THE FACTORS AFFECTING TURKEY'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The end of the Cold War marked a radical change in the world order. In the new era, the globalisation is the main force affecting policies and actions of the world states. The domination of the West (especially the US) over the world politics is much more evident. The other states of the world are prone to the intervention of the major powers. While the world goes through a radical change, Turkish leaders have chosen to be on the side of the founders of the new order, that is the US, as they exactly did in the aftermath of the Second World War. There is no one distinct common threat now facing the alliance in which Turkey is a member, but Turkish rulers still feel surrounded by threats. The Turkish economy is much stronger compared with its situation in the Cold War period, but entering into a balanced economic cooperation with the US and the EU has a great importance for Turkey in order to be able to compete with the other powers in an era in which the globalisation is the dominant force. The West is still the most important source for Turkey in getting high-tech military equipment, but it seems that the conditions of obtaining them will not be as suitable as it was in the past. Turkey also needs to make changes in its domestic system in accordance with global values in order not to stay outside the West. In short, Turkey goes through the process of participating in the new world system as a more active actor. Its relationship with the US, which constitutes the most important aspect of its foreign policy, is affected by this process as much as it influences it. This article analyses the factors behind this interaction.

KEYWORDS

Turkey; the United States; Turkish Foreign Policy; Turkish-American Partnership; US Diplomacy.
1. Turkey’s New Environment

It will be easier to comprehend Turkish-American relations if the present conditions surrounding Turkey are described briefly. Her proximity to the trouble spots of the new world order has made Turkey the frontline country of NATO, putting her in the epicentre of the new international environment. With the outbreak of regional conflicts, Turkey’s position as an island of stability in the centre of volatile region, as a barrier against the outbreak and spread of these local wars and as a promoter of regional cooperation has gained more importance.

These developments have also helped Turkey to gain a weight in regional and world politics with its increased physical and strategic strength. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has terminated the major security threat for Turkey and weakened her regional rivals such as Syria, Iran and Iraq, thus relieving its foreign and security policies from certain constraints. Moreover, the factors such as the revival of Turkey’s cultural, linguistic and historical ties with “the vast land mass of Eurasia” extending from the Balkans to the Caucasus has broadened the scope of Turkish foreign policy and opened up new areas for Turkish economic and political activities.


In Gürel's words, Turkey has passed through a unique period that has forced Turkish rulers to observe "simultaneously developments on several fronts, ranging from the process of European integration to the emergence of a belt of countries of Turkic language in the Caucasus and Central Asia, from tragic developments in the Balkans to the instability and conflict in the Middle East and the Caucasus."\(^4\) Turkey is surrounded by the most unstable, uncertain and unpredictable regions and it is one of the most exposed states to dangers of the new security environment.\(^5\)

Although it still remains wary of the developments on her borders with the former Soviet Union, Turkey's strategic priorities shifted toward the new dangers in the south, including those originated from the activities of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Kurdish terrorists.\(^6\) Among the potential threats perceived by Turkish rulers were the religious radicalism; the spread of terrorism; the ethnic nationalism; the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in its region; regional rivalries and hegemonic aspirations; instabilities emanating from mass migration, civil breakdowns, etc.; the loss of prestige and credibility of international institutions; and the possibility of disruption of Middle Eastern oil flows.\(^7\) Apart from being left out of the emerging European security structures, Turkish rulers have also feared from the establishment of defence cooperation and alliance

relations between Turkey's regional rivals and enemies. Especially Greek attempts to encircle Turkey with bilateral and multilateral relationships have alarmed Turkish leaders to search for balancing alternatives.  

Each of Turkey's hostile neighbours has no power to threaten her with individual aggression, but they may cause problems for Turkey when they act together. Turkish leaders at least have to consider the possibility of conducting military operations in two fronts in case of a regional conflict, and to direct their sources in conformity of this possibility.

2. Turkey's Current Problems and the USA

2.1. Decrease in Strategic Importance

The warming of East-West relations with the end of the Cold War brought about the possibility of Turkey's becoming "a leading casualty of strategic neglect" in the new era. This was a serious setback for it because a decrease in Turkey's strategic importance was likely to result in less Western economic and military assistance and a harsher attitude toward Turkey. Staying outside the Western political economic, cultural and security structures would mean the failure of Turkish traditional foreign policy and its Western-type political system. With the outbreak of the Gulf War, it was believed that Turkey regained its strategic importance. However, some factors such as the Western conciliatory attitude toward Russia and the European intention of leaving Turkey outside the European Community (EC) and the Western European Union (WEU) still keep Turkish rulers vigilant. The fact that America has been insistent on Turkey's strategic importance for the West keep Turkish-American relations on a sound track and led Turkish rulers to be more inclined toward the USA rather than the Western Europe.

8Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", pp. 35-36, 37, 40.
10Lesser, *Bridge or Barrier*, p. 1, Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 204; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 67.
2.2. Doubts About NATO

The best option among the present available alternatives for guaranteeing Turkey's security is to remain a full member of NATO with an emphasis on the Atlantic link within this alliance. Turkey's membership of NATO is a symbol of her participation in the Western democratic club, enhancing Western interest in Turkey and giving her a greater voice in international affairs and a seat in the highest councils of the West.\(^{11}\) NATO also provides Turkey multilateral Euro-Atlantic framework for her defence cooperation with the West and thus reduces her over-reliance on the US. Sometimes Turkey shares with Europe the concerns about the US patronage in international events, the ambiguity of US commitments and unilateral US initiatives launched without consultations with other members.\(^{12}\) However, the European states cannot replace America as the main security partner of Turkey because they lack resources and the intention to help Turkish defence efforts.

Turkish rulers expect that under the new NATO, "collective defence should stay, for it not only underpins... [Turkey's] fundamental security but it is also the basis, on which... [Turkey's] commitment rests."\(^{13}\) The US and NATO should deter Russia and other potential enemies in a real sense and should avoid to act in the way that might lead Russia and other potential enemies in the region to think that NATO's commitment to Turkey's security is not genuine.\(^{14}\) However, doubts about the solidity of the NATO commitment to Turkish security cannot be removed from the minds of Turkish leaders easily. As NATO goes through an adaptation process, the possibility of NATO's neglecting Article 5 commitments to the defence of its members, especially in the case

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\(^{12}\)Lesser, *Bridge or Barrier*, p. 24; Brown, *Delicately Poised Allies*, p. 5; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 66.

\(^{13}\)Demirel, "Turkey and NATO...", p. 9.

of an out-of-area issue seems likely. Turkish rulers were certainly alarmed when they heard the debates about the "grey area" threats that might require more conditional guarantees. Turkish anxieties were reinforced during the Gulf War when some NATO allies responded to the Turkish request for assistance and reinforcement reluctantly and tardily.\textsuperscript{15} Lesser points out that one important way of dispelling Turkish doubts about the solidity of the NATO guarantee and the emergence of a "grey area" debate is the maintenance of a permanent land-based U.S. tactical air presence (the 401\textsuperscript{st} Tactical Fighter Wing) in the Southern Region of NATO. Turkish rulers have seen this force as the evidence of a continued Alliance commitment to the security of Turkey.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, NATO established the AMF (ACE Mobile Force) in 1960 in order to come rapidly to the aid of NATO states in the flanks. This force had been carrying out field training exercises in eastern Turkey and in Turkish Thrace.\textsuperscript{17}

Some criticisms that were made in the past on Turkey's role in shaping the defence strategies of NATO might also be valid currently. According to these views, the US determines and directs general policies of the alliance by ignoring special priorities of other members. Turkey's security needs require taking extra measures in addition to the policies determined by the US. Turkey's capability of action is limited with the goals of NATO to the extent that it cannot even make tactical changes in its security strategies decided by NATO's main powers. The US feels free to consider intervening in Turkey's surrounding region for its national interests, harming Turkey's geo-strategic relations with the regional countries. Western powers do not show sensitivity toward Turkey's improving its defence structure, widening its security resources and options and adopting itself to the region's realities.\textsuperscript{18} Turkey has contributed to the Western security beyond its capacity by remaining faithful to its alliance responsibilities in contrast to the attitude of some members. It has played a vital role in the


\textsuperscript{16} Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, pp. 35-36, 43.

\textsuperscript{17} Brown, \textit{Delicately Poised Allies}, pp. 87, 93.

creation of the perfect conditions prevailed throughout the central region by making great sacrifices such as alienating itself from its neighbours. Turkish rulers now expect understanding for their efforts of diversifying Turkey's security resources, getting more aid and not provoking their neighbours. If their doubts on the uncertainty of the future role of NATO cannot be eradicated, they will naturally have more interest in the emerging European defence arrangements and will seek different alternatives to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the West.

