

ÖZALİZM (NEO-OTTOMANISM): AN ALTERNATIVE IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY?

Sedat LAÇİNER

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi & USAM

ÖZET

Turgut Özal Türk siyasi hayatında önemli bir kilometre taşıdır ve dönemi olumlu olumsuz bir çok değişimin başlangıç noktasıdır. Buna karşın Özal dönemi ve anlayışı bilimsel olarak yeterince incelenmemiştir. Özellikle dış politikada Özal anlayışı ya da 'Özalizm'in incelenmesinde önemli eksiklikler bulunmaktadır. Oysa ki Özal dönemi anlayışı kendisinden sonraki dönemleri de etkilemiş ve bir çok hükümet Özal'ın politikalarını devam ettirmeye çalıştığını öne sürmüştür. Bu çerçevede yazar dış politikada Özal yaklaşımını şekillendiren unsurları ve bunların etkilerini ele alıyor. Ayrıca Özalcı fikirlerin dış politikada nasıl bir uygulama imkanı bulduğu da çalışmanın ikinci kısmında detaylarıyla ele alınıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Neo-Osmanlılık, Özal, Özalizm, Soğuk Savaş Sonrası dönem, Türk dış politikası, Türkiye*

Key Words: *Neo-Ottomanism, Ozal, Ozalism, Turkish Foreign Policy*

INTRODUCTION

Turgut Özal, the former prime minister and president of Turkey, left great important imprint on an increasingly activist and internationalist approach to Turkish foreign policy. The dramatic developments in the international system and the transformation of Turkish economy and social life contributed much to Özal in realising his ideals in foreign policy, however he never accepted that his policies were temporary and peculiar to a specific period. Özal challenged the orthodox foreign policy understandings, structure, methodology and style in Turkey. He argued that "many things have changed in Turkey... In foreign policy the days of taking a cowardly and timid position are over... My conviction is that Turkey should leave its former passive and hesitant policies and engage in an

active foreign policy...¹ These words vividly show that his ideas represent a clear deviation in Turkish foreign policy. Furthermore many governments after Özal's dead, including the AK Party Government, claimed they were the true followers Özal in domestic and foreign policy and Turkey should follow a more active and internationalist foreign policy as Özal did. In the words of Bağcı, "Turkey's foreign and security policy still shows the signs of his political vision".² In brief Özalist approach has still affected Turkey's foreign policy and many name themselves as Özalist. All these show us that Özal period is extremely important in understanding Turkish foreign policy.

This study first 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.

1. 1980S 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 an practising Muslim and was known to have connections with the *Nakşibendi* order of dervishes.'³ 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,

¹ Ahmad, *The Making...*, p. 201; *Milliyet* 3 March 1991.

² Hüseyin Bağcı, 'Turgut Özal's Foreign and Security Policy Revisited', *Turkish Daily News*, 25 April 2000.

³ Heath Lowry, 'Challenges to Turkish Democracy in the Decade of the Nineties', *Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. V, Fall 1996, p. 95; Yeşilada, 'Turkish Foreign...', p. 178; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1993), p. 297.

nationalist, conservative, liberal politician, businessman, economist and bureaucrat.⁴ Above all, Özal was a moderate who could do business with everyone regardless of their social or ideological background. For example, he was an Islamist NSP candidate for the Izmir province in 1978,⁵ before becoming head of the economy under secular military rule.⁶ Özal's other key feature was his Americanism. Having graduated from İstanbul 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, 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 legitimated his ideology in the system. Thus Özal found opportunity to banish the military elements gradually from the politics. Third, the lack of political rivals granted Turgut Özal a respite to concentrate on the country's problems. As a result, 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 granted 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.⁷ Thus, MP received an absolute majority in the new assembly.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Heath Lowry, 'Challenges to Turkish Democracy in the Decade of the Nineties', *Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, Fall 1996, p. 95.

⁶ Thanks to his NSP membership, the radical leftists accused him of being Islamist while the Islamists labelled him as a traitor because of his departure from the NSP. *Milliyet*, 20 March 1994.

⁷ C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1990), p. 95.

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 the OECD countries.⁸ The volume of Turkish exports rose from \$ 2,910 million in 1980 to over \$ 20 billion in the 1990s, with an annual increase of 15,6 %; a staggering 350 % increase in 10 years.⁹ 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 a increase from \$212 million in 1980 to about \$3 billion in 1990.¹⁰ 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'.¹¹ Moreover, the Turkish economy had by now been more 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. Furthermore the variety of international trade partners increased.¹² Thus Turkey's economic dependency was weakened. For some scholars, all these developments were 'the Özal revolution'.¹³

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

⁸ 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; Dodd, *The Crisis...*, p. 102.

⁹ 'General Outlook of Turkish Economy', via internet, <http://www.foreigntrade.gov.tr/ENGLISH?ECONOMYYECONO.htm>, visited May 1997, p. 2.

¹⁰ Anne O. Kruger and Okan H. Aktan, *Swimming Against the Tide: Turkish Trade Reform in the 1980s*, (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1992), pp. 148-149.

¹¹ Andrew Mango, 'Unfriendly Neighbours', *The World Today*, Vol. 50, No. 3, March 1994, pp. 60-61, p. 60.

¹² Baskın Oran, 'Batı Bloku Ekseninde Türkiye 2', içinde Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası*, Cilt II, (Ankara: İletişim 2001), s. 15.

¹³ Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled, Atatürk and After*, (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1997), pp. 158-179.

Another effect of the economic boom was the radical change in economic and social structures: economic power had been in the hands of the bureaucracy and state-sponsored businessmen in the early years. 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 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.¹⁴

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, Kurds, Turkmens and other groups brought their problems to the foreign policy agenda more freely.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ This trend continued throughout the Republican era. In addition to the Turkish and Kurdish population the number of Caucasian, Balkan and Russian im-

¹⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of the internal social and economic factors' role in shaping Özalism see Hakan Yavuz, 'Değişen Türk Kimliği ve Dış Politika: Neo-Osmanlılığın Yükselişi', (*The Rise of the Neo-Ottomanism, The Changing Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy*), *Liberal Düşünce*, Vol. 4No. 13, Winter 1999, pp. 25-38.

¹⁵ Lowry, 'Challenges...', p. 103.

¹⁶ For the ethnic minorities in the Ottoman and Turkish period see: Peter Alford Andrews (ed.), *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, (Weisbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989); Server Mutlu, 'Population of Turkey by Ethnic Groups and Provinces', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Spring 1995, 12, pp. 33-60.

¹⁷ Şule Kut, 'Yugoslavya Bunalımı ve Türkiye'nin Bosna - Hersek ve Makedonya Politikası, 1990-1993', (*Turkey's Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia Policy*), in Söylemezoğlu, *Türk...*, pp. 159-179.

migrants was very high. However these people were not allowed to use their ethnic identity in politics, and were seriously warned not to interfere in the affairs of the country of their origin.¹⁸ The early Republican policy was based on increasing homogeneity of these people, and this policy continued until the end of the Cold War. Even in the 1980s the Turkish left and the orthodox 'state-Kemalism' 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.¹⁹ According to Edward Shvardnadze, the President of Georgia, the number of the Georgians in Turkey was about 2 million,²⁰ while the number of the Bosnian Turks is estimated about 3-4 million and the number of the Albanian Turks is about 4 million.²¹ There are similar number of Azerbaijanis and Chechens. Though most of these people had been Islamised and Turkified, they still spoke their language and many of them had different identity awareness.²² 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, İzmir and İstanbul 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.²³ 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.²⁴ As a result the Balkan

¹⁸ Lowry, 'Challenges...', p. 102-103.

¹⁹ Belkis Kümbetoğlu, 'Göçmen ve Sığınmacı Gruplardan Bir Kesit: Bulgaristan Göçmenleri ve Bosnalı Sığınmacılar', (A Small Portrait of the Asylum Seekers and the Migrants: The Bulgarian and the Bosnian Migrants), in Kemali Saybasılı and Gencer Özcan (eds.), *Yeni Balkanlar, Eski Sorunlar, (The New Balkans, The Old Problems)*, (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1997), p. 229-230 and 255.

