

THE EFFECTS OF THE TURKISH WESTERNIZATION ON THE TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY CHOICES*

*Nevin YURDSEVER ATEŞ***

The National War of Independence against the imperialist powers of the West was a great triumph for Turkey. Shortly after the war ended Mustafa Kemal proclaimed the aims of the newly established Republic as follows: "To reach the level of modern contemporary civilizations". Only a few years earlier he declared that those Western nations had "imperialist intentions" regarding his fatherland and he had raised a war against them. But now those nations stood as an ideal model of civilization for the young Turkish Republic.

The reason for this prima facie dilemma was obvious: Mustafa Kemal's National Movement in Anatolia was against Western states, but not against the Western understanding of statehood. Western influence beginning in the nineteenth century shook and weakened the internal structure of the Ottoman State. As the Ottoman Empire opened her doors to European trade and capital, Western capitalism and liberal thought penetrated in to her state body, thus new social demands arose (such as the declaration of the Tanzimat, First and Second Constitutional Monarchy), deeply affecting the recent generations of Ottoman intelligentsia.

One can without hesitation claim that the revolutions (or reforms) reshaping the modern Turkish Republic were a synthesis of a series of struggles beginning in the eighteenth century Ottoman State culminating in the early twen-

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** Doç. Dr. İstanbul University Faculty of Economic

tieth century¹. The Ottoman State (with the support of France and England) defeated Russia in the Crimean War, signing the Peace Treaty at the Paris Congress (March 30, 1856). As a signatory of the Paris Treaty, Ottoman Empire who was considered as a political and religious outcast during the last 500 years was finally accepted as a member of the civilized nations of Europe. According to the treaty, the Ottomans were to be guaranteed to be an equal partner enjoying the same rights with other European states forming the *Concert of Europe*².

Her new identity, a so-called "European state", which she gained during this period was to be nothing more than the level of modern civilization for the new Turkish Republic.

The Turkish National Independence Movement against the Western states was compromising and relying the liberal progressive and nationalist groups who were making use of Western ideas. Among them was Mustafa Kemal -a leader grown up in one of those groups of intellectuals. Mustafa Kemal therefore did not reject Western economic order and polity when he calls for "victory against imperialism", rather he aimed at escaping from Western economic and political oppression.

Westernisation-Early Republican Era (1923-1945)

After the National War of Independence each and every step was taken by "setting the Western civilization as a definite criteria". Mustafa Kemal's revolutions were on the one hand steps to identify oneself with the West. On the other hand, they were Western style steps even before the Western states took them - like Turkish women acquiring the right to vote³.

The signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty (July 24, 1923) maintained Turkey's international recognition as an independent and sovereign state among Western nations. During 1923-1932 Turkey's foreign policy was formed not within the framework of the usual procedures of the international relations, but as a

¹ Toktamış ATEŞ, *Türk Devrim Tarihi*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, p. 45 ff. İlber ORTAYLI, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, Hil Yayınları, İstanbul, 1983; E. Ziya KARAL, "*Tanzimattan Evvel Garplılaştırma Hareketleri*", Tanzimat I, MEB, İstanbul, 1940, pp. 13-30.

² Toktamış ATEŞ, *Siyasal Tarih*, İ.Ü.İ.F. Yayınları, İstanbul, 1989, pp. 342-343.

³ *Düstur*, 3. Tertip, vol. 16, Ankara, 1935, p. 36; Bernard CAPORAL, *Kemalizm'de ve Kemalizm Sonrasında Türk Kadını*, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1982, p. 702-703.

reflex to the policies and attitudes of each foreign state towards Turkey. By 1932 Turkey solved all the inherited problems of the Lausanne Treaty, established friendly relations with neighbouring and other states and gained an equal status among other independent states in the international environment⁴. More specifically, the emerging developments in the international relations, brought lots of advantages and positive gains to Turkey, while putting her into a position of potential ally for both sides of the Second War.