2.3. Future of NATO

NATO officials frequently emphasise that they have committed themselves to a robust "open door" policy concerning further accessions. At the Madrid Summit, NATO powers decided to invite Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to start accession talks. Turkish authorities are interested in this development because it is closely related to their wishes of occupying a central position in new defence and political structures of the West. They have some reservations in supporting the enlargement of NATO. The internal and external adaptation process should not impair the effectiveness and essential defensive role of NATO and the alliance should continue to be the main defence structure and political consultation forum of the West. The enlargement should be a gradual process and should be carried out in conjunction with the Partnership for Peace project, not to alienate but to attract Russia to the Western defence

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21 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 12.
22 John Barrett, "Current Political Agenda of the Atlantic Alliance and Turkey" in Aydın, Turkey at the Threshold, p. 25.
system.\textsuperscript{24} If Moscow is left outside and is led to adopt a heavy-handed approach towards eastern European countries that have expressed a desire to join NATO, then it is inevitable to turn to power politics for spheres of influence, especially in the region surrounding Turkey.\textsuperscript{25}

The ultimate goal of NATO is to preserve the collective defence and the stability of its members and to establish an Euro-Atlantic region where peace is the central feature and resort to military force is banished.\textsuperscript{26} However, there seems to be differences between Europe and the US in establishing defence structures concerning Europe and the surrounding regions. Some Europeans think that NATO is outdated and it should be put aside by giving more roles to other organisations such as the Organisation of Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union (EU). In their views, NATO could be maintained, to be called for help in the case of an outside aggression, but it should be transformed away from being a vehicle for US involvement and domination in European security affairs.\textsuperscript{27} The Bosnian conflict embarrassingly showed that the US and Europe shared very little sense of values, vision and political will.\textsuperscript{28} While Europe wants to keep NATO by diminishing its financial burdens and seems to be unwilling to accept the burden of a direct exposure in regions such as the Middle East, the US prefers to keep NATO strong and asks the Europeans to shoulder more burden for the Western defence.\textsuperscript{29} The US is insistent on seeing the Western security in the trans-regional basis, which is also supported by Turkey.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{25}Criss, "International Institutions...", pp. 207-208.
\textsuperscript{26}Barrett, "Current Political Agenda...", p. 7.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{30}Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 90.
Western statesmen think that the instabilities and conflicts originated outside the NATO area threaten Western security, requiring NATO respond to them effectively by undertaking new responsibilities and missions such as peacemaking, peacekeeping and crisis management.\textsuperscript{31} Especially the US think that the area which NATO needs to reach passes beyond its borders. For example, it considers NATO's southern flank extending until the Gulf region beyond Turkey's borders. However, the European states and Turkey do not see the link as clearly as the Americans do. They hesitate in accepting the extension of NATO's responsibility automatically to the regions outside the NATO area. While Turkey considers the defence of its eastern and southern borders totally inside the NATO responsibility, it approaches to the expansion of the NATO area cautiously. \textsuperscript{32} Although ready to discuss the out-of-area issues within NATO, Turkey does not want to undertake automatic responsibility to provide military force and to allow the use of its territory in developments outside the NATO area. Turkish rulers will not join the out-of-area operations unless all NATO allies agreed to do so or unless they see joining the operation as vitally important for Turkish interests.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{2.4. Future of the European Security}

The common European intention of having more voice in its defence and saving itself from the American domination is proved by the efforts to strengthen the Western European Union as the defence organ of the European Union. The Maastricht Treaty of 1991 considered the WEU as a means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance to overcome the objections.\textsuperscript{34} Meanwhile, in order not to alienate the Europeans from NATO, a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) has been established within the Atlantic Alliance.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{31}Barrett, "Current Political Agenda...", p. 25, Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 102.
\textsuperscript{32}Chipman, "Allies in the Mediterranean...", p. 63; Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{33}Karaoğlan, "Turkey and the Southern Flank", p. 331.
\textsuperscript{34}Nas, "Batu Avrupa Birliği...", pp. 68-69, 79; Ergüvenç, "Turkey: Strategic Partner...", pp. 5, 8.
\textsuperscript{35}Beyaz Kitap, p. 1.
\end{footnote}
administration has genuinely supported making NATO a two-pillar alliance by welcoming the emergence of Europe as a more autonomous and responsible actor. But it has also shared the concern of NATO’s flank countries such as Turkey, Denmark and Norway that the small group of the WEU countries may contribute to instabilities in a wider region by concentrating only on their geo-strategically narrow, selfish defence needs. These states assert that American political, economic and security interests are too closely intertwined with those of Europe and the problems involving a wider region are too complex to permit the Americans to leave the Europeans struggling to cope with wide range issues. Especially Turkey share with the US the concern about the possibility of Europe’s competing with the USA on the defence area. In the view of both sides, "NATO must remain the main forum for consultations among the Allies on issues concerning the security and defence of Europe. This is required not only because the transatlantic link is vital for European security, but also since NATO is the only forum where all European allies enjoy equal opportunities and rights on matters of common concern." 

The fact that "the ally furthest to the East geographically [Turkey] is the one quite often most worried and most concerned about preserving the connections with the allies to the West [the USA, Canada] attracts attention." However, Turkish officials also state that they support the Europeans’ taking more responsibility for their own defence, the improvement of ESDI and WEU’s bridge role between the EU and NATO. Their condition is that Turkey should be acceded to the security dimension of the EU, saving it form associating itself with decision taken elsewhere. They assert that "in order to make a meaningful contribution to ESDI, Turkey has to be included in the policy formulation phase within the EU's

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36 Asmus, "The Rise or Fall...", pp. 165-166.
37 Nas, "Batı Avrupa Birliği...", p. 78.
38 Ergüvenç, "Turkey: Strategic Partner...", pp. 6-7; Orhun, "The Uncertainties...", p. 28; Stearns, Entangled Allies, p. 23.
40 Barrett, "Current Political Agenda...", p. 35.
Common Foreign and Security Policy.”\textsuperscript{41} Turkish leaders expect the Americans help them in this issue by using their leverage with the European powers.

Turkey also needs the American help in its problems with the Europeans. The European powers tend to consider Turkey as a peripheral strategic partner and as a strategic and political liability because of its complex and immediate problems. They think that they can get the help of Turkey in the event of a Middle Eastern crisis without giving it a full membership and they do not want to accept the burden of a direct exposure in the Middle East. The Europeans are more likely to see Turkey as a barrier to turmoil and military threats outside Europe rather than as an agent for dialogue in relation to security problems in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{42}

The diversification of interest areas and security priorities reduces the possibility of defence cooperation between Turkey and the EU.\textsuperscript{43} The European refusal of integrating Turkey into WEU is considered by Turkish leaders as an unwillingness to grant Turkey a legitimate security role on the continent.\textsuperscript{44} The inclusion of Greece to, and the exclusion of Turkey from the European security umbrella have important repercussions for Turkey’s defence and security. Turkish leaders, concern that Greece will have great advantages with its full membership in WEU over Turkey and the stability and balance in the Aegean will be harmed seriously. In order to overcome the Turkish worries on the WEU guarantee for Greece against Turkey, it has been declared that the automatic guarantee in the Article five of WEU will be applied only against aggression by non-members of NATO and not to internal disputes within the alliance.\textsuperscript{45} But Greece still has the upper hand by at least feeling the support of the Europeans in its behind.

\textsuperscript{41} Orhun, "Turkey, Norway...", p. 10; Beyaz Kitap, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{42} Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, p. 4; Seyfi Taşhan, "The Peripheries: Adjusting to Change", \textit{Foreign Policy} (Ankara), Vol. 21 (1-2), 1997, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{44} Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, pp. v, 12; Criss, "International Institutions...", pp. 204-205.
\textsuperscript{45} Jamie Shea, "Should NATO be Enlarged to the East" in Carnovale, \textit{European Security}, p. 89.
The Document on Associate Membership of the WEU of Turkey clearly states that the association of this country "represents a significant step in the strengthening of the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance." The WEU Erfurt Ministerial Declarations of November 1997 made it clear that Turkey would have the right to a full role of participation and decision-making in any WEU-led operations using NATO assets and capabilities. However, all these reassurances stay short of Turkey's objective of the full integration into the mainstream of European security planning.

Turkish leaders are insistent on that Turkey's long-standing European vocation should have a security and defence aspect as well. They demand the rigid principle that full membership in WEU requires full membership in the EU should be reconsidered. They are of the opinion that a broad congruence should be achieved between NATO and the other European institutions such as the EU and WEU. In order to prove Turkey's importance for the European defence, Turkish authorities assert that Turkey has a weight in the determination of transatlantic balances. They state that Turkey is the only country which can defend and represent the interests of Europe in the Middle East, and which can help the Europeans in facing new threats. In their view, Turkey's steady efforts in being active in all of the three main foundations of the European security (EU-WEU, NATO and OSCE) and its support for the Mediterranean dialogue within NATO and the Europe-Mediterranean process within the EU show Turkey's sincerity in contributing to the European security.