²⁰ *Milliyet*, 26 June 1996.

²¹ Kut, 'Yugoslavya...', p. 178; Sezer cited in Stephanos Constantinides, 'Turkey: The Emergence of a New Foreign Policy The Neo-Ottoman Imperial Model', *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 1996, Vol. 24, Winter, p. 328.

²² Paul Henze, 'Turkey: Toward the Twenty-First Century', in Fuller and Lesser, *Turkey's...*, pp. 25-26.

²³ For the exchange of the minorities see: Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929).

²⁴ Thomas Goltz, 'Thousands of Ethnic Turks Deported in Bulgarian Assimilation Campaign', *The Washington Post*, 15 June 1989, p. A34 and Marc Fisher, 'Refugees Describe Bulgaria's Campaign Against Turks', *The Washington Post*, 21 June 1989, p. A16. For the Bulgarian Turks migration to Turkey in the 1980s also see: Türkçaya Ataöv, *The Inquisition of the 1980s: The Turks of Bulgaria*, (Washington D.C.: 1990); Kemal Karpat, 'The Turks of Bulgaria', in Syed Z. Abedin and Ziyauddin Sardar (eds.), *Muslim Minorities in the West*, (London: Grey Seal Books, 1995), pp. 51-66; D. Vasileva, 'Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return', *International Migration Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, 1992, pp. 342-352.

migrants became one of the largest pressure group in Turkey. Though the Bulgarian Turks caused a great problem in Turkish-Bulgarian relations in the 1980s, they would become an important actor in improving the economic and political relations in the 1990s.²⁵ 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 all these ethnic groups on foreign policy was dramatic. With the increasing role of ethnic groups, Turkey's relations with the region intensified.²⁶ 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. Similarly, as will be seen, one of the most important factors would shape Turkey's Bosnia policy was the Bosnian Turks in Turkey.²⁷ In other words, the ethnic groups created their own foreign policy aims, which were different from the state's orthodox foreign policy. Turgut Özal saw this change and sought to develop a foreign policy covering all these sector demands.

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 Middle East. 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 per cent 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.²⁸ Thanks to the Özalist economic measures of the early 1980s, by abandoning its inward-

²⁵ Constantinides, 'Turkey...', p. 329 and Eric Roleau, 'Turkey: Beyond Atatürk', *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1996, p. 71.

²⁶ Constantinides, 'Turkey...', pp. 328-330; Lowry, 'Challenges...', pp. 102-104; Yavuz, 'Degisen...', pp. 36-38.

²⁷ Sezer cited in Constantinides, 'Turkey...', p. 328.

²⁸ Dodd, *The Crisis...*, p. 105; Ahmad, *The Making...*, pp. 206-207.

oriented economic policies Turkey succeeded not only in diversifying its exports but also in becoming an important market for direct foreign investment.²⁹ 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 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.³⁰ In brief, with the internationalisation of the economy, Turkish businessmen imposed their agenda on the state or manipulated the official foreign policy.

*Kurdish Separatism and the Need for a New Identity*³¹

The Republican nationalism let many Kurdish nationalists down after the Independence War. As Turkist, the early republicans sought to establish a homogeneous country. In the Seyh Sait Revolt (1925) and in the Dersim (Tunceli) Revolts (1937-1938), the State suppressed the Kurdish-Islamist separatists by using violence.³² 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 Kurdish separatism 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 and launched a great terror campaign which claimed ten thousands of life between 1980-2000. By the late 1980s, the Kurdish question dominated the political agenda, and all political

²⁹ Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, (New York: Rowman, 1998), p. 164.

³⁰ Graham E. Fuller, 'Turkey's New Eastern Orientation', in Fuller and Lesser (eds.), *Turkey's*, p. 39.

³¹ Kurdish separatism is an important and huge subject, however its details fall out of the scope and the limits of this study. Here the study just focused on its role in shaping Özalism. For a detailed account see William Hale, *Identities and Politics in Turkey*, unpublished SOAS seminar paper, 7 October 1999, pp. 1-15 and Bal, *Preventing...*; also see Gerger, *Türk Dış...*, pp. 164-171 and Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's...*

³² Bal, *Preventing...*, pp. 142-148.

parties searched for a solution. The traditional Republican 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.³³ In foreign policy matters it created neo-Ottomanism or Özalist Foreign Policy understanding.³⁴ 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.³⁵ Özal underlined his plans for the outside Kurds in his speech in Diyarbakir, a predominantly Kurdish region:

*"The people in the south east region are our brothers. The people in the Northern Iraq are their brothers and should to be our brothers too. Turkey just neglected the events happened in Northern Iraq in the past.. For example, the Halabje incident. We said "that's outside our frontiers, it's nothing to do with us." This policy must be changed. Turkey's new policy should be as: if Baghdad commits another barbarity there, it will find us opposing it."*³⁶

This speech clearly underscores the huge differences between the traditional pacific policies and Özal's activist Kurdish policy. Moreover, the Özalist policy challenged the principle of non-involvement in the regional inter-state conflicts and domestic politics of the other countries. As Menderes did in the Iraqi Crisis of 1958, Özal threatened the neighbour countries with military intervention.³⁷ In sum, the Kurdish problem not only increased the political liberalism of Özalism but also nourished its Ottomanist elements.

³³ The leading Second Republicanists are: Mehmet Altan, Ahmet Altan, Asaf Savaş Akat, Ethem Mahçupyan.
³⁴ David Barchard names Özalism in general as neo-Ottomanism and claims that 'neo-Ottomanism is much more politically potent force in Turkey than Islam.' David Barchard, *Turkey and the West*, (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 91.

³⁵ Turgut Özal, *ANAP Özal Arşivi*, Ankara, TÖ / 92045A.

³⁶ Özal's speech in Diyarbakır, *Milliyet*, 9 December 1991.

³⁷ Apart from Iraq, Özal had threatened Bulgaria in the 1980s for its treatment to the Bulgarian minority. For the issue see Türkkaya Ataöv, *The Inquisition of the 1980s: The Turks of Bulgaria*, (Washington, D.C.: 1990); Türkkaya Ataöv, 'The Bulgarian Quashing of Its Minorities', *The Journal of Ankara University, The Faculty of Political Science*, January-December 1990, Vol. XLV, No. 1-4, pp. 1-10.

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

A New Civilisation Understanding and Özalist Westernism

The early Republicans had aimed at creating a fully secular, modern and European Turkey by changing the civilisational mode of the country, as they viewed the religious and traditional values and Ottoman cultural system as responsible for poverty, political corruption and economic collapse.³⁸ For Özal there was no compulsory relationship between progress and Western civilisation. Contrary to the positivist *İttihatçılar* and Republicans, Özal argued that Western civilisation was not the only civilisation on the 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*³⁹, he argued that Turkey had always been, still was, and would be a part of Europe. In brief, the main difference between the Republicans' 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 the positivist Republicans', 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 the religious and traditional values and modernity witnessed in the 1980s.

According to Turgut 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

³⁸ See Sedat Laçiner, *The Ideological Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy*, unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, University of London, 2001, Chapter IV.

³⁹ Turgut Özal, *Turkey in Europe and Europe in Turkey*, (Nicosia, Northern Cyprus: K. Rustem & Brother, 1991).

the Turkish Islamic outlook could provide peace between Muslims and the others, since religion and progress could go hand in hand.⁴⁰ 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."*⁴¹

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."*⁴²

Apart from his different civilisation understanding, Turgut Özal, contrary to Republican 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."⁴³

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

⁴⁰ Nicole and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled, Atatürk and After*, (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1997), p. 163.

⁴¹ Özal, *Turkey...*, pp. 296-297.

⁴² Özal, *Turkey...*, p. 345.

⁴³ Özal, *Turkey...*, p. 343.

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."⁴⁴

A New Look at the Ottoman Past and the Region

The Republicans 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 the Republicans 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 some of the Republican 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 orthodox Kemalist or the NSP Islam understanding. 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 visited the Turkish communities in the Balkans, in

⁴⁴ Özal, *Turkey...*, pp. 330-331.

