

THE IDEA OF A TURKISH WORLD FROM THE ADRIATIC TO THE WALL
OF CHINA:
RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND TURKIC REPUBLICS DURING THE
1990S

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“The Idea of a Turkish World from the Adriatic to the Wall of China: Relations
Between Turkey and The Turkic Republics during the 1990s”

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Title: The Idea of a Turkish World from the Adriatic to the Wall of China: Relations Between Turkey and the Turkic Republics during the 1990s

This thesis scrutinizes the reaction of Turkey towards the emergence of the Turkic Republics in the Post-Cold War Period. In doing this, it does seek not only to give an account of Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic Republics, but also to illustrate the reactions of the Turkish public opinion, especially of the Turkish nationalists and the impact of this reaction on the foreign policy agenda of Turkey. In this regard, this study departs from a classical foreign policy analysis perspective since it takes the domestic politics issues such as national identity and common culture into a foreign policy analysis. By making such an analysis, this study has found out that, Turkey's enthusiastic interest in the emergence of the Turkic Republics was stemmed from some historical and conjunctural reasons. These reasons led Turkey to pursue an active policy towards the region in a way surpassing its potential. On the other hand, the Turkic republics, with the exception of Azerbaijan during the initial years of its independence, did not respond Turkey's enthusiasm at the same degree. Turkey's failure to see the region as a monolithic bloc also hindered the development of cooperation. In short, Turkey's misperceptions prevented Turkey from becoming influential in the politics of Central Asia as it predicted at the beginning. At the end of the decade, neither Turkey was the leader of the Turkic World nor was the Turkic world was a region having a vital significance for Turkish foreign policy.

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Başlık: Adriyatik'ten Çin Seddine Türk Dünyası Düşüncesi: 1990'larda Türkiye ve Türki Cumhuriyetler Arasındaki İlişkiler

Bu tez, Soğuk Savaş Sonrası dönemde Türki cumhuriyetlerin ortaya çıkmasına Türkiye'nin gösterdiği ilgiyi incelemektedir. Bunu yaparken, sadece Türki cumhuriyetlere yönelik Türk dış politikasının bir incelemesi vermek amaçlanmamış, bunun yanında Türk kamuoyunun özellikle Türk milliyetçilerinin ilgisi ve bu ilginin Türkiye'nin dış politika gündemine etkisi açıklanması amaçlanmıştır. Bu bakımdan bu çalışma bilinen dış politika çalışmalarından, milli kimlik ortak kültür gibi konulara yer vermesi bakımından ayrılmaktadır. Bu analizin sonunda, bu çalışma Türkiye'nin Türki cumhuriyetlerin ortaya çıkışına gösterdiği coşkulu ilginin bazı tarihsel ve dönemselsel sebeplerden kaynaklandığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu sebepler Türkiye'nin bölgede potansiyelini aşacak bir biçimde aktif politikalara yönelmesine neden olmuştur. Öte yandan, bağımsızlığının ilk yıllarındaki Azerbaycan hariç Türki cumhuriyetler Türkiye'nin bu coşkusuna aynı oranda cevap vermediler. Türkiye'nin bölgeyi yekpare bir yapı olarak görmesi de işbirliğinin gelişmesine engel olmuştur. Kısaca, Türkiye'nin yanlış algılamaları Türkiye'nin Orta Asya siyasetinde başlangıçta tahmin ettiği derecede etkin olmasını engellemiştir. On yılın sonunda, ne Türkiye Türk dünyasının lideriydi ne de Türk dünyası Türk dış politikası için hayati öneme sahip bir bölgeydi.

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To my childhood,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, during the Justice and Development Party (JDP) governments, Turkish foreign policy has been pursued by a somewhat different perspective from that of the traditional premises of Turkish Foreign policy. The JDP, as Öniş stated, “put greater emphasis on the use of soft power and developing friendly relations with all Turkey’s neighbors... One significant policy initiative has been targeting zero problems with Turkey’s neighbors, signaling a deviation from the classical fixed positions of Turkish foreign policy.”¹

This policy, conceptualized as the strategic depth doctrine, is predicated on geographically and historical depth. Turkey, as a result of its historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire possesses great geographical depth.² According to Davutoğlu, “...this geographical depth places Turkey right at the center of many geopolitical areas of influence” and thus, the strategic depth doctrine calls for an activist engagement with all regional systems in the Turkey’s neighborhood.³

The above-mentioned perspective did not come onto the agenda of Turkish foreign policy during the JDP period. This perspective, under the name of neo-Ottomanism, became a trend in Turkish policy during the Özal period (1983-1993). According to this policy, developing good relations with Turkey’s near geography on the basis of existing historical, cultural ties and due to economic concerns became a major objective for Turkey. The Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East came

¹ Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era,” *Turkish Studies* 10, no.1 (Spring 2009), p. 9

² Alexander Murinson, “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (November 2006), pp. 947 – 948.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 948.

forward in order to pursue of this policy. This study focuses on one of these trends: Turkey's reaction towards the emergence of the Turkic republics during the 1990s, expressed with the phrase of "Turkish World from Adriatic to the Wall of China."⁴ This case is crucial in order to understand Turkey's active foreign policy initiatives in the last three decades for two reasons. First, the Turkic world was of great significance for the formation Turkish national identity and a relationship with these republics on the basis of cultural closeness was thought to be a feasible objective. Secondly, these republics with their economic potential offered a wide range of cooperation opportunities for Turkey.

The Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991, in a peaceful way and the Cold war ended. It was a phenomenon that led to many new events in world politics. This phenomenon and the related events following it had direct impacts on not only the foreign policies of many states, but also on their domestic politics. Turkey, which was already in a transformation process, was no exception. As a committed ally of the Western Bloc during the Cold war, the end of this long-standing international crisis was welcomed in Turkey. Furthermore, the events that followed the end of the Cold war presented new opportunities and challenges for Turkish foreign policy. Among these, the emergence of the Turkic republics would be the one that most intensely attracted the attention of the Turkish public opinion and the Turkish state elite.

Even though it coincided with a busy agenda, the emergence of the Turkic republics found considerable interest in the Turkish public opinion, especially in the first days of the independence. This was not a baseless interest. Rather, it relied on

⁴ There are numerous claims on the invention of this phrase. Hasan Celal Güzel, an ex-Minister of State in Turkey, claimed that he was the first person to use this phrase. Hasan Celal Güzel, "21. Asır Türk Asrı Olacaktır," *Yeni Türkiye* 1, no. 3 (March 1995), p. 18. There are also views that Henry Kissinger was the innovator of this slogan. However, this phrase had gained popularity when Süleyman Demirel, Prime Minister of The Time, used it in a speech in 1992. Murinson, p. 953.

numerous historical and actual roots at that time. The Turkic world and Central Asian region were used in the national identity formation during the Republican era.⁵ On the other hand, the political agenda of the time in Turkey at that time was filled with various problematic issues. The idea of finding or “re-meeting” with its brothers, seemed to be interesting to Turkish public opinion. Apart from the general optimistic atmosphere in the Turkish public opinion, the two sides, Turkish nationalists and the Turkish state elite showed a special interest in the Turkic republics. These sides had their own reasons for being considerably eager to cooperate with the region. Their common point was to be influential on the above-mentioned interest of the Turkish public opinion in the region. For Turkish nationalism, the notion of Caucasian and Central Asian Turks carried a unique meaning. In a sense, it was the most important founding element of Turkish nationalism at both the individual and ideational level.⁶ The Turkish state elite were also legitimate in their points. The perspective of nationalism that saw the Central Asian Turks as the “ancestors” of the Turks in Anatolia was a product of the state ideology. From the foreign policy perspective, there was a legitimate ground for embracing the Turkic republics. Turkey’s strategic importance stemming from the security concerns of the Western alliance seemed to have evaporated due to the end of the Cold war.⁷ Such a gap should have been filled immediately. On the other hand, the deteriorating relations with the European

⁵ For the role of Central Asia in Turkish National Identity Formation Process, See Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih: Türkiye’de Resmi Tarih Tezinin Oluşumu* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), pp. 253-264.

⁶ The prominent figures of Turkish nationalism, such as Yusuf Akçura, Zeki Velidi Togan or Sadri Maksudi Arsal, were immigrants from Russia. Thus, their reactionary attitude towards Russia and the impact of the ideologic diversion between Turkey and the Soviet Union caused a strong anti-Russian veil for Turkish nationalism. Gün Soysal, “Rusya Kökenli Aydınların Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Milliyetçiliğinin İnşasına Katkıları,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 483 – 505.

⁷ Turkey, during the Cold War Period, attached great significance to its position of “Forefront Country.”

Economic Community and the new “active foreign policy” trend of the made the emergence of the Turkic republics welcomed. Thus, apart from the above-mentioned general aim, this thesis analyzes Turkey’s reaction towards the emergence of the Turkic republics on the basis of the relationship between Turkish national identity formation and Turkish foreign policy.

Contrary to the initial optimistic atmosphere, Turkey was far from establishing a successful sense of cooperation with the Turkic republics during the rest of the decade. In this thesis, also a comprehensive analysis of this disappointment (or failure in a more precise manner) is made by considering the political, economic and cultural causes in both Turkey and the Turkic republics. In other words, even though this study mainly focuses on the reaction and expectations of Turkey, also the political, cultural and historical structures of the Turkic republics are discussed briefly in order to make a better analysis of the failure of the initial euphoria.

The emergence of the Turkic republics and the reaction to this phenomenon has been subject to numerous studies, especially in the 1990s.⁸ Among these studies, Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics also held a crucial place. However, many of these studies lack a specific context and they do not go further from being chronological analyze. Most of these studies examine the issue as a study on international relations. There are only a limited number of studies that have taken domestic factors into consideration in examining Turkey’s reaction to the emergence

⁸ For some of them, Patricia M. Carley, “Turkey and Central Asia: Reality Comes Calling,” in *Regional Power Rivalries in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*, (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 169- 201. Graham E. Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, eds., *Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), pp.37-98. Heinz Kramer, “Will Central Asia Become Turkey's Sphere of Influence?” *Perceptions* 1 (March-May 1996), pp. 1-6. Philip Robins, “Between Sentiment and Self-interest: Turkey’s Policy toward Azerbaijan and the Central Asian States,” *Middle East Journal* 47, no.4 (Autumn 1993), pp.593-610. Sabri Sayan, “Turkey, the Caucasus and Central Asia,” in *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borderland*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 197-216. Gareth, M. Winrow, *Turkey in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995).

of the Turkish republics. These studies easily named the initial euphoria period the Pan-Turkist tendency. These simplistic and categorical approaches prevented a wholesale healthy analysis. This thesis attempts to go beyond this viewpoint. Rather than illustrating the events case by case separately, a context specific to this study will be established and the related events will be discussed in this context.

Another problem observed in most of the studies about Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics is that these studies limit themselves to a opportunities and challenges context and make a chronological account of events as mentioned above. This thesis deconstructs the views that what "opportunity" and what "challenge" really meant in the case of relations with the Turkic republics. Thus, this presents an original cooperation.

In making this analysis, asking the true questions is of great significance with regard to this field of study. Moreover, before asking the questions, it is useful to illustrate the provisional claim made here about the initial optimistic response in the Turkish public opinion towards the emergence of the Turkic republics. This thesis mainly states that the enthusiastic atmosphere in the different sides of Turkish public opinion towards the emergence of the Turkic republics must be explained mainly by keeping the conjuncture in mind. Turkish nationalism, on the other hand, constitutes an exception to this claim since such a phenomenon would hold a considerable portion in their agenda whenever it would have happened. However, for the Turkish state elite and the public opinion in Turkey, the conditions of the time were the motivation in terms of the interest shown in the emergence of the so-called Turkic world.

At this point, the first question can be posed. What were the motivations of the public opinion and the Turkish state elite, Turkish foreign policy in specific,

regarding the emergence of the Turkic republics? From the perspective of Turkish foreign policy, were the Turkic republics thought to have the potential of a strong sense of economic and political cooperation, or was the initial interest only a temporary phenomenon for reasons such as the dynamics of the international conjuncture and the loss of momentum in Turkey's overall relations with the West? The way to analyze this problematic will be given in the final part of this chapter.

In searching for the real motives behind Turkish foreign policy's initial interest in the region, discussing the general trends in Turkish foreign policy will be helpful and will lead to new questions. As is known, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, namely in the Özal period, Turkish foreign policy-making processes showed a fragmented character. Contrary to the conservative pro-Western foreign policy trend of the bureaucracy, Özal was in favor of more "active" policies in Turkey's near geography. This policy was visible in many of his speeches and among the pro-Özal journalists in the Turkish media, what will be examined in this study.

In practice, this policy found direct reflection in the case of relations with the Middle East. In this aspect, we need to ask whether the interest in the Turkic republics was a part of this policy or would Turkey show the same interest in the region in any circumstances regardless of the general trends of its foreign policy at that time? This will be another concern of this study.

The emergence of the Turkic republics, among other parts in the Turkish public opinion, was welcomed most enthusiastically by the Turkish nationalists. Pan-Turkism, with some exceptions was never able to become a dominant political trend in Turkey. However, as mentioned earlier the notion of the captive Turkic world in Central Asia was a constituting element of Turkish nationalism. Thus, the above-mentioned enthusiasm may seem an inevitable phenomenon. However, this event

caused not only an atmosphere of enthusiasm among Turkish nationalists, but also it has been used as an instrument in terms of gaining ground in domestic politics. For Turkish nationalism, the emergence of the Turkic world was the proof of historical rightness and the greatest portion of the emotional and political “pie” should be obtained by Turkish nationalists at any level. In this point, the question is posed: “How did the above-mentioned role of outside Turks in Turkish nationalism affect the attitude of the Turkish nationalists.

Turkey’s relations with the Turkic republics included various elements that make the examination of each of these elements in details impossible. Such an attempt is beyond the scope of this study. The foreign policy of Turkey in Central Asia and the responses of the Turkic republics and the third sides such as Russia or Iran will be illustrated. However, each of these events will be used as instruments to understand the changing perceptions and expectations in Turkey towards the Turkic world. In short, this thesis aims to be a foreign policy analysis.

Apart from its content, this thesis has other contextual limitations. It is limited to the first decade of relations. In these ten years, the initial optimistic period in terms of perceptions and exceptions will constitute the main concern of this study. The existence of such euphoric period is accepted by nearly all the authors focused on this issue, but there is not a consensus on the concrete days of passage from an optimistic atmosphere to a more realistic view. This thesis will accept the three years after the declaration after the declaration of independence by the Turkic republics and this period will be mainly discussed. The events in the rest of the 1990s will be illustrated in order to clarify the end of the optimistic atmosphere in the euphoria period.

During the 1990s, more or less, the Turkic republics in Central Asia occupied a place in the Turkish public opinion. However, in the last decade, this interest has gradually decreased. On the other hand, there was a quite significant difference between the foreign policy making styles of the 1990s and the 2000s. During the 1990s there was considerable attention on identity-based foreign policy analysis. This was because the facts of international politics urged the scholars to behave so. However, in the last ten years, with the strong impact of the September 11 attacks, international politics have been begun to be analyzed in terms of “national security” concerns similar to the conditions of the Cold war period. It is true that the issue of cultural differences maintained their prominence in the discussions over foreign policy, but identical and ideational differences were being subordinated to the security issue contrary to their central position in the 1990s. Thus, it can be concluded that the 2000s in international politics constitute a different position the 1990s. On the other hand, as mentioned above, the Central Asian region did not attract great. Due to these reasons, this thesis does not consider the last ten years and focuses on the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics during the 1990s and mainly the first half of the decade since we aim to make the analysis of the initial optimistic perceptions and exceptions rather than to give a broad chronological account.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis limits itself to a foreign policy analysis. However, it is not limited to the traditional premises of that analysis. Rather than that an inter-disciplinary account will be given. By originating as a foreign policy analysis, it will be claimed that not only the general principles of rationality and profit maximization, but also notions such as the historical background, identity formation and political and economic facts of the time may play significant roles in

the way that states construct their foreign policies. The examination of these factors makes this study an interdisciplinary approach to Turkey's attitude towards the Turkic republics in the 1990s.

Apart from the introduction and conclusion notes, this thesis has four chapters each of them with a specific context to crystallize the big picture. In the second chapter, a theoretical basis for our thesis will be constructed. In doing this, a legitimacy ground will be sought from the international relations theories to this study. In this theoretical chapter, the general principles of the Realist and the neo-Realist paradigms which have been the dominant approaches to the study of international politics and foreign policy analysis will be challenged for over its emphasis on the unitary and rationalistic role of the state in international politics. Instead of this, it will be claimed that the aim of profit maximization and national security as well as ideational factors such as national identity, culture or perceptions can play roles in a state's foreign policy. At the end of the chapter, the theoretical claims illustrated in this chapter about the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics in the 1990s will be adopted briefly.

The third chapter illustrates the conjunctural background that increased the volume of enthusiasm in the public opinion and the eagerness of the Turkish state elite in terms of cooperating with the Turkic republics. In this regard, with the transformation of Turkish nationalism from a more Turco-Islamist line to a more Turkist ideology in the 1980s and 1990s will be discussed. The change process in Turkey both in political and economic life and its impacts on the foreign policy making style will also be discussed. In this period, the proponents of nationalism in Turkey gained variety and the traditional Turkish foreign policy making process began to be questioned even at the highest level. Lastly, a comparative analysis of

these two processes will be made in order to argue whether they had increased the enthusiastic atmosphere at the beginning of the 1990s or not.

The fourth chapter constitutes the main body of the thesis. In this chapter, Turkey's perception of the Turkic world will be examined. In doing this, an analytical distinction between the different periods of this process will be. The first period will be called as the euphoria period, which illustrates the most enthusiastic atmosphere towards the "new geography" Turkey explored. In order to understand this enthusiasm, its motives will also be given. The other periods will deal with the realization of limits as a transition period passing with significant disappointments and the routinization of the relations as a normalization process. The euphoria period, as mentioned above, will be the main axis of this period and the following periods will be presented as an outcome of the first period. These periods deal not only with the course of Turkish foreign policy's route in the region, it also illustrates the enthusiasm, perceptions and the disappointments of Turkish nationalism and their response to the state elite in this process.

The fourth chapter deals with the course of perceptions whereas the fifth chapter gives an epilogue of what has happened in terms of *realpolitik*. This chapter will be used to clarify the lack of ground of the initial optimism among the Turkish state elite and the Turkish nationalists. In doing this, the developments in political, economic and cultural relations will be categorized in order to illustrate which factors really dominated the relations contrary to the initial expectations about the possible determining role of ethnic, cultural and historical ties.

To sum up, this thesis examines the initial response of Turkey with different elements of the public opinion towards the emergence of the Turkic republics and the relations with them during the 1990s as a whole. By keeping in mind that this issue

has been discussed in different contexts previously, new approaches to this phenomenon will be introduced. First, it will be stressed that the conditions of the time played a prominent role in the emergence of the initial euphoric atmosphere rather than the existence of a structural Pan-Turkist tendency in the public opinion. In other words, Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy perspective had been damaged due to events such as the end of the Cold War or regional conflicts effecting Turkish and Muslim communities around Turkey. Second, and related to the first claim, it will be proposed that there is mutual interaction between the domestic politics and the foreign policy and an emphasis will be put on the relationship between national identity and foreign policy formation. Third, stemming from the fact that Turkey's initial optimism resulted in a huge disappointment, this phenomenon, in some sense, was due to the political, cultural and economic realities of the Turkic republics along with Turkey's unsatisfactory potential to take the leadership in the region.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NATIONAL IDENTITY- FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP REVISITED

Defining a concrete theoretical framework for foreign policy decision-making processes has been one of the most controversial discussions in the discipline of international relations. With the increasing impact of globalization and with the new world order that has emerged since the end of the cold war, various new concepts have been coined in studies on foreign policy which make such efforts much more complicated. As Rosenau argues, "... Foreign policy is a bridging discipline. (...) It takes as its focus of study the bridges that whole systems called states build to link themselves and their subsystems to the even more encompassing international systems which they are a part."⁹ This chapter discusses the methodological and conceptual background of foreign policy making-processes in order to observe the existence of some non-tangible factors such as identity and perceptions which both shape and are shaped by the foreign policy-making processes.

In this regard, this chapter argues that the concerns of national security and profit maximization as well as the notion of identity, national identity and interactions play certain roles while states construct their foreign policy perspectives. Finally, the idea of constructivist international relations theory, which accepts the existence of identity in international relations but sees the notion of identity (i.e., national, religious or cultural identity) as a constant monolithic entity will be examined. Rather it is claimed that once a national identity in a country is constructed, it may show a fragmented character and this may lead to contestations over identity constitution and

⁹ James Rosenau, "Introduction: New Directions and Recurrent Questions in the Comparative Study of Foreign Policy," in *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, ed. Charles F. Hermann, Charles W., Kegley Jr and James N. Rosenau (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 5- 6.

reproduction which can find reflections in the foreign policy making processes in many cases.

In the final part of this chapter, the theoretical data which will be obtained from this chapter will be sought to use to understand the motives behind the Turkish foreign policy behavior towards the emergence of the Turkic republics in the post-cold war period.

Before beginning the discussion, it will be useful to define what foreign policy is and what it is for. In the broadest sense, foreign policy can be conceptualized as a state's wholesale behaviors and policies towards the other states in the international system by using their authorized institutions and representatives.¹⁰ This may seem a conservative conceptualization but given the fact that states are still the primary actors in the foreign policy-making processes along with the reality of losing their, dominance, such a conceptualization can still be assessed as valid. Furthermore, the role of the state in the foreign policy-making processes is generally beyond the scope of this thesis. This is because we are not searching for the answer of the question "Who determines the foreign policy?" but are investigating the tangible and intangible elements which may become influential in a state's foreign policy.

In the international relations discipline, foreign policy differs from international politics with its concentration on the behavior of a state rather than the dynamics of the international system.¹¹ In terms of political science, from a realist and Neo-realist point of view, foreign policy differs from domestic politics due to its concentration on issues of high politics such as national security issues and the basic values of a

¹⁰ M. Fatih Tayfur, "Dış Politika," in *Devlet ve Ötesi: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar*, ed. Atilla Eralp (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), p. 73.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

state.¹² From this point of view, foreign policy can be assessed as a field independent from the issues and quarrels of domestic politics. In terms of international relations theory, the above-said positioning seems suitable, but the idea that foreign policy is a field which is independent from domestic political concerns is a quite questionable projection which has been subject to some studies.

Kenneth Waltz makes a division between explanations of international relations as the “systemic (international level) explanations and domestic explanations.”¹³ Domestic explanations, for Moravcsik, “look to the society, culture, and political institutions of individual nation-states; and individual-level explanations look to the personal or psychological characteristics of individual statesmen.”¹⁴ According to this view, “state behavior does not respond to the international system; it constitutes it. Faced with common challenges, states may react very differently.”¹⁵ According to the domestic explanations, factors such as state structure, the ideology of a regime, opposition movements and regime change, and internal stability can be major concerns in foreign policy making processes.¹⁶

Among these explanations, two of them come forward for the purpose of this study. Katzenstein argues that the foreign policy of a state is the product of the political and economic structure.¹⁷ Foreign economic policy can be determined by a

¹² Ibid., p. 75.

¹³ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Berkeley: UCLA Press, 1979) , pp. 19 – 78.

¹⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, “Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining,” in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam (Berkeley: UCLA Press, 1993), p. 5.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁶ Hakan Tarkan Kösebalaban, “Contested National Identity and Foreign Policy: The Case of Japan and Turkey” (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 2007), pp. 20 – 21.

coalition between the state and the private sector.¹⁸ Moreover, adds Katzenstein, “...change in foreign economic policy partly results from conflict in domestic politics.”¹⁹ The second one is Snyder’s “Myths of Empire” thesis. According to this view, pro-imperial views in domestic politics may lead to a different understanding in foreign policy.²⁰

After clarifying the context of foreign policy analysis, it will be useful to illustrate its historical evolution. Such an effort will reveal the tremendous widening of the context of the foreign policy analysis parallel to the developments in world politics. Furthermore, such an effort will provide satisfactory evidence that a comprehensive analysis can’t be made without a traditional understanding of foreign policy understanding and will crystallize the need into inject new concepts to the discipline. It will allow us to understand what we are opposing in order to reach “our” truth.

Realist International Relations Theory and the Traditional Foreign Policy Approach

Realist paradigm dominated the international relations discipline for more than a half century. Among numerous factors, its power stems mainly due to its influence among the American international relations scholars²¹ and its flexibility.²² Due to

¹⁷ Peter Katzenstein, “Domestic Structures and Strategies of Foreign Economic Policy,” *International Organization* 31, no. 4 (1977), p. 879.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 917.

²⁰ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (New York: Ithaca, 1991), pp. 6 – 9.

²¹ For such a view, see Stanley Hoffman, “An American Social Science: International Relations”, *Daedalus* 106, no.3 (Spring 1977), pp. 41 – 60.

²² For Richard Ashley, Realism gains its strength from its variety what he categorizes as technical and practical Realism. See Richard Ashley, “Political Realism and Human Interests,” *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no.2 (June 1981), pp. 211 – 226.

these reasons, the premises of realist International relations theory also dominated the foreign policy studies for decades.

Realist international relations theory basically argues that international politics are ruled by objective laws which lie in human nature and the international system is an anarchy where states are unitary and rational actors who seek survival, security and profit maximization and act free from any moral consideration.²³ These basic projections of Realist International relations theory gave the direction to the Traditional Foreign Policy Approach.

According to the Traditionalist approach, states are the only actors in the foreign policy-making processes.²⁴ The main motive of a state is to gain the maximum profit relying on its power. Thus, states should follow a rational foreign policy trend proportionally to their power. Power is the main incentive and foreign policy-making processes are limited to the power struggles among the states.²⁵ in such a circumstance, the context of foreign policy is limited only to the issues of military and security issues. Low politics should be behind the scope of foreign policy analysis.

Realist international relations theory gained prominence during the most intense years of the cold war Period. Thus, its overemphasis on the security and survival issues in the foreign policy analysis may seem tolerable. However, the following years revealed that a comprehensive and consistent foreign policy analysis can not be made by excluding all other factors except security issues. The criticisms of the simplistic foreign policy perspective of the Traditionalist Approach gave way to the

²³ Tayyar Arı, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri, Çatışma, Hegemonya, İşbirliği* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2006), pp. 182 -187.

²⁴ Steve Smith, "Theories of Foreign Policy: A Historical Overview," *Review of International Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986), p. 15.

²⁵ See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1960), pp. 1 – 615.

emergence of a new foreign policy analysis which led to the enrichment of the discipline.

Behaviorist School and the Decision Making Approach

The first criticism of the predominance of the Realist paradigm in the international relations discipline came from the Behavioral School, which also had a reflection on the studies of foreign policy analysis. First and foremost, it must be noted that Behaviorism did not criticize Traditional International relations theories over their doctrine.²⁶ The power of Behaviorism lay behind its methodological innovation.

The contribution of the Behaviorist approach to the study of foreign policy analysis was the Decision Making Approach to Foreign policy Analysis. According to this approach, foreign policy was limited to a series of decisions made by the foreign policy makers. The rationality of state as an actor in the international system protects its prominence in the Decision Making Approach, as was the case in the Traditionalist Paradigm.²⁷ Even though the Behaviorist School and the Foreign Policy Making Approach, as the instruments of this school, attach a similar significance to the state in the international system, it challenges the Realist Paradigm and the Traditionalist school by seeing the state as an abstract entity.²⁸ The revolution of the Decision Making Approach lies there. By stressing the determining role of decision making in the foreign policy making processes, the Decision Making

²⁶ Oktay F. Tanrısever, "Yöntem Sorunu: Gelenekselcilik-Davranışsalcılık Tartışması," in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Yaklaşımlar*, ed. Atilla Eralp (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 116.

²⁷ Tayfur, p. 84.

²⁸ Ibid.

Approach “humanized” the studies of foreign policy. In this context, Decision Making Approaches have made valuable contributions to the Theories of international relations for being some of the first attempts to broaden the limits of the discipline.

The Decision Making Approach made foreign policy analysis at different levels. On each of these divergent levels, the foreign policy analysis discipline gained new perspectives. These perspectives taught the discipline that the perceptions of a decision maker may influence the foreign policy of a country or the foreign policy decision making process is the sum of the negotiations between the related institutions and their representatives. To sum up, the Behaviorist School in the international relations discipline and the Decision Making Approach to Foreign policy Analysis broadened the scope of the studies on the related issues. Moreover, the developments in world politics also contributed to the applicability of these theories in the studies on foreign policy.²⁹

Questioning Rationality: New Concepts in International Relations Theory

Through the 1970s the Traditional international relations paradigms began to be questioned more openly thanks to the developments of the time. The national security-based and pure rationalistic understanding of Traditional International Relations School first was questioned over international economic issues. The concept of Complex Mutual Interdependence occurred in this conjuncture.³⁰

²⁹ For example, even though Greece and Turkey were partners under the NATO alliance, the Greek leader of the time, Andreas Papandreu, pursued aggressive policies towards Turkey due to his individual political preferences during the cold war.

According to this view, non-state actors also must be evaluated as an actor in the international relations along with the sovereign states.³¹ However, it must be noted that this did not challenge the basic premises of the Traditionalist School, which sees state as the unitary actor in the foreign policy-making process.³²

By the end of the 1970s, studies that comprehensively question the rationalistic perspective of the Traditionalist School emerged. The first challenge came from a Neo-Realist oriented scholar, Kenneth Waltz. Contrary to the liberal Complex Mutual Interdependence concept, Waltz did not ignore the role of the state in the foreign policy decision making processes. Waltz's point was to focus more on the whole international system and its structure than the states as separate and unitary actors.³³ Waltz did not directly criticize the view that states were rational actors to obtain maximum profit in line with their national interest directly. He stressed that the international system determines the foreign policy behavior of a state.³⁴ His theory challenged the state-centric orientation of the Traditionalist School over stressing the significance of the structure in international system, but his theory did not make a contribution to bringing the non-material factors onto the agenda of discipline of international relations and, in specific, to the studies on foreign-policy analysis.

Non-material factors such as ethics, identity or perceptions entered into the studies of international relations theory and foreign policy analysis in the 1980s. The involvement of Normative Theory and Social Constructivism in the international

³⁰ See Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye Jr., "Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction" *International Organization* 25, no. 3 (1971), pp. 329 -349.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 330.

³² Tayfur, p. 99.

³³ Waltz, "Theory of International Politics...", p. 39.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

relations discipline played a significant role. These theories gained momentum in the second half of the decade and especially the developments after the end of the cold war served the proponents of these theories to settle their claims on a more concrete ground.

Normative Theory in international relations was born as a response to the absolute determinism and monism of the Realist Paradigm.³⁵ The principle of profit maximization was rejected by normativism and instead of this as Bakan notes, “...normative theory presupposes that actors in the practice of international relations do have alternatives and real choices, and can change their conducts.”³⁶ For Normative international relations theory, international relations rely on two normative concepts: peace and war.³⁷ The claim that the sovereignty gives a state the right to behave without any moral consideration within its borders while its foreign-policy making process is something questionable. From this aspect, Normative international relations theory holds a unique position in the discipline by introducing moral standards to the study of international relations. With the help of the developments of the time, Normative international relations theory made comprehensive solutions to a wide range of issues discussed in international relations theory such as just war, international justice or human rights.

From the standpoint of this study, it can be said that Normative international relations theory does not have so much to say on the national identity-foreign policy relationship. However, it must be noted that Normativism made a somewhat

³⁵ For A Comprehensive normative theory in international relations, see Mervyn Frost, *Towards a Normative International Relations Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 1 -252.

³⁶ Zerrin Ayşe Bakan, “Normative Theory: Frost’s Constitutive Approach,” *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi* 63, no.1 (Winter 2008), p. 5.

³⁷ İhsan Dağı, Normatif Yaklaşımlar: Adalet, Eşitlik, İnsan Hakları, in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik .Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Yaklaşımlar*, ed. Atilla Eralp (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 187.

shocking impact on the study of international relations and foreign policy by challenging the main premises of the Traditionalist paradigm.

Even though the Realist paradigm is still important dominance in the discipline of international relations, thanks to the contribution of Normative international relations theory, it has been revealed that states do not act only relying on the principles of rational choice and profit maximization. As Bakan argues "...normative theory addresses the ethical nature of the relations within the state-centric global practice in a wide context of liberty, distributive justice, sovereignty, violence, just war, human rights and so on."³⁸ This phenomena challenged the traditional view from various aspects and increased the width of foreign policy analysis so that, new concepts such identity, difference or perceptions found a legitimate ground in the IR discipline and studies on foreign policy.

The second challenge to the Traditionalist perspectives of International relations theory and Foreign policy Analysis came with the introduction of Social Constructivism to the study of international relations. For Jackson and Sorensen,

Constructivists ... argue that the most important aspect of international relations is social, not material. Furthermore, they argue that this social reality is not objective, or external, to the observer of international affairs... Consequently, the study of international relations must focus on the ideas and beliefs that inform the actors on the international scene as well as the shared understandings between them.³⁹

Social Constructivism served the discipline of international relations in two ways. First, its theoretical content was a bridge between the positivist and post-positivist

³⁸ Bakan, p. 5.