In spite of all the negative attitudes of the Europeans, Turkish leaders feel that Turkey cannot afford severing its ties with the Western Europe, knowing that Turkey has a great interest in being an actor in the evolving European scene. However, they

46 Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 203.
47 Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 92.
48 Orhun, "Turkey, Norway...", pp. 9-10.
49 Müftüler-Baç, "Turkey's Predicament...", pp. 256, 260, 265.
50 Beyaz Kitap, p. 38.
51 Ergüvenç, "Turkey: Strategic Partner...", p. 9; Stearns, Entangled Allies, p. 29; Solana, "NATO...", p. 21; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options".
prefer to pursue their security interests in a multidimensional way, being members of both WEU and NATO. This will promote Turkey's importance in Europe, reduce political challenges at home, balance burden sharing within the Western alliance and help Turkish rulers to feel more comfortable on Turkey's security and strategic positions. The US is in the best position to press the Europeans for Turkey's involvement in the emerging European security arrangements. If the Americans focus solely on Turkey's position in the context of Middle Eastern and Central Asian security, they might alienate Turkish rulers.52

2.5. Enlargement of the European Union

It seems that the proposed enlargement of the EU will include central and eastern European countries but exclude Turkey. Thinking their institution as a stable and promising world actor, the Europeans do not want to share borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria, which produce instabilities continuously.53 Unlike the US, European states seem to give priority to the democratisation before the stability. The role of the Turkish army, which has been the strongest point of contact for NATO and the USA with Turkey, cannot be denied, but Western Europeans "find the role of the Turkish armed forces in the Turkish state system... quite out of keeping with Western practice".54

On the other hand, Turkish authorities sometimes do not hesitate to say that the exclusion of Turkey from the EU "would not be as vital for Turkey as some people think it would be, because Turkey has other options."55 They believe that the Turkish candidacy for full membership in the EU is not judged by

pp. 85, 88; M. Evert, "Turkey's Strategic Goals: Possibilities and Weaknesses", Mediterranean Quarterly, Vol. 4 (4), Fall 1993, p. 31; Bruce Kuniholm, "East or West? Geopolitics of Turkey and its NATO Alliance" in A. L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan (eds.), Middle East, Turkey and the Atlantic Alliance, Ankara; Foreign Policy Institute, 1987, p. 145.
52Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. 39, 43.
53Hüseyin Bağcı, "Changing Security of Turkey" in Aydin, Turkey at the Threshold, p. 81.
54Roper, "The West and Turkey...", pp. 96, 100.
the same objective criteria applied to other candidates. They also complain that Europeans do not understand Turkey's domestic difficulties and special problems.\textsuperscript{56}

Turkey is especially worried that Europe will continue to be biased toward Greece on the Turkish-Greek problems and the Cyprus issue, thus Turkish-EU relations will become captive to Greek initiatives. It believes that the enlargement of the EU without Turkey will decrease the possibility of a solution of Turkish-Greek problems.\textsuperscript{57}

The fact that the Turkish economy is essentially tied to Europe has been formalised with the customs union between Turkey and the EU. Turkey needs the EU membership not to be marginalised, not to weaken its position against Greece, to be less dependent on the US and to have a greater freedom of action in regional and global affairs.\textsuperscript{58} It is very important for Turkey that the US will not try to detach her from the EU, but it will support genuinely its initiatives of being a part of Europe.

\textbf{2.6. Relations with Russia}

In order to keep their traditional enemy (Russia) under the control of the multilateral Western security structures in the post-Cold War era, Turkish authorities pay a special attention to NATO's Partnership for Peace (PiP) project, which will serve this purpose.\textsuperscript{59} In their view, the enhanced PiP is not a consolation prize, but it is a means through which "a sense of security and a sense of belonging are projected" to NATO's partners and which facilitate the involvement of these partners in NATO's decision-making processes. Turkish officials further suggest that relations between NATO, Russia and Ukraine should be formalised in politically binding documents and that these partners should not have the

\textsuperscript{56}Kuniholm, "East or West?...", p. 141.
\textsuperscript{57}Ergüvenç, "Turkey's Strategic...", pp. 67-68.
\textsuperscript{58}A. L. Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Discreet Foreign Policy Between Western Europe and the Middle East" in Karaosmanoğlu/Taşhan, \textit{Middle East, Turkey and the Atlantic Alliance}, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{59}Beyaz Kitap, pp. 1, 33.
right to veto the decisions of NATO. To prove the sincerity of their support for the PfP, they have suggested expanding it through joint military exercises and training opportunities between Turkey and the Russian Federation. They have established a PfP Training Centre in Ankara, finalised the project of establishing a multinational peace force in south-eastern Europe with the participation of all regional NATO and PfP nations and welcomed the American suggestion of establishing new forms of cooperation with the partner countries, namely the Atlantic Partnership Council.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey have no common border with Russia and it does not have to fear direct exposure to the political and military power of its giant neighbour. Nevertheless, it seems that the two states are being engaged in a stiff competition. Russia is the strongest force in the region and, through its heavy-handed approach toward the regional countries, gives the impression that it still pursues power politics to expand its spheres of influence. Russia's efforts to control developments in the region clash with Turkey's perception of itself as the principal link between Asia and Europe. It is speculated that Turkey might be among the primary targets of Russian nuclear weapons which have been de-targeted from civilian and military centres in the US. The extension of Russian nuclear umbrella to all the member countries of the Collective Security Treaty can be interpreted as a veiled warning to Turkey on its efforts of establishing close economic and political links with the former republics of the Soviet Union. Russia also has refused to reduce the military concentrations on its southern flank as required by the CFE Treaty of 1990 and signed treaties with some rivals of Turkey such as Armenia and Greece. It still remains Syria's main military supplier and diplomatic ally and sees Iran as its strategic

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60 Orhun, "Turkey, Norway...", pp. 10, 11-12; Orhun, "The Uncertainties...", p. 28.
61 Beyaz Kitap, pp. 7, 27.
62 Demirel, "Turkey and NATO...", p. 10.
63 Orhun, "Turkey, Norway...", p. 11.
64 Sezer, "Turkey's New Security Environment...", p. 149, 150, 158.
65 Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 208; Eraydın, "Avrupa'nın Yeni...", p. 33; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 74.
partner. The Russian attempt of selling sophisticated arms and missiles to Greck Cypriots was interpreted as a direct threat against the Turkish security. The establishment of Confederation of Kurdish Organisation of the CIS in Moscow on 1 November 1994 and the meeting of the third session of the Kurdish parliament-in-exile on 19 October 1995 in a building attached to the Russian Duma were also irritating for Turkish leaders.67

The more alarming for Turkey is that the Europeans and Americans are inclined to be optimistic about developments in Russia and they do not see Russia as much threat as Turkey sees. It seems possible that the West may give a relatively free hand to Russia in the Caucasus and Central Asia and may tolerate its violating the CFE Treaty limits in exchange for Russia's leaving the Baltic states to the West and not causing any problems in the enlargement of NATO.68

Indeed, Turkish authorities really feared earlier on that the US might build a partnership with Russia's new imperial designs. Some Turkish politicians believed that the US contributed to the consolidation of the Russian influence in the region by ignoring the new Russian imperialism.69 The US administration seemed to support Russian leaders in spite of their bold actions because of their fears that more hawkish leaders might have come to power in Russia.70 Now, however, it seems that the US shares increasingly more concerns with Turkey on the assertion of the Russian influence in the Central Asia and the Caucasus with the possibility of gaining control of the energy resources in the region, and on Russia's cooperation with anti-Western states such as Iran.71 The agreement on maintaining Ukraine's independence to check the Russian expansionism is one example of the convergence of US and Turkish interests. Turkey's position is now more secure in the region. The US gives increasingly more support to Turkish

67 Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", pp. 37, 38, 40.
68 Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 208; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 91.
71 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 356.
initiatives and the Russia is less effective. Russia's heavy-handed approach toward some former Soviet republics has led these states to try to balance the Russian force by expanding their ties with other countries including Turkey and the USA.\textsuperscript{72}

2.7. Implementation of the CFE Treaty

The CFE Treaty, signed in 1990 and came into effect in 1992, stemmed originally from the view that a stable and secure balance of conventional forces should be established in Europe, where the former Warsaw Pact had superiority in numbers of ground forces. The CFE Treaty has now been considered as cornerstone of the stability and security of Europe.\textsuperscript{73} Turkey attributes importance especially to the flank regime of the CFE Treaty, according to which the signatories will not be able to concentrate military equipment and weapons on the flank of Europe and will not be able to exceed the sub-regional ceilings determined by the Treaty.\textsuperscript{74} Though Turkey is a party to the CFE Treaty, it has managed to keep its southeastern region, bordering Syria, Iraq and Iran, outside it. However, Turkish rulers worry that the withdrawal of former Soviet forces from the central Europe to behind the Urals in accordance with the CFE Treaty is expected to leave Turkey in an unfavourable position both within NATO and against Russia.\textsuperscript{75} Turkish rulers are also concerned on the Russian refusal of reducing military concentrations on its southern flank\textsuperscript{76} and on the seemingly sympathetic attitude of the West toward Russia in this issue.\textsuperscript{77} Russia still informs Turkey and other Western powers that the force ceilings established by the CFE Treaty fall short of meeting its security needs, and demonstrates its willingness to violate these ceilings. Western powers including the US generally

\textsuperscript{72}Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 77.
\textsuperscript{73}Barrett, "Current Political Agenda...", p. 34.
\textsuperscript{74}Beyaz Kita, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{75}Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. 26, 27.
\textsuperscript{76}Brown, Delicately Poised Allies, p. 142, Mufti, "Daring and caution...", p. 37.
\textsuperscript{77}Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 208; Taşhan, "The Peripheries...", p. 62; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 91.
reiterate their insistence on the fulfilment of the CFE Treaty's requirements, but their attitude is far from carrying a full force.