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."⁴⁵

In other words, Özal was against the Republican 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.⁴⁶ He searched for a middle-way between Islamism and Turkism, his aim being to formulate a religious understanding that was suitable for democracy, liberalism and capitalism.⁴⁷ The answer was *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (Turkish-Islamic synthesis).⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ 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.'⁵⁰ 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. Özal claimed that Turkish Islam could provide a peace between the Muslims and the others saying 'we learned that religion and progress could go together.'⁵¹ Özal was implying that Islam is montageable into the modern political system. In the light of this information, in Özal's foreign policy understanding Turkish Islamic mentality had an important role in Turkey's external relations.

⁴⁵ Cengiz Çandar, 'Özal'ın Cenaze Töreni Kemalizmin Cenaze Törenine Benziyordu', içinde Metin Sever ve Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları*, (Ankara: Başak yayınları, 1993), ss. 91-114.

⁴⁶ Turgut Özal, *ANAP Özal Arşivi*, TÖ / 91002.

⁴⁷ Tapper, 'Introduction', p. 11.

⁴⁸ For Turkish-Islamic Synthesis see Aydınlar Ocağı, *Aydınlar Ocağı'nın Görüşü*, (*The Aydınlar Ocağı's View*), (İstanbul: 1973).

⁴⁹ Yeşilada, 'Turkish...', p. 177.

⁵⁰ Zürcher, *Turkey...*, p. 303.

⁵¹ Pope and Pope, *Turkey...*, p. 163.

Özalist Nationalism

Turkism constituted one of the main elements of Özalism. However, his Turkism was neither irredentist, like Enver Pasha's Turkism, nor isolationist, like the Republicans'.⁵² 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, the Republicans developed an isolationist Turkism, viewing the outside a danger for the Anatolian Turks. Hence the Republicans' Turkey had no interest in the outside Turks, and gave no support for Turkish resistance against any power. 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 the Republican Turkism, Özalist Turkism was not a reactionary movement in domestic politics. The Republicans' nationalism was a reaction to 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.

*Liberalism and Americanism*⁵³

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.⁵⁴ When comparing the American and the Turkish

⁵² For the transformation of Turkism in the Özal period also see Fuller, 'Turkey's...', pp. 45-48; Yavuz, 'Değişen...', pp. 25-38.

⁵³ For the ideology's role in Özal's policies and his Americanism also see Uslu, *Türk - Amerikan...*, pp. 269-270.

⁵⁴ Özal pursued an EC-type relation with United States in economics and politics.

system, Özal argued that Turkey had a communist system in bureaucracy and economy. For him the *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 Republican approach that 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."*⁵⁵

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.

3. ÖZALISM IN FOREIGN POLICY: IMPLEMENTATION⁵⁶

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.

⁵⁵ Metin Sever and Cem Dizdar, 2. *Cumhuriyet Tartışmaları (Second Republic Debates)*, (Ankara: Başak, 1993), 17.

⁵⁶ For analysis of Özal's foreign policy see: Özal, *Türkiye...*; Hakan M. Yavuz, 'Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism', *Critique*, Spring 1998, pp. 19-41; William Hale, 'Turkish Foreign Policy After the Cold War', in *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, (Istanbul: ISIS, 1993); Kemal Kirişçi, 'The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour', *Foreign Policy (DPE)*, Vol. XVIII, Nos: 3-4, 1993; G. E. Fuller and I. O. Lesser, *Turkey's New Geopolitics, From the Balkans to Western China*, (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1993); Ramazan Gözen, 'Turgut Özal and Turkish Foreign Policy: Style and Vision', *Foreign Policy (Ankara)*, Vol. XX, No. 3-4, 1996, pp. 69-101; Ramazan Gözen, 'Türk Dış Politikasında Karar Alma Mekanizması, Turgut Özal ve Körfez Krizi', *(The Decision Making Mechanism in Turkish Foreign Policy: Turgut Özal and the Gulf Crisis)*, *Yeni Türkiye*, No. 9, May-June 1996, pp. 286-302.

Prelude to 'Neo-Ottomanism' (1983 -89)

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 E.C. as a weapon against Turkey.⁵⁷

The United States was more understanding than the E.C. They even said that the Turkish military coup was no ordinary coup but a necessary intervention in politics. During Ronald Reagan's first administration, relations between Turkey and the United States improved significantly. However, in the second Reagan term, the international balance of power began to change. The rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev, the gradual thaw in the U.S. - Soviet Union relations, the impending Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, all this made Turkey's defence needs less urgent from the American standpoint. Under economic and social pressures, Congress cut the defence budget. The decreased American aid to Turkey worsened relations. In addition, the Greek and Armenian efforts in Congress harmed U.S.-Turkish relations. Nevertheless, Özal continued his efforts to develop a special relationship with the United States.

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.⁵⁸ Also, the growing Turkish exports forced Turkish policy makers to

⁵⁷ Mehmet Ali Birand, *Türkiye'nin Ortak Pazar Macerası: 1959-1985, (Turkey's Common Market Adventure)*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1986), p. 412.

⁵⁸ Turgut Özal, *ANAP Özal Arşivi*, Ankara, TÖ/Konuşmalar/84312, 84314-C.

look at the neglected regions such as the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Middle East. Despite the crisis with Bulgaria and Greece in the late 1980s, Turkey's relations with these regions were improved, particularly in the economic sphere. In the pre-1989 era, Özal further attached great importance to the Middle Eastern Muslim countries, particularly in the economic matters. Turkey established very close economic relations with Iran, Iraq, Libya and Pakistan, which had been neglected for a long time.⁵⁹ These relations underlined Özal's ideological orientation and how he gave importance on economic relations. For Özal economy should be at the core of Turkey's relations with the Muslim states rather than politics or the military issue. He never visited any of these countries without a crowded businessmen group and made effort personally to improve the trade with the region.⁶⁰ In the first years of the Özal era, the 1984 Casablanca Islamic Summit constituted a turning point. Turkey as the first time in the Republican history, participated the conference at the presidential level. In the conference Kenan Evren was appointed president to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Co-operation (COMCEC), one of the six specialised OIC committees.⁶¹ Turkey thus in practice assumed a leading role in efforts to achieve co-operation among the Muslim countries challenging the Republican secularism and non-involvement religious meetings principles.

The last Turkish initiative in foreign policy, in the first Özal period, was its application for full EC membership. According to Özal, there were three requirements for such membership: being European, democracy and a developed liberal economy. As he saw it, Turkey had met these criteria. Özal's enthusiasm for membership was not shared by the E.C. notably by Germany.⁶² As a result, the Community warned Turkey unofficially that the timing for membership application was not right.⁶³ Ignoring these warnings, Turkey applied for full-membership in 1987, being confident of the acceptance of its application.⁶⁴ Özal asserted that 'according to the written agreements, there is no other way, they can delay it, but they cannot refuse it.'⁶⁵ The Commission's response took thirty months, which was longer than that taken for the Greeks, Spanish and Portuguese applications. The EC Commission finally issued its opinion on 20 December 1989. The reluctance of the EC was clear though the Commission tried not

⁵⁹ For the details of Özal's diplomatic visits to these countries see Yavuzalp, *Liderlerimiz...*, pp. 269-303.

⁶⁰ Yavuzalp, *Liderlerimiz...*, p. 269.

⁶¹ Aykan, 'Turkey and...'

⁶² Sevilay Elgün Kahraman, 'Rethinking Turkey-European Union Relations in the Light of Enlargement', *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 5.

⁶³ Ali Bozer, 'Turkey's Relations and Prospects with the European Community', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest*, Summer 1997, pp. 9-14, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Çayhan, *Turkey...*, p. 292.

⁶⁵ 'Turkey's EEC Full Membership Can Be Delayed But Not Refused', Interview with Turgut Özal, *Turkish Review*, Summer 1987, pp. 15-24, p. 15.

to spell out its negative opinion.⁶⁶ For the E.C. the obstacles were economic gap, free movement of Turkish workers (paragraph 82)⁶⁷, and the political problems, notably human rights issues (paragraph 9) and Turkey's problems with Greece.⁶⁸ Hale argues that democratisation after the coup had partly been motivated by foreign policy considerations and thanks to the European refusal both the military and the government accepted that further liberalisation would be necessary condition for a better relations and eventual acceptance of Turkey into the Community.⁶⁹ However disappointed Özal, in contrast, argued that the real reason was neither liberalisation nor the political problems but cultural differences and European biases about the Turks.⁷⁰

Apart from bilateral relations, another significant development of the first Özal era was Turkey's 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, 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.

