Sea Region', in Mastny and Nation, *Turkey between East and West, New Challenges for a Rising Regional Power*, (Oxford: Westview Prss, 1998), p. 73.

⁷⁷ Graham E. Fuller, 'The New Mediterranean Security Environment: Turkey the Gulf, and Central Asia', in *RAND Conference Proceedings*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1993), p. 45.

⁷⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, 'Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1993.

now the primary threat of Russia was relatively distant from Turkish borders, and the Russians were busy with their own domestic problems, and even they invited Turkish businessmen to their territories to contribute to Russian economic reconstruction. Furthermore, as the monolithic power of Russia on the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea was gone, now the littoral was now divided among Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey and Russia.⁷⁹ Particularly emerge of an independent Ukraine balanced the Russian power in Black Sea and Turkey felt itself more comfortable in the straits question. Likewise, in Caucasia the Soviet sovereignty was replaced by three different states: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. This new arrangement destroyed Russian domination in the region. Now in Caucasia Russia, Iran and Turkey became the dominant powers. Apart from the Black Sea and Caucasia, in the Balkans Soviet Union lost its privileged position. The disintegration of Yugoslavia granted new friends to Turkey. Also, the ideological changes in Bulgaria, Romania and Albania changed these countries' attitude towards Turkey. Turkey and Bulgaria, for example, looked to increase co-operation.

Apart from security concerns newly established republics (like Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) and the former communist states (such as Bulgaria) with limited economic and political resources looked to Turkey viewing it as economic and political model (Turkish model). Also they made efforts to lure Turkish investment to their countries because they could not finance all needs for structural changes in lack of Russian and Western aid. Under these circumstances, Turkey had a great opportunity to increase its investments and export to these states.

The most important development for Turkey in the post-Cold War was the emergence of the Turkic world. When Turkish peoples in the Soviet Union were freed from 150 years of Russian rule, Turkey saw these Republics as a solution to its isolation. As the most advanced of them, Turkey dreamed of being the leading Turkish republic and to benefit from this position.

The Turkish economy and ethnic structure were very suited to close co-operation with these regions and the West's indifferent policy towards Turkey also forced Turkish policy-makers to develop closer relations with its kin countries. Thanks to the West's attitude, even Turkish Westernists realised that cultural and religious differences were a crucial factor in Turkey's neglect by Europe and this weakened resistance to Özal's policies.

Given this situation, for Turgut Özal despite its disadvantages the end of the Cold War offered Turkey many regional opportunities. Although the West was questioning Turkey's value, for Özal the West could not neglect

⁷⁹ Sezer, 'Turkey', p. 72.

such an important country. Therefore, Özal made efforts to persuade the West of Turkey's post-Cold War importance locally and within the Islamic and Turkic world. Secondly, because Turkish businessmen played a crucial role in his foreign policy concept, Özal argued that the state had a duty to prepare the legal and political ground for Turkish economic enterprises in these regions. As such the Özal government took initiative to set up EC-like regional co-operation institutions in the area surrounding Turkey, like the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC) with an aim of stabilising Turkey's region for a co-operation. Then he intensified his efforts to establish bilateral and multilateral links between Turkey, neighbouring countries, Turkey's kin states and the Muslim world.

Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC)

The BSEC was a Turkish initiative and Özal's personal idea. Its main objectives were to stabilise the region by using economic means and to open new export destinations for Turkish enterprises.⁸⁰ This 1990 proposal was greeted with enthusiasm by the Black Sea, Caucasus and the Balkan states. Apart from Turkey, Russia, Greece and Ukraine almost all-regional countries participated in the organisation. The BSEC had a political as well as economic dimension but Özal hesitated from focusing on political matters because most of the countries in the region had serious political problems with each other (for example Azerbaijan and Armenia; Russia and Ukraine; Turkey and Greece).

Also, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia many regional countries faced economic catastrophe, and Özal wanted Turkey, which lost its Arab market after the Iran-Iraq and the second Gulf War, to fill the economic vacuum. Özal also emphasised the cultural dimension of the BSEC. In almost all his trips to these countries Özal signed cultural protocols or agreements which covered education, language, science and art. As a result of these efforts, some countries sent their military and civil servants to Istanbul or Ankara to study, often funded by Turkey. Turkey also gave credits to poorer regional states, like Georgia, Azerbaijan and Macedonia. Contribution of these policies to BSEC was so limited yet, thanks to Özalist policies, Turkey became a regional power-centre for many countries, like Ukraine and Bulgaria. Further, some countries saw Turkey as a balancing power against their traditional enemies. For example for Albania, Turkey became a fresh credit source and a balancing political support against Greece. Despite Russian scepticism over the BSEC, the economic needs of newly-emerging states and other former communist states nourished the organisation and a joint Black Sea Bank was

⁸⁰ Faruk Sen, 'Black Sea Economic Co-operation', *Aussen Politik*, vol. 44, no.: 33, 1993, pp. 281-287.

established; and even political and economic committees were formed in order to discuss the regional problems.

For some academics like Gençkaya, BSEC was a Turkish-led challenge to European integration.⁸¹ However, as the Turkish under-secretary for Foreign affairs clearly stated, BSEC was not an alternative to the EC, but it was thought as an assistance factor for Turkey's integration with Europe.⁸² Also, contrary to the 1930s' Balkan Pact and 1950s' second Balkan Pact, BSEC was an economy-culture oriented organisation, rather than a security block. Another characteristic of Özal's BSEC initiative was that, contrary to Atatürk's, İnönü's and Menderes' security-oriented regional policies, Özal formed such a policy for peaceful aims, like economic and cultural co-operation. Fourth, in establishing the BSEC Turkey played a leading role as a regional power. Fifth, before Özal, Turkey had never perceived the Black Sea as a co-operation region. With Turkey's new Black Sea policy, apart from the Balkans and the Caucasia the Black Sea rim was perceived as a whole political entity by the Turkish policy makers. Finally, after the BSEC the trade between Turkey and the other members significantly increased, and Turkey hugely benefited from the emergence of the Black Sea as a new political and economic entity.