Turkey, on the other hand, makes it clear that it does not want the CFE Treaty changed in favour of Russia, asserting that it will cause a great disequilibrium in favour of Russian forces in the Caucasus and the Central Asia, resulting in return of the Cold War conditions. This thinking has been proved by the Russian activism such as the stationing its troops in Armenia and Georgia.

2.8. The Iraqi Problem

The general Turkish view on Iraq is that Iraq's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity should be preserved and Iraq should comply fully with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. While the US remains focused on removing Saddam from power and challenges Iraq's territorial integrity with its policies, Turkey does not want to see Iraq destroyed and divided, fearing that this would destabilise the balance of power in the region and contribute to the expansion of the Iranian influence. Occasional Turkish attempts aimed at easing Baghdad's political and economic isolation and strengthening its territorial integrity (such as holding tripartite meetings with Iran and Syria) are bound to create uneasiness in Washington. Apart from their unhappiness on the use of the Incirlik airbase for the protection of the Kurdish zone in northern Iraq, Turkish authorities think that the emergence of a de facto Kurdish state in the northern Iraq with the American help may not only affect the boundaries of the regional states, but it may also have a domino effect on Turkey's

80 Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 75.
81 Gürel, "A General Appraisal...", p. 15; Beyaz Kitap, p. 36.
83 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 354; Turan Yavuz, ABD'nin Kürt Kartı, Istanbul, Milliyet Yayınları, 1993, pp. 268-269.
In the view of Bülent Ecevit, the US is the most responsible state for the division of Iraq because it has deliberately prevented the democratisation and territorial integrity of Iraq in order to establish an Iraqi rule friendly with the USA or to weaken Iraq in the region for US and Israeli interests.

The American-led embargo against Iraq and the closure of the Yumurtalık-Kirkuk oil pipeline are other sore points in Turkey's relations with the USA, causing the loss of billions of dollars to Turkey from trade with Iraq, and tourism and war-related expenditures. It is not only considered a loss of fairly high income but also a threat to Turkey's national interests. The US worked to raise international support to compensate Turkey's economic losses caused by the Gulf Crisis. The UN Security Council resolution 986 has reopened the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline partially, providing Iraq with the limited opportunity to export oil in return for purchasing food, medicine and fundamental humanitarian goods. However, Turkish rulers still feel that these limited relieves are too minor to compensate Turkey's losses.

The security consequences of the Gulf crisis for Turkey are much more difficult to compensate. The insurgency in the southeastern Turkey was deepened. Turkey had to spend more resources to contain the increasing terrorist activities and had to intervene in the Iraqi territory, which resulted in its isolation in Western forums. It also needed to consider reactions of the Western powers, especially the USA, not to damage the basic links on which the overall Turkish foreign and security policy depends. When Turkey left contingents in northern Iraq after its operations, it was interpreted as that it intended to create a buffer zone in the area, desiring in the long-term to control the oil-rich Iraqi provinces of Mosul and Kirkuk. The interventions also had the effect of dragging Turkey into the Iraqi quagmire and unresolved conflicts.

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84 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 353.
85 M. Hüseyn Buzoğlu, Körfez Krizi ve PKK, Ankara, Strateji, p. 139.
87 Gürel, "A General Appraisal...", p. 15; Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 36.
88 Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 245.
of the region. While Turkey shared a more common approach with western European countries on the overthrow of Saddam Hussain and the division of Iraq, it was ironic that it was the western Europeans who expressed the most severe criticism toward the Turkish interventions, which were necessitated by mainly US initiatives. On the other hand, Turkey needed the American support for its operations as demonstrated by the American attitude: they are "conducted by a legitimate, democratic government and a close ally of the West against a brutal terrorist organisation... Turkey remains our friend in a troubled region and deserves our support."

2.9. The Kurdish Question

The Kurdish question seemed at one point the biggest problem of Turkey, having negative effects on its other problems as well. Turkish rulers found it difficult to understand the apparent support given by the European states to the separatist Kurdish organisation (PKK) under the auspices of human rights and political solution. As the Kurdish uprising and the oppression of the Kurds by the Iraqi regime in the aftermath of the Gulf War attracted the attention of international public opinion to the plight of the Kurds in Turkey as well, Turkey’s neighbours had a clear opportunity to exploit Turkey’s problems with the PKK.

The creation of the Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq, protected by Western air forces in the Incirlik airbase, had the potential to upset the integrity of Turkey and the regional balance of power. PKK terrorists, who were encouraged by the autonomous Kurdish entity, increased their attacks against Turkey and Turkey’s retaliatory interventions spoiled its relations with its neighbours and

89Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", p. 195; Müftüler-Baç, "Turkey’s Predicament...", p. 261; Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", p. 39.
90Roper, "The West and Turkey...", pp. 97, 98.
91Müftüler-Baç, "Turkey's Predicament...", p. 262.
92Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", pp. 99-100; Beyaz Kitap, p. 44; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 97.
Western allies. Some American actions were particularly hurting for Turkish rulers. The American human rights reports mentioned the Turkish Kurds as a minority and American officials occasionally warned their Turkish counterparts not to forget their responsibilities and promises concerning basic human rights. American Congressmen questioned the seemingly tolerant attitude of the administration toward Turkish actions against the Kurds. In spite of their generally tolerant attitude toward Turkish military operations in northern Iraq, the Americans did not give totally a free hand to Turkish authorities and expressed their worries on the establishment of a buffer zone by Turkey.

One of the important consequences of the Gulf War was the establishment of an international force to protect the Kurdish region in northern Iraq. When Turkish President Turgut Özal proposed the establishment of a safe heaven in northern Iraq to prevent the exodus of the Iraqi Kurds to Turkey, this proposal became a golden opportunity for the US to initiate its long-pursued rapid deployment force project in a different form. The process was started with a note sent from Washington to Ankara in the first half of May 1991, asking permission to bring Turkey a special force of 600 soldiers, which would pass to the northern Iraq. Once the force was positioned on Turkish and Iraqi territories, Turkish authorities extended its term each time in spite of the fact that it caused a lot of problems for Turkey's security and foreign policies. Turkish rulers also cooperated with their American counterparts in bringing Iraqi Kurdish groups together,


94 Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", p. 97; Yavuz, ABD'nin Kürt Kari, pp. 103, 231-234, 235; Buzoğlu, Körfez Krizi ve PKK, p. 136.

95 Yavuz, ABD'nin Kürt Kari, pp. 266-267; Buzoğlu, Körfez Krizi ve PKK, p. 137.

96 Yavuz, ABD'nin Kürt Kari, p. 197.

97 Ibid., p. 200.
thus attracted the enmity of the regional powers such as Iraq, Syria and Iran.  

It is widely believed in Turkey that if the safe heaven project was not implemented, Turkey would have managed to stop the activities of the PKK much earlier. The project allegedly allowed the PKK terrorists to improve their activities to the extent that in the seven-month period they reached the point that they could have reached in 30 years otherwise. Benefiting from the presentation of the Kurdish question by the world press, PKK activists increased their influence vis-à-vis the Western powers and strengthened their prestige in the eyes of Kurdish people. Meanwhile, Turkish public opinion gradually came to believe that the US tried to use the international force only for its own interests, namely giving a severe lesson to Iraq’s ‘dictator’, Saddam Hussain. The Americans had obtained a good opportunity to control and irritate the Iraqi administration; they would not easily give up this tool even after they reached the original aim (the protection of the Iraqi Kurds). In this thinking, the use of the Incirlik airbase by the Americans stayed no longer inside the original purposes. Bülent Ecevit went even further in criticising the international force by claiming that Western powers would use the military force, stationed on the Turkish territory, against Turkey rather than Iraq. In the view of some Turkish observers, the international force became a symbol of the fact that Turkey could not take decisions on its own because it had no genuine economic and political independence.