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 re-

⁶⁶ Eralp, 'Turkey...', p. 36.

⁶⁷ *European Commission: Opinion on Turkey's Request for Accession to the Community*, SEC, 89, 2290 final, Brussels, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Opinion*.

⁶⁹ William Hale, 'Generals and Politicians in Turkey: 1983-1990', *Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 1995, Vol. XXV, p. 18.

⁷⁰ 'Turkey's...', pp. 15-24. Müftüler-Bac shares Özal's ideas: 'The replacement of the ideological East-West conflict with ethnic, religious, and historical conflicts emphasised Turkey's non-Christian, and hence non-European character: Müftüler-Bac, 'Through...', p. 29. Also see the same author's 'Turkey's...', p. 64.

gion, 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.⁷¹ Thus Turkish leaders sought ways to extricate Turkey from its predicament.⁷² As the experiences have showed in the twenty-century, despite some differences, the path all Turkish governments have chosen was integration with the West. The axis of the Kemalists' (Atatürk, İnönü and the 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 political groups in Turkey solved Turkey's historically isolated position with integration with the West. Even these radical groups were arguing partly Westernism. Particularly for the classic Republicans, integration with the Western world 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 and instability. Regional instability will undermine Turkish economy and integrity and all the foreign powers will work to disunite Turkey.'⁷³

The leftists and Republicans, 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 Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. For these groups and other isolationists, Kurdish problem and the European

⁷¹ 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.

⁷² 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.

⁷³ *Cumhuriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 27 December 1989; *Hürriyet* (daily, Istanbul), 2 January 1990.

refusal of the Turkish application were clear signs for the Western intention. Leftists and traditional Republicans 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 very different from these approaches. 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, 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."*⁷⁴

One of the reasons for this mutual awareness was the eruption of regional conflicts, like Karabagh and the Bosnia 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.⁷⁵ Thus group identity of a cross-national and cross-cultural became very important in international relations. Especially in the Balkans and Caucasia 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.⁷⁶ According to this approach, a cultural polarisation was inevitable and Turkey's region was the most dangerous in the world. Whether these theories are right or wrong falls out of the scope of this

⁷⁴ Duygu Bazoğlu 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 Press, 1998), p. 73.

⁷⁵ Graham E. Fuller, 'The New Mediterranean Security Environment: Turkey the Gulf, and Central Asia', in *RAND Conference Proceedings*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 1993), p. 45.

⁷⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, 'Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer, 1993.

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 Caucasia 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 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 divided among Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey and Russia.⁷⁷ Particularly the emergence of an independent Ukraine balanced the Russian power in the Black Sea and Turkey felt itself more comfortable on the straits question. Likewise, in Caucasia 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 previous strong 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 Romania and 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 Turk-

⁷⁷ Sezer, 'Turkey...', p. 72.

ish 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.⁷⁸ 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 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 the initiative to set up EC-like regional co-operation institutions in the area surrounding Turkey, with an aim of stabilising Turkey's region for 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. In Özal's plans, as will be seen in the Black Sea, Russia and the Central Asia cases, Eurasia in particular played a significant role, and he focused on to make Turkey an important actor in the region. One of the initiative to realise these aims was Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC).

*Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC)*⁷⁹

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, Caucasia and the Balkan states and after a preparatory meeting in Ankara in 1990, working meetings were made in Bucharest (Romania), Sofia (Bulgaria) and Moscow (the Soviet Union) followed between December 1990 and July 1991.⁸¹ After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, apart from Turkey, Russia, Greece and Ukraine almost all-regional countries participated in the organisation:

⁷⁸ Landau, *Pan-Turkizm...*, p. 202.

⁷⁹ For Turkey's role in the BSEC see Nihat Gökyigit, 'Success of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Zone and the Role of Turkey', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest*, Vol. Vi, No. 28, Summer 1992, pp. 7-10; N.Bülent Gültekin and Ayşe Mumcu, 'Black Sea Economic Cooperation', in Vojtech Mastny and R. Craig Nation (eds.), *Turkey Between East and West*, (Oxford: Westview Press, Inc., 1996), pp. 179-201; Oktay Özlüye, 'Black Sea Economic Cooperation', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 1992.

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

⁸¹ Türkkaya Ataöv, 'Expanding...', p. 58.

Romania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Albania, Georgia, Moldavia, Bulgaria and Armenia. The BSEC Agreement was signed in Istanbul on 25 June 1992 by all parties.⁸² The agreement declared all members' support for the democratic values, basic freedoms, individual rights, social justice, economic freedom, security and stability in the region.⁸³

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). After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia many regional countries faced economic catastrophe, and Özal also 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 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 and a data bank were established; and even political and economic committees were formed in order to discuss the regional problems. All member in these discussions also agreed to improve transportation, communication in the region and trade between the members.

For some academics like Gençkaya, BSEC was a Turkish-led challenge to European integration.⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the EC member

⁸² Gültekin and Mumcu, 'Black Sea...', p. 178.

⁸³ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism. From Irredentism to Cooperation*, (London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1995), p. 203. For the full text of the Bosphorus Declaration see 'Bosphorus Declaration', *Turkish Daily News*, 26 June 1992, p. 12.

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ Sanberk said 'it is not an alternative policy: Özden Sanberk, *Cumhuriyet*, 26 May 1991. Özüye, 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 Özüye, *The Independent*, 26 June 1992 and Özüye,

Greece's application to the BSEC emphasised the BSEC's this character.⁸⁶ In this context it can be said that the organisation's main character was complementing the regional integration projects like the European Community, rather than competing.⁸⁷ Also, contrary to the 1930s' Balkan Pact and 1950s' second Balkan Pact, BSEC was an economy-culture oriented organisation, rather than a security block.⁸⁸ 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, and as Uslu pointed out the BSCE can be considered as one of the most vivid proof for Turkey's new activist foreign policy.⁸⁹ 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?*⁹⁰

Apart from the BSEC, the Balkans was a very important area for Özalist foreign policy as the former Ottoman territories and a place where millions of Muslim and Turkish minorities lived. 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

'Black Sea...', p. 51. Turkey also emphasised on many occasions that the BSEC was not an alternative but a supplement to the European Community: see Sen, 'Black Sea...', p. 286.

⁸⁶ Özülye, 'Black Sea...', p. 52.

⁸⁷ Landau, *Pan-Turkizm...*, p. 204.

⁸⁸ Levent Bilmen, 'The Regional Cooperation Initiatives in Southeast Europe and the Turkish Foreign Policy', *Perceptions*, September-November 1998, Vol. III, No. 3, p. 69.

⁸⁹ Uslu, *Türk - Amerikan...*, p. 356.

⁹⁰ For Turkey's policy in the Balkans in the post-Cold War era see Garreth Winrow, *Where East Meets West: Turkey and the Balkans*, (London: Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, 1993); J. F. Brown, 'Turkey: Back to the Balkans?', in Graham Fuller and Ian O. Lesser (eds.), *Turkey's New Geo-politics: From the Balkans to Western China*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp. 141-162; Berkan Ekinci, 'Yugoslavya'nın Dağılması ve Türkiye', (*The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and Turkey*), in *Balkanlar, (The Balkans)*, (İstanbul: Eren, 1993); Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, 'Turkey in the New Security Environment in the Balkan and Black Sea Region', in Vojtech and Mastny (eds.), *Turkey...*, pp. 71-95; R. Craig Nation, 'The Turkic and Other Muslim Peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans', in Mastny and Nation (eds.), *Turkey...*, pp. 97-130; Kut, 'Yugoslavya...', pp. 159-179.

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. Under the effect of these factors Turkey evinced a new interest and activism in the Balkans after the Cold War. Turkey, similar to its policies in other regions, first of all, tried to develop economic and cultural relations 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.⁹¹ Turkey made efforts not to be seen as over-enthusiastic. As Çandar⁹² 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'.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴ 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.