The Balkans and Turkey: The Resurgence of the Ottoman Empire?

Apart from the BSEC, the Balkans was a very important area for Özalist foreign policy as former Ottoman territories millions of Muslim and Turkish minorities lived there. Also apart from Turkey, there were four Muslim countries in the region: Kosova, Macedonia, Bosnia and Albania. That is to say historical and cultural similarities provided a suitable ground for co-operation, and this co-operation was viewed as an opportunity to end Turkey's aloneness in Europe. Moreover, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the great Slavic block, which destroyed Ottoman predominance in the 19th century, now vanished. As a result, Muslim peoples and those states that had problems with Serbia and Greece, such as Macedonia and Albania, turned their faces to Ankara. Turkey,

⁸¹ Ömer Faruk Gençkaya, 'The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project: A Regional Challenge to European Integration', *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 4, November 1993.

⁸² Sanberk said 'it is not an alternative policy: Özden Sanberk, *Cumhuriyet*, 26 May 1991. Ozuye, another Turkish diplomat, also stated that the BSEC was a part of the pan-European integration project saying 'this is not a new compartmentalisation of Europe': Oktay Ozuye, *The Independent*, 26 June 1992 and Oktay Ozuye, 'Black Sea Economic Co-operation', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 1992, p. 51.

similar to its policies in other regions, first of all, tried to develop economic and cultural relations with these states instead of the military or political groupings. For example Özal's first priority was to unite these countries with Turkey by using telecommunication and transportation systems. In this context an Albania-Bulgaria-Turkey highway project (the Balkan Highway Project) was significant. For Yinanç, this highway would connect all Balkan states into Turkey and lessen Turkey and the regional countries' dependence on Greece.⁸³ Turkey made efforts not to be seen as over-enthusiastic. As Çandar⁸⁴ has noted Turkey did not want to antagonise regional opponents, like Greece, however, perceived the growing friendship between Bulgaria, Albania, former Yugoslavia, Romania and Turkey as a direct threat to its security and Greek academics and politicians referred Turkey's Balkan policy as 'containment policy'.⁸⁵ For the Greeks Turkey was surrounding Greece by using Muslims and former Ottoman subjects. According to the Greek perception Turkey's efforts created a Muslim-Orthodox competition in the Balkans.⁸⁶ Ironically Greece accused Bulgaria and Macedonia of being in a Muslim conspiracy. As a result Greece sought Serb and Russian friendship to balance Turkey. In spite of the Greek unrest, it can be said that the Özalist Balkan policy put an end to Turkey's isolated position in the Balkans, and in a short time even Greece understood that Turkey was not a new Ottoman Empire and its new Balkan policy was not based on a Muslim conspiracy against Greece, but a cultural and economic co-operation. Second, different from the Cyprus and the Aegean issues, the developing ethnic conflicts in the Balkans Turkey and the West shared common interests. While Greece was a reluctant NATO ally in dealing with the Balkan conflicts Turkey offered great help to the US and the European allies. Thus the Balkan conflicts contributed to restore Turkey-West relations.

The Bosnian crisis demonstrated the Özalist policies' difference; when the crisis erupted, Turkey, with the pressure from Islamic and ethnic

⁸³ Author's interview with Barçın Yinanç, 22 February 1999, Ankara. Also for the details of the project see M. Türker Arı and Sedat Laçiner, 'Balkan Seferinin Ardından', (*After the Balkan Visit*), *U.I.O.Y.*, December 1993, pp. 54-58 and *Cumhuriyet*, 16 December 1993.

⁸⁴ Personal interview with Cengiz Çandar.

⁸⁵ Stephanos Constantinides, 'Turkey: The Emergence of a New Foreign Policy the Neo-Ottoman Imperial Model', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. 24, 1996, pp. 323-334; N.A. Stavrou, 'The Dismantling of the Balkan Security System: Consequences for Greece, Europe and NATO', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Winter 1995.

⁸⁶ Emilja Simoska, 'Macedonia and the Myths of the 'Muslim Conspiracy' and 'Endangered Orthodoxy'', *Balkan Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 4, September 1993, pp. 189-196.

circles, felt that it had to follow a more active foreign policy. Özal arguing the arms embargo on Bosnia must be lifted immediately, even publicly stated Turkey's intention to intervene militarily in the Bosnian conflict in order to help the Muslims.⁸⁷ Çalış argues that Özal's Balkan policy was in conformity with Turkey's traditional foreign policy.⁸⁸ It is true Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin declared Özal's announcements did not reflect Turkey's official policy⁸⁹, yet Çetin's words did not mean Turkey followed a traditional Kemalist policy in the Balkans but underscored the great competition and differences between the Kemalist approach and Özal's Ottomanist Balkan policy. Turkey had never officially set its foreign policy on a common religious and cultural values neither in the Balkans nor in the Middle East since Atatürk. Moreover, in all Turkish initiatives in the region Turkey had been defensive and had never followed an active foreign policy in the Balkans except Özal's Ottomanist policies.

From the Adriatic to the 'Chinese Wall': Turkey as a Development Model for the 'Turkic World'

Turkey had no relations with the Turkic republics of the former Soviet Union and other Turkic peoples prior to 1989, despite common cultural, linguistic, and religious ties to these peoples.⁹⁰ The causes for this were mainly Kemalist isolationism and Cold War circumstances. The end of the Soviet Union freed the Turkic peoples under communist rule and five of them established their own independent states. Now there were six Turkish states: Turkey, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Kemalism had clearly warned against any kind of Pan-Turkist foreign policy. Though Turkey was the first country to recognise these states and relations developed at a feverish pace.⁹¹

Despite the discussion among pan-Turkists about the creation of a Union of the Turks,⁹² Turkey chose not to establish a Turkish Commonwealth between these countries. The reason is debatable yet it can be said that the primary reason was not to provoke the Russians and other regional powers, like Iran. Özal concentrating on the relations with the

⁸⁷ *Milliyet* and *Hürriyet*, 30 January 1990.