There was a great concern in Turkey on harmful effects of the international force. Allegedly, the increase in the number of civilian American and British personnel in the region meant the increase in the intelligence operations of these states. Intensive activities of Western humanitarian organisations and NGOs

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98 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 356.
100 Yavuz, ABD’nin Kürt Kartı, p. 276.
101 Buzoğlu, Körfez Krizi ve PKK, p. 138.
102 Ibid., p. 205.
strengthened this worry.\textsuperscript{103} As a result, Turkish Foreign Minister Mümtaz Soysal declared that the Turkish government put strict controls on the travel by members of these organisations to and from northern Iraq.\textsuperscript{104} Turkish military authorities, too, were not happy about the free movement of thousands of military and civilian personnel on the Iraqi-Turkish border. They also complained that American officials did not share the intelligence they obtained with their Turkish counterparts, such as the military preparations the of PKK guerrillas. Allegedly, a helicopter belonging to the international force picked up injured PKK terrorists and took them to an unknown place. According to Turkish journalist Yaşar Bostancı, the Americans dropped heavy weaponry to the Kurdish region in the disguise of humanitarian aid. Uğur Mumcu claimed that the main duty of the international force was to give the air support to the Kurdish Federated State. DSP leader Ecevit had worries that the arrangements concerning Kurdish people could turn into permanent structures similar to the Palestinian camps. In his view, the American administration did not want Kurdish leaders reach an agreement with the Iraqi government, thus preventing the Iraqis from establishing a stable regime and protecting their territorial integrity.\textsuperscript{105} Turkish authorities demonstrated their general unhappiness by calling the Kurdish leaders of northern Iraq to Ankara without informing the Americans.\textsuperscript{106}

Since it needed the American support on the Kurdish question, however Turkey largely refrained from carrying out activities that might have clashed with the American point of view. The approval of Turkish military operations in northern Iraq by the American government was a vital necessity for Turkish rulers. However, American proposals for solving the problem were not totally to the liking of the Turkish administration. In contrast, Turkish rulers thought that the American proposals would cause the collapse of the Iraqi regime and harm Turkey's security. The political solution in the minds of the Americans might result in giving more autonomy to Kurds inside Turkish borders, which was

\textsuperscript{103}ibid., pp. 136-137; Yavuz, \textit{ABD'nin Kürt Kartı}, p. 204.
\textsuperscript{104}Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 354.
\textsuperscript{105}TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, Term 19, Year 1, Vol. 4, 26.6.1992, p. 213.
totally unacceptable alternative from Turkish point of view.\textsuperscript{107} It seems that developments surrounding the Kurdish issue will likely to continue to be a sore point in Turkish-American relations.

2.10. Turkey's Problems with Greece

Turkey sees Greece as one of the most important dangers to its security and prepares its defence doctrine accordingly as proved by the existence of its "Aegean Army".\textsuperscript{108} The main concern of Turkish authorities regarding Greece is to prevent it from breaking the balance in the Aegean established by the Treaty of Lausanne.\textsuperscript{109} Greece's various agreements with Bulgaria, Iran, Syria and Russia in the 1990s was considered shaking this balance by isolating Turkey. Greek Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos suggested the formation of a regional cooperation system among Armenia, Iran and Greece, which would be open to other regional states.\textsuperscript{110}

Turkish-Greek disagreements on the Aegean, the Cyprus question and the Turkish minority in the Western Thrace do not only cause headaches for Turkey but also concern the Western powers. The eruption of a serious fight between the two NATO members might harm the cohesion of the Western alliance and might open the way to further conflicts. Turkish rulers argue in this matter that if Turkey is left outside the Western integration process, the possibility of solving Turkish-Greek problems might decrease with serious repercussions for the Western security. They also worry that their problems with Greece might hurt their relations with Western powers. Protecting their interests in the Aegean and Cyprus and not alienating their Western allies at the same is a difficult goal.\textsuperscript{111} The Americans, for example, are not happy about the present situation. NATO's two members, which are supposed to cooperate for the joint defence, weaken the Western

\textsuperscript{107}Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 350.
\textsuperscript{108}Brown, \textit{Delicately Poised Allies}, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{109}\textit{Beyaz Kitap}, p. 45; Taşhan, "Türkiye'nin Tehdit Algılamaları", p. 35.
\textsuperscript{110}Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", p. 40.
\textsuperscript{111}Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, p. 22; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 83; Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey and the Southern Flank", p. 288.
Alliance with their disagreements. The two states look at the US to get political and diplomatic support against each other and accuse it of giving more support to the other side.\textsuperscript{112} Turkish leaders particularly complain that coming under the influence of the Greek lobby, the American Congress inserts outsider elements such as the Cyprus question to Turkish-American relations. There are even Turkish critics who claim that the US tolerates the continuation of the Turkish-Greek enmity in order to keep Turkey under control.\textsuperscript{113} American pressures on Turkey to solve the Cyprus question and the sympathetic attitude of the European powers toward the application of Greek Cypriots to the EU are continuing problems for Turkey. The hopes are renewed recently with the acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for the EU. However, it is not clear whether Turkey will be accepted as the full member. Therefore, it can be said that Turkey's problems with Greece in the Aegean and Cyprus will continue to irritate Turkish-American relations in the near future.

3. Future Expectations

3.1. Turkey's Strategic Importance

Turkish leaders are eager to make Turkey an integral part of the West. Staying outside the Western camp is not an option for them. In order to strengthen the Western interest in Turkey, they emphasise its strategic importance for the West. Turkey is the only democratic and secular Muslim country in the Middle East, maintaining its basic goal of the full integration with the West. It might play a bridge-building role in a region of considerable geopolitical complexity and serve as a democratic, secular and free enterprising role model for the regional states.\textsuperscript{114} In Demirel's words, "by her very existence, Turkey could be a model for her neighbours to plant the seeds of secular democracy."\textsuperscript{115} It also

\textsuperscript{112}Campbell, "The Superpowers...", p. 67.
\textsuperscript{113}Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{114}Celal Göle, "Welcome Address" in Aydın, \textit{Turkey at the Threshold}, p. 3; Gürel, "A General Appraisal...", pp. 12, 14; Demirel; "Turkey and NATO...", pp. 8-9; Solana, "NATO...", p. 21.
\textsuperscript{115}Demirel, "Turkey and NATO...", p. 9.
constitutes the most important barrier preventing the export of radical religious movements to the West and neutralising the effect of Iran's theocratic government model. Some European observers consider the Turkish democracy defective and identify some Middle Eastern elements in Turkish politics. It is also argued that the Kemalist secular model for Muslim countries as a form of governance is less effective and attractive, considering the traditional hatred of the Arabs toward Turkey. However, particularly the American administration continues to stress Turkey's model role. Meanwhile, Turkey's effort of improving its democracy and human rights records will increase its prestige in the eyes of the Europeans and the Americans and will place its relations with the West on a more stable ground.

With its geographic location, Turkey is able to serve both as a bridge and barrier on critical sea, land and air routes, reaching the world's vital natural resources, and affecting developments in nearby regions such as the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. With its massive land, Turkey might resist the military attacks launched against the West in its strategic depth. It can mobilise a considerable number of soldiers and keep them ready to fight for a long time. Turkey is eager to help the West in facing many dangers such as regional wars, terrorism, drug smuggling, and organised crime. In Demirel's words, "through her actions, fostering economic and political interdependence and cooperation, Turkey will not only remain central to the security and prosperity of the West, but will also be the key state in the containment and resolution of a host of problems of our era." In Orhun's view, "Turkey has been on of the major providers of security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic era, rather than being a net consumer." By maintaining its

116 Beyaz Kitap, p. 3; Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", p. 98; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 71.
117 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. 4-5; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 96.
119 Ergüvenç, "Turkey's Strategic...", pp. 63, 65.
120 Demirel, "Turkey and NATO...", p. 9.
121 Orhun, "The Uncertainties...", p. 30.
alliance with Turkey, the West thus ensures that the balance in a strategic region is formed to its advantage and the stability is maintained in its flanks.\textsuperscript{122} Turkey's ability to control the sea traffic from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean through its Straits is another important factor which has the potential of affecting the balances in the region.\textsuperscript{123} Turkey's strategic importance will thus continue to be the most important base of Turkish-American relations.

3.2. Turkey's New Assertive Foreign and Security Policies

\textit{Turkey and the Balkans}

Turkey is increasingly more concerned about developments in the Balkans and during the Balkan crises, staying under the influence of public opinion, the Turkish governments demanded more forceful actions against Serbia. However, Turkish rulers also had to consider the possibility of outbreak of a general war encompassing the whole Balkans and had to balance their policies not to annoy the Western powers, which might accuse them of claiming rights in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{124} The American administration was particularly disturbed by the criticism of the non-intervention of the West in Bosnia by the Turkish people, giving the signal that an assertive Turkish attitude might clash with the American interests in the region. Consequently, Turkey chose to try to affect developments in the Balkans in the context of multilateral structures such as NATO without taking bold unilateral actions.\textsuperscript{125} As a sign of the importance that it gives to the security cooperation in the Balkans, Turkey has made mutual arrangements with its neighbours based on the Security Building and Increasing Measures.\textsuperscript{126} It seems that

\textsuperscript{122}Ergüvenç, "Turkey's Strategic...", pp. 65, 66, 67.
\textsuperscript{123}Brown, \textit{Delicately Poised Allies}, pp. 77, 112, 159.
\textsuperscript{124}Evert, "Turkey's Strategic Goals...", p. 31; Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 241; Sezer, "Turkey's New Security Environment...", p. 161; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 73.
\textsuperscript{125}Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", p. 102; Lesser, \textit{Bridge or Barrier}, p. 40; Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 245.
\textsuperscript{126}Beyaz Kitap, p. 30.
the possibility of the convergence of Turkish interests with those of the Americans in the Balkans is higher than the convergence of Turkish and European ones. The Europeans did not like the idea of the armament and training of the Bosnian Federation Army by the West. However, Turkey and the US played an important role in this program and Turkey's contribution was appreciated by the Americans as an alternative neutralising the Iranian influence in the region. In the Kosova crisis, Turkish rulers had similar worries with the Americans and they gave support to the initiatives led by the USA.127

**Turkey and the Middle Eastern Countries**

Turkey traditionally is in favour of having close relations with the Arab and Muslim world and wants to solve its problems with the Middle Eastern states to strengthen its security.128 Apart from having mutually beneficial trade relations with the regional states,129 Turkey attributes importance to the establishment of security and stability in the Persian Gulf together with preventing the domination of one power in the region.130 It avoids taking any side in Middle Eastern conflicts and tries not to antagonise regional countries while cooperating with the West in the security area. 131 Even if it is attracted to some regional issues and interactions, Turkey avoids institutionalising its ties with the region. President Özal's efforts of having excessive role during and after the Gulf Crisis attracted criticism and did not bring Turkey expected benefits.132

While the US points to the global character of Middle Eastern crises and expects from its all Western allies respond in the same way, Turkish rulers do not want to pursue active policies on

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127 Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 95.
129 Kuniholm, "East or West?...", p. 141; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 86.
131 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 348; Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey and the Southern Flank", p. 334.
132 Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 70.
behalf of the West and to involve in US-led Western interventions in the region. They fear that Western interventions will draw Turkey to military conflicts outside its will and damage its relations with the regional states. Turkish authorities do not want to undertake a general responsibility on behalf of the US in the Middle East, but they prefer to analyse the situation in each case to decide whether they join the American initiative. They are also not sure that the increase in the presence of the US in the region will promote the peace. The support given by the US to some authoritarian regimes of the region might harm sensitive balances and cause conflicts. Moreover, the American efforts of trying to contain Iran and Iraq and using pressure tactics against Syria might bring about clashes between Turkey and these states.