Democratisation- The Post Second World War Era

After the War, Turkey's orientation towards the West was not a coincidence or a random decision but largely is a result of her geographical situation. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the world was divided into spheres of influence and Turkey took her place within the Western democratic alliance, despite having a single party regime since the foundation of the Republic.

The Second World War was finalized by the victory of the "Democratic Front", and lots of radical alterations in the international arena shooked the Turkish political system. The utmost problem of Turkish foreign policy during the post-war period was her isolation from the international environment. During this phase Turkey decided to take part in the Western bloc for some very important reasons: The first reason was the Soviet threat against Turkey after the Second World War. But this care for security was only one of many other reasons for Turkey's approachment to the West.

The second reason was the dependency to necessary foreign aid programmes for economic development.

Finally, the third reason for Turkey's tight links with the West were the diverse Westernization efforts, mainly beginning with Mustafa Kemal's revolution. After the death of Mustafa Kemal, Turkish government leaders understood the concept of Westernization as establishing close relations with the West and especially after the 1947 Truman Doctrine, Turkey was one of the most steadfast ally of the West. Therefore Turkey identified and coordinated her national interests generally as an ally of the West and especially of the USA⁵.

⁴ Mehmet GÖNLÜBOL, *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası (1919-1995)*, Siyasal Kitabevi, Ankara, 1996, p.59 ff.

⁵ Haluk GERGER, "*Türk Dış Politikası (1946-1980)*", *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1985, p. 537 ff.

Although it is widely agreed that the transition to a multiple party political system in 1946 was a direct result of the triumph of the democratic bloc, one must acknowledge that this transition also reflects the desire for democratization, inherent to the Turkish national feelings. Certainly the post-war world and its external dynamics had a catalyzing and accelerating effect on the transition to democracy in Turkey. But countries like Spain and Portugal⁶, who were subject to the similar pressures, stayed reluctant to constitute democratic institutions.

After the Second World War the international environment transformed into a bipolar rather than a multipolar system. Under these circumstances Turkey's foreign policy had to be strictly oriented towards the West, leaving almost no space for critics. In addition, Turkey's democratic progress - in accordance with the situation of the international environment - didn't bring the opportunity to develop into a real pluralistic system⁷. Due to the limitations imposed by the governmental authorities on the process of democratization, leftists could have no chance to thrive.

The Price of Westernisation: The Cold War Era

As a result of the above-mentioned reasons and her location in a geography encircled by the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union, Turkey decided to be a "Western" country. The "price" of this decision was very costly. Shortly after Turkey decided to be a part of the Western world, the Soviet Union - Turkey's gigantic northern neighbor - started to harass her politically. Once again the historical aim of the Soviet Union to gain access to the "Warm Seas" was blocked by Turkey. Consequently Turkey found herself placed in the soft belly of the Soviet Union considering the number of the Turkic speaking people of Caucasus who have cultural and ethnic ties with the people of Turkey. In 1950s regarding Turkey's decision to be a member of the Western world, she took part in the Korean War against the communist invaders. Soon she would be accepted in to the Western NATO pact.

⁶ Tefik ÇAVDAR, *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi 1939-1950*, İmge Yayınları, Ankara, 1995, pp. 393-394 ff.

⁷ Ömer KÜRKÇÜOĞLU, "*Dış Politika Nedir? Türkiye'de Dünü ve Bugünü*", *AÜ SBF Dergisi*, vol. 35 [1-4], Ankara, 1980, p. 323.

In the 1950s Turkey played a role similar to that of Cuba of the 1960s: Like Cuba -but vice versa- she was located in the soft belly of the Soviet Union and caused a big deal of inconvenience to the Soviet Empire⁸.

The new constitution of 1961 was as an outcome of the May 27, 1960 *co-up d'etat* bringing a fresh wave of liberties to Turkey. With the help of this new constitution and its atmosphere of liberty hitherto outlawed or marginalized social groups and/or organizations began to partake organizedly in Turkey's internal and foreign policy making. Especially the tough social opposition in the late 1960s, forced the Turkish government to reconsider her tight links with the US and to expand her relations with the Soviet Union and other members of the Eastern Bloc.