⁸⁸ Çalış.

⁸⁹ *Sabah*, 28 February 1993.

⁹⁰ Kemal H. Karpat, 'Turkish Foreign Policy: Some Introductory Remarks', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Winter 1992-94, Vol. 6, Nos.: 1 & 2, pp. 1-19, p. 7.

⁹¹ Sedat Laçiner and M. Türker Arı, '21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Cumhuriyetleri' (*Turkish Republics at the Threshold of the 21st Century*), *Milliyet* (daily, Istanbul), 10-15 May 1993.

⁹² *Cumhuriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 16-20 January 1990.

outside Turks were economy, education and culture, hoped secular Turkey would provide a development model for these new emerging republics. Indeed, Özal argued that the 'Turkish model' was much more suited to the region than the Iranian, Russian or Saudi models. He further argued that the Turkish model was better for Turkey, Turkic states, the West, even for Russia because it would stimulate development, secularism, democracy and stability in the region, and it would down play fundamentalism and conflict. To realise the Turkish model Özal needed to persuade the Turkic states, the Turkish public, the West and the Russians. As a first step, Özal added a new section to the Foreign Ministry and established new institutions with large budgets to deal with relations with the Turkic world, like TIKKA (Turkish Development Assistance Agency). Moreover, he frequently visited the Turkic republics and by 1993 had signed several agreements with these countries on areas ranging from health to education. Bilateral committees and organisations were also established. Moreover, Turkey granted about ten thousand scholarships to university students from the Turkic world, and sent some Turkish students to these countries. TRT, Turkish national television, started to broadcast in the region under the name of *Avrasya* (Eurasia) and other private television stations followed the TRT move. State-owned Turkish Airlines established regular flights to Baku, Alma Ati, Taskent, Ashkabad and Bishkek. While Turkish Eximbank and other Turkish banks gave about \$7 billion in credits to Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Some former Soviet Republics, like Georgia and some Turkic autonomies in the Russian Federation also benefited from Turkish aid. Apart from state aid, Özal encouraged Turkish businessmen, religious groups, Turkists and media to invest in these countries. As a result, many Turkish businessmen and idealists poured into these countries and established their own businesses in these countries. Private aid programmes were inaugurated, particularly in the education, media, telecommunication and textile sectors, and private Turkish companies opened branches and increased their investment in these countries, especially in Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. In particular the ultra-Turkist and *Nurcu* religious groups, led by Fethullah Gülen, established their own business and media in Central Asia and Azerbaijan and Gülen group's daily newspaper *Zaman* became the second or third biggest newspaper in these countries. As a result of these efforts Turkish people and media as a first time in the Republican history named some other countries as 'brother Republics'.⁹³ This was a turning point in Turkey's sceptic world perception and underlined the effects of the new Turkist policies. Despite the welcome of the masses, Özal's Turkic policies confronted a weak leftist-Kemalist resistance in the first years of the post-Cold War era. Particularly Turkist, Islamist and Westernists features of Özalist policies disturbed the left and the leftist-

⁹³ *Milliyet*, 15 March 1993.

Kemalists who opposed any support or privileged position for Turkic republics. The left viewed Özal as a 'servant' of American interests in Central Asia, and claimed his aim was to demolish socialist solidarity in the region. They also argued that Turkey's policies would provoke Russian anger and risk Turkey's independence and security. In spite of the opposition the resistance was so weak and their effect on the public was so limited.

Özal's efforts to revive the Turkic world were warmly welcomed by other Turkic peoples, and in his latest visit to Central Asia and Azerbaijan Özal was received by enthusiastic crowds and these states decided to meet annually under the banner of 'Turkic Summits', with the first held in Ankara.

Turkey's interest extended beyond the independent Turkic Republics and covered other Turkic tribes in the Russian Federation, China and the Balkans. In particular Crimean Tartars, Bashkir, Kazan Turks, Turks of Yakutistan (Russia), Uygurs of China, Gagavuz Turks of Moldavia and Volga Turks attracted interest from Turkey and Turkey made extreme efforts not to provoke the mainland countries by using economic and cultural investments.

In light of all this, Özal was optimistic and claimed that the 21st century would be a 'Turkish century' and adopted the slogan '*Adriyatik'ten Çin Seddi'ne*' (From Adriatic to the Chinese Wall). This slogan was defining Turkey's new interest areas. Contrary to Kemalist isolationism, Özal argued that Turkey had vital interests in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasia, Black Sea rim, Central Asia, even in Western China where a Turkish tribe, Uygurs, lives under the Chinese rule. In doing so Özal brought about a historical change in Turkey's relation with Turkic states. Moreover, the emergence of the Turkic world can also be viewed as a historical turning point for Turkish foreign policy, because Turkic World put an end to Turkey's isolated position in the world. It also helped Turkey to overcome its cultural isolation and identity crisis. Turks now did not have to be just European or Arab-styled Muslim. They had their own world, a Turkish world to which they can relate culturally, politically and economically without any dilemma. All this inevitably created a more active 'Turkist' foreign policy towards the East, and Turkey left its Kemalist isolationism. As has been witnessed in the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflicts, Turkey's support to Azerbaijan on the basis of 'brotherhood' underscored the dramatic change. Özal in this crisis threatened the Armenians with sending troops to the region saying 'if we frighten the Armenians what can they do?'⁹⁴

⁹⁴ *Milliyet* (daily, Istanbul), 3-6 March 1992.