The Bosnian crisis demonstrated the Özalist policies' differences from the previous foreign policy understandings; when the crisis erupted, Turkey, with the pressure from Islamic and ethnic circles,⁹⁵ felt that it had to follow a more active foreign policy.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Author's interview with Barçın Yinanç, 22 February 1999, Ankara. Also for the details of the project see M. Türker An and Sedat Laçiner, 'Balkan Seferinin Ardından', (*After the Balkan Visit*), *Uluslararası İlişkilerde Olaylar ve Yorumlar*, December 1993, pp. 54-58 and *Cumhuriyet*, 16 December 1993.

⁹² Personal interview with Cengiz Çandar.

⁹³ 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, p. 330; N. A. Stavrou, 'The Dismantling of the Balkan Security System: Consequences for Greece, Europe and NATO', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Winter 1995.

⁹⁴ Emilija Simoska, 'Macedonia and the Myths of the 'Muslim Conspiracy' and 'Endangered Orthodoxy'', *Balkan Forum*, Vol. 1, No. 4, September 1993, pp. 189-196.

⁹⁵ Duygun Bazoğlu Sezer says there is an estimated 3-4 million Turks of Bosnian origin in Turkey. Sezer, cited in Constantinides, 'Turkey...', p. 328. Hakan Yavuz argues that Özal's Balkan policy was not only a result of neo-Ottomanism, but also at the same time an important reason of this approach: Yavuz, 'Degisen...', pp. 26-28.

⁹⁶ Semih D. Idiz, 'President Özal's Balkan Crusade', *Turkish Probe*, Vol. 2, No. 15, 23 February 1993, pp. 10-11; Semih D. Idiz, 'Turkey Ponders the Balkan Quagmire', *Turkish Probe*, Vol. 1, No. 6, 22 December 1992, p. 9.

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.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Turkey was the most enthusiastic supporter of the Bosnians in the diplomatic arenas. For instance, the Turkish delegation made great efforts to form a pro-Bosnian group organising Azerbaijan and the Central Asian republics in the 1992 ECSC Helsinki Summit. In the summit, the Turkish Prime Minister also made negotiations with the Western leaders to get their support for Bosnia,⁹⁸ and argued that the NATO had to intervene to the conflicts in Yugoslavia in order to protect the Bosnians.⁹⁹ Turkey also sent \$ 22 million official aid to the Bosnians in 1992 and 1993.¹⁰⁰ In addition, Turkey, in the name of the Bosnians, was very active in the United Nations too.¹⁰¹ Despite these efforts, the massacres in Bosnia could not be prevented. In this environment Turkey severely criticised the West and even many Turkish politicians, like Kamuran İnan, Ekrem Pakdemirli and Bülent Akarcalı, accused the European states of being racist and anti-Muslim because they did not stop the Serbs.¹⁰² As a result Turkey felt frustrated at the reluctance of the West attempted to use Organisation of Islamic Countries as a platform to support the Bosnians and to attract the Western attention to the problem.¹⁰³ President Turgut Özal, in his Balkan tour between 15-22 February 1993, tried to make the Croats and Bosnians ally against the Serbs, and made efforts to persuade the Bulgarians, Albanians and Macedonians to use their air zones for Turkish military air planes.¹⁰⁴

Çalış argues that Özal's Balkan policy was in conformity with Turkey's traditional foreign policy.¹⁰⁵ It is true Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin declared President Özal's announcements did not reflect Turkey's official policy,¹⁰⁶ yet Çetin's words did not mean Turkey followed a traditional Republican foreign policy in the Balkans but underscored the great competition and differences between the traditional approach and Özal's Ottomanist Balkan policy. Turkey had never set its foreign policy on common religious and cultural values neither in the Balkans nor in the Middle East since Atatürk,¹⁰⁷ and the Republican elite was still reluctant to see Turkey involved in the Balkans.¹⁰⁸ However now, in addition to the defensive con-

⁹⁷ *Milliyet and Hürriyet*, 30 January 1990.

⁹⁸ *Hürriyet*, 10 July 1992.

⁹⁹ Idiz, 'Turkey...', p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Kut, 'Yugoslavya...', p. 170.

¹⁰¹ Kut, 'Yugoslavya...', p. 169.

¹⁰² *Zaman* 14-20 August 1992; *Turkish Daily News*, 15 August 1992.

¹⁰³ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 July 1993.

¹⁰⁴ Kut, 'Yugoslavya...', p. 170.

¹⁰⁵ Çalış, *The Role...*

¹⁰⁶ *Sabah*, 28 February 1993.

¹⁰⁷ Constantinides, 'Turkey:...', p. 328.

¹⁰⁸ J. F. Brown, 'Back to the Balkans?', in Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkey's New Geopolitics*, (Boulder: Westview, RAND, 1993), p. 153.

siderations, Turkey's Bosnia policy was based on religious and cultural solidarity and Özal was very enthusiastic for an active Balkan policy to make Turkey economically and politically a regional power. Turgut Özal, for instance, stated 'Turkey is responsible for looking after the well-being of the Muslims in the Balkans.'¹⁰⁹ Finally, all Turkish initiatives in the region Turkey had been defensive¹¹⁰ and has never followed an active foreign policy in the Balkans except Özal's Ottomanist policies.¹¹¹ Thus Özal attempted to change another column of tradition Turkish foreign policy.

*From the Adriatic to the 'Chinese Wall': Turkey as a Development Model for the 'Turkic World'*¹¹²

Turkey had no official 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.¹¹³ The causes for this were mainly Republican nationalism and isolationism understanding¹¹⁴ and the Cold War circumstances. As Rouleau put it 'Mustafa Kemal distanced Turkey from Turkish-speaking populations, abroad, arguing that Ankara should not meddle in the internal affairs of foreign states, just as he had dissociated the young republic from the Islamic world.'¹¹⁵ Apart from Kemalism, Turkey as a small country could not challenge the Soviet Union for the Turkish diaspora in this country. 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 seven Turkish states: Turkey, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizistan, Kazakhstan and Azer-

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in S. J. Blank, S. C. Pelletiere and W. T. Johnsen, *Turkey's Position at the Crossroads of World Affairs*, internet edition, (Washington: Department of Defense, 3 December 1993), Part III, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ Bilmen, 'The Regional...', pp. 76-77.

¹¹¹ For a comprehensive account on Turkey's previous Balkan policies see Oral Sander, *Balkan Gelişmeleri ve Türkiye, 1945-65*, (*The Developments in the Balkans and Turkey, 1945-65*), (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası).

¹¹² For Turkey's policies on Central Asia and the Caucasus see: Bülent Gökay and Richard Langhorne, *Turkey and the New States of the Caucasus and Central Asia*, (London: Wilton Park, 1996); Bülent Aras, 'Turkey's Policy in the Former Soviet South: Assets and Options', *Turkish Studies*, Vol., 1, NO. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 36-58; Stephen J. Blank, 'Turkey's Strategic Engagement in the Former USSR and US Interests', in Stephen J. Blank, Stephen C. Pelletiere, and William T. Johnsen (eds.), *Turkey's Strategic Position at the Crossroads of World Affairs*, (Charlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1993); Gareth M. Winrow, *Turkey in Post - Soviet Central Asia*, (Brookings Institute, 1995); Reimani Hooman, *Rivalry in Central Asia: Iran, Turkey and Russia in Comparison*, PhD thesis, Queen's University of Kingston (Canada), 1996; Bilal Simsir, 'Turkey's Relations with Central Asian Turkic Republics', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest*, Vol. 6, 1992.

¹¹³ 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.

¹¹⁴ Gökay and Langhorne, *Turkey...*, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Rouleau, 'Turkey...', p. 20.

baijan. 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 face.¹¹⁶

Despite the discussion among pan-Turkists about the creation of a Union of the Turks,¹¹⁷ 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 outside Turks were economy, education and culture, hoped secular Turkey would provide a development model for these new emerging republics.¹¹⁸ 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 (\$406 million) to deal with relations with the Turkic world, like TIKKA (Turkish Development Assistance Agency), which is the first official institute in the republican history to regulate the relations with the Central Asia and Caucasus.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰ 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.¹²¹ 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 Krgyzstan.¹²² Some former Soviet Republics, like Georgia and some Turkic

¹¹⁶ Sedat Laçiner and M. Türker Arı, '21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Cumhuriyetleri', *Milliyet* (daily, İstanbul), 4-10 May 1993.