³⁹ Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 162.

international relations theories.⁴⁰ Secondly, as Kösebalaban argues, “the constructivist approach to international relations provides a theoretical framework to analyze ideational variables in foreign policy.”⁴¹ Beyond any doubt, it was a revolutionary attempt in challenging the rooted idea in international relations theory that sees states as rational entities to provide profit maximization. By introducing the notions of culture, identity or non-material perceptions of threat, constructivism, put forward the idea that history is not external to human affairs, but immanent to them.⁴²

For constructivists, identity is a major determinant of interest formation. Contrary to the main premises of classical Realism, the interest of a state does not stem from the codes of universal law that is based on the characteristics of human nature.⁴³ Instead of this, identity, in most cases, determines the interest of a state. Identity, culture, and thus the history of a state, become influential in the state’s decision on what is good or what is evil for herself. For constructivists, on the other hand, identity or culture and interests stemming from these notions are not given values. As Wendt argues, interest is the product of inter-subjective processes of meaning creation.⁴⁴ Thus, the interaction processes between states gains prominence in the constructivist approach. There is a mutual relationship between the notions of identity and interaction.⁴⁵ The content of an identity defined and chosen by a state

⁴⁰ Wendt proclaims that he has such an aim of bridging the two schools. See Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 394.

⁴¹ Kösebalaban, p. 47.

⁴² Jackson and Sorensen, p. 164.

⁴³ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” pp. 396 - 403.

⁴⁴ Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p.24.

heavily influences its choices in interactions, while the outcomes of the interactions can play a determining role in the identity definitions of a state.⁴⁶ This may affect the foreign policy behavior of a state directly in many cases.⁴⁷

The above-said claim of the constructivist approach also carries an epistemological discussion into the field of international relations theory and foreign policy analysis. The relationship between the definition of the self-hood and the interaction with the other, in this regard, determines the basis of the identity – interaction discussion and its impact on the formation of interests in foreign policy-making processes.⁴⁸

After discussing the central role of identity in the constructivist approach to international identity, how it works in determining the foreign policy behavior of a state in the international system can be clarified. First, there is a need to remember that identity construction is an inseparable process from the dynamics of domestic politics. Thus, constructivism is also a challenge to the Traditional international relations theories in terms of their clear cut diversion of the fields of foreign policy and domestic politics. As Bozdağlıoğlu writes, “once an identity is constructed, states institutionalize that identity at both domestic and international level.”⁴⁹ in domestic politics, myths and institutions are used for this purpose. In foreign policy,

⁴⁵ Jeffrey T. Checkel, “The Constructivist Turn in IR Theory,” *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (Spring 1998), p. 326.

⁴⁶ Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 29.

⁴⁷ For example, “During the reign of the Shah in Iran, the state was defined in secular and western terms. However, the Islamic revolution in 1979 changed the character of the Iranian state and Islam became the dominant element in the identity of the state. This transformation, in turn, changed the course of Iranian foreign policy. While before the revolution Iran was one of the most important allies of the West in the region, the Islamic government declared that the most important enemies of Islam and Iran are the West and Western values.” *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

“states seek to enact their identities in interstate normative structures, including regimes and security communities.”⁵⁰

The above-said function of identity formation in foreign policy-making processes brings another problematic. In the previous parts of this chapter, the relationship between identity and interactions and its mutual characteristic were discussed. Now, the above-said clarification raises questions about the possible relationship between a defined identity of a state and its perception of interests. At this point, how that makes an impact on the identity formation should be asked. In this case, it is again possible to say that there is a mutual relationship. In this point, it will be suitable to refer to Wendt again. Does the identity of a state dictate its perception of interest or does the interests of a state? Wendt argues that “people act toward objects on the basis of the meanings that objects have for them,” and thus “states act differently toward enemies than they do friends.”⁵¹ This reference clarifies that the constructivist approach to foreign policy attaches significance to the role of the identity of a state in determining its notion of interests.

The constructivist approach to international relations made a quite valuable contribution to the studies on foreign policy analysis. It provided a theoretical legitimacy for people who argued that apart from rational concerns, other non-material factors could play a role in a foreign policy-making process of a state. In this regard, this approach holds a respective and, in fact, a unique position for the discipline of international relations theory and also for this study. Furthermore, this approach to international relations has been criticized for some reasons. First of all, it

⁵⁰ NATO seems to suit this case since, as Risse-Kappen argues, “NATO both expressed the common identity of liberal democracies and embryonic North Atlantic security community,” Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein. “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 62.

⁵¹ Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It...,” pp. 396 – 397.

does not make a criticism of the rationalist view that sees states as unitary actors in the international system. In this aspect, constructivism does not present a departure from neo-realism and Wendt, a prominent constructivist scholar, criticizes neo-realism for not being concentrated on the international system satisfactorily.⁵² Second, and mostly due to the first reason, the constructivist approach, at least structural (or conventional) constructivists,⁵³ sees the notion of identity as a monolithic aspect that do not change under any circumstances. The possibility of the reproduction and transformation of the state identity is in most cases beyond discussion for the constructivist approach. However, this view is not accepted as a whole by all the constructivist scholars. Bozdağlıoğlu rejects this static perspective of identity and challenges the view of what he calls as “structural constructivism.”⁵⁴ Instead of this, he attempts to crystallize the role of interactions in identity formation at both the domestic and international levels.⁵⁵ This, also in my view, would be a better attempt in clarifying the role of national identity in the Turkish foreign policy-making processes.

It was previously said in this chapter that the 1980s is a decade accepted as a watershed in international relations theory and foreign policy analysis. Along with the introduction of the above-said constructivist approach, the main critical theory was adapted to studies on international relations in the mid-1980s and increased its

⁵² Kösebalaban, p. 51.

⁵³ There is a distinction between structural (conventional) constructivism and critical constructivism. “The buzzwords for conventional constructivism are norms and identity, for critical constructivism, power and discourse. Conventional constructivism examines the role of norms and identity in shaping international political outcomes... The critical constructivists focus “on how threat perceptions, the object of security, are socially constructed.” Nilüfer Karacasulu and Elif Uzgören, “Examining Social Constructivist Studies to Security Studies,” *Perceptions* 12 (Summer-Autumn 2007), pp. 30 -32.

⁵⁴ Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

influence on the discipline during the 1990s mainly due to the conditions of the then world politics.⁵⁶ In this part of this chapter, the contribution of critical International relations theories to the field of foreign policy analysis will be discussed.

Robert Keohane, a well-known neo-liberal scholar, makes a conceptualization as “Rationalistic” and “Reflectivist” while examining the approaches to the international institutions.⁵⁷ This classification made by Keohane is seen as an attempt to ignore the increasing significance of Critical international relations theories⁵⁸ but except this intention, it can be claimed that it is a functional assessment in understanding the position of critical international relations theories towards the Traditionalist approaches. This is because critical international relations theories are based on questioning the central tenets of rationalist perspectives on international relations. Keyman examines the perspectives of critical international relations theories in four categories: The relationship between modernity and international relations, the recognition of the relationship between power and knowledge, the creation of critical knowledge, and finally the perspective that sees the identity/difference relationship as the basis of international relations theory.⁵⁹ Each of these points constitutes the basis of different Critical international relations theories but also lead differentiation between these approaches. The premises that are specific to each of these approaches are beyond the scope of this study but among

⁵⁶ For a detailed study on Critical International relations theories, see Fuat Keyman, *Küreselleşme, Devlet, Kimlik/Farklılık: Uluslararası İlişkiler Kuramını Yeniden Düşünmek* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2000), pp. 1-292.

⁵⁷ See Robert Keohane, “International Institutions: Two Approaches,” *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1988), pp. 386 – 393.

⁵⁸ Fuat Keyman, “Eleştirel Düşünce: İletişim, Hegemonya, Kimlik/Fark,” in *Devlet, Sistem ve Kimlik: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Yaklaşımlar*, ed. Atila Eralp (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 227.

⁵⁹ Keyman, pp. 229 – 230.

them the identity/difference relationship and the post-modern international relations discourse is worth assessing in detail for the purpose of this study.

The post-modernist approach to international relations is of great significance for various reasons. First, it sees international relations theory as an inclusive and exclusive practice which means that modern international relations theory functions in excluding and othering different identities.⁶⁰ The foreign policy of a state plays a certain role in this process over the identity formation process because once the “foreign” is constructed, it also will determine what domestic is and thus, foreign policy is a specific sort of boundary-producing political performance.⁶¹ In this regard, foreign policy is affected not only by the constructed identity of a state, it also affect the identity formation process with the contribution of international interactions. From this aspect, post-modern discourse may seem to share the view of social constructivism that attaches significance to the role of identity formation on foreign policy-making processes. However, post-modern international relations discourse is different from social constructivism on the basis of state problematic. Contrary to the costructivist approach,⁶² post-modern discourse problematizes the position of state in the international system. The post-modern discourse problematize the notion of state in the Realist and Neo-realist paradigms over its state-centric

⁶⁰ Keyman, p. 250.

⁶¹ Richard Ashley, “Foreign Policy as Political Performance,” *International Studies Notes* 13, no. 1 (1987), p. 51.

⁶² Wendt, as a prominent constructivist scholar, argues that “I take a state-centric approach for two reasons. First, notwithstanding the growing importance of nonstate actors in world politics, states remain jealous of their sovereignty and so may resist- collective identification more than other actors, which poses a harder case for theory. Second, I argue that collective identification is an important condition for the emergence of "inter-national states." See Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 2 (1994), p. 385.

approach and the view that sees states as a unitary and independent entity free from any moral considerations.⁶³

For Post-modernists, the Realist paradigm and the Traditionalist Approaches in general set the foreign policy behavior of a state in a position in which factors of domestic politics or notions of ethics, identity or perceptions do not have any influence.⁶⁴ The post-modernist approach challenges these views by introducing a somewhat socio-centric perspective and by inter-linking the above-said “state problematic” with the modernity phenomena.⁶⁵

The post-modern approach to international relations, in principle, shows similarities with other perspectives establishing the Critical Theories in international relations theory, such as the Habermasian critical theory associated with Communicative Rationality or the Gramscian International relations theory settled on the “hegemony” discourse⁶⁶ Post-modernist approach to international relations sets the notion of modernity in international relations as an othering process and to consolidate and justify the existing conditions of world politics.⁶⁷ To sum up, the post- modern approach to international relations deconstructs the view that limits the field of international relations theory and foreign policy analysis to state actions and the efforts that try to analyze these actions just by a rationalistic point of view without any regard to domestic factors or any other considerations based on ethics, identity or perceptions.

⁶³ Keyman, Küreselleşme, Devlet, Kimlik/Farklılık, p. 101.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 170 – 171.

The post-modern approach to international relations was held by scholars such as Richard Ashley,⁶⁸ M. Shapiro, Robert Walker, James Der Derian, Jim George, William Bloom, William Connolly and David Campbell. These scholars and numerous other post-modernist authors on international relations theory met on some common points on the characteristics of the international system. However, there was considerable variation between these scholars.⁶⁹ However, by being loyal to the basic premises of the post modernist approach, these scholars made their own specific contributions to them. Among these scholars, the statements of Der Derian, Campbell and Bloom deserve special attention for the theoretical claim of this thesis.

In his book, *On Diplomacy*, Der Derian introduces the notion of genealogical textuality to the study of international relations.⁷⁰ In doing this, he aimed at analyzing the “genealogical analysis of the estrangement of the West,” which opens the way to understanding the relationship between the roots and transformations of diplomacy and ideological, legal and political practices.⁷¹ His theory reveals two significant outcomes. First, diplomacy does not have historical root and thus, there are different types of diplomacy occurring due to different significant historical, temporal and spatial determinants. In other words, diplomacy does not have a universal natural law valid for every state to be practiced on the basis interests and free from specific ideational, historical or cultural concerns of each separate state.

⁶⁸ Among these scholars Richard Ashley deserves a separate attention since he is the founding mind of the post-modernist approach to international relations theory. For example, see R. Ashley, “Poverty of Neo-Realism,” *International Organization* 38, no.1 (1988), pp. 225 – 286.

⁶⁹ For such a difference, see Connolly’s Criticism of Ashley, in Keyman, Devlet, Kimlik, Farklılık, p. 195.

⁷⁰ James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 1- 8.

⁷¹ Keyman, *Küreselleşme, Devlet, Kimlik/Farklılık*, pp. 176 – 177.

Secondly, Der Derian introduces the concept of “alienation” to the study of international relations by analyzing the historical course of diplomacy.⁷² He re-conceptualizes the alienation concept in international relations theory and claims that such a will lead to a better understanding of the identity problematic in international relations theory and of diplomacy that is mostly used as a tool to justify the Rationalist international relations discourse .⁷³ Thus, he concludes that diplomacy is not only influenced by identity politics but it also functions in establishing and reproducing the identity of a state.⁷⁴

K.J Holsti was the first scholar to focus on the relationship between the national role conceptions and the foreign policy making processes.⁷⁵ For Holsti, national role conception in foreign policy basically refers to “... policy makers’ own decisions of the general kind of decisions, rules, commitments and actions suitable to their state.”⁷⁶ Both the domestic politics and international environment are related to the national role prescriptions.⁷⁷

However, William Bloom’s study in 1990 was the first attempt to establish a direct link between the national identity and foreign policy after the Reflectivist approaches in international relations theory.⁷⁸ Bloom defined foreign policy as a tool for nation-

⁷² Der Derian, *On Diplomacy*, pp. 9 - 29.

⁷³ After introducing the main conceptualizations of “Alienation” from St. Augustine to Marx, Der Derian gives his understanding of alienation. This is “to denote the relinquishment of powers...and the resulting condition of the separation, respectively.” *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁷⁵ K.J Holsti, “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy,” *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September 1970), pp. 233 – 309.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁷⁸ William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1 -194.

building.⁷⁹ According to this view, nation-building always proceeds as an uncompleted process and in such a conjuncture, foreign policy functions well in creating a common conscious among the fragmented parts of a nation and thus serves the formation of a nation over the perceptions of threats possibly coming from outside.⁸⁰ Bloom clarifies his statement of how foreign policy serves to consolidate the national identity by using the example of the Cold war between the U.S.A and the Soviet Union. For him, these superpowers, which were also suffering from domestic set-backs or conflicts, invested in the continuation of the cold war in order to mobilize nationalistic sentiments.⁸¹

Similar to Bloom's search for the relationship between national identity and foreign policy, David Campbell aimed at making a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between national identity and foreign policy over the case of U.S foreign policy.⁸² At first glance, Campbell argues that foreign policy is not independent from nation-building process and to the contrary, foreign policy is immanent to the nation-building process.⁸³ In his words, "it is not possible to understand international relations as the existence of atomized states that are fully fledged intensive entities in which identity is securely grounded prior to foreign relations."⁸⁴ In this regard, adds Campbell, "foreign policy shifts from a concern of relations between states which takes place across a-historical, frozen and pre-given boundaries, to a concern with

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 79.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 82.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁸² David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and American Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1998), pp. 1 -262.

⁸³ Keyman, p. 251.

⁸⁴ Campbell, p. 61.

the establishment of the boundaries that constitute, at one and the same time, the state and the international system.”⁸⁵ Such kind of a “construction of the foreign is made possible by practices that also constitute the domestic.”⁸⁶ Thus, foreign policy is not only a process which is pursued on the basis of rationality and which is external to social ⁸⁷relations, but also a social practice that establishes the identity of a state.⁸⁸

Campbell makes his analysis by analyzing the role of “national security” in U.S foreign policy and nation-building processes. Even though Der Derian and Campbell used different assets in examining the national identity foreign policy relationship, their studies reveal similar conclusions. In both of these analysis, the scholars use their diplomacy (for Der Derian) and security (for Campbell) discourses to clarify that foreign policies are not pursued over single a single national identity conception and thus to show that inclusion/exclusion practices and othering practices constitute a pivotal position in understanding the state and international relations.⁸⁹ This genealogical analysis presents an analysis of international relations which focuses on the identity problematic.

To sum up, the dominance of the Realist paradigm and its premises about the state have been criticized from various aspects in the last three decades.⁹⁰ The emergence of these new perspectives brought new issues of discussion onto the agenda of

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.62.

⁸⁷ Der Derian, pp. 208 -209. Campbell, p. 69.

⁸⁸ Keyman, p.180.

⁸⁹ This fact can be summarized, as said above, “Once you create who/what foreign is, you also create the domestic.” Keyman, *Küreselleşme, Devlet, Kimlik/Farklılık* , p. 181.

⁹⁰ These challenges were the Social Constructivist Approach and the Reflectivist International relations theories.

international relations theory and Foreign policy analysis. The identity problematic, or specifically the role of national identity on foreign policy making processes, began to be discussed in international relations theory in such a conjuncture.

From the standpoint of this thesis, the period in which these studies emerged also deserves attention. With the exception of Holsti's study published in 1970, the studies which prioritize the identity problematic in international relations theory and foreign policy analysis were published mostly after the mid-1980s. This is mostly because the foreign policy behaviors of the states in this period showed completely different character to the Traditionalist approaches in international relations theory. The case which examined here also emerged in this period and the premises of post-modernist approach to international relations is quite likely to answer the questions that will be asked while trying to understanding Turkey's foreign policy behavior towards the emergence of the Turkic republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the challenges to the general principles of the Realist paradigm that sees states as unitary and rational actors in the international system seeking to maximize their profit were joined. In doing this, the initial dominance and presently still functional position of the Traditionalist approaches to foreign policy and international relations were discussed. In the next step, we attempted to illustrate the first serious challenges to the dominance of the Realist Paradigm were illustrated. At this point, it was concluded that constructivist approach to international relations made a precious contribution to the field of foreign policy analysis by stating that notions such as norms, identity and perceptions could play certain roles in a state's foreign policy making process. These ideational and non-material factors are

constructed by social and domestic interactions. In this process, it is observable that there is a mutual interaction between the interactions of a state and its national identity conceptions and that this mutual interaction determines the interest perceptions of a state, contrary to premises of the Traditionalist paradigms, which claim that state behavior is determined by the universal laws already existing in human nature (i.e. Survival and Profit Maximization).⁹¹

After situating the contribution of the constructivist approach, the “structural constructivist” approach was criticized for its view that state identity is monolithic and a constant phenomenon. To the contrary, various national identity perceptions may attempt to play determining roles in a state’s foreign policy. Thus, it can be concluded that there can’t be one monolithic or stable national identity conception in a country, but there can be different national identity definitions which may contest in order to be influential in the foreign policy making processes.⁹² As a last point, if the national identity definitions owned by a state increases, it makes the state eager to play a more active role in its foreign policy.⁹³

The emergence of Critical international relations theories was another watershed in terms of understanding the national identity and foreign policy relationship. Among the Critical international relations theories, the post-modern approach to international relations revealed revolutionary assumptions on the relationship between foreign policy and national identity. The constructivist approach dealt with

⁹¹ This view was heavily influenced by the Hobbesian interpretation of politics. Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 13 -15.

⁹² Kösebalaban, pp. 30-31.

⁹³ Bülent Aras and Aylin Görener, “National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policy Orientatio: The Ideational Bases of Justice and Development Party’s Foreign Policy Activism in the Middle East,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (February 2010), p. 77.

the impact of identity and interactions in the foreign policy making.⁹⁴ However, the post-modernist approach went one step further revealing that foreign policy, in many cases, may be influenced not only by the national identity conceptions in a country, but also foreign policy may function in constructing and reproducing the national identity in a country.⁹⁵

This thesis agrees with the idea that introduces the notions of norms, identity and perceptions to the study of foreign policy analysis. On the other hand, rather than a singular notion of identity, the existence of different conceptions of contesting national identities which are products of mutual social interactions at the domestic and international levels are assumed. It is assumed also that not only national identity impacts foreign policy and that, in line with the post-modernist approach, foreign policy creates and reproduces different national identities in a state. However, in this point, we need to oppose the post-modernist international relations perspectives. It is an acceptable phenomenon that foreign policy, in many cases, serves for national identity formation foreign policy can not only be simplified to identity formation and reproduction. As Wilson and Donnan argue, states see themselves as precise and limited objective entities with the target of profit maximization.⁹⁶ States on the one hand are products of individuals and social interactions but on the other hand, they make foreign policy to protect their interests and survivals even though being socially constructed.⁹⁷ Even in Campbell's above-said radical study on the foreign policy analysis of the U.S.A includes such a perspective. In this sense, Campbell

⁹⁴ Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivism and Identity," in *Constructivism and International Relations*, ed. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 96.

⁹⁵ As was observed in the studies of Bloom (1990) and Campbell (1992).

⁹⁶ Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donan, *Border Identities, Nation and State at International Frontiers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 8.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

argues that “The claim is not that foreign policy constitutes state identity, rather it is that foreign policy is concerned with the reproduction of an unstable identity at the level of the state, and the containment of challenges to that identity.”⁹⁸

For Anthony D. Smith, national identity can't be reduced to only one element, it is a multidimensional phenomenon.⁹⁹ Thus, as Özkırmılı argues, this would cause different perceptions of the national identity in the same country.¹⁰⁰ These claims find direct reflection in the Turkish national identity case. As Taha Parla properly indicates, Turkish nationalism has two faces. On the one hand, there is the Kemalist nationalism relying on the principles of ethnic-cultural pluralism and defensive legal nationalism and on the other hand, there is a type of nationalism which searches for ethnic-cultural unity and the superiority of the Turkish nation.¹⁰¹ Parla adds that there is an obvious tension between these two types of nationalism.¹⁰² The emergence of the Turkic republics and the reaction shown to this phenomenon by different sides in Turkey completely just stepped into such a socio-political conjuncture. The debates over the relationship with the “Turkic world” were made by these contesting stereotypes of national identity.¹⁰³ Turkish nationalists owned the project of cooperating with the Turkic republics with considerable enthusiasm since the Turkic

⁹⁸ Campbell, p. 71.

⁹⁹ Umut Özkırmılı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları: Eleştirel Bir Bakış* (İstanbul: Doğu Batı, 2008), p. 119

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁰¹ Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1992), p. 183.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 185

¹⁰³ For a study, which discusses the contradictory character of Turkishness perception in official Turkish nationalism through Turkey’s activities in Central Asia after the Cold War, see Akın Öge, “Türkiye’de Resmi Milliyetçiliğin Türklük Kavrayışı: Dış Türkler Odaklı Faaliyet Gösteren Resmi Kuruluşların Bir İncelemesi,” *Toplum ve Bilim* 116, (2009), pp. 195-206.

world was an integral part of their national identity definition.¹⁰⁴ The Turkish state elite of the time, with their Kemalist type of pro-western national identity understanding, welcomed the event since its perception of identity was in a crisis due to the developments of the time.¹⁰⁵ These contesting the national identity perceptions led Turkey to pursue more active policies contrary to its traditional foreign policy understanding and also controversies both in the domestic politics and also among intellectuals. This thesis explores Turkey's initial reaction towards the Turkic republics and generally in the 1990s with the help of theoretical tools introduced in this chapter by keeping the specific points of the Turkish case in mind.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ For example, the Turks living beyond the borders of Turkey were a major concern for Turkish Nationalism. Ethnic kinship was instrumentalized by Turkish nationalism. For an assessment of the emphasis on the Outside Turks among Turkish nationalists, See İkbâl Ayer, "Türk Yurdu Dergisinin 1924- 1970 Yılları Arasında Çıkan Sayılarında Türkiye Dışındaki Türkler," (MA Thesis, Marmara University, 1995), pp. 1- 286.

¹⁰⁵ In this period, the cold war ended in 1991 and decreased Turkey's perceived strategic importance. On the other hand, Turkey's full membership application to the EEC was rejected in 1991. Thus, it was such a conjuncture that Turkey was in search of new roles to play in the world politics in order to remind its significance for the Western world.

¹⁰⁶ For example, the predominant role of national security in Campbell's study can be seen as equal to the role of common historical roots with the Turkic world in the Turkish case.

CHAPTER 3

CHANGE IN NATIONALISM, CHANGE IN FOREIGN POLICY: A GLANCE AT TURKEY IN THE 1990S

A Brief Historical Overview

There is a controversial statement which is claimed to belong to M. Kemal Atatürk. According to this claim, in one of his speeches, stated that,

Today, Soviet Union is our friend and ally. We need this friendship. However, we can't know what is going to happen tomorrow. The Soviet Union, just like the Ottoman Empire and the Austria-Hungarian Empire, can be dismembered and the nations that she holds know can disappear. The world can have a new balance. In such a case, Turkish has to know what to do. Under the Soviet rule, we have our brothers with a same language, same faith and same origin. We must be ready to protect them... We must not wait for them to approach us, we must approach them.¹⁰⁷

There are various views which claim the validity of this statement.¹⁰⁸ However, there are also views that such a statement was not made by Atatürk.¹⁰⁹ It is difficult to believe that Atatürk made such a statement at a date that the relations with the Soviet Union were of great significance for Turkey.¹¹⁰ The existence of this

¹⁰⁷ İsmet Bozdağ, *Atatürk'ün Sofrası* (Istanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1975), p. 138. "Bugün Sovyetler Birliği dostumuzdur müttefikimizdir. Bu dostluğa ihtiyacımız vardır. Fakat yarın ne olacağını kimse bugünden kestiremez. Tıpkı Osmanlı gibi, tıpkı Avusturya-Macaristan gibi parçalanabilir, ufalabilir. Bugün elinde sınımsız tuttuğu milletler avuçlarından kaçabilirler. Dünya yeni bir dengeye ulaşabilir. İşte Türkiye ne yapacağını bilmelidir...Sovyet idaresinde dili bir, inancı bir, özü bir kardeşlerimiz, onlara sahip çıkmaya hazır olmalıyız. Onları korumaya hazır olmalıyız. Onların bize yaklaşmasını bekleyemeyiz. Bizim onlara yaklaşmamız gerekli."

¹⁰⁸ According to M. Esat Bozkurt, the Minister of Justice during the republican period, Atatürk also stated that "I must say that, first of all, I am a Turkish nationalist... I believe that the Turkic Union will be realized one day. Even if I do not see that, I will close my eyes with this dream." Mehmet Saray, *Atatürk ve Türk Dünyası: Türkiye ve Türkiye Haricinde Yaşayan Türkler* (İstanbul: Acar Yayınları, 1988), p. 11. For the other authors who believe in the validity of this statement, see Utku Yapıcı, *Küresel Süreç ve Türk Dış Politikasında Yeni Açılımlar: Orta Asya ve Kafkasya* (Istanbul: Otopsi Yayınları, 2004), p. 202. Anıl Çeçen, *Atatürk ve Avrasya* (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2003), p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ For a view who oppose that Atatürk did not make such a statement, see Erel Tellal, "Türk Dış Politikasında Avrasya Seçeneği," in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası(1989-2006)* ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), p. 14.

¹¹⁰ This statement is claimed to have been made in 1933. At this date, Turco-Soviet Treaty, which was signed in 1924, was still valid under the conditions of the time, the friendship of the Soviet

statement is, in most cases, used to legitimize the demands of pursuing a more active policy towards “Outside Turks” over Atatürk. It is beyond the scope of this study to search for the validity of this statement. However, by giving brief information about the behavior of Turkish foreign policy in the case of “Outside Turks” and of “Active Policy” initiatives, we can make a sense of about the validity of this statement.

Lausanne Treaty, which was signed in July 1923, was the founding accord of modern Turkish Republic. After this treaty, Turkish foreign policy was based on two main principles. First principle was integration with the international institutions. Second principle was the preservation of the post-war regulations and avoiding any kind of irredentist act offensive attitude in the realm of foreign policy.

Between 1923 and 1980, with some deviations, Turkish foreign policy acted in parallel with the two above said principles. In the case of integration with the international institutions, Turkish foreign policy can be separated into two periods: Before European integration process and after European integration process. In the former period, which was basically between 1923 and 1959, Turkey eagerly attempted to be a part of international institutions which were pioneered by western states.¹¹¹ In the latter period, which was from 1959 to present, the main target of Turkish foreign policy was integrating Turkey to Europe.¹¹² In these two periods,

Union was of vital importance for Turkey. Thus it is difficult to believe that such a statement, which would probably disturb the Soviet Union, would be made by Atatürk. On the other hand, this statement does not take place in the official publishing that collected the speeches of Atatürk. See Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989).

¹¹¹ Between 1923 and 1959, Turkey attempted to be a member of all the prominent international institutions. In the final analysis, this policy resulted successfully. The organizations that Turkey was accepted in this period are as follows. League of Nations (1932), United Nations(1945), European Council (1949), North Atlantic Treaty Organization(1952).

¹¹² “Turkey chose to begin close cooperation with the fledging EEC in 1959. Turkey’s relations with the EU started on the basis of a partnership regime established by the Ankara Agreement which was signed with the European Community on 12 September 1963. The Agreement entered into force on 1 December 1964. The Ankara Agreement implied a gradual process for

Turkish foreign policy was managed by same logic: integrating Turkey to the international norms and institutions and in doing this, emphasizing the western character of the national identity of the Turkish Republic.

The second pillar was the preservation of the status quo in world politics and avoiding any kind of international conflicts. This policy was symbolized with the phrase of Atatürk, “Peace at home peace in the world.” Thus, the issue of Outside Turks did not become a foreign policy concern for Turkey with one exception.¹¹³ Also the territories such the ex-Ottoman territories or in other regions such as Caucasus or Central Asia were not a concern to be demanded by Turkish Foreign policy.

To sum up, Turkish foreign policy between 1923 and 1980 was pursued on a quite conservative manner and active policies or the issue of Outside Turks, with a few exceptions in Turkish foreign policy up until the two decades of Turkish Foreign policy.

Turkey's EU integration. As a first step trade was liberalized and then Customs Union which was completed on 31 December 1995. Turkey has opted for full membership as the next step foreseen in the Ankara Agreement. Turkey was given “candidate status” during the Helsinki Summit on 10-11 December, 1999. The first Accession Partnership Document for Turkey was adopted by the Council on 8 March 2001. At the Copenhagen Summit, based on the Commission's Report and recommendation, it was decided to start accession negotiations with Turkey without delay in December 2004, on the condition that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria.” <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-the-european-union.en.mfa> [01 April 2010]. At present, Turkey-EU relations seem to be negligence since the negotiations in eight chapters had been cancelled. However, the above-said adventure of Turkey reveals the strong commitment of Turkey to the European Union as an asset to consolidate Turkey's western identity.

¹¹³ This exception was the Cyprus Question. The Cyprus Question was introduced to the foreign policy agenda of Turkey in 1955 when the Greek Cypriots aimed at gaining their independence from the British Rule. Since that date, Cyprus became a major concern for Turkish foreign policy. The Cyprus Question was a deviation from the Turkish foreign policy line due to two aspects. First, contrary to the pro-western foreign policy conceptions, Turkey pursued its Cyprus policy on the basis of ethnic kinship. Secondly, Turkey, after 1923, made its only military campaign for Cyprus in July and August 1974. This was a considerable deviation from the traditional conservative, peaceful and status quo-oriented foreign policy line.

However, the above-said, conservative foreign policy line of Turkey began to be strongly challenged by the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s there was a transformation process in the political and economic structure of Turkey. In the realm of politics, with the strong impact of military coup that took place in 12 September 1980, the space of politics was been strictly limited and also identity politics found a basis in the new political atmosphere.¹¹⁴ In the realm of economics, the Turkish economy, beginning from the 24 January 1980 decisions, was converted from the import-substitution model to the export oriented model.¹¹⁵ These two processes had direct implications on the course of foreign policy during the second half of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s as well. This chapter seeks to make a comparative analysis of the change processes in Turkish nationalism and in Turkish foreign policy as well to assess the impact of these two change processes on the welcoming atmosphere towards the emergence of the Turkic republics in the early 1990s.

¹¹⁴ The political spectrum in Turkey after the 12 September 1980 military coup was restricted as follows. “On 12 September 1980, it was announced that the armed forces had taken over political power because the state organs had stopped functioning. It also said that parliament had been dissolved, that the cabinet had been deposed and that the immunity of the members of the national assembly (the parliament) had been lifted. Immediately afterwards, all political parties and the two radical trade union confederations (the socialist DİSK and the ultra-nationalist MİSK – *Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikalan Konfederasyonu*, or Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions) were suspended.” See Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B Tauris,2003), p. 278. Until the referendum in 1987, the banned political parties and individual had to stay away from the political life which would strengthen the position of the governments of the time.

¹¹⁵ On 24 January 1980, with the 24 January Decisions, “The Turkish lira was devalued by 30 % and prices of virtually every commodity – oil and oil products, cement, sugar, paper and coal, cigarettes and alcohol – rose sharply in an attempt to cut consumption. The aim was to create a new economy based on exports rather than internal consumption. Turkey was thrown open to the capitalist world and globalization.” See Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest For Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), p. 147: This export oriented turn in the economic structure also would cause a shift in the foreign policy understanding and foreign trade concerns would become a new foreign policy asset

Towards a More Turkist Line: Turkish Nationalism in the 1990s

Among various factors, some reasons played a determining role in leading to a transformation process of Turkish nationalism during the last two decades of the twentieth century. First, Turkish nationalism gained momentum in the late 1980s and continued throughout the 1990s. Although it was hard to observe that there is an increase in the number of people supporting nationalist political parties,¹¹⁶ a significant atmosphere emerged especially due to the political events of the time. Secondly, Turkish nationalism experienced a transformation process from the Turco-Islamist Trend, which was influential especially during the late 1960s and during the 1970s as well, to a more Turkist political ideology.¹¹⁷ Thirdly and due to the two other above-said phenomena, the pro-nationalist discourse began to be used in a wider sense by different political groups especially in the second half of the 1990s. Many Left-Kemalist oriented authors of the pre-12 September period began to use the nationalist discourse which hindered the existence of a considerable opposition to the popularity of extreme nationalist discourse in the 1990s used nearly in all the issues of the time ranging from the Kurdish problem to the emergence of the Turkic republics.