Cyprus Issue

The Turkish intervention to the Cyprus (1974 Peace Operation) saved the Turkish Cypriot people from a possible genocide yet worsened Turkey's relations with the West. In September 1975 the passage of a Congress resolution banning military sales and aid to Turkey until the U.S. president could show that substantial progress had been registered towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem highly disappointed the Turks. For many Turkish people with the Johnson Letter, the arms embargo of 1975-1978 proved the US' pro-Greek position in the Cyprus issue. Turgut Özal saw the Cyprus problem as a poisoning factor in Turkey-West relations and aimed to solve the problem immediately. Özal different from the coup leaders was against an independent Turkish state on the island and preferred a federal Cyprus state. However the coup generals were still so powerful and Özal could not prevent the proclamation of Turkish republic on the northern Cyprus on 15 November 1983.⁹⁵ The independence declaration of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) was perceived as a challenge by the American Government and the White House expressed its displeasure over the Turkish action. The U.S. did not recognise the Turkish Cypriot state and the State Department prevented the recognition of the new state by Muslim and other countries which were friendly to the Turkish case by warning all of them one by one.⁹⁶

The proximity talks continued in 1984-1986 period. The US defended a federal Cyprus state and made great pressure on Turkey. For President Reagan Turkey should have forced the Cypriot Turks for solution. Therefore Reagan sent a special letter to Turkish President Kenan Evren on 22 November 1984 calling for more efforts to solve the problems. The Americans promised the Turks that they would put an end to the pressures if Turkey accepts the UN written proposals on 17 January 1985 and 29 March 1986. Turkey approved the offer yet the Greek side rejected the proposals. Nevertheless thanks to the Greek lobby in the Congress the US continued its pressures over the Turks instead of Greece and the Greek Cyprus. TRNC opened a bureau in New York and established closer ties with the State Department and the Pentagon in the following years. However the U.S. under the shadow of the Greek lobby did not recognise the TRNC and the Cyprus issue with the Armenian lobby's anti-Turkey activities continued to be one of the greatest obstacles in Turkish-American relations. For Özal both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots did not want a long-lasting solution and were not ready for nay concession. The ultimate

⁹⁵ 'KTFD'nin Adı Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti Oldu, Kutlu Olsun', *Tercüman* (daily, İstanbul), 16 November 1983.

⁹⁶ Nasuh Uslu, *The Cyprus Question as an Issue of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish-American Relations, 1959-2003*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2002), p.172.

Greek aim was to force the Turks to leave the island while Turkish Cypriot President Rauf Denktash insisted on an independent Turkish state. Under these circumstances, like the U.S. “in Özal’s view if the four leaders came together in the style of the Camp David negotiations and discussed the problem, a serious progress could be achieved in the solution of the Cyprus question”.⁹⁷ Özal’s efforts to solve the problem was met scepticism inside Turkey and even the ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz did not agree with Özal. Some newspapers in Turkey accused Özal of betraying the national case. When the Greek authorities in Cyprus and in Greece rejected the proposal the tension between Özal and Denktash decreased. The Greeks made a new proposal to meet in an international conference, but the Turkish side rejected this time. Özal continued to make pressure over government in Turkey and in the TRNC. However when Süleyman Demirel became prime minister, Özal’s influence on Lefkoşe and Ankara government dramatically weakened. At the end of 1991 Süleyman Demirel, the new Prime Minister, rejected to make pressure on TRNC President Denktash when Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis asked him to persuade the TRNC President. Intensive initiatives were launched in 1992 however no solution could be reached. The main problem was that the Greeks never wanted to share power with the Turks. For the Greek side the island was a Greek island, and the Turks were only a minority. On the other hand the Turkish Cypriots argued that the island was belonged to the Turks and Greeks and they never accept to be a minority but a founding nation. Özal made enormous efforts to solve the problem because the Cyprus issue was abused by the Greeks and all Turkey-sceptic European Community members. The problem was also an obstacle before Turkey-U.S. relations. However Özal in his prime ministry and presidential periods could not solve the decades-old problem.

Turkey and Russia: From Potential Threat to Market

As has been shown throughout this study, historically not only Atatürk but almost all Turkish and Ottoman policy-makers, except the socialists, perceived the Russians as the greatest threat to Turkish security. As such, the end of the Cold War had significant security implications. A former American Ambassador to Ankara pointed out: ‘The threat of the past 400 years – Russia – has been virtually eliminated. Turkey is now more secure than it has been since the birth as a republic after the First World War’.⁹⁸

In reality, Russia was still a great potential threat to Turkey and was unhappy with Turkey’s activities among the Turkish peoples in Central

⁹⁷ Uslu, *The Cyprus...*, p. 178.

⁹⁸ Morton Abramowitz, ‘Foreword’, in Fuller and Lesser, *Turkey’s New Geopolitics, From the Balkans to Western China*, (Boulder: Westview, 1993), pp. vii-xii, p. viii.

Asia and Russian Federation. Yet the Turks were considered a lesser menace compared with the Iranian and Saudi efforts in the region. Moreover, Turkey went to great efforts not to antagonise Russia, and Özal was much more interested in the economic potential of the Russian Federation as an export and investment destination more than political issues. For Özal, Russia had more opportunity than the small Turkic Republics had. Therefore, Turkey could benefit from these two different markets by not provoking them.