¹¹⁷ *Cumhuriyet* (daily, İstanbul), 16-20 January 1990.

¹¹⁸ For an analysis of this model see Idris Bal, 'The Turkish Model and the Turkic Republics', *Perceptions*, September-November 1998, Vol. III, No. 3, pp. 105-129.

¹¹⁹ Blank and others, *Turkey's...*, p. 3; Gökay and Langhome, *Turkey...*, p. 33.

¹²⁰ Andrew Mango, *Türkiye'nin Yeni Rolü, (Turkey's New Role)*, (Trs.: E. Yükselci and S. Demircan), (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1995), p. 118.

¹²¹ For the effect of TRT in the region see Ali Yavuz Aybek, *Turkish Television to Central Asia: Perceptions of Turkish Avrasya Television in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*, PhD thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1996.

¹²² Landau, *Pan-Turkism...*, pp. 210-211.

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.¹²³ 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.¹²⁴ 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'.¹²⁵ 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-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.¹²⁶

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.¹²⁷ As Landau pointed out 'Turkey's grand

¹²³ Landau, *Pan-Turkism...*, pp. 207-211; Fuller, 'Turkey's New...', p. 68.

¹²⁴ *Zaman*, 15 March 1992.

¹²⁵ *Milliyet*, 15 March 1993.

¹²⁶ Landau, *Pan-Turkism...*, pp. 223-224.

¹²⁷ Lowry, 'Challenges...', pp. 102-106; Constantinides, 'Turkey...', pp. 328-330; Hynan, 'Turkestan...', pp. 346-347.

policy was to strive to institutionalise its relations with the “Turkic Brethren”,¹²⁸ both in conjunction with other states and on Turkish-Turkic basis’.¹²⁹ Under this strategy, Turkey encouraged the Turkic republics to participate The Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO)¹³⁰ to improve the regional economic co-operation and with Turkey’s encouragement and efforts the ECO was enlarged in 1992 by the admission of the Turkic-Muslim republics of the Soviet Union with Afghanistan.¹³¹ The inclusion of the Central Asian republics increased the ECO’s importance in terms of politics and international trade, and the year 1992 became the busiest year of the organisation, which showed no real progress for a long time because of the Iraq-Iran War during the 1980s.¹³² Iran in particular saw the ECO as an instrument to materialise its political-religious aims in the region, yet for Turkey the was not a religious or a political organisation, but an economic cooperation initiative. Isin Çelebi, Turkish State Minister for the Economic Affairs, for example, clearly declared how Turkey perceive the organisation: ‘The ECO is not going to be an Islamic Common Market. It is a regional economic cooperation organisation.’¹³³

In this context, Eco provided Turkey another economic instrument in order to implement its economy-oriented activist regional foreign policy.

In light of all these, Özal saw Central Asian republics as an opportunity, which had been ignored by the traditional foreign policy approaches, to strengthen Turkey’s influence in international arena.¹³⁴ He was so 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,

¹²⁸ Turkic republics, s.l.

¹²⁹ Landau, *Pan-Turkizm...*, p. 206.

¹³⁰ After Iraq’s withdrawal, CENTO had replaced the Baghdad Pact in 1958 and the CENTO members decided to set up Regional Cooperation Organisation (RCD) between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan on 4 July 1964 in order to increase economic cooperation among the member countries. After the Iran Revolution CENTO was dissolved, however RCD survived as the only regional economic cooperation organisation between Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. In 1985 the members changed the name of RCD to the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) underscoring the economic character of the new organisation. For the details see Ismail Soysal, *Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Siyasal Bağlıları, 1945-1990, (Turkey’s International Political Contracts)*, Vol. II, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), pp. 496-500. For the full text of ECO Agreement see the same study pp. 521-531. Also see Burke, *Pakistan’s...*; Soysal ‘The 1955 Baghdad...’; and Laçiner, *Ideological...*, Chapter VII.

¹³¹ Gökay and Langhorne, *Turkey...*, p. 18.; Sezer, *Turkey in...*, p. 85.

¹³² Davut Dursun, *İslam Dünyasında Dayanışma Hareketleri, (The Solidarity Movements in the Islamic World)*, (İstanbul: Ağaç, 1992), p. 70.

¹³³ *Milliyet*, 22 January 1992.

¹³⁴ *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal’ın III. İzmir İktisat Kongresi’ndeki Konuşmaları, (The President Turgut Özal’s Speech in the III. İzmir Congress of Economics)*, İzmir, 4 June 1992, (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık, 1992), pp. 11-12.

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?'¹³⁵

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. The relations were often dominated by rivalry and war.¹³⁶ The age of imperial competition ended with the First World War and the mutual enemies created mutual empathy and co-operation between Lenin and Mustafa Kemal in the post-war era. However Turkish-Russian co-operation was short-lived and Turkey turned its face towards the West. The Second World War and Stalin's territorial claims over Turkey increased the mistrust, and finally Turkey's participation to the NATO worsened the relations. Despite some efforts, as seen under the Ecevit governments in the 1970s, the relations could not be improved and the main priorities had been security issues.¹³⁷ 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".*¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Turgut Özal, *ANAP Özal Arşivi*, T.Ö./Konuşmalar/92003-A,B,C; *Milliyet* (daily, İstanbul), 3-6 March 1992.

¹³⁶ Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, 'Turkish Russian Relations: The Challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical Competition with Economic Partnership', *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 61-62; George S. Harris, *Turkey, Coping with Crisis*, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 178.

¹³⁷ Sezer, 'Turkish Russian...', p. 61.

¹³⁸ 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.

In reality, Russia was still a great potential threat to Turkey and was unhappy with Turkey's activities among the Turkish, Turkic and Muslim peoples in Central 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. In another word, Turkey's orientation was mainly in the economic realm towards the former Soviet Union countries in the Özal era.¹³⁹ Similarly, the former Soviet republics under the great economic depressions and the political problems caused by the disintegration of the Soviet Union sought friendship and economic cooperation with the regional countries, including Turkey, rather than rivalry. As Ataöv noted, 'having a new and a different perception of each other, the Soviet Union and Turkey exhibited a desire to augment trade and investment possibilities.'¹⁴⁰

On 11 March of 1991 Özal paid an official visit to Russia with a delegation of businessmen and officials, which was the first presidential level visit to Russia for twenty-two years.¹⁴¹ In this visit a Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighbourness and Co-operation and some other agreements and protocols were signed.¹⁴² 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.¹⁴³ 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 İstanbul and other Turkish cities to make unofficial trade (especially *bavul ticareti* – 'suitcase-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

¹³⁹ Türkkiye Ataöv, 'Turkey's Expanding Relations with the CIS and Eastern Europe', in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy, New Prospects*, (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1992), p. 80.

¹⁴⁰ Ataöv, 'Turkey's Expanding...', p. 91.

¹⁴¹ Ataöv, 'Turkey's Expanding...', p. 91-92.

¹⁴² Ataöv, 'Turkey's Expanding...', p. 91.

¹⁴³ Graham G. Fuller, 'Turkey's New Eastern Orientation', in Fuller and Lesser, *Turkey's...*, pp. 89-90.

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, like ENKA and GAMA. 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.¹⁴⁴

*The Gulf War: Return of Activism and Özalism vs. Republican Bureaucracy*¹⁴⁵

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 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 a 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.¹⁴⁶ Also the Gulf War revealed the Kemalist bureaucracy's and army's unrest about Özalist foreign policy. Finally, the Gulf War showed the clear difference between Kemalist foreign policy and Özalist foreign policy. Therefore we now examine Özal's Gulf War diplomacy and his Middle East policy.

¹⁴⁴ Gökay and Langhorne similarly argue that the essence of the relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union unlike their past rivalry shifted towards a more co-operative point. Gökay and Langhorne, *Turkey...*, p. 33.