One should not forget the negative effect of the US President Johnson's letter to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü in 1964, considered as harassing and dishonoring Turkey apparently. Commenting on the so-called "Johnson Letter" İnönü said: "A new world will be established and Turkey will take her place in it."

The 1960s was a period of reapproachment to the European Economic Community (EEC). But when as a consequence of the military memorandum of March 12, 1971 the political liberties of the 1961 Constitution were called back, Turkey's decaying socio-economic structure led to a rise of terrorist actions throughout the country, creating civil war like conditions. Finally, Turkey's military *putsched* again in September 12, 1980 and suspended all political action.

As we turn now our attention again to Turkey's option to be a member of the Western world after the Second World War, one can discern two results of this choice in terms of economic and political/democratic.

Turkey's will to become a member of the Western world resulted with a decrease in the intensity of economic relations with the Soviet Union, until her disintegration. The economic relations with Bulgaria, Turkey's other Eastern Bloc neighbour, was also at the lowest level. After the fall of the Soviet Empire Union, Turkey's trade and tourism volume with the Eastern Bloc rose to about 15 billion US dollars, indicating at the great economic loss and burden she had to endure during the Cold War. For about half a century, Turkey was a country that had virtually no economic relations with her socialist neighbours.

⁸ Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi (1914-1980)*, (2. Edition), Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Ankara, 1984, p 611; Haluk Gerger, "Türk Dış Politikası (1946-1980)", *Ibid*, p 543.

Another economic effect of Turkey's option for the Western world was heavy military expenditures. As Turkey defined herself as a country "surrounded by enemies", she maintained - relative to the population - a considerably large army and had immense military expenditures. During this period Turkey's "Western friends and allies" did not invest in Turkey's military industry but preferred to sell from their own arsenal by specially conditioned loans and credits. As a result of this, Turkey's military expenditures took always more than % 10 of its GDP (gross domestic product), having a negative impact on the country's economic power and reducing its education expenditures to a minimum.

Due to these two factors Turkey's economic performance was never optimal. It is an historical irony that Turkey's application to EU's twentyfirst century enlargement agenda was mainly rejected by her European friends on grounds of this - in no terms self-inflicted - economic "misperformance".

Besides Turkey had also to pay a political and democratic price for choosing to be a part of the Western world. During the founding years of the republic, Turkey accepted to be a Western state on ideological grounds, meanwhile cooperating also with the Soviet Union. Up to the 1930s she supported the founding of a communist party and the cooperation between Atatürk and Lenin was always on top of the international agenda (under the title of "good neighbourhood relations"). In addition Turkey's development programmes and the founding of Public Economic Enterprises (KIT) were obviously influenced by the Soviet Union.

When Turkey definitely chosed her side as a Western ally after the Second World War, she strictly closed off her borders to her northern neighbor's ideological export. Communist sympathizers were labeled as "traitors". There was only one national ideology for Turkey: A regime founded on the Western capitalist system and aiming at democratization. Offending this ideology could not even be imagined. As a natural consequence of this one-sided point of view the regime limited the political freedom, liberty of thought and democratic institutions. In the Western democracies liberty of thought is one of the main principles of democracy, although it's limited in Turkish democracy, ironically in defense of the democratic institutions. Turkey was consedired as being largely dependent to her geostrategic position surrounded by several antidemocratic threats. Consequently many activities and demonstrations were crushed brutally.

The Post Cold War Era

The second half of the 1980s witnessed grave changes in the international environment. The process of capitalist restoration began to influence the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries deeply. In the West the so-called Keynesian welfare state policies had come to an end, changing the economic and political stability throughout the world and drawing new borders. The crumbling down of the Berlin Wall led to several disputes about who was buried under.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the "Cold War" put Turkey's strategic importance into question. The end of the Cold War changed Turkey's geopolitical location and value, which had been thought for so many years as granted.