On 11 March of 1991 Özal paid an official visit to Russia with a delegation of businessmen and officials, and a Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourhood and Co-operation and some other agreements and protocols were signed. This 1991 Treaty can be considered as the high point in Turkish-Russian relations. Moreover, unlike previous agreements the focus of these agreements was financial and economic, rather than political and security ones. After Özal's visit, Turkish Eximbank increased Turkish credits to Russia from \$300 million to \$400 million, and also gave a \$200 million credit to finance Russia's imports from Turkey. As a result, Turkish-Russian trade tripled in 1990 and by 1991 had reached \$2.5 billion. The trend continued in the following years and Russia became the second biggest economic partner of Turkey with about \$5 billion trade. Özal hoped that the trade volume might reach \$ 10-15 billion by the end of the century. In addition to the official export-import figures, millions of Russians poured into Istanbul and other Turkish cities to make unofficial trade. According to the state figures, in a short time, the unofficial trade climbed to the billions of dollars. Moreover, the Russia-Turkey natural gas pipeline increased economic dependency between these two traditional enemies. Turkish credits to Russia, which reached \$1.5 billion in 1993, and the bilateral agreements made more trade and Turkish investment in Russia possible. As a result of these policies Turkish construction and consumption sectors boomed in Russia. By 1993 the value of the Turkish construction sector in Russia was more than \$2 billion. Many Russian prestigious buildings, like hospitals, hotels later even parliament building and other cities were build by the Turkish firms. The increasing dependency between Turkey and Russia decreased the tension in the relations and forced both sides to search friendship and co-operation. As a result Turkey's biggest fear became one of the biggest markets for Turkish exporters.

The Gulf War: Return of Activism and Westernism

By developing close relations with the Turkic world and Turkey's region, Özal did not challenge the United States or Europe. On the contrary, he made efforts to unite Turkish and Western interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In other words, having provided legal and political

frameworks at home and in the region for the Turkish economy, Turkey tried to persuade the West that Turkey was an influential regional power in the Balkans, the Middle East, Caucasia, Black Sea and in the Central Asia; and with its democratic, secular and pro-Western system Turkey could be a good partner for the West. Özal meant that the West needed Turkey as a partner to defend its interests against instability, Islamic fundamentalism, unpredictable states (like Iraq, Iran), ethnic conflicts (like Yugoslavian crisis) and against Russia's unpredictable policies (as witnessed in Chechnya). In the first years the West ignored Turkey's arguments. However, the Gulf War provided the opportunity to show Turkey's importance. Also the Gulf War revealed the Republican bureaucracy's and the Army's unrest about Özalist foreign policy. Finally, the Gulf War showed the clear difference between the Republican-Kemalist foreign policy and Özalist foreign policy. Therefore we now examine Özal's Gulf War diplomacy and his Middle East policy.

As has been seen, relations with the Islamic world and the Middle East had been an important indicator in the regime's Kemalist character. Even the neo-democrat Menderes and Demirel governments could not change its essence. Turkey's relations with this region were based on these Kemalist principles:⁹⁹ Non-interference in the domestic affairs of Middle Eastern states; non-interference in disputes between the states in the area; non-interference in inter-Arab relations; non-interference in religious groupings.

When the Gulf Crisis erupted, Turkey's initial reaction was within the traditional approach – Turkey did not approve of the invasion, but saw it as merely a problem between two Arab states¹⁰⁰ and the principle of maintaining the *status quo* became the dominant consideration.¹⁰¹ However, as mentioned, Özal saw the crisis as an opportunity to show Turkey's value to the Western security system especially to the United States. In the words of Ahmad 'Özal took matters into his own hands and placed the country squarely behind President Bush's policy.'¹⁰² For Özal, the US-led anti-Iraq grouping was right, and Turkey had to give clear support for the Alliance. In addition to the legal considerations, from the Özalist perspective, Turkish support for the Alliance was very important in order to show Turkey's strategic importance for the West. Moreover, Özal believed that Turkey would benefit from the post-war situation. 'The

⁹⁹ For the principle see also: Gulnur Aybet, *Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its Implications for the West: A Turkish Perspective*, (London: RUSI, 1994) and Seyfi Tashan, 'Contemporary Turkish Policies in the Middle East: Prospects and Constraints', *Dış Politika (Foreign Policy)*, Vol. XII, Nos.: 1-2, June 1985.

¹⁰⁰ *Milliyet* (daily, Istanbul), 3-4 August 1990.

¹⁰¹ Aybet, *Turkey's*, p. 16.

¹⁰² Ahmad, *The Making*, p. 200.

Middle East was in the midst of irreversible change and it was, therefore vital for Turkey to be in a position to take full benefit from future opportunities.¹⁰³ For some, this benefit might be annexation of the northern oil-rich regions of Iraq. For Özal, for the first time in 100 years, Turkey might have backed the winning side in a war.¹⁰⁴ According to Özal, İnönü by not supporting the Allies in the Second World War risked Turkish security and prosperity, now Turkey had to use this chance and support the winning side.

Özal was so determined and when he perceived parliament and the government as timid in taking initiative he bypassed both and carried out a secret telephone-diplomacy with the White House. Moreover by manipulating the public he created pressure on parliament in favour of the Western position. Republican-Kemalist and leftist groups argued that such a policy might draw Turkey into a war and turn Turkey into an agent of American policy. On 8 August Turkey rushed to cut the oil pipelines, which carried 1.52 million barrels of oil a day between Turkey and Iraq and under Özal's influence parliament approved the government's request to send troops to the Gulf. Özal's personal role in cutting off the oil pipelines was viewed as a sign of deviation from Kemalism and his activism in foreign policy resulted in three important resignations from the government and bureaucracy. First Foreign Minister Ali Bozer resigned on 12 October. Defence Minister Sefa Giray followed Bozer on 18 December.¹⁰⁵ Not only the isolationist and cautious liberals and leftists but also the Army was upset. Chief of the Staff Necip Torumtay criticised Özal's foreign policy as 'adventurist' and implied that the army was against to such a foreign policy. Torumtay implied that Özal endangered Turkish security for the Western interests.¹⁰⁶ But now the balance of power was different than in previous years, and the Chief of Staff had to resign when he understood that he could not persuade civilians. For the Turkish press the resignation was a shock and underlined the civilian character of the regime and Özal's overwhelming influence on foreign policy matters.¹⁰⁷ Özal blamed the opponents of being İnönist and of not understanding the new circumstances in international politics.¹⁰⁸ President Özal declared Turkey's new foreign policy position as:

¹⁰³ Robins, *Turkey*, p. 71.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Friedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991*, (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 354.