Turkish officials have similar ideas in many political and economic issues of the Middle East with the Europeans rather than the Americans. Nevertheless, they need to cooperate with the USA because of common security and strategic concerns. They want to keep developments under control by pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence whereas the Americans do not hesitate to resort to forceful measures. In spite of American calls for implementing embargo against Iran, Turkey has made a natural gas agreement with this state for a 23-year period. The American administration's soft attitude toward Syria, aimed at drawing this state to the Middle Eastern peace process, does not please Turkey. There were rumours that the Americans consider the use of Turkish water resources by Syria in return for leaving the water resources in the Golan Heights to Israel. On the other hand, unlike the Europeans, the American administration assures Turkish rulers on Turkey's vital strategic importance for the West

133 Helmut Hubel, "Turkey and the Crisis in the Middle East" in Karaosmanoğlu/Taşhan, Middle East, Turkey and the Atlantic Alliance, pp. 117-118; Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 26; Taşhan, "Türkiye'nin Tehdit Algılamaları", p. 38; Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey and the Southern Flank", p. 334.
134 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 349.
135 Buzoğlu, Körfez Krizi ve PKK, pp. 33, 34, 139.
136 Hubel, "Turkey and the Crisis...", p. 118.
137 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", pp. 352, 354; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 98.
138 Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", pp. 197, 198.
in the Middle Eastern context. On the Palestinian problem, Turkey sees the US as the only country which could guide the sides for a solution and supports US-led peace process for the sake of regional security. Turkish rulers put emphasis on granting the self-determination right to the Palestinians and on the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, promise to provide financial aid to the Palestinian administration, but they do not want involving in the process closely.\textsuperscript{139}

\textit{Turkey and the Central Asian Countries}

Some prominent Turkish politicians speak of a large unified Turkic world, stretching from the Chinese Wall to the Adriatic. They thought in early 1990s that a political and economic unity could be established among the Turkic states under the leadership of Turkey even if a tight political organisation could not be formed. This gave the impression that Turkey might depart from its traditional conservative foreign policy line.\textsuperscript{140} However, Turkish efforts of inserting its model in the region implied a big brother attitude that was hurting for the regional states. Turkish rulers realised soon that the idea of establishing a strong Turkic union was not a viable alternative. The Central Asian states were unstable and demanded much more military and economic aid than that Turkey could give. Although they seemed very close to Ankara, it was proved that they could turn to Moscow easily in vital economic, political and security issues. What they preferred was a loose grouping which held summit meetings occasionally. Turkey might help them mostly by serving as an agent in getting the capital, technology and friendship of the West.\textsuperscript{141} Meanwhile, irritated by Turkey's activities, Russia tried to reinsert its influence in the Central Asia, made special arrangements with the regional

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Beyaz Kitap}, p. 35, Gürel, "A General Appraisal...", p. 16.
\item Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", pp. 38, 46; Criss, "International Institutions...", p. 208; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", pp. 69, 71.
\item Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", p. 101; Jesus N. Villaverde, "Turkey-European Union Relations in the Framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" in Aydın, \textit{Turkey at the Threshold}, p. 151; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 75; Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", pp. 239, 247.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
states, and even resorted to the military force. The Americans seemed at that time to consider the region in the realm of the Russians. Only after Russia faced with great difficulties in establishing its influence, American leaders began to think that helping Turkey in increasing its influence in the region might be to the advantage of the US.

In the eyes of the Americans, Turkey might affect the regional states in shaping their system in accordance with democratic and secular models. With the help of having the same language and religion, Turkey could prevent or at least limit the expansion of the Russian and Iranian influences in the Central Asia. Turkish rulers emphasise that they can help Western initiatives in the region and undertake the leadership role in tying the Central Asia to the West through technical, economic and financial aids. As the US shows more interest in the region and the regional countries expect US help, Turkey maintains close contact with both sides to help their relations and attributes special importance to the participation of the Central Asian and Caucasian states to the PfP project in this context. It takes the lead in the summit meetings of the Turkic states and joins economic projects and encourages its private companies in these countries. Helping the regional states in this way to reduce their dependence on Russia will be helpful for both Turkey and the US. In the last analysis, Turkey's relations with the Central Asian countries are not alternative to Turkey's ties with the West, but they could be seen as the means for strengthening these ties with their original aim of attracting attention to the fact that Turkey is an indispensable ally of the West.

Another important issue for Turkey in the Central Asian context is to ensure that the region's oil and gas will reach to the

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143 Demir, "SSCB'nin Dağlmasına...", p. 243.
144 Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", p. 98.
145 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. vii-viii, 7; Müftüler-Bac, "Turkey's Predicament...", p. 265.
146 Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 243; Beyaz Kışap, p. 33.
147 Evert, "Turkey's Strategic Goals...", p. 32; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 86; Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 78.
Western markets through the Turkish territory. At the beginning, Turkey wanted all oil pipelines pass through its territory.\textsuperscript{148} However, with the intervention of the US, which do not want to alienate the Russians totally, Turkey accepted that oil could be transferred through multiple pipelines, meaning that some other states such as Russia, too, could get benefit from the transportation of oil.\textsuperscript{149} In the eyes of Turkish rulers, “the project tabled by Turkey to transport oil from the vast reserves of the Caspian basin through a main pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan will have significant consequences for the prosperity of the entire region... Turkey offers a viable, reliable, rantable, technologically and environmentally most feasible and safe option.”\textsuperscript{150} The transportation of oil through Russia means that the tanker traffic in the Turkish Straits will increase greatly, causing environmental problems for Turkey. Turkish rulers have obtained the support of some regional states such as Azerbaijan for the Baku-Ceyhan project. However, the major powers of the world, including oil companies, have more voice in taking the final decision. Therefore, Turkish leaders attribute great importance to the support of the US in this matter.\textsuperscript{151} The US and Turkey agrees on that the Azeri oil should be saved from the monopoly of Russia and that Iran and Russia should not be allowed to have an influential voice in the transportation of oil.\textsuperscript{152}

\textit{Turkish-Israeli Relations}

The recent improvements in Turkish-Israeli relations strengthen Turkey’s relations with the US and increase its importance in the eyes of the Americans. The Turkish-Israeli defence cooperation agreements in February and August 1996 symbolised the introduction of the security aspect to the relations between the two states. According to the agreements, the air forces and the navy of the two states would carry out joint military

\textsuperscript{148}Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 355; \textit{Beyaz Kitap}, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{149}Duygu Sezer, "The Black Sea Politics and Turkey" in Aydin, \textit{Turkey at the Threshold}, pp. 75-76.
\textsuperscript{150}Gürel, "A General Appraisal...", p. 16.
\textsuperscript{151}Sezer, "The Black Sea Politics and Turkey", pp. 74-75.
\textsuperscript{152}Demir, "SSCB’nin Dağılmasından...", pp. 238, 244.
exercises, the Israeli navy would use the Turkish ports, and the Israeli air forces would perform training flights upon the wide Anatolian plateau. With the help of America, a border control system which included sensitive cameras, receivers and satellites would be put into operation in Turkey.

Demirel's official visit to Jerusalem in December 1996 was the first visit of a Turkish president to Israel. During the visit it was declared that Turkish forces would carry out joint military exercises with the Israeli and American forces in the eastern Mediterranean. Turkish Defence Minister Turhan Tayan's visit to the Golan Heights in May 1997 was a brave action. In return, Israeli Prime Minister Netenyahu criticised the idea of the establishment of a Kurdish state and condemned the separatist PKK organisation for the first time in his interview with a Turkish television. In spite of the intensive protests of the regional states, Turkish, American and Israeli navies performed the planned joint military exercise in January 1998. As stated by Israeli Minister Moshe Arens, the Turkish-Israeli military axis is the most important development of the recent Middle Eastern history, having the potential to change the regional balance of power. The fear of the Arabs that the Western powers and their regional allies might establish an anti-Arab coalition has been renewed. Syria has activated the Arab world against the new development and has obtained the political support of the Arab states to break its isolation. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria have formed a strategic partnership and Iran has won important successes in getting recognition of the Middle Eastern countries. Responding to reactions, Turkish authorities assert that the Turkish-Israel cooperation is not against any regional state but contributes to the establishment of peace, stability and order in the region.