In a period of both important domestic and international political developments and changes Turkish policy makers decided to apply for full membership to the European Community in 1987. Though Turkey's relation with the European Economic Community was based on the Ankara Treaty of 1963, it had to suffer some interruptions in the 1970s and 80s. But the reply report of 1989 came to a conclusion that membership negotiations with Turkey would not be useful.

In the early 1990s the world went into a deep economic crisis (whose roots lie in the 1970s). The era also witnessed numerous local wars, nationalist and ethnic upheavals, the rise of micronationalism, poverty and unemployment, internal turmoil within the blocs, hegemonic wars and a new disorder.

The rejection of Turkey's application to the European Community (EC) forced her to turn her face to the East in terms of foreign policy and economic expectations while connecting with the Turkic speaking republics and pursuing for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Project. To develop trade relations with Black Sea coastal countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and some former Soviet Republics, was not a very new project indeed. But the intensity of relations increased as a result of the timely conditions, so that for a while those relations were thought to be an alternative to the European Community. As to the relationship with the Turkic republics, the purpose was to create a "Turkic Common Market", embracing the Caucasus and Central Asian Republics. "Common History" and "Common Religion (Islam)" were thought to be the driving forces behind this Common Market.

The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the fall of the Soviet Union led to a reconsideration of Turkey's role in the international system⁹. By the end of the Cold War the impetus behind Turkey's refocusing on her neighboring geography was the United States of America. After the Gulf Crisis the "New World Order" project initiated by the US increased the importance of Turkey. In addition the relations between Turkey and the European Community were postponed to an indefinite future. This was obviously no coincidence¹⁰.

From the beginning of the 1990s Turkey concentrated on being a regional power, consequently showing active interest in all international problems surrounding her. Turkey actively took part in the problem solving processes in a wide range of international problems - from Bosnia Herzegovina to Karabagh and from Chechenia to the Middle East.

The 1997 Luxembourg Summit of the European Union (EU) was another turning point in the history of EU-Turkish relations. At this summit the EU set forth economic and foreign political criterias while demanding the solution of the Cyprus problem. But this criterias led to an increase in the tension between Turkey and the EU. As a consequence Turkey loosened her ties with the EU and focused on the US-Israel strategic axis¹¹. The response from the EU on Turkey's EU aspirations can be summarized as follows: "Turkey's economy and understanding of democracy is not compatible with a EU membership". but at the same time by proceeding a new enlargement agenda. Some of the former socialist satellite states of the former Soviet Union who are on the agenda also suffer from similar economic and democratic deficits, are welcomed by the EU, as those states were forced to be a member of the Socialist Bloc. From this perspective the main objective of EU seems to facilitate the integration of those states into the Union and transform their economic and political system. As compared accordingly to the economic and democratic criterias, it won't be wrong to argue that Turkey's conditions are obviously better than those of the former Socialist Bloc states.

⁹ Kemal KİRİŞÇİ, "*Uluslararası Sistemdeki Değişmeler ve Türk Dış Politikasının Yeni Yönelimleri*" (çev: Burak Samih Gülboy), *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi*, der. Faruk SÖNMEZOĞLU, Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 1994, p.393

¹⁰ Attila ERALP; "*Değişen Savaş Sonrası Uluslararası Sistemde Türkiye ve Avrupa Topluluğu*" der. C. BALKIR, A.WILLIAMS, , Sarmal Yayınları, İstanbul, 1996 p. 53

¹¹ İlker AKTÜKÜN, "2000'li Yılların Başında Türk Dış Politikasının Ana Yönelimleri", *Avrupa Birliği ve Sosyalistler Akıntıya Karşı*, der. Sibel ÖZBUDUN – Temel DEMİRER, Ütopya Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2000 s.109.