¹⁰⁵ *Hürriyet*, 19 October 1990.

¹⁰⁶ Necip Torumtay, *Org. Torumtay'ın Anıları (Torumtay's Memoirs)*, (Istanbul: Milliyet, 1994).

¹⁰⁷ *Milliyet*, 31 December 1990; *Hürriyet*, 1 January 1991.

¹⁰⁸ *Milliyet*, 3 January 1991; *Zaman*, 4 January 1991.

“Many things have changed in Turkey... In foreign policy the days of taking a cowardly and timid position are over. From now we will pursue an active policy based on circumstances...”¹⁰⁹ My conviction is that Turkey should leave its former passive and hesitant policies and engage in an active foreign policy.”¹¹⁰

Compared with Menderes and Demirel’s timid attitude in the face of army opposition, Özal’s self-confidence was significant. No doubt the main reason behind this confidence was internal changes. As Özal expressed, his foreign policy was a result of his internal policies. Also, his opponents were in an ideological dilemma with the end of the Cold War bankrupting most of the leftist and Kemalist values. They were attacking Özal yet they had no prescription for the problems. For example in the Iraqi Crisis they condemned Iraq for its invasion, yet they could not provide any policy towards Iraq and United States.¹¹¹ Thus this ideological dilemma helped Özal in shaping a new foreign policy.

Özal claimed that entering the Gulf War was a ‘profitable move’ saying ‘this is the most profitable deal of my life. We are betting one getting three.’¹¹² Despite Özal’s enthusiasm, due to public pressure, Turkey did not join the war actively, but gave clear support to the alliance forces. Turkey also allowed American forces to use military bases (like İncirlik in Adana) in Turkey to bomb Iraqi forces.¹¹³ Turkey’s importance was underlined by the war, and particularly the Americans understood that Turkey was a vital country for American interests in the Middle East as Robins noted:

“... the action of President Özal in helping to isolate and confront the Iraqi regime greatly endeared him to the US administration and the White House. This in turn brought benefits on a wide front – from greater access to American markets for Turkish textiles to help in improving the quality of military

¹⁰⁹ Ahmad, *The Making*, p. 201.

¹¹⁰ Robins, ‘Turkish’, p. 70.

¹¹¹ Except Bülent Ecevit and Mümtaz Soysal, who argued that Turkey should oppose the UN-led campaign, almost all opponents of Özal were in favour of implementing the UN decisions, including Erdal İnönü, President of the leftist-Kemalist Social Democrat Populist Party, Süleyman Demirel, leader of the right-wing The True Path Party and the former coup leader and former President Kenan Evren: *Milliyet*, 6-7-8- August 1990; *Hürriyet*, 8-9 August 1990. İnönü further suggested an international army against Saddam (*Hürriyet*, 7 August 1990) while Ecevit opposed any military action against Iraq, *Milliyet*, 26 December 1990.

¹¹² *Hürriyet*, 16-17 January 1991. For some profit was Northern Iraq while Turkish press viewed the war as an opportunity for Turkey’s EC membership: *Hürriyet*, 14 August 1990.

¹¹³ *Hürriyet*, 18 January 1991.

hardware possessed by the armed forces. The US now appears to place greater value on the importance of Turkey than before."¹¹⁴

Moreover, after the Gulf War Turkey's importance as a regional power rose. On the negative side, however, new troubles appeared, like the Kurdish problem. When the Kurdish rebellion against Saddam failed, some 700,000 people poured into the Turkish territories. Also the war created a power vacuum in Northern Iraq, which was filled by the PKK. Thus, the PKK gained a strategic base to attack Turkey and increased its authority in this region and south-eastern Turkey. On top of all this, the war caused an economic and political crisis in Turkey as Turkey lost an important market. Though Turkey asked for compensation from the West, the aid was limited.

Post-war Developments

In June 1991, in a defeat for conservative-nationalists, the leading secular liberal Mesut Yılmaz was elected as the leader of MP. The October elections indicated the end of the Özal era as Demirel's *Doğru Yol Partisi* (True Path Party, TPP) emerged the winner with 27 per cent of the vote. Yılmaz's MP came second with 24 per cent. Surprisingly the leftist-Kemalist *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti* (The Social Democrat Populist Party, SDPP), that carried out an anti-war and anti-Özal campaign during the Gulf War fell to third place with 20.8 per cent. Özal continued to challenge the traditional foreign policy position and blamed the official understanding of being timid, isolationist, bureaucratic and useless, but the domestic changes limited his influence over the government and parliament. According to his close circle¹¹⁵, Özal thought that he could not affect Turkish politics from the Presidential Palace, therefore he was making plans to return the politics as party leader in order to implement his radical policies including a new foreign policy understanding, and a new human rights and nation-state concept, which was more tolerant to the Kurdish groups. However, in the spring of 1993 Turgut Özal died and never found an opportunity to carry out his ideas. His death increased the dilemma of Turkish foreign and internal politics. As Çandar pointed out Özalism continued its effect after Özal's death¹¹⁶ and many parties including the MP, TPP and Islamist WP (Welfare Party) claimed Özal's heritage.

¹¹⁴ Robins, 'Turkish', pp. 85-86.

¹¹⁵ Yusuf Bozkurt Özal, Turgut Özal's brother told me that Özal prepared a party program suggesting a more active foreign policy. Author's interview with Yusuf Bozkurt Özal, Ankara 15 December 1994.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Cengiz Çandar in Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları (Second Republic Debates)*, (Ankara: Başak, 1993).