Turkish nationalism, since its emergence, has been fed by two contradicting feelings. The first is the concern of national survival (*milli beka*) and the other is

¹¹⁶ Nationalist Work Party (*Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi*), the successor (and also the predecessor of Nationalist Action Party), could take only the 2.93 % of the votes in the 1987 parliamentary elections. In the 1991 elections, 17 candidates of the NWP entered the Parliament thanks to an alliance with the pro-Islamist Refah Party. In the 1995 elections, this time the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) could not pass the threshold again. Murat Güvenç and Hasan Kirmanoğlu, *Türkiye Seçim Atlası (1950-2009): Türkiye Siyasetinde Süreklilik ve Değişim* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), pp. 82-94.

¹¹⁷ Turkist motives gained popularity at both symbolic and ideological level. Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun: 1990'lerden 2000'lere MHP* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), p. 207.

extreme self-confidence.¹¹⁸ These two phenomena, in most cases, have given way to an increase in nationalism. This may seem a paradox but in modern Turkish history, these two phenomena have proceeded hand in hand to feed the notion of nationalism in Turkey. In the case of 1980s and 1990s, this is clear.¹¹⁹ The developments in the last two decades of the twentieth century, such as the Kurdish Question or the idea of the Turkic world from Adriatic to the Wall of China” are good examples of the two above said characteristics of Turkish nationalism and have led Turkish nationalism gain a more legitimate ground among the Turkish public opinion even at the state elite level.

In the 1980s and the 1990s, the concern of national survival (*milli beka*) was fed by the critical attitude towards the West, and the sensitivity against the Kurdish separatism. As said earlier, Turkish nationalism is based on the notion of a threat perception. This threat perception is successful in the constructing and reproducing itself on actual developments. Every conjuncture could easily create a legitimization basis for the continuation of the national survival notion and during the 1990s the Kurdish Question was institutionalized in this manner. The Kurdish Question, a product of the 1980s,¹²⁰ which reached its peak in the first half of the 1990s, was simplified into a “separatist” threat by the state elite.¹²¹ On the other hand, it functioned as a new tool for the sustainability of the “national survival” case of

¹¹⁸ Tanıl Bora, “Ebed Müddet Beka Davası,” *Birikim* 33 (January, 1993), pp. 14 -19.

¹¹⁹ In the domestic politics, the main motive for the “national survival” case was the “Kurdish Question.” In the case of foreign policy, the Neo-Ottomanism” discourses was feeding this self-confident mood.

¹²⁰ On 15 August 1984, PKK made its first attacks in Eruh and in Şemdinli. However, the war with PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces reached its peak between 1991 and 1993. : Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: PKK and the Kurdish War for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), p. 80, pp. 175 -200.

¹²¹ Bora and Can, p. 88.

Turkish nationalism. Along with the Kurdish Question, the anti-Western attitude of Turkish nationalism and the re-emergence of the Armenian Question in a different manner¹²² were fed the reactionary character (i. e. the national survival case) of Turkish nationalism.

The threat perception towards Kurdish separatism and scepticism towards the West fed each other. According to this view, the Kurds were playing a subordinate role similar to that was played by the minorities during the disintegration process of the Ottoman Empire which was thought to be a conspiracy of the West.¹²³ Thus, for nationalists, not only the Kurds but also the Western world posed threats to Turkey's national survival. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, as the most prominent actor of modern Turkey's threat construction, and the highly critical attitudes of the Western institutions, especially the EC's criticisms regarding human rights abuses,¹²⁴ provided a "legitimate" basis for this discourse.¹²⁵ The end of the Soviet Union made the Kurdish separatism the unique source of threat to the "national survival" case. The criticisms of the European politicians or the public opinion were

¹²² Between 1973 and 1983, ASALA, an ultra-nationalist Armenian organization, attacked the Turkish diplomats on various occasions for the recognition of genocide claims. After 1983, a tactical shift occurred and the Armenian diaspora wasted efforts for the acceptance of "Genocide Recognition Acts" in world parliaments. This phenomenon and Armenia's invasion of Azeri territories once again caused an anti-Armenian atmosphere among the Turkish nationalists. Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası II: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Bilgiler, Yorumlar*, ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), p. 409.

¹²³ Bora and Can, p. 89.

¹²⁴ In 1987, the Turkish government allowed its citizens the right of individual application to the European Court of Human Rights. The responsibilities stemming from this development began to be visible. By the turn of 1995, the Court concluded the existence of human rights abuses in most of the cases. Gökçen Alpkaya, "İnsan Hakları Konusu," in *Türk Dış Politikası II: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Bilgiler, Yorumlar*, ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 524-539. This development caused a reaction in the Turkish public opinion and fed the long-standing anti-European stance of Turkish nationalism.

¹²⁵ Alparslan Türkeş, the most prominent pro-nationalist leader of the time, criticized the human rights defenders in Turkey and in Europe by stating that "The ones who are mentioning human rights keep their silence against the PKK Terror." *Milliyet*, 13 June 1995.

labeled as equal to the reformation demands of the European states from the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁶

The reaction of Turkish nationalists to Kurdish separatism is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is quite helpful to understand the underlying causes of the increasing trend of the Turkish nationalism in the 1990s and to see how the “national survival” case is constructed over a threat perception. To sum up, the general nationalist atmosphere emerged as a response to Kurdish separatism and to the criticisms by the Western world provided a legitimate ground for the nationalist ideology and their aggressive discourse. This would be a motivating factor for Turkish nationalists to sharpen their language in creating an optimistic atmosphere when the Turkic republics emerged in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Another constituting element of Turkish nationalism was the feeling of self-confidence which was reproduced in the early 1990s over the discourses of the “imperial legacy” of Turkey.¹²⁷ Similar to the national survival case, it served to the increase of nationalism in a different conjuncture and again similarly, it was fed with strong collaboration between the state elite and the nationalist intellectuals. The late 1980s and the early 1990s, especially the era between 1984 and 1991, which is called the Özal Period in Turkish foreign policy,¹²⁸ became the scene for this collaboration between the state elite and conservative nationalist intelligentsia.

¹²⁶ Bora and Can, p. 89.

¹²⁷ *Türkiye Günlüğü* (Diary of Turkey), a conservative nationalist journal which began to be published in 1989. This date was coincided with the change process in Turkey’s near geography and in world politics as well. The authors contributing to this journal pioneered the idea of undertaking a “new imperial vision” for Turkey with reference to the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. Yüksel Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijensiya: Anti-Komünizm’den Küreselleşme Karşıtlığına* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), pp. 368 – 379.

¹²⁸ M. Hakan Yavuz, “İkicilik (Duality): Türk-Arap İlişkileri ve Filistin Sorunu (1947-1994),” in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p. 580.

The self-confident mood of Turkish nationalism was constructed by a quite simple discursive mechanism. The “glorious past” of the Turks was reiterated on every occasion and the idea of “Turkish superiority” was always kept actually in mind.¹²⁹ This process is managed by various tools ranging from the education system to the atmosphere created in the public opinion with the help of the political conjuncture of the time. The 1990s led Turkish nationalism use this “self-confident mood” in order to gain momentum.

The end of the Cold war crashed the routine of how the Turkish state elite viewed world politics. Turgut Özal, president at the time, opted to use every political development in Turkey’s near geography for the promotion of “Great Turkey.” In doing this, reminding the “glorious” Ottoman past and even the previous periods had become functional in mobilizing Turkish public opinion, especially the Right wing groups. Among these right-wing groups, each separate fraction had different “Great Turkey” imaginations in the regions they preferred, but they had a consensus that Turkey should gain a leadership position in its hinterland.¹³⁰ Mustafa Çalık, a prominent conservative nationalist figure, pointed out that “...in the new conjuncture, Turkey is a political entity which has new and significant responsibilities and has to play new and significant roles proportional to these responsibilities.”¹³¹

¹²⁹ Among the nationalist intellectuals, the Cedit group under the leadership of Mustafa Çalık, pioneered this discourse. Here, it is worth to say that there were close ties between Özal and Çalık, Taşkın, p. 369.

¹³⁰ This was first and foremost visible in the Gulf War. Coşkun Kırca, a Turkish diplomat and politician, suggested Turkey’s active involvement in the Gulf War by stating that “Turkey is a Western country which has vital interests in the Middle East.” *Milliyet*, 25 February 1991.

¹³¹ Mustafa Çalık, “Neo – Osmanlıcılık Tartışmalarına Sade Bir Derkenar,” *Türkiye Günlüğü* 21 (1992), p. 49.

These views provided the creation of a new concept, neo-Ottomanism. The political developments of the time also fed and consolidated these views. Yavuz properly clarifies the factors leading to the emergence of Neo Ottomanism as follows,

(a) domestic societal transformations that created alternative discursive spaces for critical thinking within the emergence of a new liberal political and economic milieu; and (b) major international developments such as the gradual collapse of the bipolar system, the Cyprus crisis, the European Union's refusal to accept Turkey as a full member, European indifference to the ethnic-cleansing in Bosnia, and Kurdish ethnic-nationalism in southeastern Turkey.¹³²

Along with the above-said national survival case, the self-confident mood of Turkish identity formation increased the legitimacy of nationalism in the 1990s. On the other hand, this self-confidence, which was generated over foreign policy issues, constitutes a good example of the claim that Turkish nationalism is vulnerable to the consent and support which would be endowed by the state elite.¹³³

Along with the above-said traditional pillars of Turkish nationalism, during the 1990s Turkish nationalism experienced a change process from a Turco-Islamist ideology to a more Turkist line.¹³⁴ The Turkist version of Turkish nationalism was not a phenomenon specific to the late 1980s and early 1990s. Turkish nationalism was born in a more Turkist sense in the early years of its formation, but the pre-cautious attitude of the Republican elite towards Turkism and Pan-Turkism hindered

¹³² Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism," *The Middle East Critique* 7, no. 12 (March 1998), p. 22.

¹³³ For example, during the early years of the WWII (1939-1942), due to the success of the Axis powers, the Pan-Turkist groups in Turkey were tacitly supported by the government of the time. However, when the situation of WWII changed, the tacit support was withdrawn and proponents of Pan-Turkism were brought to trial with the "Trial of Turkism-Turanism" in 1944. Günay Göksu Özdoğan, "II. Dünya Savaşı Yıllarındaki Türk-Alman İlişkilerinde İç ve Dış Politika Aracı Olarak Pan-Türkizm," in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2000), pp. 483 -490.

¹³⁴ Bora and Can, p. 207.

the development this version of Turkish nationalism. However, after 1965, when the Turkish nationalists were congregated under a political party, Turkism left its place to Turco-Islamism.¹³⁵ The developments in the early 1990s caused a departure from this trend and Turkish nationalism gained a more Turkist character in the early 1990s. The root causes of this transformation process can be grouped in three categories.

First, it must be noted that the Kurdish issue affected Turkish nationalism in the early 1990s from various aspects. Similar to the national survival case, Kurdish separatism triggered the reactionary character of Turkish nationalism. The reaction towards the Kurdish issue caused the usage of a more Turkist discourse among Turkish nationalists. This does not mean that the proponents of a more Islamist trend in Turkish nationalism did not react to the Kurdish nationalism as intensely as did the Turkists. The point in here is to stress the catalyzing role of the Kurdish issue as a factor provoking the Turkist trend in Turkish nationalism.

Apart from the reaction shown to Kurdish separatism, the roots of a Turkist turn can be sought in the European political life of the time. Beginning from the 1980s, with the strong impact of globalization, a new type of cultural racism began to emerge in Western Europe.¹³⁶ In the case of the nation-state, globalization refers to a tendency towards supra-nationalism. Thus, it may sound contradictory that the globalization process would provoke any kind of nationalism. However, it is a clear fact that the nationalist wave in Europe during the 1980s and in early 1990s was fed

¹³⁵ Beşir Ayvazoğlu, "Tanrı Dağı'ndan Hira Dağı'na Uzun İnce Yollar," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), pp. 574 -577.

¹³⁶ Tanıl Bora, "Milliyetçilik: Mikro Mu, Makro Mu?" *Birikim* 45/46 (January-February, 1993), p. 22.

by the outcomes of the globalization process.¹³⁷ These types of nationalism, examples which are the *Leghe Nord* in Italy or the *Front Nationale* in France, have similar characteristics.¹³⁸ Their ideologies include, as Belge argues, a kind of exclusion which was not based on race or nation, but on culture.¹³⁹ The proponents of this ideology demand the exclusion of the “different” cultures for the sake of creating a homogenous common culture.¹⁴⁰

During the 1990s, the interpretation of nationalism among the nationalist intelligentsia gained a Turkist character and in Nationalist Work Party (NWP), the biggest nationalist political group in Turkey began to put a stronger emphasis on Turkism.¹⁴¹ Apart from the above said reasons, a separation within the party caused the emergence of a more Turkist tendency. The conservative fraction of the party resigned and founded the Great Union Party (*Büyük Birlik Partisi*) in July 1992.¹⁴² This phenomena gave the Party elite a free hand to use a more Turkist discourse without considerable criticism coming from the party. The separation in the party was not the only reason that the NWP adopted a more Turkist discourse.¹⁴³ Moreover, the members of the GUP did not totally reject the Turkist discourse and

¹³⁷ For a comprehensive analysis of the Extreme Right in Europe, see Hasan Saim Vural, *Avrupa'da Radikal Sağın Yükselişi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), pp. 17-260.

¹³⁸ Bora, “Milliyetçilik: Mikro Mu, Makro Mu?” pp. 26 – 27.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36

¹⁴⁰ Among the Extreme Right-Wing politicians, the immigrants and other culturally diverse entities were being discriminated against and there was the perspective of a culturally homogenous Pan-Europeanism. Bora, “Milliyetçilik...,” pp. 26 -33 This fact clearly resembles the usage of a neo-PanTurkist discourse among the nationalist intellectuals after the emergence of the Turkic republics and in the case of the reaction shown to the Kurdish Question.

¹⁴¹ Bora and Can, p. 201.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁴³ The separation was mostly related to the relative success of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*). *Ibid.*, pp. 60 -65.

this separation was due mostly to the internal power struggles within the party.¹⁴⁴

The Turkist tilt in the NWP was due mostly to the above said periodic reasons in the early 90s but the separation process also could have been a contributing factor. The adoption of a more Turkist approach to nationalism by the NWP, as the most important nationalist political group in Turkey, seems to have had an inevitable impact on the perceptions of nationalism among the nationalist intelligentsia.¹⁴⁵

Thirdly, especially in the second half of the 1990s, the number of users of a nationalist discourse increased in Turkey. Not only momentum that the nationalist sentiments gained among the Turkish public opinion but also the Turkist shift in the perception of nationalism provided this variety. The reason for such a shift have been the developments which led to the emergence of a nationalist atmosphere provided a legitimate basis for people such as retired bureaucrats or Kemalist-oriented intellectuals who were refraining from using pro-nationalist discourses. Moreover, also the shift to a more Turkist tendency could have a similar outcome. The people who could have been disturbed by the Islamist discourse in the previous decade embraced nationalism especially in the second half of the 1990s and in the 2000s. Each political tendency had their own reasons in heading towards the region but the outcome was unique; variation in number of the Turkish nationalism proponents and the increase in the interest shown to the Turkic republics under an umbrella term, Euro-Asianism.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ For example, Ökkeş Şendiller, a member of the Great Union Party, criticized the rapprochement between Alparslan Türkeş and Armenian President Levon Ter Petrosyan, due to the “sensitivity” of Azeri issue. Bora and Can, p. 62.

¹⁴⁵ The interesting point is that the Nationalist Work Party, which was supposed to tilt towards a Turkist line, also was engaged in an election alliance with the pro-Islamist Welfare Party in order to surpass the threshold. *Milliyet*, 18 September 1991. This fact illustrates that practical concerns were more influential in the party politics than the determined principles.

The above-said political perspectives which were considerably interested in the emergence of the Turkic republics can be categorized basically in four groups.¹⁴⁷ The first group are what I call as the “classical nationalists” (*kadim milliyetçiler*), the nationalist oriented Turkish nationalists who were strongly concentrated on the “Outside Turks” even before the end of the Cold war. This group was quite sensitive to preserve their privilege stemming from their eternal interest in the Turkic world in Central Asia with a strong sense of “romantic nationalism.”¹⁴⁸ Among these people two names come forward due to their intellectual properties and their closeness to the state elite. The first one is Namık Kemal Zeybek. Zeybek was prominent figure since he was the Minister of Culture between 1989 and 1991, and advisor to Süleyman Demirel, president at the time, between 1993 and 2000 on the relations with the Turkic republics. Zeybek was interested in preserving the above-said copyright of the interest towards the Turkic world. He claimed that he was the first person to promote the term Eurasia in Turkey.¹⁴⁹ For him, the final solution would be the establishment

¹⁴⁶ “Euro-Asianism is an intellectual and quasi political trend which emerged in the 1920s among Russian migrants. The point of Eurasianism is the assumption that Russia longs neither to the Eastern nor to Western Europe but constitute the civilization in its own right as mixture of Slavs a ethnic, mostly Turkic, background.” See Dmitry Shlapentokh, “Dugin, Eurasianism, and Central Asia,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007), pp. 143-144. In the post-Cold war period, Eurasianism was also begun to be discussed among some circles in order to offer an alternative to Turkey’s pure pro-Western foreign policy understanding. Büşra Ersanlı, “Türkiye’nin Dış İlişkilerinde Türkçülük ve Avrasya,” pp. 143- 157.

¹⁴⁷ The categorization made in this study belongs to the author. However, in this case there are alternative categorizations. For example Aça classifies the Eurasianist perspectives under six subtitles. These are 1) Sultan Galiyevist Euro-Asianism represented mainly by Attila İlhan, 2) The Eurasianist circles writing in the journal, *Ulusal* (National); 3) Doğu Perinçek’s Eurasianism; 4) The Eurasianism of Turkish nationalists which are congregated around the journal *Yeni Avrasya* (New Eurasia); 5) The Eurasianism of the people in *Diyalog Avrasya* (Dialog Eurasia); 6) The Eurasianism of ASAM (Eurasia Strategic Researches Center). Mehmet Aça, *Avrasyacı Yaklaşımların Türkiye Çeşitlenmeleri ve Türk Dünyasının Geleceği*, p. 162. İmanov makes a similar classification by adding a new type of Eurasianism, Turkey (Ottoman) Eurasianism which was mostly defended in the journal of *Yarın* (Tomorrow). Vügar İmanov, *Avrasyacılık: Rusya’nın Kimlik Arayışı* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2008), p. 334.

¹⁴⁸ Tanıl Bora, “Türki Cumhuriyetler ve Türkiye: İkinci Vizyon,” *Birikim* 37 (1992), p. 85.

¹⁴⁹ İmanov, p. 317.

of the Turkic Union.¹⁵⁰ Zeybek's ideas are also interesting since he preserves his hopes about the "Turan." Zeybek, even in the 2000s, states that even though Turkey's popularity in Central Asia have decreased, "Turkish nationalists should not give up the idea of 'Turan.'"¹⁵¹ Ahat Andican, originally from Central Asia, also deserves attention. Andican, who was also Minister of State in 1997, had a kind of Eurasianist view mostly concentrated on the Turkic world. For him, a Turkestan Confederation should be established and in order to achieve this, long-term policies should be developed on the basis of preserving the interests of Turkey and the Turkic world.¹⁵²

The second group is constituted by the bureaucrats from both the civil or institutions of the military bureaucracy. Their perspective can be summarized as an anti-western attitude over geopolitical concerns and the strategic importance of Turkey's near geography, most notably, the Turkic world, as a foreign policy asset for Turkey. The strategic research institutes such as *ASAM* (Eurasian Strategic Researches Center), in which these retired bureaucrats were involved, also can be categorized with their nationalism understanding based on Euro-Asianist-strategism. Among these people, Suat İlhan, a retired military officer, offered a Turkist-Eurasianist view based on the idea of "geostrategism." İlhan proposed a "Turkish Eurasianism" and for him "...in case Turkey exists, the Turkic world will exist and unless Turkey exists, the Turkic world can not exist."¹⁵³ For him, the Turkic Union could be established only in the case of the existence of cultural and geographic

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Namık Kemal Zeybek, "Ortalık Asya Birliği," *Asya-Avrupa* 3, (July-August, 2005), p. 5.

¹⁵² İmanov, pp. 326- 327.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 324.

integrity.¹⁵⁴ Şükrü Elekdağ, a Turkish diplomat known for his strong eagerness for the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, attached importance with Turkey's cooperation to its near geography. Similar to İlhan, Elekdağ offered a strategist perspective. For him, in order to be influential in the Eurasian region and in the Turkic world, Turkey needed to resolve its internal problems, determine long term strategies towards the Turkic world, and pursue active policies in its near geography when the regional security was under threat.¹⁵⁵

The third group was, with their own interpretation, leftist-nationalist intellectuals who also had a strong anti-Western attitude and with a Euro-Asianist perspective. Their Euro-Asianism, which stemmed mostly from this anti-Westernism, was a combination of their leftist-secular views and nationalist sentiments. The ideational interest in the Turkic republics was because of two factors. First, the above-said anti-Westernism and anti-Islamism left the Eurasian region as the only lands in which to cooperate. Second, the ideological closeness with Sultan Galiyev's socialist Turanianism provided them an ideological legitimacy in their tilt towards nationalism. The proponents of this idea constitute a variety and in the above-said classifications, these people were categorized under different groups. However, people such as Attila İlhan or Doğu Perinçek, who were classified under separate groups, basic terms, defended the same idea: a Sultan Galiyevist Eurasianism relying on a Kemalist perspective.

Among these, Attila İlhan deserves special attention. İlhan established a linkage between nationalism and leftism through Eurasianist-Turkist perspective.¹⁵⁶ İlhan

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 324.

¹⁵⁵ *Milliyet*, 10 May 1992.

said, “Turan is the Turkish name of Eurasia.”¹⁵⁷ İlhan was also claimed to have been inspired by nationalist-communist intellectuals such as Sultan Galiyev, Mollanur Vahidov and Neriman Nerimanov.¹⁵⁸ İlhan also claimed that there was a strong similarity between the thoughts of Atatürk and Sultan Galiyev.¹⁵⁹ Finally, İlhan was optimistic about Eurasia’s role in bringing the Turkists and secular nationalists (*ulusalcılar*) together.¹⁶⁰ Doğu Perinçek also came forward with Eurasianist view. Perinçek offered an “Option of Eurasia” for Turkish foreign policy.¹⁶¹ In the second half of the 1990s, two Eurasia Conferences were held by Perinçek’s Labor Party (*İşçi Partisi*) in order to promote this “Option of Eurasia” for Turkish foreign policy.¹⁶² This perspective not only included a strong anti-Americanism, but also proposed a Eurasian solidarity.¹⁶³ For Perinçek, the borders of Eurasia were not concrete. However, in his writings during the late 1990s the emphasis on Central Asia and the Turkic world was visibly on the rise.

The fourth group was the Gülen movement, which is a controversial issue of discussion. Their Euro-Asianism was reflected in the writings of the journal, *Dialog Euro-Asia (Diyalog Avrasya)* and the conferences of the Dialogue Eurasia Platform. This group basically defines its Euro-Asianism perspective as “... the promotion of

¹⁵⁶ Attila İlhan, *Yıldız, Hilâl ve Kalpak: Gâzi'nin 'Ulusal' Solculuğu, Cumhuriyet Söyleşileri* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2004), p. 97.

¹⁵⁷ İmanov, p. 344.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Attila İlhan, *Sultan Galiyef: Avrasya'da Dolaşan Hayalet* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2000), p. 77.

¹⁶⁰ Attila İlhan “Avrasya Konusu Türkiye’de Türkçülerle Solcuları Birleştirecek Bir Platformdur,” *Yeni Avrasya* (January-February, 2001), pp. 26 -36.

¹⁶¹ For an account of Perinçek’s views on the “Option of Eurasia,” see Doğu Perinçek, *Avrasya Seçeneği: Türkiye İçin Bağımsız Dış Politika* (İstanbul: Kaynak, 2000), pp. 1 – 136.

¹⁶² İmanov, p. 312.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

Euro-Asia’s cultural and intellectual repertoire throughout the world.”¹⁶⁴ For this group, Euro-Asia is basically the intersection of Europe and Asia.¹⁶⁵ They opened a free space of discussion about Euro-Asia ranging from quite different political perspectives.¹⁶⁶ The members of this group did not use a nationalist discourse, however, they were appreciated by some nationalist intellectuals.¹⁶⁷ The proponents of this group also became relatively successful in the region. Contrary to the other groups, they did not aim ultimately to be influential in forming the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. The members of this group did not follow a Euro-Asian policy on the basis of ideology, but on direct involvement in the region. They pursued a cultural campaign in the region.¹⁶⁸ Their so-called success stemmed from this active involvement in the region and they were appreciated even by a Kemalist-leftist political figure, Bülent Ecevit, due to their successful cooperation initiatives in the Turkic world.¹⁶⁹

At the beginning of the 1990s, Turkish nationalism in Turkey gained a multiple character. Different political groups with different ideological motivations headed towards the newly emerging Turkic republics which they thought to be tools to legitimize their claims on the foreign policy agenda and in the public opinion. Neither of these ideologies could find a legitimate ground in the foreign policy agenda; however, they provided the intensification of the interest of the Turkish

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 328.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 328.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 329.

¹⁶⁷ For example, Mustafa Çalık, a prominent conservative nationalist intellectual, named Fethullah Gülen as the most significant “Turkist” and “Turanist” after İsmail Gaspirinski. Mustafa Çalık, *Teorik Denemeler* (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 1999), p. 121.

¹⁶⁸ Imanov, p. 329.

¹⁶⁹ *Milliyet*, 25 March 1995.

public opinion towards the Turkic republics. In the early 1990s it was hard to oppose the advanced cooperation demands with the Turkic republics. However, at the end of the day, whatever their attitudes, Neo-Ottomanists, Eurasianists or neo-PanTurkists, they did not change the traditional pro-Western and status quo-oriented conservative Turkish foreign policy line.

In Search of Activism: Changing Character of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1980s and the 1990s

As said earlier, after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish foreign policy followed a relatively stable trend in the sixty years of the Republican period. This foreign policy line, which has been labeled as the Kemalist Foreign policy, was a status quo-oriented foreign policy perspective based on the idea of avoiding conflicts, integration to international organizations and a kind of pragmatic balance politics which was in a sense, inherited from the nineteenth century Ottoman foreign policy.¹⁷⁰ There were deviations from this policy in some cases either in a peaceful way or not.¹⁷¹ However, this kind of foreign policy trend, which mainly was held by the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not challenged openly. The traditional Turkish foreign policy line which was deeply concerned with the notions of national security and the pro-Western identity definition preserved their dominance until the 1980s.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikası: Temel İlkeleri ve Soğuk Savaş Sonrasındaki Durumuna İlişkin Notlar," *AÜ SBF Dergisi* 51, no. 1 (January 1995), pp. 354 – 355.

¹⁷¹ As an exception to this policy, the active involvement of the Democrat Party government in the affairs of the Middle East and the Balkans can be shown. See Hüseyin Bağcı, *Demokrat Parti Dönemi Dış Politikası* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1990), pp. 1 - 184; The intervention to Cyprus was the clearest example of the deviation from the traditional foreign policy trend in an offensive way.

¹⁷² Oran, p. 355.

By beginning from the 1980s, the above-described Turkish foreign policy was no longer the “one and only” foreign policy perspective in Turkey. This was a complex transformation process and even today, it is subject to various discussions in the realm of foreign policy analysis.¹⁷³ This section of the thesis gives a brief account of the change process in Turkish foreign policy during the second half of the 1980s and first half of the 1990s. In doing this, the impact of this change process on the quite welcoming atmosphere towards the emergence of the Turkic republics in Central Asia will be sought.

Briefly speaking, the change process in Turkish foreign policy was an outcome of two change processes (i.e., the change in world politics and the change in Turkish politics.) The latter, beyond any doubt, was vulnerable to the developments in the former change process.

The Change in International Politics

The changes in world politics that deeply affected the course of Turkish foreign policy making in the 1980s and also in the 1990s can be summarized basically under in three points. The first one was the intensification of the globalization process, which was influential on other developments in both the political and economic senses.¹⁷⁴ In fact, globalization was the phenomena that created the inrelatedness and even inseparability of the political and economic issues. The second one was the

¹⁷³ At present, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, is pioneering the idea of adopting an active foreign policy line for Turkey. Davutoğlu basically argues that “Turkey should guarantee its own security and stability by taking on a more active, constructive role to provide order, stability and security in its environs.” Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision,” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008), p. 79.

¹⁷⁴ Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 35.

change in the “bloc politics,” namely the decreasing tension in the cold war politics after the mid-1980s, which had already been dominating the last four decades of the world politics. The change in the bloc politics would have direct impacts on Turkish foreign policy in the 1980s and in the 1990s. The third external development was the regional developments in Turkey’s near geography, most notably in the Balkans and in the Middle East. These three phenomenon, which had occurred in the 1980s and carried their impacts into the 1990s, led to the questioning of the general premises of the above-said traditional uni-dimensional Turkish foreign policy line.

During the 1980s, there were significant changes in the cold war politics, which brought the end of it. In fact, the 1980s began in an atmosphere that seemed to increase the tension of cold war politics that had been stagnant in the Détente Period (1962-1979). The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan started the second cold war Period within the general cold war context.¹⁷⁵ Moreover, there had been a change of presidency in the U.S.A. Ronald Reagan, a highly conservative Republican politician, took office in January 1981 and changed the relatively peaceful Carter doctrine of U.S foreign policy along with continuities.¹⁷⁶ All these developments were thought to have increased the tension in cold war politics. However, in the other superpower of the cold war politics, notably in the U.S.S.R, there were significant political developments which eased the tension of the cold war and would demolish this process in the end. The Gorbachev presidency gradually increased the sphere of freedom within the Soviet Union, which was collected under the umbrella of

¹⁷⁵ John Baylis and Steve Smith, *Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) , p. 82.

¹⁷⁶ Chester Pach, “The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006), p. 87.

Glastnost and *Perestroika* policies.¹⁷⁷ In the foreign policy, contrary to the Reagan's attitude, the rigid Brezhnev Doctrine was replaced with the famous Sinatra Doctrine,¹⁷⁸ which, contrary to the previously active Brezhnev Doctrine, gave the Eastern Bloc countries a free hand in pursuing their foreign policies and even in the realm of their domestic politics. This process, also due to the economic and bureaucratic shortcomings in the Soviet system, brought the end of the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc and the cold war as well.¹⁷⁹

This was a development, which by itself was enough to redefine the general parameters of the Turkish foreign policy. As said earlier, Turkish foreign policy attached significance to the national security issue and the cold war politics was the most crucial asset of this politics.¹⁸⁰ Turkey's security meant not only the security of Turkey, but also the security of the Western alliance. During the cold war years, Turkey was the front line of the Western Bloc and still utilized the importance that was derived from this strategic importance.¹⁸¹ The elimination of the greatest threat (and thus the strategic importance) would affect the general course of Turkish foreign policy definitely. The main outcome of this process was to force Turkey to search for new foreign policy alternatives since the most important asset on which Turkey had constructed its foreign policy had evaporated.

¹⁷⁷ Baskın Oran, "Dönemin Bilançosu," in *Türk Dış Politikası II: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Bilgiler, Yorumlar*, ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp. 12 -14.

¹⁷⁸ Baylis and Smith, p. 217.

¹⁷⁹ Sajjad Ali Khan, "The Fall of the Soviet Union: The Fall of a State or the Fall of an Ideology," *Journal of Political Studies* 15 (2009), pp, 86 -94.

¹⁸⁰ Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Strategic Model: Myths and Realities," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004), p. 52.

¹⁸¹ Oran, "Türk Dış Politikası," p. 359.

Between the years 1980 and 1995, there were numerous significant developments which delivered big blows to the sustainability of the traditional conservative style of Turkish foreign policy. Briefly speaking, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and the Gulf War (1991) in the Middle East, the human rights violations that the Turkish minority faced in Bulgaria (1984-1989), the dismemberment of the Yugoslav Federation (1991) and the break up of the war among the remnants of the Yugoslavia in the Balkans (1992-1995) and finally, our case the emergence of the Turkic republics in Central Asia (1991), inevitably corroded the general attitude of the Turkish foreign policy which focused more on national security-oriented bloc politics and excluded an identity based foreign policy (i.e., taking the common cultural ties with the communities in Turkey's near geography into consideration in the foreign policy making processes) and economic concerns from the realm of foreign policy practices.¹⁸²

Moreover, the developments in Turkey's near geography coincided with the transformation in Turkish political life. For example, the long-standing Iran-Iraq War was contributing to Turkey's newly emerging export-oriented economy.¹⁸³ Moreover, the ethnic cleansing that the Bosnian Muslims faced during the Yugoslav Civil War and the sufferings of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were embraced by the identity-focused conservative discourses in Turkey. Ahmet Kabaklı, a conservative intellectual, stated about the conflict in Bosnia, "... if we can't stop the Serbs in Sarajevo, then we will not be able to keep them in the Edirne border."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Muhittin Ataman, "An Integrated Approach to Foreign Policy Change: Explaining Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1980s," (Ph. D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1999), pp. 49-54.