¹⁴⁵ For the Gulf War and Turkey see: Philip Robins, 'Turkish Policy and the Gulf Crisis, Adventurist or Dynamic?', in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy, New Prospects*, (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1992), pp. 70-87; Necip Toruntay, *Orgeneral Toruntay'ın Anıları*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1993); R. Danreuther, *The Gulf War: A Political and Strategic Analysis*, (London: Adelphi Papers, No. 264, 1992); William Hale, 'Turkey, the Middle East and the Gulf Crisis', *International Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, 1992; I. Lesser, 'Turkey and the West after the Gulf War', *International Spectator*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January-March, 1992; Gözen, 'Türk...', pp. 286-302.

¹⁴⁶ Gözen, 'Türkiye'nin II. Körfez Savaşı Politikası: Aktif Politika ve Sonuçları', in İhsan D. Dağı (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikasında Gelenek ve Değişim*, (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi, 1998), p. 198.

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:¹⁴⁷ 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. In another word, Turkish foreign policy became characterised by non-involvement and non-interference in the regional politics.¹⁴⁸ However, as he implied in the 1980s, Özal saw an active role in the Middle East and on many occasions he stated that Turkey would have to increase its involvement in the Middle eastern politics: 'It is impossible for us to refrain from playing a role in the Middle East.'¹⁴⁹ Despite his desire for activism, Turkey's relations with the Middle East were mainly economy-oriented until the Gulf War, except the relations with Syria.¹⁵⁰ Turgut Özal in these years personally played a significant role in mobilising Turkish business interests in the Middle East and also attracted Arab capital to Turkey.¹⁵¹ Thanks to his efforts, Turkey's trade with the region grew dramatically and Turkey became an important exporter in the Middle East.¹⁵²

When the Gulf Crisis erupted, Turkey's initial reaction was within the traditional approach – Turkey did not approve of the invasion,¹⁵³ but saw it as merely a problem between two Arab states¹⁵⁴ and the principle of maintaining the *status quo* became the dominant consideration.¹⁵⁵ However, as mentioned, Özal saw the crisis as an opportunity to show Turkey's value to the Western security system especially to

¹⁴⁷ For the principle see also: Gülnur Aybet, *Turkey's Foreign Policy and Its Implications for the West: A Turkish Perspective*, (London: RUSI, 1994) and Seyfi Taşhan, 'Contemporary Turkish Policies in the Middle East: Prospects and Constraints', *Dış Politika (Foreign Policy)*, Vol. XII, Nos.: 1-2, June 1985, pp. 12-20; Oral Sander, 'Turkey and the Middle East', *Turkish Review Quarterly Digest*, Winter 1987, pp. 47-62; A. Karaoşmanoğlu, 'Turkey's Policy in the Middle East', *Studies on Turkish-Arab Relations*, Vol. 1, 1986, pp. 159-164.

¹⁴⁸ Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, (London: Pinter, 1991), pp. 65-67.

¹⁴⁹ *Hürriyet*, 19 January 1984.

¹⁵⁰ Turkey-Syria relations were dominated by the PKK problem and the water problem: Sedat Laçiner, 'Bir GAP Suda Fırtına', (*The Storm in the GAP*), *Milliyet*, 3-8 February 1993. The PKK problem in particular deeply affected Turkey's foreign policy in certain issues, however this study cannot focus on the issue because of its limit and scope. For a comprehensive analysis see Robert Olson, 'The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995: From the Gulf War to the Incursion into Iraq', *Journal of South East Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1995, pp. 1-30 and Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), esp. Chapter 6 (The Kurds and Turkish Foreign Policy).

¹⁵¹ Kirişçi, 'Turkey and...', p. 40.

¹⁵² Halis Akder, 'Turkey's Export Expansion in the Middle East, 1980-1985', *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 4, Autumn 1987.

¹⁵³ Bölükbaşı, *Türkiye ve...*, p. 93.

¹⁵⁴ *Milliyet* (daily, İstanbul), 3-4 August 1990.

¹⁵⁵ Aybet, *Turkey's...*, p. 16.

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.'¹⁵⁶ Also, for Özal, the US-led anti-Iraq grouping was morally and legally 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 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.'¹⁵⁷ 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.¹⁵⁸ According to Özal, İnönü by not to supporting the Allies in the Second World War risked Turkish security and prosperity,¹⁵⁹ 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.¹⁶⁰ Kemalist-Republican 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 the orthodox republican policies 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 1990.¹⁶¹ Defence Minister Sefa Giray followed Bozer on 18 December.¹⁶² Not only the isolationist and cautious liberals and leftists but also the Army was upset. Chief of the Staff Necip Toruntay criticised Özal's foreign policy as 'adventurist' and implied that the army was against such a foreign policy. Toruntay implied that Özal endangered Turkish security for Western interests.¹⁶³ 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.

¹⁵⁶ Ahmad, *The Making...*, p. 200.

¹⁵⁷ Robins, *Turkey...*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence Friedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991*, (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 354.

¹⁵⁹ *Milliyet*, 20 October 1991.

¹⁶⁰ Gözen, 'Türkiye'nin...', p. 185.

¹⁶¹ Gözen, 'Türkiye'nin...', p. 208.

¹⁶² *Hürriyet*, 19 October 1990.

¹⁶³ Necip Toruntay, *Org. Toruntay'ın Anıları (Toruntay's Memoirs)*, (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1994).

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.¹⁶⁴ According to Özal, the generals were resisting the change: 'some generals are not keeping in step and are acting to preserve the *status quo*. While we are taking brave steps forward, they are trying to put brakes on.'¹⁶⁵

As Robins pointed out, on the other hand the opponents' considerations were different than Özal's; "the Kemalist traditionalists were concerned that the end of the crisis would see a rapid closing of Arab ranks, leaving a legacy of deep suspicion towards Turkey, whose involvement in the crisis would be feared and resented as a resurgent neo-Ottomanism."¹⁶⁶

Considered Özalist activism as a threat for Turkish security, leftist Bülent Ecevit, for example, visited Baghdad to dampen the tension between Iraq and Turkey. Ecevit was followed by Islamist Necmettin Erbakan and the leftist-Kemalist Social democratic Populist Party's (SHP) leader Erdal İnönü.¹⁶⁷ Despite these leftist, Kemalist and Islamist attempts, Özal managed to keep Turkey with the US-led alliance against Iraq and blamed the opponents of being İnönist and of not understanding the new circumstances in international politics.¹⁶⁸ President Özal declared Turkey's new foreign policy position as:

"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...¹⁶⁹ My conviction is that Turkey should leave its former passive and hesitant policies and engage in an active foreign policy... The reason I made this call is because we are powerful country in the region. Let me also point out that there are conservatives who prefer that no change should be made to these passive policies. The reason these circles accuse me of dragging the country into an adventure is because I generally prefer to pursue a more dynamic policy for our country."¹⁷⁰

Compared with Menderes and Demirel's relatively timid attitude in the face of the army opposition, Özal's self-confidence was significant. No doubt the main

¹⁶⁴ *Milliyet*, 31 December 1990; *Hürriyet*, 1 January 1991.

¹⁶⁵ *Milliyet*, 7 December 1990.

¹⁶⁶ Robins, 'Turkish Policy and the Gulf Crisis, Adventurist or Dynamic?', in Clement H. Dodd (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy, New Prospects*, (Huntingdon: The Eothen Press, 1992), p. 77.

¹⁶⁷ Robins, 'Turkish Policy...', pp. 77-78.

¹⁶⁸ *Milliyet*, 3 January 1991; *Zaman*, 4 January 1991.

¹⁶⁹ Ahmad, *The Making...*, p. 201.

¹⁷⁰ *Milliyet*, 3 March 1991.

reason behind this confidence was the internal changes.¹⁷¹ 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 republican values. They were attacking Özal yet they had no clear prescription for the problems. For instance in the Iraqi Crisis they condemned Iraq for its invasion, yet they could not provide any policy towards Iraq and United States.¹⁷² Thus this ideological dilemma helped Özal.