NEO-OTTOMANISM: AN ALTERNATIVE TO KEMALIST FOREIGN POLICY?

The left and Kemalist groups¹¹⁷ have accused neo-Ottomanism of being aggressive¹¹⁸ while some European and Greek academics have called it an irredentist movement,¹¹⁹ and some in the Western press saw the Özalist policies as pan-Ottomanist, pan-Turkist, even pan-Islamist march of the Turks.¹²⁰ Yet despite its name, neo-Ottomanism is not an aggressive foreign policy and is not aimed only at the former Ottoman territories. It looks to the imperial Ottoman past but it is a product of a very different economic and social structure and is a reaction to a Kemalist isolationist foreign policy, not an irredentist, expansionist or aggressive foreign policy. In fact, neo-Ottomanism does not suggest a renewed interest in the former territories and people of the Ottoman Empire. But it aimed at a certain organic geopolitical, cultural, and economic relationship that had been absent during the Cold War and the early Republican years could re-emerge in the new suitable international and regional environment. In the words of Fuller, 'It suggests that the Turks may now come to see themselves once again at the centre of a world re-emerging around them rather than at the tail-end of a European world that is increasingly uncertain about whether or not sees Turkey as part of itself.'¹²¹

Moreover, because of Özal's obsession with the economy, his foreign policy focused on the economic aspects of external relations. For example for Özal, Turkey's export-import capacity was far more important than military capacity.¹²² For Özal Turkey needed time to develop its economy. Having developed its economy Turkey would have to follow an active foreign policy in order to protect its economic interests in the world. However this protectionism was not aggressive or isolationist. On the contrary economic interests played a crucial role in Özalist activism and Özal's compromise policy in Cyprus and in relations with Greece.

¹¹⁷ Like Mümtaz Soysal, Erdal İnönü and Emin Çölaşan.

¹¹⁸ Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 26 June 1992.

¹¹⁹ Stavrou views Ottomanist orientation as abandonment of the Kemalist philosophical basis of foreign policy arguing Turkish Balkan policy was based on common religion instead of secular considerations. Stavrou, 'The Dismantling', pp. 45-46. Also for Ottomanist irredentism see: Constantinides, 'Turkey', pp. 323-334;

¹²⁰ A. Zaman, 'Ottoman Heirs Seek New Balkan Role', *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 November 1992; D. Sneider, 'Turkey and Iran Play Out New "Great Game" in Asia', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 15-21 May 1992; R. Marthner, 'Horizon Shift to Central Asia', *Financial Times*, 24 May 1992.

¹²¹ Graham E. Fuller, 'Turkey's New Eastern Orientation', in Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser (eds.), *Turkey's New Geopolitics*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), p. 48.

¹²² TRT, 22 November 1991, *Zaman* 23 November 1991; Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi* (*Özal Story*), (Ankara: Bilgi, 1990), p. 294.

For Çandar, Özal was against the militarist character of Turkish-Western relations:

*“Turkey, until Özal, saw its relations as political or security relations. The West needed Turkey, and Turkey used the West’s need to enter the Western society. For Özal, the only way to join the Western club was economy. He emphasised that the West has to accept Turkey as an equal partner if Turkey become a developed state. Further, Turkey will not need anybody if it success this.”*¹²³

Similarly, Özal’s solution to Turkish-Greek and Turkish-Russian problems was to develop economic ties. As a result, Turkey, in the Özal period, searched for good relations with the promising foreign markets and focused on the economic matters more than political ones. Contrary to the independence-obsessed Kemalist foreign policy, with increasing economic power, Özal’s Turkey re-gained its confidence in the world and pursued an internationalist foreign policy, because with rapid economic change not only the independence concept but also the national interest concept was changed. Now Turkey’s interest was not in isolationism but in a close relationship with the world. In other words, Turkey’s new economic interests had a crucial role in Özalist activism.

In addition to the economic aspects, neo-Ottomanism placed great importance in the cultural similarities of Turkey to the Middle East, the Balkans and the Central Asia. In this context, Islam, Turkism, and Ottomanism were three key concepts. Neo-Ottomanists argued that Turkey was a natural part of the Islamic, Turkish and Ottoman world and this provides a suitable ground for economic and political co-operation.¹²⁴ They further argued that Turkey could be a perfect model for the countries in these regions. That is to say, contrary to Kemalist indifference and isolationist policies, Özalist neo-Ottomanism was very keen to improve relations with these regions. While Kemal had strictly avoided from setting out relations based on the Ottoman and Islamic past, Özal particularly emphasised the importance of these values. For instance, Kemal had seen the outside Turks as a dangerous issue, although for the neo-Ottomanists the outside Turks with the Turkish diaspora in Europe were crucial to improve Turkey’s relations with Germany, Russia and other states.

Integration with the West was another main pillar of neo-Ottomanism, and for Özal, neither the Islamic nor Turkish world was a viable alternative to the West. Özal argued that Turkey with its good relations with these regions would be integrated into the West. In other words, Turkist, Islamist

¹²³ Interview with Cengiz Çandar in Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları (Second Republic Debates)*, (Ankara: Başak, 1993).

¹²⁴ Interview with Cengiz Çandar...

and Ottomanist elements in Turkish foreign policy were part of Turkey's European integration aim, and Özal never gave up the European Turkey dream.

Moreover, as a result of his Americanism and ideological considerations, Özal attached a great importance to relations with United States. For him, the Americans could understand Turkey more than the Europeans. Also he argued that the American political model was more suitable for Turkey because of Turkey's unique social structure. In addition, for Özal, the American realist foreign policy suited Turkey's foreign policy priorities. In particular in the Middle East and Caucasia, he saw the United States as a natural ally for Turkey.