¹⁸³ Henri I Barkey, "The Silent Victor: Turkey's Role in the Iran-Iraq War," in *The Iran-Iraq War: Strategic and Political Implications*, ed. Efraim Karsh (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ *Türkiye*, 06 August 1992.

Agah Oktay Güner said “Without Bosnia Thrace can’t be defended.”¹⁸⁵ Hence, the events that were seen as occasions on the way to becoming involved in a more “active foreign policy trend,” as was the case in the Gulf War, the developments in Turkey’s near geography during the 1980s and early 1990s were not only foreign policy matters but also could be converted into domestic politics assets.¹⁸⁶

To sum up, the developments in Turkey’s near geography had implications for the emerging foreign economic policies (i.e., due to the export oriented model), and caused the intensification of identity-based politics due to the problems that the communities which had common cultural and historical ties with Turkey faced.

Change in the Domestic Politics

During the 1980s, if the strong impact of the 12 September 1980 military coup was the one of the most important factors in determining the domestic politics in Turkey, the other factor was the political personality of Turgut Özal. Moreover, the former factor, by restricting the political spectrum of Turkey during the 1980s, also gave a free hand to the second factor to increase its determining role in Turkish political life. Beyond any doubt, it can be concluded that Turgut Özal dominated Turkish politics between 1983 and 1993. During this relatively long period, Turgut Özal served as Minister of State Responsible for Economics, Prime Minister (1983 - 1989) and President (1989 -1993) of Turkey.¹⁸⁷ This long span of time in office, with

¹⁸⁵ *Türkiye*, 19 January 1993.

¹⁸⁶ For example, the Bosnian Civil War was discussed intensely in the Turkish Parliament on identity-based perspectives. See Didem Ekinci, “Bosna Hersek Savaşı ve Türk Parlamento Görüşmeleri: İnşacı Bir Yaklaşım,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 6, no. 22 (2009), pp. 40-53.

¹⁸⁷ Ufuk Güldemir, *Teksas-Malatya* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1992), p. 17.

the exception of one-year long interruption, led the 1980s to be called as the Özal decade.

Turgut Özal challenged the general premises of the previous dominant economic and political perspectives in various ways. In the realm of economics, he was in favor of an export-oriented market economy and a process of privatization.¹⁸⁸ Özal said that “Economic and political changes must go hand in hand within the framework of a mutually reinforcing process.”¹⁸⁹ He was the architect of the 24 January 1980 decisions, which were meant as a transformation to a new economic model. For him, the role of the state in the economy should be minimized. Such an economic view also required the rise of export rates in amount and the variation of the export opportunities in order to preserve and increase the export-orientation in the Turkish economy. This target resulted relative success. Exports rose sharply from \$2.3 billion in 1979 to \$8 billion in 1985 and \$13 billion in 1990.¹⁹⁰ During that decade, Turkey ranked first in rate of export growth in the world: exports had increased from 2.9 % of GNP in 1978–1979 to 11.7 % of the GNP in 1984–1985.¹⁹¹

Özal’s party, the Motherland Party, consisted of different groups which were former members of the right-wing parties that had been abolished after the military coup. The eclectic composition of the Motherland Party in terms of political ideologies allowed these views to gain legitimacy at an official level. Even Turgut Özal, as the founder of the Motherland Party, was once a candidate of National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*), which was abolished after the military coup,

¹⁸⁸ Ataman, p. 103.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 77-83.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

in the 1977 parliamentary elections.¹⁹² From this aspect, the Motherland Party was a departure from the previous political parties even though it inherited many approaches from the previous ones. The innovations that the Özal period brought to Turkish politics emerged in the two major realms: political and economic. Both of these change processes had direct implications on the course of Turkish foreign policy. Briefly speaking, Turkish foreign policy experienced an important departure from its traditional conservative trend based on the concerns of national security and bloc politics to “calculated risks and search for new alternatives and options.”¹⁹³ The new orientation in the Turkish economy made the foreign trade a new major concern for Turkish foreign policy.¹⁹⁴ This was a considerable deviation from the traditional security oriented Turkish foreign policy line. For example, even though Özal was known and even criticized for his pro-U.S.A attitude and strong commitment to the NATO alliance, Turkey’s foreign trade with the U.S.S.R recorded its highest rates mostly due to this new foreign policy perspective.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, this happened at a time when world politics was in the “Second Cold war.”¹⁹⁶

The nationalist and conservative turn in Turkish political life, on the other hand, found direct reflections among the public opinion about the foreign policy issue. During the 1980s, there were two rising political phenomenon in the political agenda

¹⁹² Ataman, p. 100.

¹⁹³ Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey: The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis,” *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1992), p. 18.

¹⁹⁴ Ataman, pp. 259 - 260.

¹⁹⁵ Erel Tellal, “SSCB’yle İlişkiler,” in *Türk Dış Politikası Baskın*, ed. Baskın Oran (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), pp.163 – 164.

¹⁹⁶ The most-widely accepted cold war periodization was as follows. The period between 1945 and 1953 was the onset of the cold war period. The period between 1953 and 1962 was the First Cold war. The period between 1962 and 1979 was the Detente Period. The period beginning from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979) to the end of the Cold war in 1989 is called the Second Cold War. Baylis and Smith, p. 58.

of Turkey: political Islam and Kurdish nationalism.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, the pro-Leftist groups were suppressed and eliminated after the military coup. The Motherland Party, as the dominant political organization, defined itself as a “nationalist and conservative political party.”¹⁹⁸ This momentum that the identity politics gained in Turkish politics, along with the economic activism based on foreign trade, brought “active foreign policy” discussions onto the agenda of Turkish public opinion.

As Holsti writes, “there is a positive correlation between the number of national role conceptions and active involvement in international affairs.”¹⁹⁹ In the case of the early 1990s Turkey, this claim was visible. The rise of identity-based political discourses in the 1980s had found a field of practice in the early 1990s due to the developments in Turkey’s near geography and also in the international politics.²⁰⁰ This new “active foreign policy” demands were fed by the “opportunities” that the post-Cold war political conditions offered or ordered Turkey.

It must be noted that the developments in international politics or in Turkey’s near geography that caused a rise in the overall nationalist atmosphere in Turkish public opinion also caused a search for a more active trend in Turkish foreign policy. This fact is interesting for this study since it is a clear example of the intersection between Turkish nationalism and Turkish foreign policy.

¹⁹⁷ These factors not only allowed more than just an identity-based political discourse. They also constituted a tension between the government of the time and the bureaucratic elite, which also found direct reflections in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey.

¹⁹⁸ Ataman, p. 112.

¹⁹⁹ Holsti, p. 288.

²⁰⁰ These events were basically the Azeri-Armenian War, the Bosnian Civil War and the Chechnian Uprising in Russia.

For Turkish foreign policy, beyond any doubt, the most important change in the early 1990s was the end of the cold war. This was a significant challenge to Turkey's well-settled position in international politics. Turkey, during the cold war period, acquired its strategic position due to its strong commitment to the Western bloc and its determining significance about the security concerns of the NATO alliance. The peaceful end of the cold war, led to the questioning of Turkey's well-determined principles. Turkish foreign policy searched for alternatives.

Except for the Caucasus and Central Asia, which will be discussed in the next chapter, two other regions came forward for active foreign policy projections; The Middle East, The Balkans. In the case of Middle East, the Gulf War was the first and maybe the clearest example of this new trend. The eagerness for active involvement in this war was an issue that unified the nationalist-conservatives and the people among the state elite who were in search of an active trend in Turkish foreign policy according to the concept of Great Turkey Imaginations.²⁰¹ The Middle East Region would occupy a significant place in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey mostly due to the security concerns stemming from the Kurdish issue. As Özcan points out, "Because of Syria's sheltering of the PKK and the power vacuum in northern Iraq after the Gulf War there was a great danger against the territorial integrity of Turkey. Consequently, Turkey's primary aim in formulating its Middle East policy was the elimination of threat of terror."²⁰² Hence, Turkey's activism initiatives in the Middle East coincided with the above-said dual character of Turkish nationalism (i.e., coexistence of a self-confident mood and national survival concerns.)

²⁰¹ Tanıl Bora, "Körfez Savaşı, Ortadoğu ve "Büyük Türkiye Tasavvurları," *Birikim* 24 (April 1991), p. 13.

²⁰² Mesut Özcan, "Harmonization of the Foreign Policies of Turkey and the European Union: the Case of the Middle East" (Ph. D. diss., Boğaziçi University, 2008), p. 187.

In the Balkans, there were also developments that attracted the interest of the conservative nationalist public opinion along with the whole public opinion and the foreign policy agenda in Turkey. Prior to the 1990s, namely in the 1980s, the Balkans occupied the foreign policy agenda of Turkey due to two developments: the oppression that the Muslims faced in Bulgaria and the aggressive attitude of the PASOK government in Greece towards Turkey.²⁰³

In the early 1990s, the region experienced a great transformation process which also influenced the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. Yugoslavia, contrary to the example of the U.S.S.R, was dismembered in a bloody way. Along with the whole public opinion, the Bosnian Muslims and their sufferings in the Yugoslav Civil War attracted the attention of the conservative nationalist intellectuals towards the region. There was a general interest in the war in Yugoslavia and this put a pressure on the Turkish foreign policy mechanism. Turkey, during the Bosnian Civil War, attempted to pursue an active policy which consisted of attracting the interest of the international organizations to the issue, attempting to persuade the international public opinion for a diplomatic or even for a military intervention and also for military equipment assistance.²⁰⁴ As said earlier, the Bosnian War also caused

²⁰³ In Bulgaria, the Muslim Turkish minority faced several human rights abuses. During the 1980s, these abuses reached its peak and for the first time became a foreign policy concern for Turkey. The process ended with the migration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from Bulgaria to Turkey. After the end of Communist regime in Bulgaria the Muslim minority regained their rights and this minority became no longer a factor in poisoning the Turkish-Bulgarian relations. İlhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası*, Baskın Oran, ed., pp. 176 – 181 ; In Greece PASOK Leader Andreas Papandreu became the Prime Minister of Greece in 1981. Similar to Turkey, the 1980s passed in Greece under one party and leader domination. However, contrary to Özal, Papandreu followed a foreign policy line which contrasted the dynamics of cold war politics. For Papandreu, the threat for Greece did not come from the North but from the East." His aggressive attitude toward Turkey caused the deterioration of Turkish-Greek Relations and in this period nearly all of the already existing tense issues (i.e Cyprus, Aegean Islands etc.) between Turkey and Greece led to a crisis. Melek Fırat, "Yunanistan'la İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası...*, Baskın Oran, ed. pp.102 -124.

²⁰⁴ İlhan Uzgel, "Balkanlarla İlişkiler (1990-2001)," in *Türk Dış Politikası...* Baskın Oran ed., p. 496.

excitement among the conservative nationalist intelligentsia and also among the public opinion in Turkey.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, an answer for the question “Why did the nationalist intellectuals, different parts of the Turkish public opinion and the state elite as a whole overreact to the emergence of the Turkic republics in the former Soviet South was south. In doing this, focus was given to the possible conjunctural reasons behind this interest. At the end of this discussion, it was observed that, along with the existence of cultural and historical ties the change process in Turkish economic policy and in Turkish foreign policy set the conjunctural background of Turkey’s interest in the emergence of the Turkic republics.

For Turkish foreign policy, the change was inevitable due to two factors. First, world politics as a whole changed and Turkish foreign policy, which positioned itself according to the premises of bloc politics, could not sustain its traditional style as rigidly as before. Secondly, the developments in Turkey’s near geography not only presented new opportunities for Turkey, but also constituted serious threat to Turkey’s overemphasized national security concerns which were still an important aspect of Turkish foreign policy even though its prominence was decreasing. Such a change in the regional politics in the Balkans, the Middle East and in the former Soviet South, and the developments in the international politics required the revision of the traditional foreign policy making style of Turkey.

There were developments also in domestic politics were influenced the foreign policy agenda of Turkey. The 1980s and the first two years of the 1990s passed

under the Motherland Party government whose leader was eager to pursue an active foreign policy style. Moreover, in this period, there were political groups or parties that carried identity-based politics into Turkish political life. These factors were combined with the changing economic structure of Turkey and Turkish foreign policy, contrary to its traditional premises, began to be more open to the near geography of Turkey due to cultural and economic concerns.

Turkish nationalists, the political group which showed the greatest interest into the emergence of the Turkic republics, were also in a process of change. The agenda of domestic politics and the sufferings of the communities that had cultural ties with Turkey provided a legitimate basis for Turkish nationalism. The developments in Turkey and in the nearer regions to Turkey fed the two prominent aspects of Turkish nationalism: national survival case and a self-confident mood relying on the notion of the “glorious past.” On the other hand, mostly due to the above-said increase in popularity, Turkish nationalism gained a more Turkist character in the first half of the 1990s and also widened its proponents, especially at the second half of the 1990s. All of these developments increased the awareness towards the emergence of the Turkic republics.

CHAPTER 4

AN EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP: THE RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE TURKIC REPUBLICS DURING THE 1990S

All Turkic republics proclaimed their sovereignty in 1990 and their independence in 1991.²⁰⁵ The Turkish public opinion and foreign policy decision makers reacted to these Republics immediately after independence and even before the independence. However, this interest did not continue in the same intensity throughout the 1990s. Thus it is necessary to divide the decade into periods in order to understand the shifting perception towards the region. As Stearn states “periodization is the conceptual tool that makes change over time a manageable topic and difficulty of handling such an effort remains the same.”²⁰⁶

In doing this, it will be taken into consideration that it is hard to make a clear cut distinction. Periodization constitutes a major difficulty for most of the social scientists. As Gerhard successfully points “...the historian knows that any division of time into definite periods is artificial since recent experienced have thought him that even in the midst of upheavals and utter destruction there is no complete break with the past.”²⁰⁷ Since this study aims to analyze the shifting perceptions and expectations towards the Turkic republics, it will be convenient to make a periodization through the place that the Turkic republics held in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey. In this study, the Turkic republics deserve attention to the degree that they had taken place in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey. In this regard, the

²⁰⁵ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism: From Irredentism to Solidarity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 201.

²⁰⁶ Peter N. Stearns, “Periodization in World History Teaching: Identifying the Big Changes,” *The History Teacher* 20, no. 4 (1987), p. 561.

²⁰⁷ Dietrich Gerhard, “Periodization in European History,” *The American Historical Review* 61, no. 4 (1956), p. 900.

government programs may provide satisfactory evidence. Throughout the 1990s, eight governments were founded. The Turkic world found place first in the True Path Party-Social Democratic People's Party coalition government established in October 1991. In the program of this government, it was stressed that the government attached importance to "strengthen the relations with the Republics of which Turkey has cultural ties."²⁰⁸ In the second True Path Party-Social Democratic People's Party Government, which was established in June 1993, the stress on the ethnic kinship with the Turkic world was more dominant. In the program of this government, it was stated that,

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Turkic republics along with the other newly independent states caused important developments for Turkey. We all know this. In the 21st century, Turkey will be a sphere of attraction for these countries. Turkey has responsibilities for integrating these republics, which we have close ties, to the world. In this regard, we will attach a special significance to the improvement of economic, social and cultural relations with these republics.²⁰⁹

A remarkable shift in Turkey's perception towards the Turkic world was visible in the two following governments founded in May 1995 and in October 1995. In the programs of these governments, the economic potential of the Central Asian region was stressed in a stronger sense. In the former government, the importance of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project was for the first time mentioned.²¹⁰ In the latter government, established in October 1995, the volume that the economic cooperation with the Turkic republics reached was appreciated.²¹¹ In both of these government programs, it can be observed that Turkey's foreign policy agenda was once again

²⁰⁸ Kemal Girgin, *T.C Hükümet Programlarında Dış Politikamız* (Ankara: T.C Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 1998), p. 100.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

concentrated on the European integration due to the impact of the Customs Union process.²¹² In the case of the Turkic republics, the government programs in the second half of the 1990s had dealt with general “good office” statements and with specific issues such as energy transportation or the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Thus, in terms of periodization, we can conclude that during the second half of the 1990’s, the Turkic world as a whole lost its certain place in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey and there is a sharp difference between Turkey’s perception of the Turkic world between the two halves of the 1990s. In this regard, the period between the declaration of independence and the midst of the decade (i.e., 1991-1995) constituted the first period which can be defined as initial enthusiasm. The second period was the rest of the decade (i.e., 1995- 2000), which could have been defined as the settling the relations on a realistic ground which also had impacts on the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics in the 21st century.

Enthusiasm Dominates: Turkey-Turkic Republics Relations between 1991 and 1995

The period between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the declaration of independence by the Turkic republics, namely between 1989 and 1991, was followed by Turkish officials in a quite careful sense. Even President Turgut Özal, who was known for a foreign policy-making understanding that usually contrasted to the traditional methods of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was cautious about the course of events. For example, Özal was quite eager to get Turkey involved in the First Gulf War in order to regain Turkey’s prestigious position in the West and to be

²¹² Ibid., p. 124.

involved in economic cooperation with Middle East as well.²¹³ To the contrary, during the crisis between Azerbaijan SSR and the USSR in January 1990, he was in line with Turkish foreign policy making institutions in terms of seeing the crisis as a domestic politics issue of the Soviet Union and following a policy of non-interference. For Özal, the Azerbaijan issue should be the concern of Iran rather than Turkey since the Azeris were believed in the Shia sect of Islam.²¹⁴

Until their declaration of independence, the Turkic republics were still legal parts of the Soviet Union. However, the Gorbachev era presented a space of freedom for the people in the Soviet Union. Together with the other Soviet Socialist Republics in USSR, the Turkic republics were granted a freedom of pursuing an independent foreign policy from Moscow. This freedom became the first open gate for Turkey to follow a more active policy towards the region. The initial ones of the several following bilateral and multilateral treaties were signed in this era. From 1990 to late 1991, 24 bilateral agreements were signed with the Turkic soviet socialist republics.²¹⁵

Through mid-1991, even before the declaration independence, Turkish state officials, the nationalists and the public opinion were in a mood of euphoria. For example, Ercüment Konukman, the Minister of State in Turkey said that “all the Turkish power in the World should act together by means of economic and cultural cooperation. When this is realized, a Turkic world consisting of a 200 million

²¹³ Ertan Efeğil, *Körfez Krizi ve Türk Dış Politikası Karar Verme Modeli* (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 2002), p. 216.

²¹⁴ Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya’yla İlişkiler,” p. 372. This statement was criticized by Turkish nationalists. Demirağ called this statement as a fallacy.” Yavuz Selim Demirağ, *Turan Tutuldu* (İstanbul: Hamle Yayınları, 1994), p. 27.

²¹⁵ See Metin Akgüney, Fatma Zehra. Esmeray and Tahir Erdoğan Şahin, eds. *T.C Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Türkiye İle Türk Cumhuriyetleri Arasında Yapılan Anlaşmalar, İlişkiler, Faaliyetler*, vol. 1 (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı Türk Cumhuriyetleri ve Türk Toplulukları Dairesi: Ankara, 1993), pp. 7-436.

population will emerge.”²¹⁶ However, the declaration of independence by Turkic republics constituted the real cornerstone in the perceptions of the public opinion. Just after the loss of initial euphoria, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have admitted that Turkey had never sought to shape some form of commonwealth or union with the newly independent Turkic republics of the Soviet Union and Turkey’s intention was rather to deepen the relations.²¹⁷ However, there were also initiatives which were backed by the state elite of the time such as the several treaties signed, given promises either officially or unofficially and the summits. Such a paradox needs to be explained. At this point of the study, it will be useful to clarify the reasons and indicators of the euphoria period.

The Role of Leaders

In the second chapter, it was said that the preferences of the leadership in a state may be influential in the foreign policy making processes. The threat or interest perceptions of the leaders may direct the foreign policy behavior of a state.²¹⁸ The case examined in this thesis also validates this claim. When the Turkic republics proclaimed their independence in December 1991, some charismatic leaders dominated the Turkish political life. Turgut Özal was the President of Turkey. Süleyman Demirel was the prime minister and would replace Özal in May 1993 after Özal’s death. Moreover, Alparslan Türkeş was also an influential figure in Turkish politics due to his long-standing existence in this area, even though did not hold an

²¹⁶ Ercüment Konukman, *Topluluktan Millete* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1989), p. 28.

²¹⁷ Gareth Winrow, *Turkey in Central Asia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), p. 16.

²¹⁸ This was discussed in Chapter 2, under the subtitle of “Foreign Policy Decision Making Approach,” pp. 14-15.

official title. Erdal İnönü and Bülent Ecevit were the leaders of the most prominent pro-Leftist parties in Turkey. Since the influence of all these leaders on Turkish public opinion was important, it is worth examining their reaction towards the Turkic republics. The rhetoric that these leaders used towards the Turkic republics was one of the most significant motives behind the enthusiastic reaction towards the emergence of the Turkic republics. In this section, the rhetoric used by the most prominent political leaders in Turkey towards the emergence of Turkic republics in Central Asia will be examined.

Turgut Özal, as a politician, entered the agenda of Turkish public opinion relatively late, after 1980. However, he recorded a huge rise in his political career.²¹⁹ Özal's political understanding, in most cases, was in contrast with the traditional policy-making perspectives of the former state elite. The political atmosphere of the time was also helpful for him to pursue policies or make statements which could be considered as radical for that time. All the prominent political groups and the leaders of ten years earlier were politically suspended.²²⁰ In the case of foreign policy, this phenomenon was much clear. In his words,

When we look at this geopolitical space from the Adriatic Sea to Central Asia under the leadership of Turkey, we realize that this space is molded and dominated by Ottoman-Muslim and Turkic population... Just as it was during the Ottoman Empire, it is possible today to transcend ethnic differences through Islamic identity.²²¹

Özal, either in an open sense or tacitly, challenged the traditional attitudes of the bureaucratic institutions which determined the nature of the Turkish foreign policy-making processes. Özal, on the other hand, was eager to resolve the prolonged issues

²¹⁹ For a brief account of Özal's rise in Turkish politics, see Chapter 3, p. 57.

²²⁰ For the political suspension in Turkey during the 1980s, see Chapter 3, p. 38.

²²¹ Yavuz, "Turkish Identity....," p. 24.

of Turkish foreign policy such as the Cyprus Question.²²² In doing this, Özal pursued an individual decision making process in Turkish foreign which was highly criticized by the Ministry of Foreign policy officials and by members of Turkish Armed Forces.²²³

Özal's contrasting views with the traditional foreign policy-making perspective of Turkey coincided with the emergence of the Turkic republics in the above-said conditions. Özal welcomed the disintegration of the U.S.S.R and the collapse of Eastern Bloc and he thought that a new window of opportunities was opened for Turkey.²²⁴ However, as the leader of Turkey, the end of Cold War had different significant meanings for him. Turkey was a pivotal aspect of the security of the Western Bloc during the Cold war years and now, at the very beginning of the 1990s, this advantage was over. Özal confessed his concerns about Turkey's changing role in an interview: "The position of Turkey has changed. Ankara's strategic importance decreased after the collapse of the Soviet Empire."²²⁵

However, in the same speech, Özal expressed hope for new developments. According to him, "The world was changing and the Soviet Republics (i.e., five of them were of Turkic origin) and the Balkans offered new opportunities for

²²² For example, in one of his speeches, Özal stated that "Bringing the Cyprus Question to the foreign policy agenda creates a perception that we attach this issue a greater attention than it deserves. This issue should not constitute a barrier against Turkey forever. We don't give concessions but we will do what is logical." *Milliyet*, 15 March 1991.

²²³ Just after the 1983 elections, the MP government limited the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with two statutory decrees. According to the two statutory decrees legislated in December 1983 and in June 1984, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been appointed in practicing the foreign policy which would be determined by the government. This tendency, in the following years of MP governments, had been crystallized in the ways of excluding the Turkish Parliament from the foreign policy decision-making process and by Özal's individual initiative tendency. Gencer Özcan, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Rejim ve Dış Politika," in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), pp. 527-533.

²²⁴ *Cumhuriyet*, 1 March 1990.

²²⁵ *Milliyet*, 8 January 1991.

Turkey.”²²⁶ Özal, under these circumstances, attached great significance to the emergence of the Turkic republics just as he did during the Gulf War. For Özal, this was a historical occasion which could not be missed. In October 1992, Özal stated that, “We can not disappoint our people. We have the same language, culture and history. Then I think that our aims can also be the same.”²²⁷

Özal’s optimism and eagerness showed itself in many cases varying from his speeches in the Turkic world Congresses to the statements he made to journalists from the national and international press. As Taşkın argues, Özal’s economic nationalism with the aim of making Turkey as a regional-economic power in the region led to a rapprochement also between the state elite and nationalist intellectuals.²²⁸

However, it must be noted that probably Özal’s statement increased the expectations in the Turkish public opinion and especially among the Turkish nationalists and also these enthusiastic speeches at the same time gave the first big blow to the optimistic atmosphere which was also shared by the leaders of the Turkic republics. For example, in the first Turcophone States Presidential Summit, Özal’s words about the necessity of a Turkic Commonwealth and Turkic Development and Investment Bank were not welcomed by the leaders of the Turkic republics.²²⁹ Özal’s

²²⁶ *Milliyet*, 8 January 1991.

²²⁷ *Milliyet*, 31 October 1992. “İnsanlarımızın umutlarını boşa çıkaramayız. Dilimiz bir, kültürümüz bir, tarihimiz bir. O zaman işimiz gücümüz de bir olabilir diye düşünüyorum.”

²²⁸ Yüksel Taşkın, “Milliyetçi Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Türk Kimliğini Türk Dünyası Ölçeğinde Yeniden Tanımlama Çabaları ve Dış Politika Gündemine Etkileri,” in *Sivil Toplum ve Dış Politika: Yeni Sorunlar, Yeni Aktörler*, ed. Semra Cerit and Erhan Doğan (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 2006), p. 196.

²²⁹ Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler,” p. 388.

statements made these leaders act against Turkey reluctantly even if these statements did not frighten them.²³⁰

Turgut Özal, the eighth president of the Turkish Republic, died in 17 April 1993 due to a heart attack. Just a few weeks earlier he had paid visits to the Central Asia region, where he was kindly welcomed.²³¹ Özal's statements and initiatives were the integral part of the euphoria period. Şen argues that he encouraged the Turkish entrepreneurs by establishing contacts between these entrepreneurs and the leaders of Turkic republics.²³² In the late 1990s, when the disappointments were being lived most intensely, most of the people thought that the death of Özal started the inactivity process of Turkey in the region.²³³ After his death the foreign policy-making procedures were held by politicians and bureaucrats (i.e., mostly with the incorporation of the Foreign Ministry officials and military officials) who were in line with the traditional national security oriented foreign policy-making perspective of the Turkish Republic.²³⁴

Süleyman Demirel, a veteran politician who had been in Turkish political life since 1965, was an other prominent political figure of the early 1990s and due to this, evaluating his attitude towards the Central Asian states can be quite helpful in terms of understanding the “state's perception.”

²³⁰ Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev was the strongest objector for Turkey's leadership aims and initiatives for getting the Turkic republics involved in the regional crisis such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. *Milliyet*, 1 November 1992.

²³¹ This visit carried the main characteristics of Özal's initiatives. Özal took a delegation of 221 members who mostly consisted of Turkish business men. *Milliyet*, 4 April 1993.

²³² Mustafa Şen, “Türkiye-Orta Asya Yatırım İlişkileri ve Bölgede Aktif Türk Girişimciler,” in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası (1989-2006)*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), p. 135.

²³³ *Milliyet*, 18 February 1997.

²³⁴ Gerassimos Karabelias, “Dictating the Upper Tide: Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Özal Decade, 1993-2003” *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 3 (2008), p. 463.

After the October 1991 elections he once again became the prime minister of Turkey thanks to a coalition with the social democrat party of the time Social Democratic People' s Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*).²³⁵ In 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Cold war ended. The foreign policy agenda of his last government was nearly meaningless in 1991.²³⁶ The Turkic republics just emerged at such a critical conjuncture.

As said earlier, Demirel did not contrast with the traditional conservative Turkish foreign policy line as much as Özal had, but it was unimaginable for a Turkish Prime Minister to be carefree against such a development. This is because such an event would have implications not only for the foreign policy of Turkey, but also on the fragile stability of Turkish domestic politics. Moreover, his True Path Party was in a coalition with the Social Democratic People's Party, but this coalition was supported externally by the most prominent nationalist party of the time Nationalist Work Party (NWP) and by its leader Alparslan Türkeş. Moreover, in the following years of the first decade of the 1990s, NWP (the name of the party was converted to Nationalist Action Party in 1993) members would penetrate into the ranks of bureaucracy and security forces.²³⁷ Under such circumstances, Süleyman Demirel, whether willingly or in a strategic sense, played a major role in motivating Turkish public opinion and especially the Turkish nationalists for big expectations about the potentials of relationship and cooperation with the Turkic republics.

²³⁵ Altunışık and Tür, p. 51.

²³⁶ The previous Demirel government was overthrown with a military coup in 12 September 1980. At this date, the main parameters of Turkish foreign policy were strictly determined by the Cold War conditions.

²³⁷ Didem Mersin Alici, "The Impact of Turkey's Nationalistic Culture on Turkish Foreign Policy Making as Observed in Turkey's Relations with the Central Asian Turkic Republics" (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1995), p. 79.

Demirel's statements were clear signs of his enthusiasm as such. For example, in an interview for Time Magazine, Demirel stated that, "a new window of opportunity has opened for us with the Turkic republics. They speak our language. We urge them to remain secular and to switch to the Latin alphabet."²³⁸

On the other hand, among the Turkish politicians, he was the most eager one to use the phrase, "the Turkic world stretching from the Adriatic Sea to Wall of China."²³⁹ Demirel went one step further and stated that the Turkic republics should have got out of the "Ruble Zone,"²⁴⁰ which was clearest sign of economic interdependence with Russia.²⁴¹ However, Demirel also tried to assuage the possible reactions in the world public opinion which may have stemmed from the fear that Turkey could be in an irredentist foreign policy trend. Demirel, in one of his articles, stated that, "our relations with our brothers in Central Asia must not frighten any body. These relations rely on the notions of mutual interest, mutual trust, and the love and respect each of them stemming from history."²⁴²

Demirel's optimism and initiatives towards the Turkic world did not find positive reflections among the Turkish nationalists. This was mainly due to Demirel's cautious attitude during the Nagorno Krabakh conflict.²⁴³ Demirel was accused of not supporting the Elchibey administration, which was ready in all terms to cooperate

²³⁸ James Wilde, "The Phoenix of Turkish Politics," *Time*, 10 February 1992.

²³⁹ Bal, *The Rise and Fall of The Turkish Model...*, p. 51.

²⁴⁰ Robins, p. 280.

²⁴¹ Mustafa Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and The Caucasus," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004), p. 5.

²⁴² Süleyman Demirel, "21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Dış Politikası," *Yeni Türkiye* 3, no. 1 (March April 1995), p. 9. "Orta Asya'daki kardeşlerimizle ilişkilerimiz kimseyi korkutmamalıdır. Bu ilişkiler her biri kaynağını tarihten alan karşılıklı çıkar, güven, sevgi saygı üzerine kuruludur."

²⁴³ It must be noted that Demirel strongly objected the claims that his cabinet acted reluctantly towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In one of his speeches, Demirel stated that "What should the government do and what we did not?" *Milliyet*, 12 May 1992.

with Turkey.²⁴⁴ The Turkish nationalists did not view the issue as one of foreign policy, but as a domestic concern of Turkey.²⁴⁵ As a second indicator, Turkish nationalists blamed Demirel of not cooperating with them, especially with Türkeş and to rely on his social democrat government partners.²⁴⁶ The “active policy” criticisms of the Turkish nationalists in that period were directed mostly to Demirel’s policies.

To sum up, Demirel joined the enthusiastic atmosphere at the beginning of the 1990s. His optimistic discourse continued during his premiership. Demirel was probably aware of the limits of Turkey. Thus his enthusiastic statements were not supported with concrete steps as was in the case of Azerbaijan’s domestic and international troubles.²⁴⁷ He was rather interested in possible areas of cooperation- especially in the realm of economic and cultural cooperation with the Turkic republics which he saw as a new hinterland for Turkey. In the following years, during his speeches after the end of his presidency Demirel made statements proving this fact. In one of them, he declared that Turkey assisted these countries to prove that it was a great power.²⁴⁸ In another statement, Demirel claimed that Turkey’s

²⁴⁴ Even years after the end of the War, these criticisms continued. For example, Andican stated that “the perspective that Russia will restrain Armenia if Aliyev holds power instead of Elchibey, has bankrupted which was developed by Demirel-Aliyev” Ahad Andican, *Değişim Sürecinde Türk Dünyası* (İstanbul: Emre Yayınları, 1996), p. 183.