Turkish leaders see their cooperation with Israel as an alternative to be used in the case the Western powers cause problems. While the European countries and the US seem unreliable in providing weapons because of their heavy conditions, Israel has become an alternative for Turkey, diminishing its dependence on the West and diversifying its defence sources.

153 Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", pp. 35-36, 47-48,
154 Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", pp. 189-190, 193-194, 203.
Turkey might get from Israel weapons and military technology that will never be able to get from the US and the European countries. In 1996 the Israeli companies undertook half a billion-dollar project of the modernisation of Turkey's 54 F-14 warplanes. In December 1997, the modernisation of Turkey's 48 F-5 warplanes was given to Israel. Turkey and Israel also agreed on the joint manufacture of Arrow missiles.\(^{156}\) In the light of the serious increase in the military armament in the region, Israel seems a valuable partner, helping Turkey to defend itself against ballistic missiles. The cooperation with Israel has also provided important opportunities to Turkey in limiting the power of Syria, Iraq and Iran.\(^{157}\) However, the most important motive of Turkish rulers in improving their relations with Israel is to strengthen their alliance relations with the US. They expect that the mighty Israeli lobby in America will affect the Congress in taking more pro-Turkish decisions in important issues such as the military sales, the Cyprus question and the allegations of Armenian massacres at the hands of the Ottomans.\(^{158}\)

The American administration clearly supports the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement. When Turkey and Israel decided to carry out joint military exercises, America expressed its worries only on its timing. After persuading the sides in changing its time, the US itself joined the exercise. The Americans suggested calling a Jordanian commander to the exercise seemingly to appease the Arab opposition or to expand the Turkish-Israeli cooperation to a Middle Eastern grouping. In the last analysis, Turkey needs to pursue a flexible policy by taking into consideration the possibilities that Israel might solve its problems with the Arabs and Turkish-Israeli relations might deteriorate. Such a development might decrease the importance of Turkey for the Americans in the Israeli context and might leave Turkey alone in facing the Middle Eastern powers alienated by the Turkish-Israeli cooperation.\(^{159}\)

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\(^{156}\) Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", pp. 190, 191.

\(^{157}\) Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 84.

\(^{158}\) Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", p. 191; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 98.

\(^{159}\) Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 72.
3.3. Future of Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkish disappointment toward the Western powers in some issues in the 1990s underlined the possibility that Turkey might seek a new identity outside the West and new roles in the Balkans and Turkic republics. In the view of Süleyman Demirel, the effectiveness and reliability of the Western organisations failed in the recent international crises. The prestige of Western values and ideas were sharply decreased in the eyes of Turkish people because they believed that the West showed a biased attitude toward the oppressed Muslims of Bosnia, Chechnya and Kosova.160

Turkish people also thought that Turkey was not accepted to the EU because of its Muslim identity. With the new developments, they felt that Turkey could not trust any more the West in getting benefits in economic, political and security areas. That strengthened the hand of the conservative and nationalist elements in Turkish politics, demanding closer relations with the Muslim and Turkic world respectively.161 Islamic-oriented Welfare Party thus became successful in the local and general elections by playing off "Turkey's economic, political and security turmoil with a nationalistic message of contempt for the West." Its message found fertile ground among average Turks, who believed that the West let them down on a number of vital issues central to Turkey's future.162

While the centrist parties could not satisfy demands of the average person, the dynamic character of conservatives and nationalists hinted a radical shake up in the Turkish political life with its repercussions on Turkey's foreign policy.163 The process has been interrupted by a series of initiatives launched by the Turkish military, starting on 28 February 1997 and radical elements themselves have become pro-integration with the West. However, anti-Western feeling might also overcome Turkey's traditional elite as shown by Şükrü Gürel's statement that Turkey is

160 Dağı, "Turkey in the 1990s...", pp. 71, 72, 77; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", pp. 82, 88.
161 Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 238.
162 Kesic, "American-Turkish Relations...", pp. 105, 106.
163 Kuniholm, "East or West?...", p. 141; Dağı, "Turkey in the 1990s...", p. 76.
not doomed to wait for an ambiguous time or outcome and has no intention to turn EU membership into an obsession.¹⁶⁴

Turkey's close relationship with the West, including the US cannot be taken granted. The West has to be careful on not antagonising Turkey if it wants to protect its own interests. Turkish estrangement from the West is likely to make the process of political and economic change in Turkey more difficult and crisis-prone.¹⁶⁵ Turkish rulers warn that the fall of Turkey to the hands of radical groups will affect Western security directly. Particularly the Turkish military has sought to attract the US support for Turkey's traditional line. "By designating Islamic fundamentalism as the enemy within, [it] made itself part of the anti-Iranian strategy... By allying itself to Israel, it could be sure of strong support from the USA and the Congress."¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Turkish people's lack of confidence in the West continues and the centrist parties still face heavy defeats in Turkish elections. Therefore, there are still valid reasons for the Americans to worry on a possible change in the structure of Turkey's traditional ruling elite and its Western-oriented foreign policy line. Relying on the military in maintaining the traditional structure is both unreliable and contrary to democratic principles.

In the new atmosphere created after the end of the Cold War, Turkey's foreign policy alternatives have widely been discussed in public in the way that cannot compared with the past and new proposals were put forward. The changes in Turkish domestic politics and the affinity of the Turkish nation to the people in the crises regions have put pressures on the government to pursue more active foreign policies. As a result, the horizon of Turkey's foreign and security policies has broadened both regionally and functionally. Turkey is more active in the international crises, it protects its interests more assertively (such as its actions against Syria and its operations in northern Iraq) and the sensitivity of Turkish officials on Turkey's sovereignty is more prominent with the increasing Turkish nationalism.¹⁶⁷ Turkish rulers try to protect

¹⁶⁵Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 88.
¹⁶⁶Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli...", p. 191.
¹⁶⁷Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", pp. 80, 87, 88; Roper, "The West and Turkey...", p. 90.
their interests through the organisations such as the UN, NATO and OSCE, rather than emphasising bilateral relations with the countries such as the US. In Demirel's words, Turkey seeks:

\begin{displayquote}
 to explore opportunities for political, economic, commercial, social and cultural joint initiatives in meeting daunting challenges by pursuing a multi-dimensional foreign policy. (\ldots) Turkey's strategic relevance in the post-Cold War era lies in her ability to look both to the west and the east; to remain firmly committed to her Western orientation while simultaneously recognising the complexities of her geography as well as the harsh realities of her immediate neighbourhood.\(^{168}\)
\end{displayquote}

The establishment of the D-8 group among the Muslim states during the brief period of Erbakan's government symbolised an important change in Turkish foreign policy. But Erbakan had to leave the power because of the severe opposition to his government. In fact, Erbakan himself could not take contrary actions to the traditional policies concerning the membership in NATO, the relations with Israel and the customs union with the EU. Finally the economic crises in Asia reiterated the notion that the integration with the Muslim world could not be an alternative to relations with the West.\(^{169}\) Nevertheless, Erbakan's successors have chosen to keep the D-8 in case they need it. Turkey's leading role in the Organisation of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), too, is aimed at pursuing more active foreign policy. It enhances Turkey's influence in the region and contributes to its security by strengthening the peace in the surrounding region. But Turkish authorities frequently emphasise that their leadership role in the BSEC project is not an alternative to future membership in the EU. They state that their activities will serve the Western interests and will deepen Turkey's integration with the West. The support given by the US to this project, therefore, is valuable for Turkish rulers.\(^{170}\)

As a part of pursuing more independent foreign policy, Turkish rulers try to be self-sufficient in defence. The impact of...

\(^{168}\)Demirel, "Turkey and NATO...", p. 8.
\(^{169}\)Hunter, "Bridge or Frontier?...", p. 76; Lesser, "Turkey's Strategic Options", p. 87.
\(^{170}\)Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy...", p. 244.
American arms embargo and occasional sanctions imposed by the Western powers on Turkish arms purchases are always in their minds. The formulation of a new defence concept and the creation of the Defence Industrial Development and Support Administration and other organs, are some of the initiatives launched in this direction. Meeting the modernisation needs of the Turkish Armed Forces by establishing a national defence industry infrastructure is continuously in the agenda of Turkish authorities. Strengthening the air defence through the Patriot missiles and F-16 warplanes is an urgent priority for Turkey. The lack of these systems will make Turkey defenceless against air attacks, leading Turkish authorities to be more reluctant in allowing the use of the Turkish territory by the Western states in the future military clashes outside the NATO area. Turkish rulers have also opened the defence sector to Western and Turkish private companies to benefit from their technological, financial and management capabilities. The Turkish defence industry has developed greatly with recent efforts. However, Turkey still has to import military equipment and technology to meet military needs. The Turkish army is tied to the US functionally and its weapons systems have been established according to American standards. Therefore, Turkey will continue to need American military assistance and equipment. Getting certain equipment (such as Black Hawk and Skorsky helicopters), spare parts and military training from the US will always be vitally important for Turkey.