The Third World was not a very important issue for Özalist foreign policy. Unlike the socialists and leftist-Kemalists, Özal did not have an ideological framework for these countries. Muslim Third World states, however, had a special place in Ozalist policies. As noted earlier he restored relations with Iran, Iraq and other Muslim states in his early years. He also tried to demolish the historical mistrust between the Turks and Arabs, created partly by the Ottoman experiences, partly by Kemalist isolationism and Westernism. For example, Özal apologised to the Algerians for Turkey's pro-French policies during the Algerian Independence War.¹²⁵

Özal saw the Third World countries as export destinations. In particular, the difficulties in the European and American markets forced neo-Ottomanists to turn these countries. As a result, Turkey's political relations with these countries were almost the same, on the other hand, in the Özal era, Turkey's trade with the African and Asian countries increased by more than % 100.

In conclusion, unlike the Kemalist and leftist foreign policy approaches Özalism added new dimensions to Turkish foreign policy, like cultural and economic areas. National interest, independence and many more concepts of foreign policy were re-defined by Özalism. All these caused a multi-dimensional and more internationalist foreign policy understanding. Özal did not see Islam, Turkism and Ottomanism as an obstacle to Turkey's integration into the West, but an important contribution to that ultimate target. In brief, Özalist foreign policy was a clear deviation from Kemalism, however it was not an absolute rejection of the Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's ideas. In the words of Fuller, 'it does not represent a wholesale rejection of Atatürk, but rather a recognition that not every idea and value of Atatürk has to be forever valid in Turkish consideration of the future.'¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Fikret Ertan, 'Menderes'in ve Türkiye'nin Cesareti' (*Menderes' and Turkey's Courage*), *Zaman* (daily, Istanbul), 26 January 1999.

¹²⁶ Fuller, 'Turkey's', p. 47.

In the light of this information it can be said that Özalism was a new approach and provided a new way in foreign policy. However Özal did not directly attack Kemalism or Atatürk. On the contrary Özal attacked Kemalist policies, but on the other hand he said that Atatürk was the greatest Turkish hero. Özal, instead of attacking Atatürk, attacked İnönü's Kemalism. He, in one of his speeches divided Turkish foreign policy history into two different periods: Atatürk and İnönü period.¹²⁷ According to this analysis, Atatürk symbolised a more pragmatic, active and brave period, while İnönü closed Turkey to the world with his extremely isolationist, pacific, bureaucratic and etatist policies. Despite the words, as discussed, Özal's critics were for Kemalist foreign policy.

CONCLUSION

Özal provided the last challenge to the Republican foreign policy concept. As a synthesis of Liberalism, Turkism, Islamism and Ottomanism, Özalism produced Second Republicanism in domestic politics and Özalism's liberal, moderate religious, nationalist and economy-oriented policies produced neo-Ottomanism in foreign policy. However not only Özal's ideological orientation but also the radical structural changes in the Turkish economy and ethnical structure helped to form neo-Ottomanism and activism in foreign policy. While the Kemalist elite advocated a pacifist, isolationist and pro-Western foreign policy based on Kemalist civilisation understanding the Turkish people created its own foreign policy aims. The state was not Muslim yet the overwhelming majority of the people were and very close relations with the Muslim world. Also, for the Kemalist legacy any kind of pan-Turkism was dangerous, therefore, the Kemalist state machinery had always avoided to develop close relations with the Turkic groups of the Central Asia, the Balkans, Caucasia and the Middle East. Özal, with the help of international developments, deserted this Kemalist tradition as well, and the improvement of relations with the Turkic World became one of the primary aims of Turkish foreign policy.

With the development of an export-oriented Turkish economy and the spread of economic welfare and democratisation the ethnic groups of Turkey created pressure on the governments for co-operation with these regions. Further, urbanisation and industrialisation nourished Islamic and traditional values in Turkey and created a suitable environment for Islamism and Ottomanism. All these changes determined his policies and

¹²⁷ Gülistan Gürbey, 'Özal Dönemi Dış Politikası', (*Foreign Policy in the Özal Period*), in *Devlet ve Siyaset Adamı Turgut Özal, (Turgut Özal, as a Statesman and Politician)*, (Istanbul: 20 Mayıs Kültür Vakfı, 1996), p. 78. Özal used Atatürk's Hatay policy as proof for his activism: Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal'ın Anıları (Turgut Özal's Memoirs)*, (Istanbul: 1994), p. 127.

helped Özal to develop a new foreign policy understanding. Indeed, Özalist foreign policy was a direct response to these internal changes. It was also a response to international developments. The European unwillingness to integrate Turkey and the end of the Cold War left no alternative for Turkey but the Balkans, Caucasia, Black Sea, Middle East and Central Asia. In addition to the growing Turkish economy's interests towards these regions, the peoples of these countries turned towards Ankara. As a result, Turkish foreign policy dramatically shifted from isolationist Kemalist policies towards a more active foreign policy. Despite Atatürk's neglectful policy Turkey developed close economic, cultural and political relations with the Muslim world, Turkic states and with former Ottoman nations, like Bulgarians and Albanians.

In conclusion, Özal combined Islamist, Turkist and Ottomanist values under Özalism or neo-Ottomanism while the internal and international developments undermined the Republican orthodoxy. Moreover, the left lost its persuasiveness with the collapse of the communist block. As a result, despite the Republican state machinery, Özalism with its popular support became the most significant foreign policy alternative for Turkey. For a first time in the Republican history the people's foreign policy goals and the government's foreign policy goals did not contradict. In summary Özal's economy-oriented, Turkist, 'Islamist', Ottomanist, Westernist and active foreign policy understanding demolished many Republican taboos in foreign policy. Turkey started to interest in Ottoman, Muslim and Turkic territories; changed its priorities and aimed to be a regional power in its region. As a final word, in these years Özal's ideology, international developments and the internal changes in Turkey determined Turkey's foreign policy and in doing so they left permanent mark on Turkish politics.