²⁴⁵ *Türkiye*, 22 June 1993. Demirel’s attitude towards the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was also criticized by the members of his party. Coşkun Kırca, then a member of the True Path Party, urged the government to intervene the conflict to stop Armenian forces. According to Kırca, NATO would also have supported Turkey against Russian influence in the region. Coşkun Kırca “Türkiye Müdahale Etmek Zorundadır,” *Yeni Forum* 13, no. 6 (June 1992), p. 55.

²⁴⁶ For example, Aydın Yalçın intensely criticized the government of the time due to its attitude towards the Azeri-Armenian conflict. See Aydın Yalçın, “Liderlik Sınavı,” *Yeni Forum* 12 (June 1992), pp. 4-7.

²⁴⁷ Even in the most intense days of the Azeri-Armenian War, Demirel did not opt to use aggressive policies towards Armenia. This was criticized even by moderate politicians such as Mesut Yılmaz. Yılmaz criticized Demirel as being diffident in the Nagorno-Karabakh case. *Milliyet*, 8 March 1992.

increasing profile in Eurasia contributed to its membership in the EU.²⁴⁹ These statements clarify that Demirel's interest in the region was not only due to a sentimental tendency, but also to a practical need related to the changing dynamics of Turkey politically and economically which were described above in this study.

Alparslan Türkeş, the third prominent political figure of the euphoria period held a unique position during this process. His prominence did not stem from his official position as was in the cases of Özal and Demirel, but from his political background. He was known for his Pan-Turkist attitude during the World War II, which would let him be adjudicated with other Pan-Turkist figures of the time during the famous Racism-Turanism Case in 1944.²⁵⁰ Among the other defendants he was the only leader who would gain political legitimacy by taking the leadership of a political party. However, the Turco-Islam trend of the 1970s also influenced Türkeş's Nationalist Action Party and radical claims lost momentum among the Turkish nationalists during this decade.²⁵¹

Seven years after the 12 September 1980 coup, in 1987, Türkeş regained his political rights with a referendum.²⁵² One of the most important aspects of the "new"

²⁴⁸ Süleyman Demirel, "Sovyet İmparatorluğu Dağılıncı Avrasya Siyasi Coğrafyası Oluşturdu," in *Adriyatik'ten Çin Seddi'ne Avrasya ve Demirel*, ed. Hulûsi Turgut (Ankara: ABC Basın Ajansı, 2001), p. 48.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

²⁵⁰ In the case, Alparslan Türkeş with other 22 defendants, "were charged with establishing secret organizations in order to overthrow the government, making propaganda of racist and Turanist ideologies, opposing the constitution, humiliating the spiritual personality of the Grand National Assembly and the government and counteracting national interests" Murat Kaya, "Reha Oğuz Türkan and Pan-Turkist Movement in Turkey (1938 - 1947)" (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005), p. 125.

²⁵¹ For the rise of Turco-Islamist trend in the Nationalist Action Party during the pre-12 September period, see Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet Ocak Dergah: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), pp. 54-56.

²⁵² In the referendum (on 6 September 1987) he lost by the narrowest of margins: 50.24 % of the voters voted 'yes' whereas 49.76 % voted 'no'. Zürcher, p. 284.

Türkeş policies, were making peace with the state elite.²⁵³ The most useful tool to realize this aim could be to provide a link between Turkish nationalism and the state elite. Türkeş stubbornly and consistently continued this policy with the exception of an election alliance with the Welfare Party during the 1991 parliamentary elections. Along with other factors, such as the Kurdish Question, the emergence of the Turkic republics could be instrumentalized in creating a rapprochement between Turkish nationalists and the state elite.²⁵⁴

The emergence of Turkic republics came just at such a conjuncture. This was a welcomed event for Türkeş. Türkeş could not derive popular support from this phenomenon; however he saw important gestures from the political elite of the time.²⁵⁵ Türkeş was included in the official visits even though he had no title in terms of representing the state.

The emergence of the Turkic republics and their initial enthusiastic discourse towards Turkey increased the political legitimacy of Türkeş.²⁵⁶ Thus, he managed to become one of the most prominent figures of the euphoria period even though he had no official title. However, at the end of the day, neither Türkeş nor his political movement could acquire concrete gains from this process.

²⁵³ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun*, p. 25.

²⁵⁴ In the previous chapter, it was stated that, “the National Survival (*Milli Beka*) case is one of the two significant pillars on which Turkish nationalism rested. Kurdish Question, during the early 1990s was instrumentalized by both the Turkish nationalists and the state elite in order to revitalize this national survival concern. This fact seems to have been influential in the creation of a pro-nationalist atmosphere which would also increase the enthusiasm towards the emergence of the “Turkic world.”

²⁵⁵ For example, Türkeş was invited to Demirel’s visit to Central Asia in April 1993 even though Türkeş had no official title. Demirel invited Türkeş by saying that “Your presence will exhilarate and honor us.” Alıcı, p. 82.

²⁵⁶ The legitimacy that Türkeş derived from the emergence of the Turkic republics was so striking that, it was even thought that Türkeş was “the spokesman of Demirel in the case of the Turkic world.” *Milliyet*, 4 May 1992.

The above-said three leaders were from the different fractions of the right-wing political background. However, pro-leftist leaders such as Bülent Ecevit and Erdal İnönü also joined the initial atmosphere. For example, Ecevit defended the establishment of a “Ministry of Outside Turks.”²⁵⁷ For Ecevit, the development of relations with the Turkic republics under certain frameworks could create effective lobbies for Turkey.²⁵⁸ Erdal İnönü, on the other hand, joined the Turkic world Congress which was backed by Türkiye’s Nationalist Work Party.²⁵⁹

To sum up, during the euphoria period, the discourses and actions of the political leaders of the time served to the enthusiastic atmosphere. The most important political figures of the time were strongly interested in the idea of creating a “Turkish Commonwealth,” but with different motivations. Özal aimed to re-increase the strategic importance of Turkey, which was in a sharp decline after the end of the Cold war and find new markets to the already transforming Turkish economy. Demirel was in a more practical line not only for Turkey but also for himself. For him, Turkey was in need of new cooperation areas and his government was in need of the indirect support of Türkiye. Thus, giving reference to a future possible Turkic integration could be useful for Demirel. Türkiye, in a quite different sense, dreamed of realizing his political movements’ a half century year long goals. The interest shown even by leftist political leaders of the time clarifies the amount of enthusiasm among the public opinion in the initial years. In sum, all of these leaders were considerably eager to get involved in this issue, but none of them could make a concrete contribution to the process.

²⁵⁷ *Milliyet*, 28 March 1990.

²⁵⁸ *Milliyet*, 28 March 1990.

²⁵⁹ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 239.

Turkish Nationalists: The Victorious Side

Turkish nationalists were the most welcoming part of the Turkish public opinion towards the emergence of the Turkic republics.²⁶⁰ In the words of Yalçın Toker,

We are living the days that our dreams come true. Thank god that, a Turkish belt has been created from the Adriatic to the Wall Of China, where Ezan is heard and flags with Crescents are waved... The Turkic world is now under the wings of big brother Turkey. Big brother Turkey will share everything with them and their problems will be our problems.²⁶¹

On the other hand, Turkish nationalists enjoyed the historical rightness and the superiority of their ideology. Öke's words constituted a well example of this perspective. Öke stated that,

Ecevit will join a meeting organized for the Muslims in Bosnia, the Social Democratic People's Party will defend the Outside Turks... If one had said these words five years ago, he would have been enclosed in an insane asylum. The present developments prove how true the fixations, projections and the prescriptions the Turkish nationalists made are.²⁶²

The contributions of the Turkish nationalists to the optimistic atmosphere in the early 1990s were clear; however there were other aspects in the Turkish public opinion showed a considerable interest in the region, especially during 1991 and 1992.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ In this section, the term Turkish nationalists refer to the group that we categorized as the "Classical Turkish nationalists in the previous chapter.

²⁶¹ Toker, *Büyük Uyanış...*, pp. 254-255. "Hayallerimizin hakikat olduğu günler yaşıyoruz. Allah'a şükürler olsun ki Dünya üzerinde bir ucu Adriyatik Denizin'den başlayan, öbür ucu Çin Seddine dayanan, göklerde ezan seslerinin yankılandığı, burçlarında hilalli bayrakların dalgalandığı bir Türk kuşağı yaratılmıştır. (...) Türk Dünyası şimdi büyük ağabey Türkiye'nin kanatları altındadır. Büyük ağabey Türkiye onlarla her şeyi paylaşacak ve onların derdi bizim derdimiz olacak."

²⁶² *Türkiye*, 30 April 1992. "Ecevit Bosnalı Müslümanlar için yapılan mitinge katılacak, SHP Dış Türklere'i savunacak. Bunları beş sene önce söyleyeni aklından zoru var diye tımarhaneye kapatırlardı. Bugün gelişen hadiseler ülkücülerin bir zamanlar sunduğu tesbit, ileriye dönük projeksiyon ve reçetelerin ne kadar doğru olduğunu vurgulamaktadır."

²⁶³ Not only the pro-nationalist public opinion, but also different journalists from different political backgrounds also showed interest to the developments in the region. For some of them, Ali

The interest of Turkish nationalism in the “Outside Turks” stems from three major factors. At first, most of the intellectuals that contributed to the formation of nationalist ideology such as Yusuf Akçura or Zeki Velidi Togan, had immigrated to Turkey from the near territories. Thus, the nation “imagination” of these people, who were strongly influential in the overall understanding of nation in Turkey, was not limited to the boundaries of the Turkic republics. Secondly, even though Republican Turkey rejected Pan-Turkism and any other kinds of irredentism, Central Asian origins were strongly stressed in the national identity formation process during the 1930s.²⁶⁴ Thirdly, during the cold war years, the main motive of Turkish nationalism was anti-communism,²⁶⁵ which was clearly symbolized with the Soviet Union.²⁶⁶ This caused the creation of the notion the “Captive Turks under communist domination.”²⁶⁷ The hatred of communism was inter-linked with the notion of “Outside Turks” and became a constituting element of Turkish nationalism during the cold war period.

Turkish nationalists, as briefly summarized above, tried to utilize all sorts of opportunities in this case. In domestic politics, they tried to increase their political legitimacy and demanded positions in the state mechanism in order to pioneer the relations with the Turkic republics. As Bora and Can claim, Turkish nationalism had assessed the issue of “Outside Turks” as a component of domestic politics of

Sirmen, “The Countries of the Motherland” (*Anayurt İlleri*), *Milliyet* 27 January 1992. Fatih Yılmaz, “Central Asia Wakes Up” (*Orta Asya Uyanyor*), *Cumhuriyet*, 15 December 1991. Nilüfer Yalçın, “Türkiye’de Dış Türkler Sorununun Dünü Bugünü Yarını” (*The Outside Turks Question In Turkey: Past, Present and Future*), *Milliyet*, 26 March 1990, Hayri Birlir, “Ata Topraklarında 7 Gün” (*Seven Days In The Ancestor Territories*), *Milliyet*, 7 May 1992. The days refer to the beginning of the interviews or series.

²⁶⁴ Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih...*, pp. 253-264.

²⁶⁵ Soysal, pp. 483-515.

²⁶⁶ Taşkın, *Milliyetçi Muhafazakar Entelijensiya...*, pp. 79-135.

²⁶⁷ Alıcı, p. 88.

Turkey.²⁶⁸ On the other hand, Turkish nationalists were eager to cooperate with the political formations in the Turkic republics which they thought to have Pan-Turkist tendencies. However, these groups, such as *Agzı Birlik* (Unity) in Turkmenistan, *Alas Orda* (The army of Alas) in Kazakhstan or *Kayragelis* (Reincarnation) in Kyrgyzstan were evaluated as politically marginal and even illegal in their countries.²⁶⁹ This fact led to democratization demands among Turkish nationalists. For example, Andican stated that “whatever happens in the short term, in the long term the governments in the Turkistan should give their places to the democratically elected powers.”²⁷⁰

Moreover, the nationalism understanding of these political groups was not led by Pan-Turkism but a local understanding of nationalism.²⁷¹ The Popular Front in Azerbaijan had a more Azeri nationalist sense. The *Birlik* movement in Turkmenistan had also a Turkmen nationalist character.²⁷²

Turkish nationalists had a great share in creating an optimistic atmosphere in the Turkish public opinion towards the Turkic republics. The conflicts of the time which were symbolized mostly as Muslim-Christian conflicts (i.e., The Wars in Bosnia, Azerbaijan and Chechnia) served the continuation of this atmosphere. However, along with many other factors, Turkish nationalists themselves were a significant determinant of the end of the euphoria period. Their claims could not gain ground among the state elite, especially among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials who were known for their conservative understanding of foreign policy-making. This was

²⁶⁸ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 218.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ahad Andican, “21. Yüzyıla Doğru Türkistan Cumhuriyetleri,” *Yeni Forum* 14, no. 8 (August 1993), p. 18.

²⁷¹ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 223.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 221.

an issue of criticism among the nationalist public opinion. For example, Ali Karaosmanoğlu, in one of his articles, criticised the bureaucratic foreign policy making style and offered a multi-dimensional model.²⁷³

In the first half of the 1990s, Turkish nationalism did not gain popular support. After the 1995 parliamentary elections, even there was a fertile ground for the rise of a nationalist party, the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) lost its place in the Turkish Assembly. The “partners” of Turkish nationalists in the Turkic republics, on the other hand, were eliminated in their countries.

For Turkish nationalists, the responsibility for the relative failure of relations with the Turkic world belonged to the state elite and their incapability of practicing active policies towards the region was the most important factor in terms of the loss of initial enthusiasm.²⁷⁴

External Factors: The Encouragement of the West

As discussed earlier, Turkey, since the very early days of its modernization process, attached great significance to the reactions of the West to the developments in Turkey, and this was some sort of a state policy for the Republic of Turkey. Thus, among with other factors, the Western support for Turkey’s leadership projections in the Turkic world would play partly a role for increasing the interest of the Turkish public opinion in Central Asia. Any possible encouraging statement from the Western politicians or the media would increase Turkey’s interest in the Turkic republics and it became so.

²⁷³ Ali Karaosmanoğlu, “Bürokratik Dış Politikayı Aşmak,” *Yeni Forum* 13, no. 10 (October 1992), pp. 45-47.

²⁷⁴ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 214.

Both the Western media and politicians made optimistic statements about the emergence of the Turkic republics. *The Daily Telegraph* of England described the new situation as the re-emergence of an old empire while *Jane's Defence Weekly* made more suitable assessment by saying that Turkey is a growing power in a region of change.²⁷⁵ *The Economist* noted that Turkey is the star that shows the Turkic republics their way. The German newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* named this process “the big revenge that Turkey was taking from the United Kingdom and Russia and for *Der Spiegel*, Turkey was the Star of the East.²⁷⁶ It is not convenient to see the Western politicians and the media as a monolithic bloc, but nearly all of the groups in Turkey acted in this manner.²⁷⁷ In this point, it is useful to illustrate the possible motives for the Western politicians to make such optimistic statements.

First, the end of the Cold war and the disintegration of the Turkic republics was a welcoming event also for the Western world. Thus, any development which would cause the loss of Russia's impact in any region would be a positive phenomenon for the West. Moreover, in the early days of independence, the Turkish media welcomed the fact that the U.S.A gave new responsibilities in the region to deal with.²⁷⁸

Secondly, the Central Asia region, which was of critical importance, was thought to be under the influence of Islamic Republic of Iran. After the Islamic Revolution, Iran preserved its “export of revolution” discourse during the 1980s.²⁷⁹ This was one

²⁷⁵ Bal, *The Rise and Fall of The Turkish Model...*, p. 109.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Meryem Kırımlı and Dilek Temiz, “Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türk Cumhuriyetlerine Yönelik Türk Dış Politikası,” in *21 Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikası*, ed. İdris Bal (Ankara: Nobel, 2004), p. 450.

²⁷⁸ *Milliyet*, 22 January 1992.

²⁷⁹ For an account of Iran's export of revolution policy, See Iffat S. Malik, “The Role of Islam in Post-Revolution Iranian Foreign Policy,” The Institute of Strategic Studies, available from http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2000_files/no_4/article/8a.htm accessed [12 February 2010].

of the most frightening aspects of the Islamic Revolution in Iran from the point of view of the Western World.²⁸⁰ The Central Asian republics and Azerbaijan, for the West, were subject to such a threat. Turkey, with its secular regime and relatively stable democracy, seemed to be a much more suitable option for the West in order to fill the power vacuum in the region instead of Islamic Republic of Iran.²⁸¹ This factor also brought the issue of the Turkish Model on to the agenda, which was intensely discussed by the Western politicians and in the press during the early 1990s, a period that coincides with the euphoria period.

Thirdly, Turkey more or less had long-standing ties with the West. Thus, if the West had planned to engage in the region, it was impossible to find a more convenient bridge than Turkey, which was eager to play such a role.

The Western world supported Turkey's possible future initiatives towards the regions due to the above-said factors. Not only the politicians, but also the press organs supported such possible attempts. Interestingly, this was not a support stemming from Western interests, but there were also statements which sincerely claimed that Turkey had caught the chance of being a new super-power of the world politics. Interestingly this was also welcomed among the nationalist intelligentsia who were traditionally sceptical towards the West. As a clear example, Toker took quotes from the European press. According to him, *Der Standard* from Austria referred to one of the most famous statements of the time by pointing out that Turkey, stretching from the Adriatic to China had been born and Turkey was becoming a superpower.²⁸² Moreover, the statements of the Turkic leaders also

²⁸⁰ *Milliyet*, 01 January 1992.

²⁸¹ M.E Ahrari, "The New Great Game in Muslim Central Asia," *Mc Nair Paper* 47 (1996), p. 63.

increased Turkey's enthusiasm. For example, Uzbek President Kerimov stated that "I announce to the whole world that my country will go forward by the Turkish route."²⁸³ Kyrgyz president Akayev also stated that, "Turkey is a morning star that shows the true path to other Turks."²⁸⁴

The Western interest in Turkey's initiatives towards the Turkic Republic followed a similar path to that of the flow of events in the euphoria period. This interest first occurred in an enthusiastic manner, which led to numerous optimistic predictions about Turkey's future role in the region. Afterwards, this optimism recorded a steady decline. Ironically, this decline happened due to the same reasons as the existence of optimism. The scope of the Iranian Threat had been overestimated by the West and as time passed the idea of locating Turkey as a barrier against Iran in the region began to be seen as an outdated instrument. Secondly, Russia with its well-known Near Abroad Doctrine, which will be given below made a real return to the region with a motivation that the Western countries could not oppose.

The Western support of Turkey's possible leadership in the region became a short process, just like Turkey's initial enthusiasm. The Western support played a certain role for Turkey's enthusiasm. In fact, Demirel, in an interview revealed this fact by stating that Turkey had seen itself as the emissaries of Europe in Central Asia and Turkey could take Western values to Central Asia.²⁸⁵ In the absence of such a support, the Turkish political elite would be less motivated in pursuing a leadership policy in the region. This was not the case for Turkish nationalists and the loss of initial support became a subject of criticism. However, it is inevitable to admit that

²⁸² Yalçın Toker, *Büyük Uyanış* (İstanbul: Toker Yayınları, 1992), p. 256.

²⁸³ *The Independent*, 21 December 1991.

²⁸⁴ İdris Bal, "The Turkish Model and the Turkic Republics," *Perceptions* 3, no. 3 (September-November 1998), p. 6.

²⁸⁵ *Financial Times*, 07 March 1993.

the Western support for promoting a Turkish Model to the Turkic republics was rootless for two reasons. Firstly, as Bal argues, Turkey was not a successful practitioner of this so-called Turkish Model, due mostly to the escalation of the Kurdish issue.²⁸⁶ Secondly, the Turkic republics did not demand the application of this model in their countries. The leaders of these states were rather in favor of getting Western direct investment for their countries and any of the common historical, cultural or ethnic ties constituted significance in this case. Just as the Turkic republics were for the Turkish elite in terms of reproving Turkey's significance to the West, Turkey was crucial for the Turkic republics in terms of being an instrument attract Western investment to their countries.

The Outcomes of the Initial Optimism: Congresses, Agreements and Official Visits Between 1991 and 1995

Turkey's initial optimism towards the Turkic republics found direct reflection in the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. The demands of the Turkish nationalists which were conceptualized under the abstract definition of active policies seemed to be shared by the state elite and by different institutions in Turkey.

The activism in the euphoria period can be put into three categories. The first one is the congresses between Turkey and the Turkic world. The most significant ones were the Turcophone States Presidential Summit and the Turkic world Friendship and Cooperation Congresses. The first one was an official inter-presidential meeting whereas the latter had a semi-official character. Secondly, the mutual visits searching for possible areas of cooperation led to an impetus in the relations. It must be noted that the Turkic republics, at different levels of enthusiasm, of course, were keen to

²⁸⁶ Bal, *The Rise and Fall of The Turkish Model...* , p. 128.

attract Turkey's interest to the region in the half of the decade. Thirdly, the euphoria period recorded a huge inflation of bilateral and multilateral agreements. Turkey was criticized for making promises over its capacity during that time. These agreements constituted the basis of these exaggerated promises and thus, assessing them will be helpful to understand Turkey's failures in conducting logical policies towards Turkic republics.

Turkey, as said previously, followed the developments in the Soviet Union carefully on the eve of disintegration. However, this did not prevent visits from Turkey to Central Asia and Trans-Caucasus. Even before the independence of the Turkic republics, there were visits from Turkey to these republics by utilizing the atmosphere of freedom of the Gorbachev administration. The first large-scale official visit to the region was made in March 1991 by the leadership of Özal, president of the time.²⁸⁷ This visit was interesting interesting for two reasons. First, the visit schedule included countries such as Ukraine, to give the message that Turkey did not seek Pan-Turkist aspirations. Secondly, numerous businessmen participated. This also shows significance of economic motives of Turkey's interest in the region. The Turkic republics, for Turkey in principle, were a new great potential for economic and commercial initiatives.

This visit found reflections from the Turkic republics. In May 1991 Turkey hosted the Kyrgyzstan Prime Minister in Ankara, and one month later in June the President of Tajikistan S.S.R was hosted in İstanbul.²⁸⁸

After the summer of 1991, which was of critical importance for the disintegration process of the Soviet Union, in September 1991 Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan S.S.R, visited Turkey. This visit gave birth to a Joint Declaration of

²⁸⁷ Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler," p. 373.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 374.

Aims and Targets, which was the first treaty between Turkey and a leader of a Turkic community which foresaw concrete obligations for the signatories in terms of cooperation.²⁸⁹

September of 1991 witnessed an important step forward. Rather than inter-presidential high-level meetings Turkey decided to send a group of officials to the region to understand the technical limits and potentials of cooperation. This group, which consisted of ambassadors such Bilal Şimşir, Kurtuluş Taşkent and Halil Akıncı paid a five-day long visit to Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan between 12 and 17 September 1991.²⁹⁰ The timing of this visit was of great significance. Turkey was the first state to send a group of diplomats to the region.

Turkey was the first state to recognize all of the states in Central Asia and Trans-Caucasia in mid-December of 1991.²⁹¹ After this, in fact on the same day as the recognition, Uzbek President Islam Kerimov paid a visit to Ankara. At the end of 1991, Turkey abandoned its Moscow-centered policy.²⁹² In January of 1992, Ayaz Muttalibov from Azerbaijan and Askar Akayev from Kyrgyzistan visited Turkey in order to sign Friendship and Cooperation Treaties.²⁹³

Turkey was then quite self-confident of its position. Hikmet Çetin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid a visit to the Turkic republics in March 1992. Prime Minister

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 376.

²⁹¹ The Turkic republics were officially recognized by Turkey in the same day as they proclaimed their independence. The official recognition dates of the Turkic republics by Turkey are as follows: Azerbaijan: 9 November 1991, Uzbekistan: 16 December 1991, Kazakhstan: 16 December 1991, Kyrgyzistan: 16 December and Turkmenistan: 16 December 1991
<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.tr.mfa?ede60537-9169-4b35-a43b-1471fc7eaf08>. [01 April 2010].

²⁹² Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum...", p. 3.

²⁹³ Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler," p. 379.

Demirel's Central Asia tour followed this visit two months later. Two years after independence 1200 delegations had visited the Turkic republics and the Central Asian region.²⁹⁴

Most of the mutual visits were made before the first Turkophone States Presidential Summit, which was held in October 1992. The relative failure of this congress, which will be evaluated below, gave a big blow also to the number of visits. These visits were the typical products of Turkey's misperceptions about the Turkic republics. Not only the issues discussed during the visits, but also the public speeches that the leaders made during these visits clarify the fact that the relations lacked a foundational basis and especially the Turkish side was satisfactorily aware of the limits of cooperation. The agreements signed as a result of these visits needs to be evaluated at this point as another outcome of the initial euphoria.

Between the mid-1990 and the last days of 1992, there were 86 agreements, protocols and joint declarations signed.²⁹⁵ Among these, Azerbaijan had the most diplomatic documents with 37 agreements, protocols and joint declarations.²⁹⁶ Azerbaijan was followed by Turkmenistan with 20 officially signed diplomatic documents whereas Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzistan had 15, 13 and 11 diplomatic conducts, respectively.²⁹⁷

The contents of the agreements, in general, constituted similar characters. These were mostly about Turkey's infra-structural assistance to the Turkic republics. With no exception, the Turkic republics signed technical cooperation treaties with Turkey

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹⁵ T.C Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, *Türkiye İle Türk Cumhuriyetleri ve Türk Toplulukları Arasında Yapılan Anlaşmalar, İlişkiler ve Faaliyetler* (Ankara: T.C Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1993), pp. 13-476.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 13-14.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 175-476.

such as telecommunication or transportation. Secondly, cooperation was visible in the cases of health services and education. Tourism was another issue of the agreements signed with the Turkic republics.

Azerbaijan was the only Turkic state to have a border with Turkey. Thus, Turkey signed agreements with Azerbaijan about the new situation of the border gates and the transportation among these states over the Aras River.²⁹⁸ The geographical closeness factor with Azerbaijan seems to have increased the number of agreements signed with these states.

The agreements, protocols and declarations signed between Turkey and the Turkic republics inform us clearly about the nature of the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics and how these sides perceived each other. From the perspective of Turkey, the Turkic republics had the potential to be a sphere of influence. The agreements signed about the abolition of visa or agreements which aimed to increase economic and cultural cooperation were clear signs of this aim. For the Turkic republics, on the other hand, Turkey was a source of service provision for their nearly miserable technical infrastructure. Indeed, it must be kept in mind that there were diversities within these states. Azerbaijan, during the Elchibey administration, was quite keen to adopt Turkey as a role model in all terms.

At the end of the day, Turkey overreacted to the atmosphere of the euphoria period and made officially signed promises beyond its capacity which led to the loss of Turkey's respectiveness among the Turkic republics. The content of the agreements signed in the first half of the decade did hardly situate Turkey in a stronger position in the region, but harmed Turkey's relations with each of the

²⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

republics. This fact was even admitted in an official paper of the State Planning Organization revealed in 2000, just at the end of the first decade of the relations.²⁹⁹

The last aspect in the first period, which informs us about the course of perceptions in Turkey and the Turkic republics, was the official and semi-official congresses. Just after the independence, various meetings were organized at different levels. Two of them differed from the other meetings because of being much more comprehensive and of their official character. The first one was, with its official name, the Turcophone States Presidential Summit.³⁰⁰ This was an inter-presidential summit with an official character of which the representation of the countries was at the highest level. Between 1991 and 1995 three summits were held.³⁰¹ The second summit was the Turkic world Friendship and Cooperation Congress, which was organized under the influence of Alparslan Türkeş, but gained an official character thanks to the support of Özal and Demirel. Both of these summits were organized during the rest of the decade, but the initial meetings constituted the greatest significance in terms of clarifying the perceptions and expectations of the sides from each other and thus determining the nature of relations during the 1990s.

The first Turkic world congress, which was organized under the ideological influence of Türkeş, was organized between 21 and 23 March 1993, in Antalya.³⁰²

As said earlier, these months passed with the claim of historical rightness for Turkish

²⁹⁹ In this report, it was stated that “Turkey should not make promises that are difficult to keep.” State Planning Organization (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*), *Türkiye İle Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri ve Bölge Ülkeleri İlişkileri Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Raporu* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2000), p. 5. This source will be abbreviated as SPA Report in this study.

³⁰⁰ Georgeon, François, “Pantürkizm Düşü,” in *Türkler: Doğu ve Batı, İslam ve Laiklik*, ed. Stefanos Yerasimos (Ankara: Doruk Yayınevi, 2002), p. 206.

³⁰¹ These Summits were; Ankara Summit (October 1992), İstanbul Summit (October 1994) and Bishkek Summit(August 1995)

³⁰² Bora and Can, p. 239.

nationalists and this point of view found direct reflections on the atmosphere of the summit. Not only Türkiye, but also the nationalist press of the time “sanctified” the existence of such a congress. However, the high-level participation from Turkey did not find a response from the Turkic republics. Almost none of the Turkic republics sent high level representatives. The participants from the Turkic republics were mostly nationalist intellectuals of their countries who had ideological bonds with the organizer party in Turkey, the NAP.³⁰³

The Turkic world Congress ended without any tangible agreement. However, the conclusive declaration of the Congress was of critical importance in terms of understanding what the Turkish nationalists expected during the first half of the decade. After seeing these expectations expressed in the conclusive declaration, it becomes more understandable why the Turkish nationalists overreacted negatively to the realistic policies of Turkey towards the Turkic republics in the second half of the decade. The declaration included an optimistic program by foreseeing

(...) the establishment of a Turkish Common Market, a Customs Union, Economic Research Institute, a common Banking System, Common Alphabet, a Common Media Center, establishment of Permanent Culture Research Comissions.³⁰⁴

The first Turcophone States Presidential Summit was organized on 30-31 October 1992, in Ankara.³⁰⁵ The idea of organizing such a comprehensive summit was born in a series of official visits from Turkey to Central Asia in a delegation including Türkiye. It is questionable what the role of Türkiye was in this case, but the statements

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 240.

³⁰⁴ Zakir B. Avşar, “II. Türk Devlet ve Toplulukları Dostluk, Kardeşlik ve İşbirliği Kurultayı,” *Yeni Forum* 15, no. 306 (November 1994), p. 33.

³⁰⁵ Winrow, p. 18.

of President Özal during the summit revealed the atmosphere that was dominant the Turkish public opinion in the case of the Turkic world.³⁰⁶

On the eve of the summit Turkey aimed to sign a political, economic and a press declaration. However, the only document signed was a declaration which mentioned about an uncertain type of cooperation in the realms of economics, culture, foreign policy and security.³⁰⁷ Winrow explains the relative failure of the First Summit as follows,

The first Turkic Summit eventually concluded with the publication of only one text, the Ankara declaration. This in vague and general terms of the need to develop cooperation in the fields of culture, education, language, security, the economy, and judicial and parliamentary affairs...The Ankara Declaration made no reference to the formation of a Turkic Common Market or Turkic Bank...Another demonstration of the lack of Turkic solidarity, the Ankara declaration made no reference whatsoever to the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, although Turkey and Azerbaijan must have been pressing for a statement critical of Armenia.³⁰⁸

The Presidential Summit of 1992 and the Turkic world Congress of 1993 were both unsuccessful.³⁰⁹ The Turcophone States summits were repeated with the İstanbul Summit in October 1994 and Bishkek Summit in August 1995.³¹⁰ The Second congress, which was postponed twice, was organized under the shadow of criticisms of Russia. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “it is unimaginable to think that a summit based on ethnicity will not disturb Russia.

³⁰⁶ For Özal’s optimism, See this chapter, p. 76.

³⁰⁷ Winrow, p. 19.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁰⁹ However, Demirel preserved his optimism for the summit. According to him, the content of the declaration was not so much important. It was rather important to to organize such a summit. *Hurriyet*, 2 November 1992.

³¹⁰ The İstanbul Summit was planned to be made in Baku in 1993. However, it was postponed twice due to indefinite reasons and finally held again in Turkey in 18 October 1994. Winrow, p. 28.

Turkey takes wrong steps.”³¹¹ Moreover, this summit was more satisfactory for Turkey. Expectations were less and even though the initial optimistic atmosphere was lost, positive steps were taken. For example, this time the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute was included in the Istanbul Declaration. However, the reference to this dispute was not based on ethnic solidarity but on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.³¹²

The Turkic world Congresses, which had a semi-official character at least in the first half of the decade, had a different agenda. In the second Turkic World Congress, which was held in İzmir in October 1994, Türkeş stated that “The Great Turkistan between Tanrı and Altay Mountains must be established again.” However, in this second congress and also in the third congress, which was held in İzmir in September 1995, the main aim was to appease the fears of Russia.³¹³ On the other hand, the participation from the Turkic republics was even lower than the previous congresses.³¹⁴ This reluctant attitude and low level of participation led the Turkic world congresses to be organized in an atmosphere which was quite far from the expectations during the initial days of independence.