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.'¹⁷³ When the war begun on 17 January, Özal was able to get the extra powers from the Turkish Parliament: The parliament gave permit to deployment of Turkish forces in foreign countries, the deployment of foreign forces in Turkey and the utilisation of these forces.¹⁷⁴ Despite Özal's enthusiasm, due to public pressure, Turkey did not join the war actively, but gave a clear support to the alliance forces. It also allowed the American forces to use joint air bases (like İncirlik in Adana) in Turkey to bomb Iraqi forces.¹⁷⁵ 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 hardware possessed by the armed forces. The US now appears to place greater value on the importance of Turkey than before."*¹⁷⁶

Moreover, after the Gulf War Turkey's importance as a regional power rose.¹⁷⁷ On the negative side, however, new troubles appeared, like the Kurdish problem. When the Kurdish rebellion against Saddam failed, some 700,000 people poured

¹⁷¹ For the impact of Turkey's domestic changes on its foreign policy in the Özal period also see Fuller, 'Turkey's New...', pp. 38-40.

¹⁷² 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.

¹⁷³ *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.

¹⁷⁴ Robins, 'Turkish Policy...', p. 79.

¹⁷⁵ *Hürriyet*, 18 January 1991.

¹⁷⁶ Robins, 'Turkish', pp. 85-86.

¹⁷⁷ Kuniholm, 'Turkey and...', p. 62.

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. In conclusion it is hardly possible to argue Özal's strategy in Iraq worked perfectly and Turkey could not get most of the benefits Özal had expected while it was exposed to the bad effects of the Gulf War.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, Özal's Gulf War policy vividly showed the differences between Özal's foreign policy and the previous approaches. Turkey, under Özal, abandoned its traditional pacific Middle Eastern foreign policy. Özal himself publicly declared that the main responsible the shift was his own foreign policy understanding and he accused the previous Turkish Middle Eastern policies of being pacifist and timid.¹⁷⁹

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 Republican *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 circle¹⁸⁰, Özal thought that he could not affect Turkish politics from the Presidential Palace, therefore he was making plans to return to 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 death¹⁸¹ and many parties including the MP, TPP and Islamist WP (Welfare Party) claimed Özal's heritage.

¹⁷⁸ Gözen, 'Türkiye'nin...', pp. 213-216.

¹⁷⁹ *Milliyet*, 3 March 1991 and Gözen, 'Türkiye'nin...', p. 189.

¹⁸⁰ 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 1997.

¹⁸¹ Interview with Cengiz Çandar.

4. CONCLUSION: NEO-OTTOMANISM, AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY?

The leftist groups and the Republican bureaucracy¹⁸² have accused neo-Ottomanism of being aggressive¹⁸³ while some European and Greek academics have called it an irredentist movement,¹⁸⁴ and some in the Western press saw the Özalist policies as pan-Ottomanist, pan-Turkist, even pan-Islamist march of the Turks.¹⁸⁵ Yet, it can be argued that, despite its name, neo-Ottomanism was 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 the traditional 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.'¹⁸⁶

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.¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Like Mümtaz Soysal, Erdal İnönü and Emin Çölaşan.

¹⁸³ Emin Çölaşan, *Hürriyet* (daily, İstanbul), 26 June 1992.

¹⁸⁴ Stavrau 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. Stavrau, 'The Dismantling', pp. 45-46. Also for Ottomanist irredentism see: Constantinides, 'Turkey', pp. 323-334;

¹⁸⁵ Amberin 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.

¹⁸⁶ 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.

¹⁸⁷ TRT, 22 November 1991, *Zaman* 23 November 1991; Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 1990), p. 294.

¹⁸⁸ Süha Bölükbaşı, 'Türkiye'nin Yakınındaki Avrupa İle İlişkileri: Türk - Yunan Sorunları', in Atilla Eralp (ed.), *Türkiye ve Avrupa*, (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1997), pp. 264-265.

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.”¹⁸⁹

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.¹⁹⁰ 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.¹⁹¹ In other words, Turkist, Islamist and Ottomanist elements in

¹⁸⁹ Çandar, ‘Özal’ın...’.

¹⁹⁰ Author’s interviews with Fehmi Koru, leading conservative columnist and Cengiz Çandar.

¹⁹¹ Turgut Özal, *ANAP Özal Archive*, T.Ö.90222

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 crucial issue for Özalist foreign policy. Unlike the leftists, Özal did not have an ideological framework for these countries. Muslim Third World states, however, had a special place in the Özalist 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 West-ernism. For example, Özal apologised to the Algerians for Turkey's pro-French policies during the Algerian Independence War.¹⁹² 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, and Turkey's trade with the African and Asian countries in particular dramatically increased in the Özal era.

In conclusion, unlike the classic Republican 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 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. In brief, **Özalist foreign policy was a clear deviation from the Republican orthodoxy, however it was not an absolute rejection of the Kemalist approach**. 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."¹⁹³ 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. On the contrary Özal attacked Kemalist policies, but on the other hand he said that Atatürk was the

¹⁹² Fikret Ertan, 'Menderes'in ve Türkiye'nin Cesareti' (*Menderes' and Turkey's Courage*), *Zaman* (daily, İstanbul), 26 January 1999.

¹⁹³ Fuller, 'Turkey's...', p. 47.

greatest Turkish hero.¹⁹⁴ Özal, instead of attacking Atatürk, attacked İnönü's and other republicans' interpretation of Kemalism. He, in one of his speeches divided Turkish foreign policy history into two different periods: Atatürk and İnönü period.¹⁹⁵ 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, and Özal clearly declared that he was against the previous foreign policy understandings,¹⁹⁶ and, as discussed above, he proved these words with his own foreign policy implementations.¹⁹⁷

The recent Turkish foreign policy cannot be fully understood without referring Özalism. Özal had a great Turkey dream and he blended the Turkish, Eastern and Western values in order to create the great Turkey once more. His ideological approach and his willingness helped to follow a more active and internationalist foreign policy. However, the change in Turkish foreign policy in his period cannot be explained solely by the ideological factors. The international political and economical changes (the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the USSR and Yugoslavia, the Gulf War, globalisation, the rise of the EC etc.) with the revolutionary liberalisation and growth of Turkish economy made Özalist policies realisable.

Thanks to Özal's policies Turkey re-gained its self-confidence and has increasingly become a regional power. Furthermore the economic, social and cultural tools became more important in foreign policy. However Özal's 'free style' in foreign policy severely damaged the foreign policy making mechanism as well: His reluctance for working with the foreign policy bureaucracy avoided a more efficient policy making. Özal publicly criticised the Foreign Ministry and whole bureaucracy, thus Turkey showed all the weaknesses in foreign policy issues.

¹⁹⁴ ANAP, *Turgut Özal'ın Konuşmaları (Turgut Özal's Speeches)*, (Ankara: ANAP, Motherland Party n.d.).

¹⁹⁵ 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)*, (İstanbul: 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)*, (İstanbul: 1994), p. 127.

¹⁹⁶ Hale, 'Turkey...', pp. 679-782.

¹⁹⁷ About the Özal period also see Mehmet Akyol, *Beni Çok Ararsınız*, (Kişisel Yayınlar, 1999); Engin Güner, *Özallı Yıllarım*, (Babiali Kültür Yayıncılığı A.Ş., 2000); Uğur Mumcu, *Devlet Modası: Tek Yol Özal!*, (Ankara: Uğur Mumcu Vakfı Yayınları); Hulki Cevizoğlu, *Körfez Savaşı ve Özal Diplomasisi*, (İstanbul: Form yayınları); Hayrullah Mahmud, *Tonton Zamanı / Özal'ın Değişim Paradigması*, (Alfa Yayınları, 2001); Şaban H. Çalış, *Hayaletbilimi ve Hayali Kimlikler / Neo-Osmanlılık, Özal ve Balkanlar*, (Çizgi Kitabevi, 2001); İhsan D. Dağı ve İhsan Sezal (ed.), *Kim Bu? Özal*, (Boyut Yayınları, 2001); Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2000); Yavuz Donat, *Özallı Yıllar*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi); Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal'ın Anıları*, (Birey Yayınları, 1996).