171 Beyaz Kitap, pp. 54-55.
172 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. 27-28, 30; Cengiz Okman, "NATO Stratejileri ve Türkiye Bakımından Sonuçları" in Türkiye'nin Savunması, p. 97; Mufti, "Daring and Caution...", p. 47; Beyaz Kitap, p. II.
173 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 31.
175 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 355.
3.4. Military Assistance

With the outbreak of the Gulf Crisis, it became clear that Turkey's importance for the US would not decrease, but it was also realised that American aid to Turkey would not continue in the same level and way. The failure in getting more financial and military assistance from the US in spite of its faithfulness and cooperation inside NATO displeased the Turks. After the Gulf War, American aid to Turkey was increased from 553.4 million dollars to 635.4 million dollars, most of which was in the form of outright grants. With the inclusion of CFE-related equipment, Turkey would be recipient of US and German military equipment worth of 8 billion dollars. But this extraordinary increase resulted from the CFE treaty and special conditions of the Gulf War. The normal tendency was that the American Congress would be less enthusiastic in providing security assistance. Turkish rulers were also aware that the Cyprus and Kurdish issues, the human rights violations and the Balkan conflicts would be debated during the foreign aid bill discussions. When the American Congress suspended 10% of the 453 million-dollar aid on 29 July 1994 because of Turkey's failure in making improvements in its human rights records and the Cyprus issue, the Turkish government responded by refusing the part of the aid, which was made conditional. This caused a serious cutback in the US supplementary weapons and equipment program, on which Turkey relied heavily especially in its fight against the PKK.

Turkey's traditional ways of receiving aid from the US have gradually disappeared and the aid, which has been turned to a commercial arms sale, has been filled by the Congress with outsider elements harming Turkish interests. Turkey buys weapons from private American companies and receives military equipment from the US administration in the form of credits or grants (Foreign Military Sales, FMS). In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the US provided aid to Turkey as FMS credits, Southern-Region Aid (SRA) and CFE-surplus weapons, trying to reduce the effect of the Congress' limitations. By pointing to the SRA, American authorities cancelled the grant-aid totally and turned it to interest-

176 Brown, Delicately Poised Allies, pp. 159-160.
177 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 36.
178 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", p. 351.
bearing FMS credits. The 450 million-dollar aid in 1993 was
totally this kind. Owing to high interest rates, Turkey's debt
payments exceeded in some years the actual amount of the so-
called American aid and even reached the 10% of Turkey's total
expenditures. There was no difference between taking credits from
a commercial bank and receiving military aid from the US any
longer. The reduction of the FMS credits to 400 million dollars for
1995 with the 7% interest rate and its conditioning resulted in the
loss of the attractiveness of the American security aid for Turkey.
Meanwhile, with the limitation of the commercial purchases with 10
million dollars, Turkey could not benefit from bargaining
opportunities with private companies. Moreover, political disputes
prevented the transfer of some US military equipment that was
appropriated for Turkey. Consequently, it can be said that the
limitations in the American aid negatively affect Turkey's security
principles and priorities. Turkey's dependence on the US on
logistics, maintenance and training limits Turkey's security
 alternatives. The American policy of allowing only limited
technology transfer in military sales and joint projects sanctions
Turkey's efforts to establish a stronger defence infrastructure.179

3.5. Turkish-American Strategic Partnership

Turkish authorities were not happy in the content and
implementation of the Defence and Economic Cooperation
Agreement (DECA) signed between Turkey and the USA in 1980.
They were of the opinion that the Americans did not fulfil their
responsibilities concerning the modernisation of the Turkish armed
forces. Turkish leaders particularly demanded that the security
relationship between the two countries should be saved from the
outsider elements such as the Cyprus question and that the
economic aspects of the DECA should be implemented
satisfactorily. When their demands were not met, they became
reluctant in the expansion of the defence cooperation with America
though they allowed the extension of the DECA annually.

However, the Gulf Crisis provided a good opportunity for
Turkey in proving its strategic importance for the West by
cooperating with Washington closely. The Turkish government

closed the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline immediately and allowed the use of its territory by the coalition forces. The alleged intention of President Özal by opening a second front against Iraq to annex Mosul and Kirkuk was not materialised because of severe domestic opposition. Nevertheless, the unhesitant help provided by Turkey for America in its hour of need during the war had vital importance. In this way, Turkey guaranteed its place within the Western camp in the post-Cold War period. Ankara has never received compensation for its war losses in the amount which it has expected, but it has become one of major strategic partners of the US by deepening its security relationship with it.

After the Gulf War, by extending the DECA in December 1991, Turkish authorities pre-empted in a sense the Americans' putting forward new demands concerning the use of the bases. In March 1993, the Turkish administration conveyed its demands again to the Americans on making changes in the DECA. In this way, the two sides returned to the period of endless negotiations of 1980s with the extension of the agreement annually. Meanwhile, the American decision to withdraw military personnel and nuclear weapons in the Erhaç and Eskişehir air bases without consulting the Turkish side displeased Ankara. By the middle of 1994, ten out of twelve NATO bases in Turkey had been closed. The dissatisfaction of Turkish rulers on the DECA continued in the following years. They mainly wanted America provide more help and transfer high military technology in developing Turkey's defence industry.

It was expected that the Turkish-American defence cooperation would not expand any longer in the 1990s. The Americans should have appreciated the cautious attitude of Turkish authorities on the use of Turkish airfield and military bases. Turkey would demand a more mature and diversified relationship in which traditional security contacts were supported by more emphasised political and economic cooperation, benefiting both states. The new security initiatives concerning Turkey should have been materialised in a multilateral context and in a way that they would increase Turkey's importance for the West, they would be

180 Köni, "Gulf Savaşı..." pp. 48-49.
181 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, p. 35.
182 Aykan, "Turkish Perspectives...", pp. 345-346, 347.
accepted by Ankara and they would encourage to share the Transatlantic responsibilities.  

However, Turkish authorities have recently launched new initiatives on the strategic partnership with the US. The daily use of the Incirlik airbase by America, the consideration of use of the Turkish territory for NATO attacks against Yugoslavia and the active participation of Turkish authorities in many US-led operations are some examples in this regard. Turkey might benefit in many issues from its strategic partnership with the most powerful state of the world. However, it is still in the minds of Turkish authorities how the close relationship between the two states in the 1950s caused big problems for Turkey in the 1960s and the 1970s. By taking into consideration the possibility that the Turkish-American relations might deteriorate in future and the American administration might choose to apply pressure tactics against Turkey, Turkish rulers need to be cautious in their attitude on improving the partnership with the US. Not showing the old sensitivities on the use of the Incirlik airbase, for example, seems a departure for them from their traditional policies. They are supposed to be reluctant in undertaking wide responsibilities on the use of the Turkish territory by the Americans and in involving American interventions in the region. As Uğur Mumcu warned, the main agreement on the use of the Incirlik airbase was the DECA. However, after Turkey accepted the international force to its territory for the protection of the Iraqi Kurds, the DECA has been forgotten. The possibility that the US might involve Turkey in a military conflict with Iraq through Incirlik is taken lightly.

4. Conclusion

For America, Turkey is an indispensable ally which has contributed to its security and political and economic stability by remaining faithful to its responsibilities toward the Western Alliance. Turkey occupies a vital place for the main American

183 Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. vi-vii, 24, 34, 38, 43-44.
184 Snyder, Defending the Fringe, p. 122; Lesser, Bridge or Barrier, pp. 36, 37; Brown, Delicately Poised Allies, pp. 60-61.
185 Yavuz, ABD'nin Kürt Kartı, p. 278.
goals in the new era such as "a) elevating global economic growth as a primary foreign policy goal; b) promoting the spread of democracy and free markets; c) updating American-led alliances created during the Cold War as well as working to revitalise and reform the United Nations; and d) updating America's security arrangements and armed forces to meet new threats and challenges, including a higher emphasis on peace-support operations."

The new tendencies in the American security thinking ("the rediscovery of geopolitics on Europe's periphery especially in the Caspian and growing emphasis on the challenges of weapons of mass destruction and missile proliferation and regional power projection") have resulted in America's showing more interest in Turkey as a strategic partner. High-level American officials consider Turkey as the new frontline country of NATO and one of the major actors which might affect developments in the Balkans, Middle East, Central Asia and Europe.

For Turkey, the US is the most suitable partner that can provide security guarantees in facing new threats. Turkish rulers aim at improving Turkish-American relations in the way that they will serve the mutual interests. They think that furthering the bilateral relationship which is called as the "Improved Partnership" in the areas of politics, defence cooperation, economy and energy will serve the regional and global peace and stability. Finally, it has to be known that being strategic partners and making strategic cooperation do not mean that Turkey and the US will have the same views in every matter in a wide region stretching from the Balkans to the Central Asia.

186 Asmus, "The Rise or Fall...", p. 162.
187 Lesscr, "Turkey's Strategic Options", pp. 83-84.
188 Beyaz Kitap, p. 27.