The Turcophone States Summit and the Turkic world Congresses were of great significance. First, it helps us to understand the amount of misperception in the Turkish state elite and in the Turkish nationalists. The issues discussed in both of the summits such as the establishment of a Turkish Commonwealth, a common banking system and common Turkic alphabet, were reactionary attempts made against the Western world. This fact justifies the claim here that Turkish interest in the Turkic

³¹¹ *Milliyet*, 19 October 1994.

³¹² Winrow, p. 29.

³¹³ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun*, p. 241.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

world was, in some sense, a result of the disappointment then felt in regard to the West.

Secondly, the uneasy attitude of the leaders of the Turkic republics taught Turkey that there were not only limits for Turkey due to its own political and economic capacity but also the Turkic republics constituted a barrier for Turkey. These summits, in this regard, became functional for Turkey to settle its relations with the region on a more realistic ground which would mean a passage to a new phase of relations.

Realizing the Limits: Routinization of Relations between 1995 and 2000

The first half of the decade, saw a period of optimism fed by numerous factors. For Turkey, concrete experiences would be necessary to understand the unfeasibility of the projections made during the euphoria period. This was because, as Robins put, optimistic atmosphere of the euphoria period could not set a good guidance for the course of developments in the following years.³¹⁵ In the period beginning from the early days of 1995 to the end the decade Turkey pursued more realistic policies towards the Turkic republics along with the existence of ethnic solidarity concerns. As Piccoli and Jung suggest it is possible to argue that following the phase of euphoria, Turkey's foreign policy in the region was characterized by a major emphasis on cultural and economic relations rather than on political ones.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Robins, p. 295.

³¹⁶ Wolfgang Piccoli and Dietrich Jung, "Pan-Turkist Dreams and Post-Soviet Realities: The Turkish Republic and the Turkic States in the 1990s," in *Modern-Day Turkey in the Greater Middle East: Kemalism Faced with Its Ottoman Legacy*, ed. Wolfgang Piccoli and Dietrich Jung (London: Zed Books, 2003), p. 11.

The optimistic atmosphere of the first years did not evaporate in one day. There were root causes in this change of perspective towards the Turkic republics. Every proceeding day convinced the Turkish state elite not to be involved in the region under the influence of the atmosphere of the euphoria period. For Turkish state elite this period meant settling their policies on a more realistic basis. Illustrating the facts of this period will be helpful to assess this perspective change.

The root causes of Turkey's passage to more realistic policies towards the Turkic republics can be divided into three categories. The first is the domestic dynamics of Turkey including Turkey's relations with the West. Secondly, the problems between Turkey and the Turkic republics gave a big blow to Turkey's perception. Even though it was criticized by the Turkish nationalists, Turkey saw that there could be problems between Turkey and a Turkic republic under the shadow of *realpolitik*. Thirdly, the problems between the Turkic nations taught Turkey that these states should not be evaluated as a monolithic bloc. This would cause a dramatic shift in Turkey's Central Asia policy. Lastly, Turkey would begin to be aware of the other influential external factors in the region such as Russia or Iran as an aspect desiring to cooperate with the region directly.

The influence of dominant political leaders on the optimistic atmosphere of the first half of the decade was clarified above in this chapter. Turgut Özal, as the president of the time, made a contribution to the formation of such an optimistic atmosphere. Thus, Özal's death on 17 April 1993 would inevitably affect Turkey's policy-making style towards the Turkic republics. In fact, this was not specific to the relations with Turkey, but also the fact for the overall course of Turkish foreign policy and of the domestic politics. Turgut Özal was, most of the time, accused of conducting foreign policy without consulting and informing the military or the

Foreign Ministry.³¹⁷ By the death of Özal in April 1993, the main barrier for Turkey's traditional pro-Western, so called mono-dimensional and status-quo oriented foreign policy line was again became the only foreign policy norm. Lastly, Özal was a motivating actor for Turkish entrepreneurs who wanted to be engaged in the Central Asian markets. His death also gave a big blow to Turkey's economic activism along with emotional statements based on ethnic and cultural solidarity.

Özal's death was not the only factor to end Turkey's economic activism in the region. As a second domestic factor, the 1994 crisis, which was symbolized by the 5 April Decisions, damaged Turkey's economic activism in Central Asia in two ways. First, one of the two pillars of the Turkish Model relied on Turkey's export-oriented market economy. Secondly, and mainly due to the first aspect, the Turkish economy had grown quite far from keeping the promises that had been made in the agreements in the initial years. Winrow argues the role of the 1994 crisis in Turkey's activism in Central Asia and the sustainability of the Turkish model in the Turkic republics as follows,

The financial collapse within Turkey since June 1994 must have discouraged Turkish entrepreneurs from taking risks in what is still an insecure market... The Turkish economy has suffered a serious decline in industrial production after the sharp decline of the Turkish Lira against the dollar followed by the imposition of the harsh austerity measures in April 1994... Given these difficulties doubts must be raised about the appropriateness of the Turkish economic model in the Turkic republics.³¹⁸

Apart from any other factors, the low-intensity war with the PKK in south eastern Anatolia would direct the attention of Turkish public opinion to this issue. In fact, the sentiments which were generated by the birth of the Kurdish issue could have been a motivating factor for the Turkish public opinion and the state elite as well towards

³¹⁷ Lundgren, p. 95.

³¹⁸ Winrow, *Turkey in Central Asia*, p. 33.

the Turkic Republic. However, in the years of 1993 and 1994, Turkey suffered from its biggest loss in the war with the PKK.³¹⁹ The Kurdish issue itself began to be perceived as a predominant survival issue for Turkey.

As another domestic factor, the NAP lost its place in the Turkish Grand National Assembly after the 24 December 1995 parliamentary elections.³²⁰ In the earlier days of independence, there was a new coalition government in Turkey which needed the external support of the NAP. The need of such a support from the NAP made the Prime Minister of the time Süleyman Demirel, give concessions to the radical tendencies of the NAP, which was said earlier. Now, on the eve of the second half of the decade, any of the possible sides of the government would feel less pressure of nationalism. On the other, the NAP lost its long-standing leader Alparslan Türkeş in April 1997. Since that day, the leadership of the party aimed to move the NAP to a more central-right wing line by putting distance between itself and the Pan-Turkist tendencies.

On the other hand, Turkish public opinion, in the second half of the decade, was busy with two other cases. The first one was a traffic accident that happened in Susurluk in 1996. The details of this event led to the humiliation of nationalism in the public opinion from this event to the 1999 parliamentary elections, nationalism in Turkey was in its worst period in terms of respectiveness. Secondly, the tacit coup of February 1997 not only changed the agenda of domestic politics in Turkey, but also gave a big blow to the perception of the state among Turkish nationalists. In the National Security Politics Report, nationalism was evaluated as a “racist threat along with separatism and Islami fundamentalism by giving the example of nationalist

³¹⁹ Lundgren, p. 96.

³²⁰ In this election, the Nationalist Action Party could take the 8.18 % of the total votes and could not surpass the threshold. Güvenç and Kirmanoğlu, p. 97.

mafia.³²¹ This fact even itself is a clear example of the change in minds of the state elite in Turkey in the last years of 1990s.³²²

Turkey's relations with the EU in the 1990s recorded considerable ups and downs. During the early days of independence of the Turkic republics, namely in late 1991, there was a quite negative perception on then the European Community in Turkey. The criticisms coming from the members of European Parliament due to the human rights abuses damaged the existing negative image of European Community more and more.³²³ After the completion of the Customs Union process in 1995,³²⁴ Turkish foreign policy again tilted towards its pro-Western orientation. The overemphasized interest towards the emergence of the Turkic republics was, in some sense, due to the disappointments in terms of Turkey's European integration process. The momentum that the European integration process regained after 1995 was a prominent factor in decreasing the interest towards the Turkic world.³²⁵ The government of the time presented the issue as if Turkey had become the full member just as another government would do after the Helsinki Summit in 1999.³²⁶ To sum up, not only did the interest of public opinion decrease but also the motivation of the

³²¹ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 441.

³²² *Ibid.*, pp. 440 - 441.

³²³ Gökçen Alpkaya, "İnsan Hakları Konusu," p. 524.

³²⁴ On 1 January 1996 the Customs Union between the European Union and Turkey came into effect, thereby creating the closest economic and political relationship between the EU and any non-member country. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-customs-union-between-turkey-and-the-european-union.en.mfa>. [02 April 2010].

³²⁵ Not only among the Turkish nationalists, this case had also been subject to doubts among the public opinion. Especially, there was a strong belief that the Customs Union process has been completed for the sake of Cyprus. *Milliyet*, 24 Januray 1995.

³²⁶ Murat Karayalçın, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, interpreted the Customs Unin Process as "We will access EU over the Customs Union." *Milliyet*, 6 March 1995. Similarly, İsmail Cem, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1999, claimed that Turkey will "exaltate" with the accession to European Union a few days before the Helsinki Summit as if Turkey was accepter as a full member. *Milliyet*, 7 December 1999.

state elite did in terms of pursuing active relations with the Turkic republics since the aim of re-proving the significance of Turkey already had been realized by the completion of the Customs Union Process.

In terms of regional politics, it took a half-decade long for Turkey to realize the dynamics of Central Asia. In the very aftermath of Cold war, Russia was not thought to intervene in the affairs of the Turkic republics. Russian Federation was not expected to be a barrier for Turkey's activism in Central Asia.³²⁷ Nevertheless, with Kozirev's famous "Near Abroad Doctrine", Russia's return to the region had been officially revealed.³²⁸ It was not feasible to push Russia, and in some cases Iran, out of the Central Asia in terms of politics, economy and even of cultural affairs.

On the other hand, the leaders of the Turkic republics were not keen on the idea of such a change in their region. The dependency relationship with Russia forced them to be engaged with the Russian Federation clearly. It was a new phenomenon for Turkey to realize that Russia was the main actor in the region in all areas and that Turkey could not play a role in the region without at least a "virtual rapprochement" with Russia.³²⁹

³²⁷ To the contrary, there were comments in future possible Turkish-Russian cooperation in Central Asia after Süleyman Demirel's visit to Moscow in May 1992. Prime Minister also interpreted these developments as "extremely positive." *Milliyet*, 27 May 1992.

³²⁸ In Russian foreign policy, this perspective emerged in Kozirev's ministry in 1992. The notion of "Near Abroad Doctrine" can be basically seen as "...a Russian version of the Monroe Doctrine, whereby Russia states that its interests and priorities should be respected in the CIS countries. This doctrine was used to justify the prolonged stay of Russian troops in Central Asia and the Caucasus." Şener Aktürk, "Turkish Russian Relations after the Cold War (1992-2002)," *Turkish Studies* 7, no. 3, (2006), p. 343.

³²⁹ For Sezer, virtual rapprochement refers to "a state of bilateral relations in which public manifestations of state-level adversity and hostility have nearly completely disappeared; the importance of cooperation in a range of fields for furthering respective national interests is mutually perceived and publicly articulated; governments desist from using inflammatory rhetoric so as not to arouse public hostility; and officials keep the lines of communication open in order to safeguard relations against the impact of sudden crisis. On the other hand, a hard kernel of mutual fear, mistrust, and suspicion remains in the minds of the decisionmakers and political elites." Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish Russian Relations: The Challenges of Reconciling Geopolitical Competition with Economic Partnership," *Turkish Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2000), p. 62.

Apart from the disappointments lived due to the realization of cooperation limits and of the dominant factors, Turkey faced serious bilateral political problems with two of the Turkic republics. Turkey's influence in the region was related directly to how these states perceived Turkey in terms of their national identity.³³⁰ However, Turkey ignored this fact and pursued policies on the basis of Turkish model.³³¹ This was also valid for Turkish nationalists. The new, more realistic nature of the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics were found unacceptable by some nationalist-oriented groups in Turkey. These groups had connections with the ultra-nationalist groups in the Turkic republics and in the Turkic communities. This connection led to an unsuccessful coup attempt in Azerbaijan thanks to the assistance of President of the time Süleyman Demirel and the high-level Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³² However, this event gave a big blow to the relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and its pro-Turkish leader Ebulfez Elchibey was the main and in fact only drive for Turkey as a country convincing Turkey on the feasibility of adopting the Turkish Model among the Turkic republics. However, Turkism was not the only dominant political discourse in Azerbaijan and the contest between Turkism and Azerbaijanism had already been won by the latter.³³³ The relations were now quite far from the warm atmosphere of the Elchibey era.

A crisis emerged also between Turkey and Uzbekistan. The Mohammed Salih crisis of 1994, which will be illustrated in detail in the next chapter, made Turkey

³³⁰ Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum...", p. 6.

³³¹ Ersanlı, p. 149.

³³² Enis Berberoğlu, *Öbür Türkler: Büyük Oyun'un Milliyetçi Süvarileri* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1999), p. 108.

³³³ Ceylan Tokluoğlu, "Definitions of National Identity, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1990s," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 4 (July 2005), p. 728.

and Uzbekistan hostile states during the rest of the decade. Uzbekistan has been distant to the idea of Turkey's leadership over the Turkic republics since then.

The above-said developments negatively affected Turkey's perception of the Turkic republics at least at the level of the state. At this point, it must be reminded again that not all the aspects of Turkish public opinion gave up the idea of getting engaged with these states. The change occurred in the discourses of the Turkish nationalists. The initial claim of "historical rightness" evolved into criticism against the state elite and criticized the statesmen of the time for not practicing active policies. The main criticism was being directed at the social democratic Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hikmet Çetin, and more than him, to the pro-Western mind of Ministry officials.³³⁴ On the other hand, there was also a lack of confidence towards the Minister of Culture, Fikri Sağlar, due to his social democrat background.³³⁵

For Turkey's foreign policy towards the Turkic republics, the change occurred in Turkey's eagerness to be involved in their affairs. Turkey never denounced its aim of establishing a closer sense of cooperation with the region based on ethnic solidarity.³³⁶ Nevertheless, the aim of initiating cooperation areas with these states was no longer being fed only by ethnic sentiments. The cooperation efforts included mainly economic areas based on practical needs. Central Asia was an ordinary sub-region in Turkey's overall foreign policy which will be clarified in detail in the next chapter of the thesis. It took nearly five years for Turkey to realize the existence of

³³⁴ Taşkın, p. 185.

³³⁵ Altemur Kılıç was one of these authors. Kılıç revealed his lack of confidence towards Fikri Sağlar in terms of cultural policies, however, contrary to the other Turkish nationalists, Kılıç also noted that he had trusted Hikmet Çetin. Altemur Kılıç, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'da Umutlar ve Tehlikeler," *Yeni Forum* 12 (March 1992), p. 35.

³³⁶ See Chapter 5, p. 145.

an “emotional asymmetry” with these states which could even be realized by the Turkish nationalists during the rest of the decade.³³⁷

The second half of the 1990s was quite different from the first half of the decade in terms of Turkey’s perception of Turkic republics. Just five years after the emergence of these states, Central Asia was not of greatest significance for Turkish foreign policy. As Ersanlı stated, “the Eurasia concept was not an issue of identity for Turkey but a region.”³³⁸ Trans-Caucasus region, which also included Azerbaijan, protected its priority, but this was not due to feelings of ethnic and cultural closeness, but due to Turkey’s vital security concerns.

Apart from the realities of domestic politics, the international conjuncture in the Central Asia region did not permit Turkey to be as influential as it had planned at the beginning of the decade. After the realization of the Russian Federation’s influence in the region, Turkey attempted to act towards Russia as a potential cooperation partner rather than a rival.³³⁹ In fact, Turkey needed good relations with Russia even if it had planned to deepen its ties with the Turkic republics since there was a considerable Russian influence in these states which Turkey had not been able to realize at the beginning of the decade.³⁴⁰ Turkey’s deteriorating relations with the West in 1997 increased the aim of getting closer to Russia. In fact this was a mutual rapprochement. As Tanrısever successfully clarifies, by the end of 1997 both Ankara

³³⁷ The most radical example for this case was a statement of Türkeş. In a meeting in which Gorbachev was also a participant, Türkeş stated that “The Soviet republics gained their independence but they did not get rid of their problems. Would not it be suitable for Russia to pursue a “Big Botherness” policy towards these states just like the British Commonwealth?” This surprising statement had been interpreted as “Did Türkeş give up Pan-Turkism?” *Milliyet*, 30 April 1995.

³³⁸ Büşra Ersanlı, “Türk Dış İlişkilerinde Türkçülük ve Avrasyacılık,” in *Bağımsızlıklarının Onuncu Yılında Türk Cumhuriyetleri*, ed. Emine Gürsoy Naskalı and Erdal Şahin (Haarlem: SOTA, 2002), p. 155.

³³⁹ Ersanlı, “Türk Dış İlişkilerinde Türkçülük ve Avrasyacılık,” p. 157.

³⁴⁰ Graham Fuller and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkey’s New Geopolitics: From the Balkans to Western China* (Santa Monica: Westview Press, 1993), p. 136.

and Moscow recognized that their rivalry was unlikely to produce a clear victory in Eurasia and both countries realized their “updated” capacities.³⁴¹

The most visible example of Turkey’s distancing itself from ethnic-based policies was observed in the Chechnian case of 1999. The government of the time neglected the criticisms coming from nationalist and conservative politicians and public opinion by insisting that this was a domestic issue of the Russian Federation.³⁴² Furthermore, the relations gained a foundational character with the examples of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and Black Sea Naval Sea Force Group (BLACKSEAFOR). Turkish nationalism would have to wait a few years to realize this new situation. It would be possible just in the new century for the Turkish nationalists to see Russian Federation as a potential for cooperation rather than an enemy.³⁴³

Turkey lacked reliable partners as had been the case of Elchibey in 1992. The bilateral relations with each Turkic republic deteriorated. Due to the Mohammed Salih crisis, Turkish-Uzbek relations began to carry all the implications of a hostile relationship. The crisis triggered numerous other set backs in Turkish-Uzbek relations. The natural gas crisis in 1999 caused similar implications on the Turkish-Turkmen relations.³⁴⁴

The Turkish republics had already been reluctant to be engaged in hostile relations with the Russian Federation. When Turkey also started to revitalize its relations with

³⁴¹ Oktay Tanrısever, “Turkey and Russia in Eurasia,” in *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy*, ed. G. Martin Lenore and Dimitris Keridis (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), p. 141.

³⁴² Elif Hatun Kılıçbeyli, “Orta Asya’da ABD Varlığı: İç Hilalden Merkez Bölge’ye Yeni Bölge,” in *Türkiye-Rusya İlişkilerinde İhtilaflı Konular ve Çözümleri*, ed. Gülten Kazgan (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2008), p. 42.

³⁴³ Ümit Özdağ, “Türk Milliyetçiliği ve Jeopolitik,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Taml Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), p. 177.

³⁴⁴ The details of these developments will be given in the next chapter.

Russia due to its practical concerns, the relations with the Turkic republics evolved into a routine being quite far from promising a strong and durable sense of cooperation. The dynamics of domestic politics in Turkey also served the routinization process of relations. The Turkic republics themselves also became much more concerned on their domestic security concerns. The main expectations of these states from Turkey were not different than those of any other Western states. The Turkic republics aimed to pull economic and technical assistance to their country in order to increase their internal authority.³⁴⁵ These root causes led to economic issues became the main motives in pursuing policies for Turkey towards Turkic Relations.

At the end of the decade, the relations did not carry any sense of ethnic, cultural or historical ties like those that had been generated enthusiastically at the beginning of the 1990s. The misperceptions of Turkey towards the Turkic republics led to serious foreign policy mistakes which needed to be repaired again by Turkey.

The Congressess Between 1996 and 2000: Well Indicators of the Shift

Even though the initial optimism did not exist, the Turcophone States Presidential Summit continued also between 1995 and 2000. In this period, three conferences were held. These were the Tashkent Summit, held in October 1996, the Astana Summit of June 1998, and the Baku Summit of April 2000. These summits may have seemed encouraging since they were organized in three of the Turkic republics. However, the declarations revealed in each of these summits were less robust than the declarations in the summits held in the first half of the 1990s. According to the

³⁴⁵ Georgeon, p. 208.

declaration after the Tashkent Summit in 1996, the aim of the participants was basically as follows;

The improvement of cooperation among Turkophone states and nations, continuation of the cooperation in the realms of science, culture and education and to generalize the great cultural legacy of Turkic nations, recovering the Silk Route, generalization of commercial relations among the Turkic nations, cooperation in the management of natural resources such as Oil and Natural Gas.³⁴⁶

The content of this declaration was a sign of how far the Turkic world was from being a political cooperation group as it had been imagined in the initial years. The cooperation aims were limited to cultural and economic areas. Uzbek President Islam Kerimov, as the host of the summit, also stressed that “cultural, historical and economic issues were dominantly discussed and political issues were the last items of their agenda.”³⁴⁷

The Astana Summit, which was held in June 1998, resulted in a weak outcome. The declaration, which consisted of 19 articles, included nearly the same targets, “recovering the Silk Route or cooperation in the management of natural resources such as Oil and Natural Gas.”³⁴⁸ The participating leaders were again reluctant to give spectacular messages. Turkey’s president Süleyman Demirel stated that, “...the leaders of the Turkic republics do not aim to rewrite the history, but to contribute wealth and peace in a large region stretching from Adriatic to the Wall Of China.”³⁴⁹ Kyrgyz President Akayev also emphasized the existence of “economic, cultural and educational cooperation among the Turkic republics.”³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ *Zaman*, 22 October 1996.

³⁴⁷ *Zaman*, 22 October 1996.

³⁴⁸ *Zaman*, 10 June 1998.

³⁴⁹ *Zaman*, 10 June 1998.

In this period, the last summit was held in Baku in April 2000. This summit could not attract the public opinion in Turkey. The mainstream newspapers of Turkey were rather busy with the end of Süleyman Demirel's presidency. Only *Hürriyet*, a mainstream Turkish daily newspaper, dealt with the sixth summit. However, this newspaper handled the summit, which was held in Azerbaijan, as the "Magnificent Welcoming for Demirel" by the Azeris.³⁵¹ On the other hand, not only did the interest of the Turkish public opinion decrease, but the leaders of the Turkic republics showed less interest in the summit. Until this sixth summit, all of the leaders of the Turkic republics attended the five summits. At the Baku Summit, only Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were represented at the presidential level. The problems with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan prevented these states from being represented at presidential level.³⁵²

As said earlier, along with the Turcophone States Presidential Summit, the Turkic World Congresses were other prominent events. The Turkic World Congresses were held annually between 1996 and 2000 with no interruption. However, the congresses seriously lacked the formation of a wide-range attendance from the Turkic republics. The congress was held by the influence of the NAP leader Alparslan Türkeş. Thus, the semi-official character of the congress was important since it provided a political legitimacy for the radical nationalist tendencies in the NAP, at least in the initial years. In the second half of the decade, five meetings were held in different cities of Turkey.³⁵³ In this period, the Congresses in 1997 and 1998 were quite weak due mostly to Türkeş's death and the NAP's failure in the 1995 parliamentary

³⁵⁰ *Zaman*, 10 June 1998.

³⁵¹ *Hürriyet*, 9 April 2000.

³⁵² Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun*, p. 242.

³⁵³ The cities were as follows: Ankara (1996), İstanbul (1997), Bursa (1998), Denizli (1999) and Samsun (2000).

elections.³⁵⁴ However, contrary to the above-mentioned Presidential Summits, the political union aims were kept alive in the Turkic world congresses. For example, in the fifth Turkic world Congress which was held in 1996, Muzaffer Özdağ, a former military officer, stated that,

If a Turkic union is formed in the case of tending towards an economic, cultural cooperation like the European Union, by surpassing the imperialist pressures and traps, it will obviously form a power platform, peace and prosperity area, with regard to its population, wealth and facilities.³⁵⁵

The interesting point is that the congresses in 1999 and in 2000, in which the NAP was the partner of a coalition government, did not also attract a considerable interest even by the members of the NAP. With the exception of a few ministers and deputies from the NAP, the congress was not favored even by NAP members.³⁵⁶ However, it must be noted that even in the congress held in 2000, the demands that were declared in the first congress such as “Permanent Cooperation Assembly” or “Turkic Common Market” were reiterated.³⁵⁷

To sum up, both the Turcophone States Presidential Summits and the Turkic world Congresses were clear indicators of the course relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics. In the first half of the decade, these organizations showed the degree of “exaggerated optimism” and then disappointments. In the second half of the decade, these organizations illustrated how the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics were routinized.

³⁵⁴ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 242.

³⁵⁵ Muzaffer Özdağ, “Türk Dünyası Gerçeği,” Paper Presented in the 5th Turkic States and Communities Friendship, Brotherhood and Cooperation Congress. “Emperyalist baskı ve tuzakları aşarak kurulacak olan, ekonomik ve kültürel işbirliğine yönelecek olan Avrupa Birliği benzeri bir Türk birliği, nüfusu, refahı ve olanakları sayesinde bir güç platformu ve bir refah alanı oluşturacaktır.”

³⁵⁶ Bora and Can, *Devlet ve Kuzgun...*, p. 242.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Concluding Remarks

This chapter clarified the course of Turkey's perceptions towards the Turkic republics with special emphasis on the first four years that are called as initial enthusiasm and assessed the rest of the decade as an outcome of the initial years in order to better understand the scope of the expectations and the realities of the euphoria period. In this manner, the fragmented character of public opinion was noted and how the Turkic republics did not constitute a monolithic bloc was examined. These states were rather much more concerned on their security issues and their own efforts of "identity formation." As Kramer argues, "the political and economic independence of these states were of greater significance than any issue for the Turkic republics."³⁵⁸

In the second chapter, with reference to Parla, it was stated that Turkish nationalism stood on two pillars. On the one hand, there was the Kemalist nationalism relying on the principles of ethnic-cultural pluralism and defensive legal nationalism. On the other hand, there is a type of nationalism which searches for ethnic-cultural unity and superiority of the Turkish nation. The scope of this study has been a well-example for the tension between these two perspectives of Turkish nationalism in the case of Turkish foreign policy making process. Especially due to the developments of the time, the pro-Western perspective of Turkish nationalism was in a crisis. On the other hand, the emergence of the Turkic republics encouraged the proponents of the second face of Turkish nationalism to make their perspectives influential on the agenda of Turkish foreign policy. The initial reaction shown

³⁵⁸ Heinz Kramer, "Will Central Asia Become Turkey's Sphere of Influence," *Perceptions* 1, no. 1 (1996), p. 2.

towards the emergence of the Turkic republics might be evaluated as the victory of the proponents of the second face of the Turkish nationalism. However it must be noted that it is difficult to observe such a tendency in the government programs of the time.³⁵⁹ During the 1990s, eight governments were formed and there was no strong stress on the relations with the Turkic republics on the basis of ethnic solidarity.³⁶⁰ As said in the previous chapters, Turkey had determined Western norms as an integral part of its national identity and the 1990s give no evidence of deviation from this policy.³⁶¹ As Georgeon states, not only the state elite, but also a great portion of Turkish intellectuals chose to integrate their country with Western norms with the exception of some nationalist and conservative groups.³⁶² Thus, it can be concluded that Turkey's initial enthusiasm towards the emergence of the Turkic republics was not a consequence of a deviation from the pro-Western national identity perception, but a consequence of a change in the foreign policy agenda of Turkey due to the disappointments experienced in the post-Cold war era. Under the shadow of these factors, Turkey's perception of the Turkic republics followed two phases, named the euphoria and realization of limits by stating that the perceptions in Turkey towards the Central Asian Republics recorded a steady decline.

The next chapter will deal with the factual aspects of relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics which caused the formation of perceptions outlined in this chapter. Thus, the next chapter will give broader details about the course of bilateral relations with each Turkic state, the role of other influential actors in the region and

³⁵⁹ Gökçen T. Alpkaya, "Türk Dış Politikasında Milliyetçilik," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003), p. 162.

³⁶⁰ Girgin, pp. 91 – 130.

³⁶¹ Ersanlı, p. 152.

³⁶² Georgeon, p. 209.

the general character of political, economic and cultural relations in the 1990s. Such an evaluation is thought to clarify the evolution of perspectives towards the Turkic republics among the state elite and the Turkish public opinion.

CHAPTER 5

THE OUTCOMES OF RELATIONS: POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics proceeded in a contentious manner. The general conclusion about the flow of events in the first decade, namely in the 1990s, is that Turkey's influence less than its own and Western predictions³⁶³ or much less the fears of Russian Federation³⁶⁴ and other countries concerned with the affairs of the region. Nevertheless, it must be noted that if one wants to prove that Turkey became very active in pursuing a leadership policy towards the Turkic republics and managed to become influential in Central Asian and Trans-Caucasus politics, satisfactory evidence can be found.³⁶⁵ In other words, the enthusiastic atmosphere of the initial years of independence did not hinder the attempts for positive initiatives. In this chapter, the disappointments and the positive developments in Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics that were both the outcomes of the initial optimism in the first years of independence will be illustrated.

In the previous chapter, the perceptions and expectations that occurred towards the emergence of the Turkic republics among the different sides of the Turkish state elite and among the pro-nationalist public opinion as well in a comparative perspective were discussed. This chapter will seek to find the reflections of the above-said positive perception towards the Turkic republics in Turkey's political, economic and cultural relations with the region. This chapter, in this manner, will be another tool in

³⁶³ For a account of the optimism in the West, see İdris Bal, *Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic republics: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 107-135, Kırımlı and Temiz, p. 450.

³⁶⁴ Russian Federation opposed strongly to Turkey's activities in Central Asia. See Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish Russian Relations," p. 65.

³⁶⁵ For an optimist evaluation of Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics, see Süleyman Demirel, "Sovyet İmparatorluğu Dağınca Avrasya Siyasi Coğrafyası Oluşturdu," DEİK Council Meeting, 29 June 2000, pp. 44- 45.

order to understand both the reasons for this euphoria and high expectations and the impossibility of such an expected scope of cooperation with the Turkic republics. In doing this, an analytical distinction will be made between the realms of political, economic and cultural relations to clarify that these three areas have both specific character to be examined and there was also a mutual interaction process between these three.

It is suitable to begin the discussion with the political relations with the Turkic republics since this was the most capable area in terms of affecting the course of overall relations. This was not only the fact in terms of relations with all of the Turkic republics, but also it was valid for the fate of bilateral relations with each Turkic republic. Thus, political relations constitute milestones in terms of understanding the nature of relations as a whole.

Until the last decade of the twentieth century, Turkish foreign policy was limited to the perceived threat against communism³⁶⁶ and to various alliances with the Western world which were seen as a whole by Turkey.³⁶⁷ Even though there were signs of change in the 1980s as a result of the changing nature in domestic politics and also in world politics, a real need to shift from the traditional foreign policy line to a more “active trend” could be openly expressed after the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Öniş and Yılmaz consider this shift a multidimensional foreign policy trend as the first wave of Turkey’s foreign policy activism in the Post-Cold war era.³⁶⁸ This was not the case only for Turkey but it was

³⁶⁶ Nasuh Uslu, *Turkish Foreign Policy in The 21st Century* (New York: Nova, 2004), p. 21.

³⁶⁷ Beril Dedeoğlu, “Değişen Uluslararası Sistemde Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinin Türkiye-AB İlişkilerine Etkileri,” in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p. 227.

³⁶⁸ Öniş and Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism ...,” p. 7.

one of the states most vulnerable to the developments of the time. The emergence of the Turkic republics caught Turkish foreign policy in such a critical conjuncture.

The details of Turkey's reaction to the emergence of these states and the underlying causes behind this reaction were given in the previous chapters. The main point of this part of this study is to deal with the details of *realpolitik*; in other words more focus will be given to the fate of political relations between Turkey and the emerging Turkic republics at the time.

Turkey's Attitude towards Turkic republics: A General Overview of the Political Relations in the 1990s

If one counts the perception and expectations of Turkey towards the emergence of the Turkic republics as was done in the previous chapters, it would be suitable to call it as a "welcoming event" for Turkish statesmen, bureaucracy and public opinion. However, if the realities of Turkey's attitude towards the Turkic republics are taken into account, this process could have been labeled a "confusing surprise."

Turkey was not ready to pursue an intelligent policy towards the region for a variety of reasons. Turkish foreign policy showed a fragmented character at this time. President Özal was one side with his active policy-oriented style and the foreign policy bureaucracy with their traditional conservative understanding on the other side. Süleyman Demirel, who would dominate Turkish politics in the 1990s as Prime Minister and the President, was in line with the former in terms of speeches but he was in parallel with the traditional methods in basic principles.

Secondly, the emotional factor that was given in detail previously played a prominent role. Briefly speaking, Turkey was between the feelings of disappointment regarding the West and the hope of gaining a leadership in this imaginary Turkic

world. Under these circumstances, it was an optimistic prediction that Turkey could pursue clear cut and well-decided policies.

Lastly, Turkey was not capable of fulfilling the promises it made during the first two years of independence. It was between the optimistic promises and political – economic realities which were kept it from following a consistent foreign policy line.

Although the above-said causes prevented the application of consistent and intelligent policies towards the region, Turkey never officially gave up the claim of cooperating with the Turkic republics. Moreover, Turkic republics could never constitute a pivotal position in the “official trend” of Turkish foreign policy. Neither in international politics nor in the realm of economics, nor did Turkey present a sense of harmony with the Turkic republics. Under the shadow of these demotivating factors, Turkish foreign policy followed a policy line towards the Turkic republics during the early 1990s as if they were a monolithic bloc, without taking the specific conditions of each state into consideration.