According to the Economic Report of the EU¹² (November 2000) related to the conditions of the candidate states, Turkey's economic data are – compared for instance to Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia - better. EU's structural and economic aids to those countries are increasing faster than Turkey's. On the other hand those candidate states are receiving more development aid (relative to population figures) from the European Union (EU) than Turkey.

Another economic comparison criterion is the high unemployment rate in countries like Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. Hence it is very often claimed that the high unemployment rate in Turkey will cause after a full membership, a flood of worker immigration to the EU. A comparison between Turkey and those three countries seems ever more immediate. For example as of November 2000 the unemployment rate in Bulgaria¹³ was 17,8 %, in Romania¹⁴ 8,4 % and in Slovakia¹⁵ 18,5 %, the same rate was in Turkey¹⁶ (as of May 2000) only 8,3 %.

According to such comparisons Turkey is economically in better shape and condition indeed. Time and again the Europeans also stress this fact, but the outcomes for Turkey are at hand: As Turkey aspires to be a Western country in a delicate geography, she has to pay the price for this candidacy herself.

As I conclude my paper I want to stress the fact that at the December 2000 at the Helsinki Summit Turkey's candidacy to the EU has been approved. But this is only another beginning for Turkey.*

It is very true that in the last decades Turkish governments were very clumsy in the handling of Turkey's democratization process, that the 1982 Constitution (a remnant of the September 12, 1980 *coup d'etat*) is restrictive on matters such as human rights and individual freedoms. But Turkey's actual crisis is now forcing her to some very important changes in fundamental laws. Turkey's future agenda is focused on the realization of these changes into her political

¹² European Economy, Supplement C., Economic Reform Monitor, No.1, February 2001

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.5

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.19

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.20

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.23

* It must be stressed that in relevance with the relations between Turkey and EU, Turkey had started a major democratization program beginning from August 2002. The program that had been approved in the Turkish parliament included publication in the mother tongue, education in Kurdish, abolishment of capital punishment.

body. Turkey's strategic choice of becoming a regional power for the twenty first century may create a new impetus for her EU candidacy and give her a trump for the political bargaining with the Europeans.

But it should be added that Turkey is not the sole determining actor in the changing international system. The international system of the new century will be an outcome of the struggle between all actors taking part in the system.

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ÖZET

Cumhuriyetin ilanının ardından yeni kurulan Türkiye, "batılılaşma" olgusunu devlet geleneği içinde önemli bir bileşen olarak algıladı. Türkiye'nin özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası bu algılayışı, dönemin uluslararası konjonktürü içinde, siyasi iktidarların bu olguyu farklı bir biçimde yorumlamaları ile Türkiye dış politika seçeneklerinde genellikle "Batı" lehine tercihlere yöneldi.

Bu tebliğin temel amacı Türkiye'nin yakın tarihi içinde Batılılaşma çabasını ve bu çerçevede Batılıların arasında kendine bir yer edinme mücadelesini incelemek ve Türkiye'nin Batıya dönük durmasının dış politika seçimlerinde kendine neler kazandırıp, kaybettiğini sorgulamaktır.

Özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşının ardından Türkiye ile Batılı ülkeler arasındaki ve Türkiye ile eski Doğu Bloku arasındaki ilişkilerin sorgulanarak günümüze yönelik çıkarımlar yapılması amaçlanmıştır.

ABSTRACT

"Westernization" had been an important component in the Turkish Republic's state tradition. Especially after the Second World War, this perception, in relevance with the international environment, was exercised by the governing politicians -in a somehow corrupted way-, causing to take their choices in parallel with the "West" without considering the ends.

This paper aims at analyzing Turkey's efforts for westernization and her striving to obtain a place in the western club, albeit her gains and losses in the international arena.

The main intention of this article is a brief interrogation of Turkey's relations with both Eastern Bloc and the Western countries, especially after the Second World War and therefore to search for the effects of the Turkey's westernization process on the Turkey's foreign policy choices.