First, Turkey’s policy towards Turkic republics was shaped by two main principles. First was the adoption the so called Turkish Model³⁶⁹ to these states regardless of the real demands of the leaders and political elite of them. Secondly, integrating the Turkic republics to international organizations of which Turkey was a member. Both of these principles stemmed from a delusion which saw these states as if they were similar units with nearly nothing specific to themselves. This misperception would force Turkey to pursue more careful and realistic policies in the succeeding years of the decade and Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic republics would be reshaped by more focus on the course of bilateral relations and

³⁶⁹ For an explanation of the Turkish Model, see Gün Kut, “Yeni Türk Cumhuriyetleri ve Uluslararası Ortam,” in *Bağımsızlığın İlk Yılları*, ed. Büşra Ersanlı Behar (Ankara: T.C Kültür Bakanlığı Başvuru Kitapları 1994), pp. 12 – 17.

attaching greater significance to practical needs so that the sides could benefit from each other mutually as in the case of energy sector³⁷⁰ or infrastructure services.³⁷¹

Turkey's aim of integrating these states into the international organizations recorded a considerable success at first. As one of the first states to recognize the independence of Turkic republics, Turkey was involved actively in completing the membership processes of these states to the United Nations.³⁷² Furthermore, three of these states joined the Economic Cooperation Organization, in fact an outdated organization, with the active and enthusiastic support of Turkey.³⁷³ However, this eagerness could not stop Turkey's "loneliness" on international platforms. A Turkic bloc which would be led by Turkey could never be established. Even if such a bloc thoughts had existed to be established, the Turkic republics sought their leadership in such an organization, which meant a Pan-Turkestanist approach rather than a Pan-Turkist one.³⁷⁴ Moreover, the Turkic republics were not as much concerned about Turkey's regional leadership and cooperation initiatives. They had their own "regional perspectives" and due to this would have sought new regional initiatives among themselves and with the other regional powers in the region, as was especially the case for Uzbekistan.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁰ Carol R. Savietz, "Tangled Pipelines: Turkey's Role in Energy Export Plans," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009), pp. 96 – 99.

³⁷¹ For the struggle among the regional powers of Euro-Asia in order to undertake to develop the infrastructural capacity of the region, See Stephen Blank, "Infra-structural Policy and National Strategies in Central Asia: The Russian Example," *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 3 (2004), pp. 225-248.

³⁷² Mustafa Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus," *Turkish Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004), p. 4.

³⁷³ Hakan Fidan, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Central Asia," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010), p. 115.

³⁷⁴ These views are especially dominant in Uzbekistan. See Anthony Hyman, "Turkestan and Pan-Turkism Revisited," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 3 (2009), pp. 342 -349.

The second principle, the case of promoting the Turkish Model, was a much more problematic issue. First, the so-called Turkish Model was an illusion for the political realities of Turkey. Turkey with its democratic deficits in the 1990s and quite problematic economic structure was far from being a suitable model for these new states.³⁷⁶ This so-called model was backed by the West strongly and maybe due to this reason Turkey owned this discourse so enthusiastically stemming from the conditions from which it suffered in the early 1990s. Secondly, the Turkic republics, with the exception of the 11-month long government of Elchibey, were not keen on adopting that imaginary Turkish Model at least in terms of democratization.³⁷⁷ Even if they were in favor of adopting the Turkish Model, it would be the Turkey of the 1930s or in other words, the “real Turkish Model of the 1990s”³⁷⁸. These states were eager to utilize Turkey as a catalyst in pulling foreign direct investment from the West, as will be discussed below.

Under the burden of numerous shortcomings and political set backs, Turkey managed to reach the Turkic republics politically thanks to the diplomatic insufficiencies of these states. This was because these states had nearly no human resources with which to conduct the foreign policies with the existing staff at the

³⁷⁵ See Svante E. Cornell, “Uzbekistan: A Regional Player In Eurasian Geopolitics?” *European Security* 9, no. 2 (2000), pp. 115-140.

³⁷⁶ Mustafa Aydın, “Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler,” pp. 392- 396. Bal, *Turkey’s Relations*, p. 128.

³⁷⁷ Even though none of the four Central Asia Turkic republics had a pure democratic political structure, their authoritarianism is not at same degree. As Çolak argues, “Central Asian Republics have some common practices which indicate the regimes’ undemocratic nature, it is appropriate at this juncture to distinguish the more authoritarian regimes of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan from the relatively moderate regimes of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.” Yılmaz Çolak, “Nationalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Central Asia,” *Asian Ethnicity* 5, no.1, (2004) p. 48.

³⁷⁸ The term “Turkish Model” was problematic for various reasons. In the realm of economics, Turkey’s liberal economy faced numerous shortcomings during the 1990s. Moreover, the political spectrum was restricted after the coup in September 1980 and the Kurdish issue caused several criticisms from the West towards Turkey.

time.³⁷⁹ However, the cooperation stemming from these practical needs of the Turkic republics did not continue during rest of the decade. It had its own political realities and the Russian Federation, the old and eternal rival, was the most significant political reality of the region. Russia's return to the politics of Central Asia with the Near Abroad Doctrine,³⁸⁰ reminded all sides including Turkey how the *realpolitik* ran in Central Asia. However, as Kılavuz notes, "...although they are regional rivals, Turkey and Russia have mutual interests that would be well served by bilateral cooperation."³⁸¹ Thus, Turkey and Russia gradually realized that it would be better to pursue a policy towards the Turkic republics in cooperation with Russia.³⁸²

In general, Turkey's experience with the Turkic republics taught it not to see the region as a unitary bloc and the fact that the region had its own political realities in the mid-1990s, Turkey had realized that the region could not be an alternative for the West and that the Turkic republics were becoming a threat to Turkey's image in the West rather than an aspect of reproofing itself. As a result of these realities, Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics can be more easily assessed by focusing on the course of bilateral relations.

³⁷⁹ İter Turan and Gül Turan, "Orta Asya İle İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. Faruk Sönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p. 760.

³⁸⁰ For the details of the Near Abroad Doctrine, see Chapter 4, p. 104.

³⁸¹ İdil Kılavuz, "The Security Policies of the Russian Federation: The Near Abroad and Turkey," *Turkish Studies* 1, no. 2 (2000), p. 109.

³⁸² The mutual visits of the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's visit to Turkey on December 14-17, 1997, and former Turkish Chief of General Staff İ. Hakkı Karadayı's visit to Russian Federation on May 18-21, 1998, were signs of a passage to a new era in Turkish-Russian Relations. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Bilateral Relations: Little Aspects Determining The Big Picture

Turkey's failure to realize the diversities between the Turkic republics, which will be clarified below, prevented the establishment of a sustainable cooperation with each of these states. At the time when Turkey understood the impact of bilateral relations on Turkey's overall influence in the region, numerous problems hindered Turkey from being influential in the politics of the region. Thus, evaluating the nature of bilateral relations gains prominence for understanding this "story of failure." However, as Çelik argues, the course of bilateral relations was even more complicated than the relations with the region as a whole.³⁸³

In beginning to evaluate the nature of the bilateral relations, no other country deserves to be the first one to be evaluated more than Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, among the Turkic republics, was the closest country to Turkey geographically and the Azeri language is considerably close to Anatolian Turkish. Even though it was an eleven month-long experience, Azerbaijan was the only state to have a president who viewed Turkey as a model for his country in all terms.³⁸⁴ Finally, Azerbaijan was the state which convinced the Turkish political elite that the imaginary Turkic world would not act together in the name of Turkishness. In the first Turcophone States Presidential Summit, Turkey could not persuade the Turkic leaders to make a joint declaration in the Azeri-Armenian conflict.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Yasemin Çelik, *Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy* (London: Praeger Publishers), p. 130.

³⁸⁴ Ayça Ergun, "Türkiye-Azerbaycan İlişkileri," in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası (1989-2006)*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), p. 247.

³⁸⁵ In this summit, Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, rejected the demands of signing a Press Declaration which named the Nagorno Karabakh conflict an Azeri and Armenian

Azerbaijan was the most determining factor in Turkey's overall relations with the Turkic republics.³⁸⁶ The Elchibey presidency increased the expectations in Turkish public opinion in terms of playing a leadership role in the region. The Azeri-Armenian conflict also kept alive the interest of the Turkish public opinion on the Turkic world and especially the nationalist intelligentsia and the public opinion³⁸⁷ urged the state elite to support the Elchibey regime intensely.³⁸⁸ However, this conflict proved many other things to the state elite and to the public opinion in Turkey. This case also proved the difficulty of creating a unique Turkic bloc which would act on behalf of the ethnic ties.

The overthrow of Elchibey and the new Aliyev presidency in Azerbaijan changed the course of relations dramatically. Aliyev followed a different policy from his predecessor.³⁸⁹ During his presidency which would continue for the rest of the 1990s, different groups tried to get involved in the domestic politics of Azerbaijan in somewhat illegal ways.³⁹⁰ This led to the humiliation of Turkey in that of Azerbaijan and Aliyev criticized Turkey for supporting the opposing groups in Azerbaijan.³⁹¹ In the second half of the decade, the relations with Azerbaijan were better than the first years of Aliyev presidency. However, the warm and exaggerated type of relations during the Elchibey presidency, were far away.

Conflict. Nazarbayev, in this issue stated that "I can't sign this. This is a sensitive issue. We must not make a decision against Armenia in which they do not take place." *Milliyet*, 31 October 1992.

³⁸⁶ For example, see Süha Bölükbaşı, "Ankara's Baku Centered Trans-Caucasus Policy: Has It Failed," *The Middle East Journal* 51, no. 1, (1997), p. 23.

³⁸⁹ Ergun, p. 251.

³⁹⁰ Berberoğlu, p. 100.

³⁹¹ In the "Azerbaijan-Turkey Economic Cooperation Conference," Aliyev stated that "There is a sympathy towards some militant groups who were targeting to destruct the stability in Azerbaijan" *Milliyet*, 31 May 1996.

In the second half of the 1990s, Turkey's Azerbaijan policy was settled on two pillars. First, Turkey tried to repair the negative outcomes of the previous years. Secondly, the relations took a more realist shape by getting rid of the burden of "Friend and Brother Countries" even though it was always used in the discourses of the leaders.

The relations with Uzbekistan taught Turkey the fact that the establishment of domestic stabilization in the Turkic republics was of much more significance than any other issues. Uzbekistan, in this manner, determined its relationship with other states and especially with Turkey over its domestic security concerns. This security-oriented policy prevented the development of a sustainable cooperation with Turkey relying on ethnic sentiments. The underlying causes hindering such a political cooperation between Turkey and Uzbekistan can be summarized as follows:

As said above, the first issue was Uzbekistan's domestic security concerns. Kerimov, by stating that, "...Uzbekistan is a front line state,"³⁹² explained this overemphasis on security. Moreover, Turkey, as it was the case for the other Turkic republics, was the first state to recognize Uzbekistan.³⁹³ The relations in the first three years of independence continued in an optimistic atmosphere. Uzbek President Islam Kerimov was one of the most motivated leaders among those of the Turkic republics in terms of keeping Turkey's interest in the region. He stated that "I announce to the whole world that my country will go forward by the Turkish Route..."³⁹⁴ However, 1994 was a watershed in terms of Turkish-Uzbek relations.

³⁹² Islam Kerimov, *Uzbekistan on the Threshold of 21st Century: Challenges to Stability and Progress* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1999), p. 12.

³⁹³ Cengiz Sürücü, "Türkiye Özbekistan İlişkilerinin Üç Evresi," in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası (1989-2006)*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), p.350.

Mohammed Salih, the most prominent opposition leader in Uzbekistan, escaped to Turkey with a request for political asylum.³⁹⁵ This caused a long-standing crisis and led to the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan during the rest of decade.

Another problem in pursuing relations with Uzbekistan was Uzbekistan's aim of capturing the leadership position in the region.³⁹⁶ Uzbekistan in this manner was involved in serious significant initiatives. Such kind of a leadership effort would harm the relations with Turkey, which were already deteriorated due to the Mohammed Salih crisis between the two sides. Especially after the pro-Islamist Welfare Party's rise to government in Turkey, Uzbekistan went further and withdrew 1298 students in 1997, claiming that some members of the Welfare Party and Uzbek dissidents living in Turkey were trying to turn Uzbek students in Turkey into 'Islamic fundamentalists'.³⁹⁷

As a final cause of the long-standing crisis in the relations, Uzbekistan, even during the first days of independence, was not sincerely eager to adopt the Turkish Model. In the case of economic cooperation, Uzbekistan led the establishment initiatives among the Turkic republics even in the initial years.³⁹⁸ Moreover, the Kerimov regime had been already restricting the political space for the Uzbek public

³⁹⁴ İdris Bal, "Turkish Model as a Foreign Policy Instrument in the Post Cold War Era," in *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post Cold war Era*, ed. İdris Bal (Boca Raton, Fl.: BrownWalker Press, 2004) p. 331.

³⁹⁵ Erhan Büyükkakıncı, "Sovyet Sonrası Orta Asya'da Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Açılımları: Özbekistan ve Türkmenistanla İlişkiler," *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, ed. FarukSönmezoğlu (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p. 798.

³⁹⁶ Cornell, "Uzbekistan: A Regional Player in Eurasian Geopolitics," pp. 126 – 127.

³⁹⁷ Lerna K. Yamık, "The Politics of Educational Exchange: Turkish Education in Eurasia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 2 (2004), p.295.

³⁹⁸ *Milliyet*, 06 January 1993.

opinion³⁹⁹ and the regime was being criticized by the international public opinion due to several human rights abuses.⁴⁰⁰ Under these circumstances, it would be hard to claim that Uzbekistan viewed Turkey as a model.

Uzbekistan's foreign policy was determined under the domination of the President. Thus, Kerimov's scepticism towards Turkey and the Turkish political elite prevented the development of a durable political cooperation. This fact is best crystallized by Kerimov's reconciliation efforts after Ahmet Necdet Sezer became president of Turkey.⁴⁰¹ The relations in the new century are beyond the scope of this study, but it can be concluded that the domestic security concerns of Uzbekistan and the leadership race in the region prevented the sides from engaging in a successful political cooperation. The course of relations with Uzbekistan was significant for Turkey's general perceptions of the region since Uzbekistan, among the Turkic republics, was the most homogenous country in ethnicity.⁴⁰²

While discussing Turkey's position in Turkmenistan's foreign policy, it is not very necessary to talk various aspects. This is because it is hard to talk about the existence of a precise Turkmen foreign policy pursued by professional institutions. Saparmurad Niyazov, the only decision maker in the foreign policy of Turkmenistan

³⁹⁹ For example, Freedom House, a significant human rights organization, has ranked Uzbekistan as one of the countries with the poorest records on democracy and human rights and classifies the country as a consolidated autocracy. Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road* (Singapore: Harwood Academic Publishers, 2005), p. 35.

⁴⁰⁰ For a detailed assessment on Uzbekistan's human rights report, see US Department of State: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor 2004 Country report on Human Rights Practices In Uzbekistan, 28 February 2005.

⁴⁰¹ Büyükakıncı, p. 787.

⁴⁰² According to the data of 1989, Uzbekistan held the greatest number of Turkic and the smallest number of Slavic population in its borders among the Turkic republics. Touraj Atabaki, "Introduction," in *Central Asia and the Caucasus: Transnationalism and Diaspora*, ed. Touraj Atabaki and Sanjyot Mehendale (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 5.

opted to distance his country from multilateral or regional cooperation initiatives.⁴⁰³ This was contrary to the initial efforts of Turkish foreign policy in the region. Even if Turkey did not aim to create a political integration process, it would be pleased by creating a common policy making process. However, Turkmenistan kept itself distant from such kind of political cooperation efforts. This attitude was not specific to a possible Turkic-based cooperation. Turkmenistan applied to the United Nations in order to acquire “permanent neutrality” status and gained this status on 9 November 1995.⁴⁰⁴ There is no question that such a Turkmenistan would not be open to an enhanced type of political cooperation with Turkey.

in terms of political relations, Turkmenistan was not an active partner for Turkish foreign policy in Central Asia. However, the experiences with Turkmenistan showed that the realities of the region were more significant than any emotional aspect. Turkmenistan did not give up its aim of neutrality for the sake of getting involved in a political cooperation with Turkey or any other Turkic republics. Moreover, the natural gas crisis of 1999 illustrated that Turkey was as crucial as the amount of gas it would import from Turkmenistan. The enthusiastic statements of the euphoria period seemed to have disappeared under the heat of natural gas in the late 1990s which can be seen as a clear example of the mutual interaction between the political and economic relations.

Contrary to Turkmenistan, pursued a neutral and passive foreign policy line, Kazakhstan, since its independence, followed a multi-vector politics in its foreign

⁴⁰³ Turkmenistan is quite sensitive about preserving its “Permanent Neutrality” status since its acquisition in 1995. This notion is even used as an asset for national identity construction in Turkmenistan. See Ahmet T. Kuru, “Between the State and Cultural Zones: Nation Building in Turkmenistan,” *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 1 (2002), p. 76.

⁴⁰⁴ Luca Anceschi, *Turkmenistan’s Foreign Policy: Positive Neutrality and the Consolidation of the Turkmen Regime* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) p. 25.

policy.⁴⁰⁵ Kazakhstan became member in international organizations.⁴⁰⁶ Turkey, in this context, was evaluated as one of the –sub-aspects of this active policy. Thus, Kazakhstan was not eager to see Turkey as the leader of Central Asia. Kazakhstan similar to Uzbekistan’s attitude was searching for its leadership in the region.⁴⁰⁷

Contrary to the overall case, Turkish-Kazakh relations were cool even in the early days of independence and Turkey did not constitute a priority for Kazakh foreign policy.⁴⁰⁸ Even in these early, optimistic days, Kazakhstan was the most cautious state against a possible Turkic commonwealth due to its demographic structure.⁴⁰⁹ This fear found reflection in Kazakh foreign policy and thus, Russia, also due to other important factors preserved its critical position in Kazakh foreign policy. This phenomenon was completely contrary to Turkey’s initial expectations, but this was the reality to determine the nature of Turkish-Kazakh relations throughout the 1990s.

The relations with Kazakhstan continued under the heavy influence of economic issues and symbolic cultural gestures in the 1990s and with a fragile character due to the above-said reasons. Ethnic or cultural ties failed to create a closer relationship between these two states. The notion of Kazakh identity was not a determinant aspect in Kazakh politics mostly due to the demographic structure of the country. This is more proof of the claim of this thesis that Turkey perceived the region as a monolithic bloc without any regard to the characteristics of each Turkic republic.

⁴⁰⁵ Reuel Hanks, “Multi-Vector Politics and Kazakhstan’s Emerging Role as a Geo-strategic Player in Central Asia,” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 11, no.3 (2009), p. 257.

⁴⁰⁶ Hatiboğlu, p. 378.

⁴⁰⁷ Hanks, p.257.

⁴⁰⁸ Şule Kut, “Yeni Türk Cumhuriyetlerinin Dış Politikaları,” in *Bağımsızlığın İlk Yılları: Azerbaycan, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Özbekistan, Türkmenistan*, ed. Büşra Ersanlı (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Millî Kütüphane Basımevi, 1994), p. 262.

⁴⁰⁹ According to the 1999 Census, Kazakhs were constituted the % 53.4 of the total populaton. *CIA World Factbook: Kazakhstan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kz.html> [20 March 2010].

The determining role of economic aspects in Turkey's policies towards the Turkic republics has been briefly explained here in this chapter and will be discussed below. Under such circumstances, states like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with political setbacks, limited economic capacities and the few energy resources could not play significant roles in Turkey's overall politics towards Central Asia.⁴¹⁰ The relations with these two states were influenced by the overall atmosphere. To sum up, not only the insufficiencies of these states in political and economic terms⁴¹¹ but also the domestic problems from which they suffered prevented these states from being determining factors of the Turkish foreign policy in Central Asia.

The Course of Economic Relations

The Turkish economy went through a remarkable shift from import substitution and an inward-looking economy to an export-oriented economy and economic liberalization during the 1980s.⁴¹² The success degree of this transformation is not a main concern of this thesis. The point that makes this transformation important for this study is its explanatory role in terms of understanding the economic motives behind Turkey's interest to the Turkic republics

Briefly speaking, the opening up of the Turkish economy to the world market required the existence of new markets. During the 1980s, the Middle Eastern region functioned for Turkey to increase its export capacity. However, it must be noted that

⁴¹⁰ For example Tajikistan suffered from a long-standing civil war between 1992 and 1997. Stuart Horsman, "Uzbekistan's Involvement in the Tajik Civil War 1992-97: Domestic Considerations," *Central Asian Survey* 18, no. 1 (1999), pp. 37 – 38.

⁴¹¹ For example, the debt of Kyrgyzstan was higher than half of its GDP at the end of the 1990s, Boris-Mathieu Pétric, "Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan or the Birth of a Globalized Protectorate," *Central Asian Survey* 24, no. 3 (2005), p. 331.

⁴¹² Altunışık and Tür, p. 83.

the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988 caused this increase rather than the pure success of a structural transformation in Turkish economy.⁴¹³ Since it was clear the Iran-Iraq War was a temporary phenomenon and the war between its neighbors presented not only opportunities, but threats to the Turkish economy,⁴¹⁴ any new market to increase the foreign trade volume of Turkey would be welcomed. As Bilgin argues, the Turkic republics with the potential of an economic cooperation based on foreign trade, emerged in such a conjuncture when Turkey moved far from its neighbors while it thought to have got closer.⁴¹⁵

Even in the very early days of independence, Turkish interest in the Central Asian region in terms of managing economic cooperation began to be declared along with the cheers of ethnic solidarity.⁴¹⁶ The economic aspects of the interest in the region stemmed from two causes. First, the region offered a wide range of opportunities for the Turkish investors and for the Turkish economy in general. Secondly, economic relations with the Turkic republics could perfectly function as an asset to give the message that Turkey did not aim to get engaged with the region based on marginal

⁴¹³ “Both Iran and Iraq, as a result of their international isolation, were forced to rely on Turkey as a major source of needed commodities imported from Turkey itself or from the West. By showing no favour to either party, Turkey has become a major trading partner of both... In 1984 and 1985 Turkish-Iranian trade amounted to \$ 230 million making Turkey Iran’s third most important commercial partner after West Germany and Japan.” Evren Altınkaş, “The Iran-Iraq War and Its Effects on Turkey,” *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika* 1, no. 4 (2005), p. 142.

⁴¹⁴ The Iran-Iraq War harmed the Turkish economy along with the benefits it presented especially in the realm of oil pipelines. In the words of Altınkaş “Not only did the Iraqi pipeline to the Turkish city Iskenderun stop functioning, the oil tankers were no longer able to enter the Persian Gulf. When, as a consequence, Iran and Iraq stopped shipping oil, Turkey’s reserves went down at an alarming rate... Another disadvantage of the war was the increasing threat to the Kirkuk- Yumurtalik oil pipeline between Turkey and Iraq. This pipeline had stopped functioning at the beginning of the war. The bombing of it during the war would have meant not only a slowdown or a halt of oil deliveries from Iraq but the loss of transit revenues from the pipeline, of which 690 kilometres passed through Turkey.” Altınkaş, pp. 142 – 143.

⁴¹⁵ Bilgin, p. 31.

⁴¹⁶ Just five months after the declaration of their independence, the Turkic states came together in Bishkek and this meeting had been interpreted as a new step for the formation of “Turkish-Asian Economic Region. The date of this summit coincided with Demirel’s visit to Central Asia. *Milliyet*, 22 April 1992.

political goals, such as Pan-Turkism. The real aim of Turkey could have been presented as the provision of mutual benefits based on advanced and intensified economic cooperation.

As Jung and Pocoli categorize, the economic ventures between Turkey and the Turkic republics were concentrated on four major fields: The allocation of developmental assistance, trade and construction, transport and the telecommunication and the energy sector.⁴¹⁷ This categorization illustrates also a chronological line. In the early years of the 1990s, these republics were thought to be in need of considerable amounts of developmental assistance as clarified also by their leaders.⁴¹⁸ To the contrary, at the end of the decade, the energy sectors dominated the economic relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics. In conclusion, at the end of the decade, the economic relations were pursued on a more equal ground with each of the Turkic states. In October of 1999, the statements made by Yıldırım Akbulut, president of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, were a tacit confession of Turkey's denouncement of the Big Brotherhood claim on the Turkic republics. In the Second Eurasian Economic Summit, which was held in İstanbul, Akbulut stated that, "the relations with the Turkic republics should be held mutually and it would not be proper to expect a one-sided search of interest."⁴¹⁹

Two foundations, namely TİKA (Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency) and Turkish Exim Bank, pioneered Turkey's developmental

⁴¹⁷ Jung and Pocoli, p. 15.

⁴¹⁸ This view is problematic. Even in the first years of independence, the Turkic States had similar humanitarian development rates as Turkey. This is also an indicator of Turkey's socio-economic capacity. See *UN Human Development Report of 1993*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1993_en_indicators1.pdf [01 March 2010].

⁴¹⁹ On the other this conference was held one year earlier under the name of "First Economic Summit of the Turkic States." Even the change in the name of the summit and President Demirel's absence in the summit were clear signs of the change in Turkey's mind towards the Turkic republics. *Milliyet*, 06 October 1999.

assistance from Turkey to the Turkic republics. TIKa was initially established for the purpose of helping transition economies in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans.⁴²⁰ Even though the foundation broadened its target regions in the following years, the Central Asian and Caucasian regions remained major recipients of the donations of TIKa.⁴²¹ From the establishment of TIKa to 2003, Turkic republics such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan received 69.4 % of the all of the of TIKa.⁴²²

The other donor was Turkish Exim Bank. Even though the foundation was not established for a specific goal, unlike TIKa example, Turkish Exim Bank made considerable contributions to the Turkic republics. By the end of 1999, Turkish Exim Bank's overall assistance to the five Turkic republics was 850 million dollars.⁴²³ This donation constituted a vital contribution to the economies of these states even though the initial goal of one billion dollars of donations was neutralized due to financial deficits and bureaucratic obstruction.⁴²⁴

Turkey eagerly attempted to institutionalize its economic relations with the Turkic republics. Without any exception, Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreements, Agreement on the Mutual Promotion and Protection of The Investments and The Agreements on Preventing Double Taxation were signed with each of the Turkic

⁴²⁰ Hakan Fidan and Rahman Nurdun, "Turkey's Role in Global Development Assistance Community: The Case of TIKa," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 10, no.1 (October 2009), p. 99.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴²² "Among these states, 47 % of TIKa's aid went to Kazakhstan, 13 % to Azerbaijan, 9.4 % to Turkmenistan." *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴²³ Bülent Aras, "Turkish Policy in the Former Soviet South: Assets and Options," *Turkish Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000), p. 46.

⁴²⁴ Jung and Pocoli, p. 15.

republics⁴²⁵ These were modest steps when compared to the spectacular aims declared in the euphoria period (such as quitting the Ruble zone or the establishment of a Turkic commonwealth, etc.)⁴²⁶, and did not promise the establishment of ordinary economic relationships.

Foreign trade constituted a significant aspect of the economic relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics. As said previously, the Turkish economy, since 1980, had been moving towards an export oriented model and this model required new markets to increase Turkey's foreign trade volume. The Turkic republics, on the other side, wanted to attract foreign capital regardless of its nationality. Ethnic ties, as it will be illustrated, did not play a significant role in the course of trade relations, however, Turkey and the Turkic republics utilized the existence of these ties to create a convergence in the realm of economic relations.

The course of trade relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics does not constitute an integral aspect of this thesis, but it is significant for two reasons: First, it helps us to illustrate the potential of the economic cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic republics, which was strongly emphasized in the initial years. Secondly, Turkey's foreign trade statistics with the Turkic republics may help us understand how the economic relations affected the course of overall relations and how economic relations were affected by the political realities of the time.

Turkey's foreign trade with the Turkic republics can be evaluated in two ways. First, the overall trade volume in the 1990s can be discussed. This will lead to the clarification of the significance of the Turkic republics in Turkey's foreign trade in the 1990s. Second, the volume of foreign trade with each of the Turkic republics may

⁴²⁵ Kırımlı and Temiz, p. 452.

⁴²⁶ These were the expectations of the then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, at least at the discursive level. See Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya İle İlişkiler," p. 379.

help us reveal the specific aspects of each Turkic republic. As discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey did not realize the diversities in the Turkic republics in terms of foreign policy perspectives. This was valid for the economic structures of these countries. Along with political relations, economic relations also made Turkey realize that the post-Soviet Turkic republics did not constitute a monolithic bloc showing the same or even similar characteristics.⁴²⁷

When the general statistics of foreign trade between the Turkic republics and Turkey are examined, it is easy to claim that the Turkic republics were not be major partners of Turkey's overall foreign trade. Between 1992 and 2000, the Turkic republics constituted only 3 % of Turkey's overall imports and 5.9 % of Turkey's overall export.⁴²⁸ The trade volume did not show a dramatic decline during the 1990s. However, with the exception of 1993, the overall trade volume did not record a desirable increase. Even this increase was mostly due to the usage of Turkish Exim Bank credits.⁴²⁹ As numerical data suggests, both Turkey and the Turkic republics did not become crucial foreign trade partners for each other during the 1990s. Between 1992 and 2000, Turkey constituted only 3.3 % of the overall import that the Turkic republics realized.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷ In March 1992, Muammer Tekeoğlu, a pro-Turkist economist, pointed out that Turkey should take the multi-colored structure of the region into consideration and even the possible conflicts to occur among these Turkic republics. Muammer Tekeoğlu, "Orta Asya İle Ekonomik İlişkiler," *Yeni Forum* (March 1992), p. 37. This caution, when Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics examined years after the 1990s, seems appropriate.

⁴²⁸ Kırımlı and Temiz, pp. 457 – 459.

⁴²⁹ Turkish Exim Bank allocated a considerable amount of export Credits to The Turkic republics. These credits were categorized as the "Credits For Goods" and "Credits For Projects." The amount of the utilities of the each of the Turkic republics from the Ezim Bank Credits are as follows (The numbers in paranthesis show the amount of "Credits For Goods" and "Credits For Projects" ; Azerbaijan: 91.7 million dollars (59.6: 32.1), Kazakhstan: 213.1 (40: 173.1), Kyrgyzistan: 48.1(35.7: 12.4), Uzbekistan: 347.1 (124.6: 222.5) and Turkmenistan: 109.1(75: 34.1) ; At the end of the decade, namely in May 1999, Turkish Exim Bank donated 2.4 billion dollars to the Turkic republics and 1.6 billion dollars of this donation was used. SPA Report, pp. 88 and 151 – 152.

If the foreign trade with each of the Turkic state is examined, it will be seen that how dominant the political realities and the capacity of these states were on the course of economic relations. The foreign trade volume with Azerbaijan did not make up more than 1 % of Turkey's overall amount of import. Even the modest amounts of the late 1990s could increase after the end of the political set backs in 1993 and 1994.⁴³¹

A similar case is valid for Uzbekistan. The foreign trade statistics with Uzbekistan decreased in the periods during the political set backs.⁴³² The Mohammed Salih and the overemphasized security concerns of Uzbekistan led to this dramatic decrease.

The financial capacity of the Turkic republics also hindered the development of foreign trade between Turkey and the region. For example, Kyrgyzistan, a Turkic state with a limited fiscal capacity, recorded considerably low amounts of foreign trade with Turkey.⁴³³

The case of communication and transportation can be quite helpful to understand the limits of a comprehensive cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic world. In other words, thanks to the relations in the transportation and the communication sectors, Turkey realized its economic capacity and also the distance between itself and the Turkic republics by all means.

⁴³⁰ Turkey, in respect, constituted 4.9 % of Azerbaijan's, 2.3 % of Kazakhstan's, 6.12 % of Turkmenistan's, 2.7 % of Uzbekistan's and 0.92 % of Kyrgyzistan's overall export in this period. Kırımlı and Temiz, p. 458.

⁴³¹ The trade volume between Turkey and Azerbaijan recorded in 1993 and 1994 were, 101.8 and 141.3 million dollars which were the lowest numbers of foreign trade between the two countries during the 1990s. Kırımlı and Temiz, 460. For the political turmoils between Turkey and Azerbaijan, see the "Political Relations" section in this chapter.

⁴³² The turn of 1994 – 1995, and 1999, when serious political crisis emerged in the bilateral relations with Uzbekistan, the trade volume recorded lowest numbers as follows, 143.9, 199.8 and 146.6 million dollars. Kırımlı and Temiz, p. 461.

⁴³³ At the end of 1992, the first year of Kyrgyzistan's independence, the trade volume was only 3,2 million dollars and the highest record, which was realized in 1997, was only 57.5 million dollars. From 1992 to 2000, the total volume of foreign trade between Turkey and Kyrgyzistan was only 296 million dollars. Kırımlı and Temiz, p. 462.

As said previously, there was a dependency relationship between the Soviet periphery and the center, Moscow. This was also valid for the transportation sector and it had an impact on the economic relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics in the post-cold war era. In the very early days of independence, Turkish citizens and entrepreneurs had to go first to Moscow in order to reach the Turkic republics due to the route of transportation lines and unsatisfactory number of flights to the region.⁴³⁴ In this manner, political problems and the distance with the region negatively impacted the development of transportation. The negative climate of relations with Armenia prevented the usage of this country as a corridor to the Turkic republics.⁴³⁵ At present, considerably indirect routes are being used for the transportation of Turkish goods. The security problem and the poor treatment of the Turkish goods in many of the ports such as in Novorossisk are other significant demotivating factors for Turkish trade.⁴³⁶

The case of communication showed a different character than that of transportation. Communication was a realm which the relations proceeded as an assistance process from Turkey to the Turkic republics in order to develop the poor communicative infrastructure of the region. Turkey, as a country which was in search of capturing a leadership position in the region and which was also being encouraged by not only the Western world but also by the Turkic republics, undertook the duty of developing a communicative infrastructure. As an initial attempt 12,500 telephone lines and five digital telecommunication operators were equally allocated to each of

⁴³⁴ Turan and Turan, p. 762

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

the Turkic republics.⁴³⁷ Apart from these initial efforts, neither the Turkish state nor Turkish private entrepreneurs played roles that were diverse and superior than to those of other states and companies.⁴³⁸ The efforts in the postal service could not be intensified and numerous projects in this sector, of which the Eurasian Posting Union⁴³⁹ was the most significant, could not be realized.

The last element of the economic relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics is perhaps the most interesting one. The energy sector, especially in the second half of the decade, began to hold a predominant position in the economic relations with the region just a couple of years after the independence. In the early days of the 1990s, the Turkic republics, similar to the other post-Soviet newly independent states, lacked self-confidence mostly in the realm of economics. However, in the following years, the region came forward with its economic potential. The region is the repository to the third largest oil and gas deposits in the world, after the Persian Gulf and West Siberia and the world's second largest producer of cotton.⁴⁴⁰ On the other hand, Turkey was already a promising natural energy resource demander⁴⁴¹ and it was also a country which was eager to play a

⁴³⁷ Ibid., p. 762.

⁴³⁸ In many cases, Turkish companies were engaged in consortiums in the communication sector. See SPA Report, pp.184 – 187.

⁴³⁹ This organization was still being planned to be established at the end of the decade. See SPA Report, p. 181.

⁴⁴⁰ Inomjon Babokulov, "Central Asia: Is There an Alternative to Regional Integration?" *Central Asian Survey* 25, no.1 (2006), p. 81.

⁴⁴¹ In a projection made in 2001, Turkey's demand for energy sources was predicted to have increased by 96 %. Nadir Devlet, "Turkey's Energy Policy in The Next Decade," *Perceptions* 9 (Winter 2004-2005), p.81.

bridge role in the “energy game.”⁴⁴² Apart from ethnic, cultural and historical concerns, the energy sector was also a significant aspect of economic cooperation between Turkey and some of the Turkic republics with the potential that it presented to both sides.⁴⁴³

There has been a growing interest in the energy politics in the last decade and this has led to a huge increase in numbers of studies focusing on this issue. However, this thesis does not prioritize the developments in the energy sector. The aim here is to illustrate the impact of economic concerns and expectations on the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics along with the strong emphasis on cultural and historical ties. In doing this, the role of energy sector in the overall economic relations will provide satisfactory evidence for the claims made here.

Turkey, in heading towards the Caspian energy resources, had three main objectives. These were, as Jung and Pocoli categorize, “economic benefits deriving from transit fee income; the reduction of Turkey’s dependence on Russian gas and Middle Eastern oil; and employment opportunities that pipeline constructions would created in the less developed east of Turkey.”⁴⁴⁴ The Turkic republics held the 5.1 % of the world’ s oil and natural gas reserves, and 1.7 % of the world’s oil and natural gas production had been done.⁴⁴⁵ From an economic point of view, these resources

⁴⁴² This is stil an integral aspect of Turkey’s foreign economic policy. See Roman Kupchinsky, *Ankara Seeks Role as East-West Energy Bridge*, Radio Free Europe Website, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078367.html> [02 May 2010].

⁴⁴³ In the Second Summit of ECO, the attending countries agreed on the idea that the rich energy potential of the region should be used in a way to satisfy the needs of the member countries and also in a way to carry these resources to the international markets.” *Milliyet*, 07 July 1993. This joint statement reveal that even in the early days of independence, both Turkey and the Turkic republics were aiming to use the energy potential of the region as a mutual benefit asset.

⁴⁴⁴ Jung and Pocoli, p. 17.

⁴⁴⁵ SPA Report, p. 190.

seemed promising for Turkey, yet the energy export issue was rather pursued as a new Great Game in the region called energy politics.⁴⁴⁶ Political concerns, along with economic needs, play a role in the construction of pipelines and thus, this process has been an issue for the foreign policy institutions of the states as well.⁴⁴⁷ This reality would inevitably bring the political limits of Turkey along with its economic incapability in the region onto the agenda. In the energy sector, Turkey did not influence the perspectives of the Turkic republics due to the trans-national character of the issue and Turkey's political and economic shortcomings.⁴⁴⁸

In the first days of independence, even though the economic issues were stressed by Turkey and the Turkic republics, these discourses were not dominant. Instead of this, the revitalization of ethnic, cultural and historical ties was the predominantly discussed issue. However, it is easy to predict that the state elite kept in mind that these states could be fertile economic partners for Turkey. The Turkic republics were the "brothers" of Turkey, but not ordinary brothers. They represented a considerable potential for economic partnership, especially in the energy sector.

Turkey's economic relations with the Turkic republics was one of the biggest determinants of Turkey's overall perception to the Turkic republics, in addition, Turkey's economic success in the region was vulnerable to many other external factors. Economic relations were influenced by the domestic political economic realities both in Turkey and in the Turkic republics. The economic relations were influenced by the roles of other actors in the region. The economic relations were

⁴⁴⁶ Peter Pavilionis and Richard Giragosian, "The Great Game: Pipeline Politics in Central Asia" *Harvard International Review* 19, no. 1 (Winter 1996-1997), p. 24.

⁴⁴⁷ Gökhan Bacık, "Turkey and Pipeline Politics" *Turkish Studies* 7, no. 2 (2006), pp. 293 – 294.

⁴⁴⁸ Turkey developed significant policies in terms of carrying the Trans-Caucasian and Caspian energy resources to Europe during the 1990s. However, the projects on the transportation of Trans-Caucasian and Caspian natural resources could be activated only in the 2000s.

influenced even by individual problems. However, the existence of ethnic ties between Turkey and the Turkic republics rarely influenced the preferences of the leaders of these republics. The statements made in the previously said Turkic world Congresses could never become an issue of discussion. Instead of this, the Turkic republics even sought new regional cooperation alternatives. In the realm of economic relations, Turkey failed to establish a durable economic cooperation with the Turkic republics, just as the idea of creating a Turkic monolithic bloc in the international political arena failed. As a striking statistic, at the end of the decade in 1999, the Turkic republics represented 2.9 % of Turkey's foreign trade.⁴⁴⁹

A Catalyst and a Barrier: The Role of Cultural Ties

Ethnic and cultural ties have always constituted a big portion of the optimistic discourses used in Turkey towards the Turkic republics. Turkey's long-standing ties with the Turkic republics have been shown as the most important advantage of Turkey in pursuing policies towards them. Moreover, in the national identity construction process during the 1930s, the Turkic world and the Central Asian Region were placed in pivotal positions by the Republican elite.⁴⁵⁰ Turkey's disappointments about the West also set the ground for the Turkish public opinion to return to the roots. Thus, cultural ties could consolidate Turkey's profile in the region.

⁴⁴⁹ Aras, "Turkish Policy in the Former Soviet South...", p. 47.

⁴⁵⁰ In the Turkish History Thesis, Central Asia was claimed to be the Motherland of the Turks. Moreover Turks are from the Aryan Race and Turkish language had considerable impacts on the other languages in the World. ; Büşra Ersanlı, "Bir Aidiyet Fermanı: Türk Tarih Tezi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekinçil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), p. 805 ; This data reveals two facts. First, Central Asia is the Motherland of the Anatolian Turks. Secondly, historical ties with Central Asia do not prove Turkey's ties with the East but with the Western world.

In this atmosphere, the Turkish state elite immediately and eagerly aimed to institutionalize the cultural ties with the Turkic republics. In doing this, the lack of satisfactory knowledge about the cultural climate of the region led to the failure to create a common cultural sense. However, the national identity imaginations of Turkey and the Turkic republics contradict each other on many points. There are even diversities among the republics. However, it must be noted that there were positive steps in the realm of cultural cooperation that warmed the overall relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics.

Turkey's cultural policy towards the Turkic republics was based on the revival of the cultural, ethnic and historical ties with the Turkic communities. The promotion of the Turkish-style education, history writing and religion constituted the cornerstone of this policy.⁴⁵¹ Official, semi-official and private institutions eagerly embraced this new process. In this regard, it is useful to discuss these initiatives briefly to make conclusive remarks about the course of cultural relations in the 1990s and its impact on Turkey's perception towards the region in general.

Education constituted a significant portion of Turkey's cultural policies towards the Turkic republics. The legal framework of this policy had been shaped by the numerous agreements signed at the beginning of the decade.⁴⁵² The funding of educational assistance was provided by the general budget, the Ministry of National

⁴⁵¹ This cultural policy was on two pillars. The first pillar was a policy towards the Turkic republics. In doing this, the history and literature educations in the Turkic republics were aimed to be standardized under the principle of accomodating their curriculum to the history and literature education in Turkey. Numerous "Common History" and "Common Literature" conferences were held. The second pillar was stressing the closeness with the Turkic world. After 1993, serious differences had been observed in the High School History books. In the new History curriculum, the Turkish History before Islam began to be emphasized in a stronger sense. On the other hand, the closeness with the Turkic republics was held in detail with a considerably political point of view. ; Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih...*, pp. 253 – 254.

⁴⁵² For a detailed listing of these agreements, see Tahir Erdoğan Şahin, Fatma Zehra Esmeray, Metin Akgüney, eds. *Türkiye ile Türk Cumhuriyetleri ve Türk Toplulukları Arasında Yapılan Anlaşmalar, İlişkiler ve Faaliyetler*. Vol 2. (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1993), pp. 1-299.

Education Budget, the Prime Ministry Promotion Fund and by the budgets of banks, holdings and related ministries.⁴⁵³ Educational cooperation was managed by secondary education and universities. Furthermore, this policy had been realized by both opening schools in the region and by Turcophone students being accepted to universities in Turkey. The related official institutions on education and the private initiatives concentrated on the issue of educational cooperation. For example the Gülen movement has twenty-nine schools in Kazakhstan, twelve in Azerbaijan, thirteen in Turkmenistan and twelve in Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁵⁴ The only Turkic Central Asian country which has been hostile to the movement's schools is Uzbekistan.⁴⁵⁵ Along with the Gülen movement, Turkic World Researches Foundation (*Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı*) is also another unofficial organization that aims to be influential in the Turkic world by means of education.⁴⁵⁶ All sides in Turkey seemed to be convinced that the way to reach the region was through education.

The education campaign proceeded in two ways, as said above. The first way was an educational exchange project. This project was welcomed as a Turkish Renaissance or the modernization of the Turkic world.⁴⁵⁷ Named the "Great Student Exchange Project,"⁴⁵⁸ it started in the 1992-1993 academic year. The Turkish state offered 10,000 scholarships, of which 7,000 were for higher education and 3,000

⁴⁵³ Yaşar Kalafat, "Türkiye-Türk Cumhuriyetleri İle Kültürel İlişkiler: Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türk Cumhuriyetlerine Yönelik Türk Dış Politikası," in *21 Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikası*, ed. İdris Bal. (Ankara: Nobel, 2004), p. 463.

⁴⁵⁴ Berna Turam, "A Bargain between The Secular State and Turkish Islam: The Politics of Ethnicity in Central Asia," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004), p. 360.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Nadir Devlet, "Türkiye'nin Avrasya'ya Yönelik Kültür Politikaları," in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası (1989-2006)*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), pp. 199 - 207.

⁴⁵⁷ Yanık, p. 300.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 294.

were for secondary education.⁴⁵⁹ These 10,000 scholarships, which was an obsessive goal in fact, were allocated to each Turkic country equally regardless of their demands. In fact, this was a clear sign of Turkey's attitude towards the Turkic republics that did not care for the specific concerns and needs of these countries.

The student exchange policy continued in the following numbers. Whether considered in quality or quantity, the project was unsuccessful. In the case of quantity, the total amount of 32,595 scholarships provided only 5,019 graduates at the secondary and higher education levels.⁴⁶⁰ In the case of quality, it is hard to claim that the general conditions that the visiting Turcophone students met satisfied these people. Even at an early date, the results of a survey reveal the levels of satisfaction of the exchange students in Turkey. Among the 552 participants, only 23 % of the students stated that they were satisfied with the conditions in Turkey by all terms.⁴⁶¹ Another interesting outcome of this survey was nearly that a half of the students confessed that they had known nothing about Turkey before they came as students.⁴⁶² This fact alone, when we considered the significance of Central Asia in Turkish national identity formation, reveals the existence of an asymmetry between the awareness levels of the Turks of Turkey about Central Asia and of Central Asian Turks about Turkey.

Even though the failure of the student exchange project was admitted by the high level state officials, Turkey never gave up on this project up to present. Even at a late date, namely in 2001, then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem, stressed

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 302.

⁴⁶⁰ Devlet, p. 180.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 182.

⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 183.

the importance of the student exchange project.⁴⁶³ Nevertheless, it neither led to the realization of a Turkish Renaissance or to an impetus to the course of political and economic relations. Instead of this, the student exchange program became quite vulnerable to the political conjuncture of the time.⁴⁶⁴

The other way of the educational cooperation was the secondary and higher education schools opened in the Turkic republics. This was an even more unsuccessful and fruitless attempt. Two universities were founded, Hoca Ahmed Yesevi University in Kazakhstan and Manas University in Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁶⁵ At the secondary education level, the Ministry of National Education founded nine schools.⁴⁶⁶ The relatively low education qualities of the universities prevented these schools from being preferable options for the Turcophone students in the Turkic republics. For instance, graduates of the Ahmet Yesevi University in Kazakhstan claimed to suffer problems in terms of being employed.⁴⁶⁷ The statement of a Kyrgyz official about the story of Manas University in Kyrgyzstan reveals not only the

⁴⁶³ Yanık, 297.

⁴⁶⁴ For example, the Uzbek government recalled the Uzbek students in Turkey by claiming that some circles in Turkey had provoked these students against the Uzbek government and urged them to support the opposition groups in Uzbekistan. This development emerged just after the well-known Mohammed Salih crisis between Turkey and Uzbekistan. : For detailed information about the impact of this crisis on the overall relations between Turkey and Uzbekistan, see the “Bilateral Relations: Little Aspects Determining the Big Picture” in this chapter.

⁴⁶⁵ “International Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University is an international and autonomous mutual state university of the Republics of Turkey and Kazakhstan. Agreement on Founding International Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Turkish-Kazakh University in the city of Turkistan” was signed between the governments of two countries at The Summit of The Presidents of Turkish-Speaking Countries on October 31, 1992 in Ankara.”

http://www.yesevi.edu.tr/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=118 . [01 March 2010]. Kyrgyz-“Turkish Manas University was founded in accordance with an agreement signed on September 30, 1995 in Izmir, between the government of the Turkish Republic and that of the Kyrgyz Republic.” <http://www.manas.kg/alt.php?tip=1&id=3> [01 March 2010].

⁴⁶⁶ Yanık, p. 298.

⁴⁶⁷ Devlet, p. 183.

course of Turkey's cultural campaign towards the region but also the details of the background behind Turkey's failure in the region.⁴⁶⁸

Apart from the educational campaign, another case related to the cultural campaign of Turkey was the Common Alphabet creation initiatives. This initiative did not only aim at converting the alphabets of the Turkic republics from Cyrillic to Latin alphabet, but also at preventing the possible adoption of Arabic alphabet in the region.⁴⁶⁹ The aim of creating a common Latin alphabet began among some circles which are intensely focused on the region in the Turkish Academia.⁴⁷⁰ This was followed by numerous conferences held by related official institutions such as TİKA, the Turcology Research Institute at Marmara University and the Ministry of Culture. The Turkish Republics Alphabet Conference was held In 8-10 March 1993. In the second article of joint declaration after the conference it was stated that, "The conference urges that the first step to overcome the lack of communication is to unite under a common alphabet. This alphabet should be established under a Latin alphabet framework since it is more suitable to the structure of Turkish language and is necessary for the Turkish Republics in order to follow the modern world more easily and to take a respective place in the modern world."⁴⁷¹ In a 34-lettered

⁴⁶⁸ Ermenek Omuraliyev, then Kyrgyz Ambassador to Turkey, stated that "There were great expectations towards the Manas University in Kyrgyzistan. While we predicted it to be the Harvard of Central Asia, we observe that Manas University became unsuccessful. The members are not chosen according to their merits but chosen by patronage relations and this harms Turkey's prestige", Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "Bağımsızlıktan Günümüze Türkiye Kırgızistan İlişkileri," in *Türkiye'nin Avrasya Macerası (1989-2006)*, ed. Mustafa Aydın (Ankara: Nobel Yayınevi, 2007), p. 431.

⁴⁶⁹ Tajikistan, a country with a predominantly Persian population, adapted the Arabic Alphabet. The Muslim Uighur minority in the Sinkiang region of China were already using the Arabic Alphabet.

⁴⁷⁰ This was made in the International Contemporary Turkic Dialects Symposium held by the Turcology Researches Institute between 18 and 20 November in 1991. Bal, *The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Model...*, p. 91.

⁴⁷¹ Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Enstitüsü, "Milletlerarası Çağdaş Türk Alfabeleri Sempozyumu Sonuç Bildirisi," *Bir: Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (1994), pp. 179 -180.

common Latin alphabet was created.⁴⁷² Among the Turkic republics, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan agreed on adopting the Latin alphabet while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan continued to use the Cyrillic alphabet.⁴⁷³

According to the data, the idea of creating a common alphabet seems to be one of the most successful aspects of the cultural cooperation between Turkey and the Turkic republics. However, the idea that these states adopted the Latin alphabet in order to dedicate considerable importance to their cultural ties with Turkey is false. This process was related to the overall transformation processes of these countries.⁴⁷⁴ Only Azerbaijan, a country which was the earliest acceptant of the Latin alphabet among the Turkic republics can be shown as an exception with its pro-Turkish and anti- Russian attitude during the first months of independence due to a conflict with which they believed to be a Russia-backed Armenia.

The other aspect of Turkey's cultural campaign towards the Turkic republics was the promotion of so-called Turkish Islam. This case also was taken seriously by the nationalist-conservative groups in Turkey. Thus, this issue was discussed not only at the official level, but also attracted the interest of private formations in Turkey.

Similar to the education case, Turkey aimed to use religion as a tool to modernize the Turkic communities under the framework of the so-called Turkish model.⁴⁷⁵ The

⁴⁷² Devlet, p. 185.

⁴⁷³ This must not be interpreted as a coincidence. Among the Turkic republics, as noted earlier, there were a large number of Slavic people in Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan, on the other hand, had not only a considerable non-Turkic population but also this country was in a strong dependency relationship with Russia due to its fragile economy and landlocked geographic position.

⁴⁷⁴ For the relationship between the language policies and overall politic concerns in Central Asian countries in Central Asia, see William Fierman, "Identity, Symbolism and Politics of Language In Central Asia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (September 2009), pp. 1207-1228.

⁴⁷⁵ The notion of the "Turkish Model" was invented and developed by the Western public opinion. Turkish Media, as well, owned the notion enthusiastically. Turkish state elite did not proclaim the promotion of "Turkish Model" as a major foreign policy target towards the Turkic republics. However, it must be noted that at least some aspects of the Turkish foreign policy making

Islam that Turkey promoted in the region was a secular one and it became a field of competition with the Muslim countries interested in the cultural affairs of the region, such as Saudi Arabia and especially Iran.⁴⁷⁶ The modernist perspectives of some Islamist-oriented groups, most significantly the Gülen movement, contributed to Turkey's modernist style of religious promotion in a way described below.⁴⁷⁷

Even before the declaration of independence, Turkey handled the development of the religious notion in the Turkic republics. In 1990, during the *Ramadan*, Turkey sent four imams to the USSR which would increase to eight who would be equally distributed to Azerbaijan and Tataristan.⁴⁷⁸ Along with this immediate assistance, Turkey helped these states establish their own religious human resource. Between 1991 and 1993, 134 students from the Turkic republics visited Turkey for religious education under the coordination of the Presidency of the Turkish Religious Affairs.⁴⁷⁹ On the other hand, Turkey sent Kor'ans to the region, similar to Iran and Saudi Arabia, but with different interpretations.⁴⁸⁰

process was pleased of the promotion of the "Turkish Model." For example, Demirel stated that "It is in Europe's interest to see that a modern, secular and democratic Turkey to be shown as a role model for the ex-communist countries in the region." *The Guardian*, 03 April 1992. Turgut Özal also in favour of promoting the "Turkish Model" as an example even to the entire Islamic World. Bal, p. 51.

⁴⁷⁶ It must be noted that these states were already strongly committed to secularism. However, there were extreme-Islamist groups within these countries and on the other hand, Iran and Saudi Arabia, with pro-Islamist regimes, were aiming to be influential in the region.

⁴⁷⁷ The members of the Gülen Movement were committed followers of Said Nursi, a pro-Islamist thinker. Said Nursi was one of the rare Islamist thinkers who mentions the compatibility of religion and science. For him, "Religion without science is a superstition. Science without religion has gone astray... If these are separated, it gives rise to ignorance and fanaticism in religion and fallacies and scepticism in the science." Cécilia Schmitt, "Enlightened Islam: The Paradigm of Said Nursi," in *Islamic Theology of the 21st Century*. Retrieved 11 May 2010 from http://www.stuttgarterstiftung.de/II_introduction.pdf [11 May 2010], pp. 39 – 40. This pro-scientist perspective of Said Nursi became considerably influential also on the Gülen movement.

⁴⁷⁸ Bal, p. 86.

⁴⁷⁹ The number of students from each Turkic republic was as follows, Azerbaijan: 6, Uzbekistan: 7, Turkmenistan: 58, Kazakhstan: 57 and Kyrgyzstan: 6, *Ibid.*, pp. 87 – 88.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.87.

Turkey's modernist Islam promotion consequently failed due to the misperceptions in the initial years. First, Turkey failed to realize that Islam could not be used as a tool to create cultural cooperation with these communities. As former Soviet communities, the Turkic nations had been for more time removed from describing their identity in terms of religion. Even the people with Islamic faith were not continuous practitioners of Islamic rituals. On the other hand, as repeated previously, the leaders of the Turkic republics were dominant even in the daily lives of their citizens and these leaders perceived any kind of Islamist formation as a threat to their security. To sum up, a cultural campaign pursued over the promotion of a religion, even if it was done in a modernist view and there were positive and successful initiatives, could not function well in establishing a rapprochement between Turkey and the Turkic republics.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter analyzed the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics during the 1990s. In doing this, the discussion moved from the claim that the initial perceptions and expectations towards the Turkic republics had been obtained from the discussions in the previous chapter, was unsuccessful. The course of political, economic and cultural relations and each of these realms were examined distinctly to reach a synthesis. Yet, it is concluded that there is a mutual interaction process between these realms, and among them the political and economic relations had been vulnerable to each other to a considerable degree. This process revealed the fact that non-material, ideational factors as well as interest perceptions determined the relations. On the other hand, it has been observed that even if the notion of common

identity had played a predominant role in the relations, neither the Turkish state elite nor the dominant political figures in the Turkic republics planned to reconstruct their “national identity” based on the idea of uniting the Turkic worlds either in the political, economic or cultural sense.

The relations with each Turkic republic can be summed up as follows. In the case of political relations, Turkey’s main failure was to imagine the Turkic republics as a monolithic bloc with nothing specific to them. This delusion prevented Turkey from establishing the relations with the Turkic republics on a more sustainable basis. In the realm of economics, even though it seems to be a successful area, Turkey was far from the potential of dominating the region with its economic capacity. Its economic relations with the region proceeded just on the basis of economic donations and the positive developments in some specific sectors. The cultural relations followed a somewhat independent path from the mutual interaction process between political and economic relations. However, the efforts for cultural cooperation revealed how far Turkey was from the Turkic republics in terms of ethnic, historical and cultural identity conceptions.

To sum up, Turkey was unable to establish a kind of a relationship with the Turkic republics proportionally to the initial expectations, in terms of political, economic and cultural cooperation. However, along with political set backs, limits for economic cooperation and cultural diversities that were discussed in this chapter, the existence of positive steps and the distance which was recorded in the two decades after independence should not be ignored.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸¹ For an evaluation of Turkey’s current profile in Central Asian politics, see Bülent Aras and Hakan Fidan “Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a New Geographic Imagination,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 40, (2009), pp. 198-202.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this study, the relationship between national identity and foreign policy making processes was examined. In doing this, Turkey's reaction towards the emergence of the Turkic republics in the post-cold war era was scrutinized. Moreover, the already existing change process in Turkish foreign policy and also in domestic politics during the 1980s and the 1990s were illustrated in order to understand the underlying causes of the "relatively" exaggerated optimism about a possible political, economic and cultural cooperation with the newly emerging Turkic republics. The outcomes of this euphoria were sought by analyzing Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics in the political, economic and cultural realms separately in order to find evidence for the claim that Turkey failed to create a desirable cooperation with the Turkic world.

During the period which is subject to this study (i.e., 1990s) Turkish political life and Turkish foreign policy making processes showed a fragmented characters. In domestic politics, coalition governments dominated the whole decade. It was hard to bring these political groups together on the same idea in any given case. Turkish foreign policy, which had already been in a process of change since mid-1980s, was also pursued by different contesting perspectives which were emphasized in this study. Basically, active policy initiatives based on identity politics and a new economic model overemphasized security concerns and the pro-western policies simultaneously aimed to determine the Turkish foreign policy behavior during the 1990s. In such a conjuncture, similar to the case in domestic politics, on numerous occasions there were contestations of the preferences of Turkish foreign policy. However, contrary to this fragmentation in Turkish political life, nearly all the

aspects of Turkish public opinion positively reacted towards the emergence of the Turkic republics. In this study, this unification on the support for cooperation with the Turkic republics was also a major concern. Different groups, with different perspectives, emphasized of the importance of developing relations with the Turkic republics. These perspectives, along with the overall course of Turkish foreign policy towards the Turkic republics during the 1990s, were examined and the degree of their impact on Turkish foreign policy making were questioned.

Foreign policy analysis, for about a half century, had been made by being loyal to some strictly determined patterns. According to these patterns, some basic principles determined the foreign policy making processes which were valid for all of the states without any regard to their specific characteristics. These principles were hidden under the human nature: survival and profit maximization. However, as clarified in the theoretical discussion chapter, these strict patterns began to be questioned especially after the 1980s by basing decision on the events in world politics.

According to these views, non-material factors such as the perceptions of identity, and threat may be influential in the foreign policy making processes. These views gained ground in the post-cold war era since the events in world politics justified these views. This study also attempted to adopt these theories in order to justify the claims made. A heterodox language was developed in the foreign policy language and it was stated that Turkey's determined national identity definitions played a role in Turkey's foreign policy behaviors along with national security concerns. The discussion was taken one step further and it was clarified that even notions such as national interest and national security maybe defined relying on national identity and national role conceptions.

During the early republican period (1923-1938), mainly by using the Turkish History Thesis, Turkish national identity was constructed on a pro-Western perspective. Pre-Islamic Turkish history, which was basically Turkish history in Central Asia and the cultural closeness with the Western civilizations, was emphasized in the Turkish national identity construction process. This fact led to a dual character in Turkish national identity and found direct reflection also in the Turkish foreign policy behaviour. Throughout the twentieth century, Turkey attached great significance to integrating itself with the international organizations. However, this pro-western, status-quo oriented conservative foreign policy trend had been subject to changes especially during the central right wing parties' governments. In this study, it was concluded that these two different foreign policy perspectives mainly stemmed from this dual character of the Turkish national identity. Thus, in the theoretical context, the identity of a state may be influential on a state's foreign policy preferences and the identity definition of a state may not show a monolithic character. To the contrary, national identity definitions are multiple within the boundaries of a country, which causes a shift in the foreign policy preferences of a state when different political perspectives hold the executive power in different periods.

Along with the theoretical findings, this study revealed some main outcomes as a result of the discussions in the last three chapters. These findings were the answers given to the main questions asked in the introduction chapter. This thesis mainly questioned the real motives behind Turkey's enthusiastic reaction towards the emergence of the Turkic republics. The proponents of different political ideologies, different aspects of the state elite interpreted the emergence of the Turkic republics

as a positive phenomenon for Turkey. Thus, this unifying impact of the Turkic republics on Turkish public opinion became a major concern. The question arises, what were the main incentives behind this interest towards the Turkic republics?

First, the idea of pursuing foreign policy based on common cultural and historical ties and on economic concerns rather than security-based perspectives were not being discussed on the Turkish foreign policy agenda for the first time. Turkish foreign policy already had been in a transformation period during the 1980s. Turkey's reaction to the human rights abuses against the Muslim majority in Bulgaria was a clear example of this shift in foreign policy. The Bosnian Civil War and the Turkish public opinion's interest was a similar case. On the other hand, Turkey pursued a leadership policy in its near geography based on an economic cooperation perspective. The Turkic republics emerged in such a conjuncture and this region was thought to be also a new asset for the transformation process of Turkish foreign policy since these republics were not only from the same origin as Turkey, but also promised economic cooperation facilities for the Turkish economy, which was also in a transformation process towards an export-oriented model. In short, Turkish foreign policy was already shifting towards a different line and the Turkic republics met the two basic requirements (i.e., common cultural-historical ties and economic potential) of this transformation process.

Second, there were some important reasons leading Turkey to pursue active policies in regard to the Turkic republics. By the end of the cold war, the main parameters of Turkish foreign policy were turned up side down. The greatest threats, the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc had disappeared. On the other hand, Turkey's three-decade long relations with the European Community were in a crisis since the application for full membership was rejected. Under these conditions, Turkey was in

search of new roles to remind its strategic importance to the West which was a quite determinant of Turkish foreign policy. The establishment of a political, economic and cultural cooperation under the leadership of Turkey could be a message to the Western world to remind them that Turkey is still and even a more important figure in world politics. This motivation is quite visible in the place given to the comments of the Western media about the possible leadership of Turkey in the region based on ethnic and cultural closeness.

Thirdly, the Central Asian region and ethnic kinship played a predominant role in the formation of Turkish national identity. Turkish nationalism attaches great significance to the notion of Outside Turks. The Turks living within the borders of the Soviet Union were frequently instrumentalized by Turkish nationalists. The usage of the term “Captive Turks” was an example of this situation. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, these “Captive Turks” gained their freedom and this was used by Turkish nationalists in a way to justify their ideology. Thus, the Turkic republics also functioned as a domestic politics asset. The fragile character of the governments of the time enforced them to support even radical tendencies in case of the relations with the Turkic republics. Hence, as a third finding, we can conclude that domestic policy considerations of the governments and the role of Central Asia in Turkish national identity formation also contributed to the emergence of the optimistic atmosphere towards the emergence of the Turkic republics which may lead us, in theory, also to conclude foreign policy should not be interpreted purely independent from the dynamics of domestic politics.

In the last chapter, the political, economic and cultural relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics during the 1990s were analyzed in order to examine the success degree of Turkey’s campaign towards the Turkic republics. At the end of the

decade, at least, Turkey failed to realize the initial objectives which had been projected by the state elite to establish a successful cooperation in political, economic and cultural terms. It was found that the reason for this failure, along with some positive steps, was basically due to two reasons. First, Turkey pursued policies towards the Turkic republics without any regard to its political and economic potential. This meant that Turkey could not replace the Soviet Union's role due to its political position in world politics and economic shortcomings that the Turkish economy repeatedly faced throughout the 1990s. Secondly, Turkey interpreted the Turkic republics as a monolithic bloc and pursued policies towards the region without taking the special conditions of each Turkic republic. This was visible mostly in the political and cultural relations. Each of these states had different foreign policy preferences and even though their languages collectively were named "Turkic," each of them had its own national identity definitions. Theoretically, these findings show that if the foreign policy preferences of a state surpassed its political and economic capacity, these policies were less likely to be successful.

To sum up, Turkish public opinion and the Turkish state elite overreacted to the emergence of the Turkic republics in the post-cold war period. This interest was both for historical and conjunctural reasons. If the overall course of the relations between Turkey and the Turkic republics are examined, it is difficult to claim that the initial objectives were realized. However, the existence of positive developments mostly in the realm of economic and political cooperation should not be underestimated. As a last point, for the studies focusing on Turkey's present active foreign policy initiatives, Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics during the 1990s teaches that if a country opts to pursue a pro-active foreign policy line, the success of such a policy is dependent on the political and economic potential of the state pursuing this

policy, and also is related to how it is perceived (i.e., positively or negatively) by the sides which are subject to it.

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