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THE MIDDLE EAST POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY



**WISE MEN CENTER
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

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FOREWORD

When Turkish history is analyzed, it is seen that there are well educated wise men that stand behind the achievements. Though, the multi-dimensional development of the events and the complexity of the issues lead some wise people or intellectuals to have some difficulties in correctly perceiving the events on time and produce alternative policies. Following the improvements closely, making realistic previsions about the future and producing the right policies necessitate the gathering of wise people from various fields and who have different views, with young dynamic researchers in order to provide a synergy between them in flexible organizations.

BILGESAM (the Wise Men Center for Strategic Studies) was founded to make predictions about the future by following external and domestic developments; to make scientific researches about Turkey's bilateral and multilateral international relations and security strategies; domestic, political, economic, technological, environmental, and socio-cultural problems, and to present realistic and dynamic solution-oriented proposals for decision-makers. This center's vision, purpose, structure methods, and publications are presented on the web site <http://www.bilgesam.org/tr>

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In line with the decisions that were taken during the fifth Wise Men Board Meeting, R. Minister/Ambassador İter Türkmen has prepared the report 'The Middle East Policy of the Turkish Republic.' This report was reviewed during the sixth Wise Men Board Meeting, and after its approval it was decided to be published among the other publications of BILGESAM.

The report '**The Middle East Policy of the Turkish Republic**' contains the following sub-headings: '**The Era of Atatürk and İnönü,**' '**The Years 1950-1960,**' '**The Years 1960-1970,**' '**The Years 1970-1980**' and lastly '**The Years 1980-1990.**'

It is my hope and wish that this report will reduce the barriers that are currently standing in the way of Turkey's development and progress. Furthermore, I would like to give my special thanks to the writer of the report, R. Ambassador İter Türkmen, President R. Admiral Salim Dervişoğlu, the members of the Wise Men Board and the personnel of BILGESAM.

Assoc. Prof. Atilla Sandıklı
President of BILGESAM

THE MIDDLE EAST POLICY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

A General Assessment

Recently, it seems that the Middle East has become the main focus of Turkey's contemporary foreign policy. Without any doubt, one of the reasons for this focus is that the Justice and Development Party (AKP), within the context of their main foreign policy directions, is determined to enlarge their role in the region since the day they came to power. However, it has to be said that various conditions are also forcing the government towards this direction. For example, directly after the electoral victory in 2002, the AKP was confronted with the US intervention in Iraq in 2003. Acting with the knowledge that this intervention would cause instability and chaos in the region, and to avoid a war, Turkey took the initiative to hold meetings with countries bordering Iraq. When it was evident that the war could not be prevented, the government agreed upon the opening of its' southern borderfront with Iraq to the US, which gave them access to Northern Iraq through Turkey. Yet, the Turkish parliament disapproved this gesture by AKP. After American military operations ended, the Turkish government attempted, in a somewhat controversial manner, to send a military force that would be part of the coalition forces to Iraq. This attempt was blocked by the Iraqis and especially by the Northern-Iraqi Kurds. Eventually, when the Kurds became the closest allies of the Americans in Iraq, the Turkish-American relations were occasionally quite tense. Before 2003, Turkey was able to fly into Northern Iraq to fight against the PKK. However, it found itself unable to enter Iraq for a long time soon after the Americans arrived to the country. Even today, for Turkey, the main problem in the Middle East region remains the question of Iraq's future.

The developments in Iraq and its consequences are undoubtedly the main triggers for Turkey to play a more active role in the Middle East diplomacy. Within this scope, it seems that Turkish diplomacy has successfully expanded its 'macro diplomacy' with 'micro diplomacy' by establishing contacts with several different sectarian and political groups in Iraq. Later on, similar activities have taken place in Lebanon, while the relations with the Palestinians have

also been strengthened. Although it seems slightly assertive, the notion of ‘zero problems with neighboring countries’ seems to be a creative concept as well.

A detailed analysis of AKP’s Middle East policy will be further examined within the upcoming subparagraphs of this research report. Yet, before doing so, it seems useful to have a look at the continuous and divergent elements of the Middle East policies that have been adopted by the various governments since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. This approach will, on some level, shed light on what extent the discourse of ‘Turkey was pursuing a relatively passive Middle East policy’ before AKP administration reflects the reality.

ATATÜRK AND İNÖNÜ PERIOD

Following the Turkish Independence War, it was necessary that, on one hand, the war-torn country would be economically and socially reconstructed, while on the other hand, the new regime of the Republic had to be modernized. To realize this goal, the framework of national and international peace and stability had to be established. Atatürk's motto 'Peace in the Country, Peace in the World' is a reflection of this necessity.

In this context, it seems important to notify that Turkey (at that period of time) was confronted with a different kind of Middle East than it is today. In essence, Turkey had to negotiate with France about Syrian matters, and with England about Iraqi matters. The issues concerning Mosul and Hatay remained unsolved during the Lausanne Conference and they still had to be negotiated with these countries.

When the Ottoman Empire and England ended their war on October 31st 1918, the English army was 100 kilometers away from Mosul. After the war, the English army found itself in violation of the Montrose Truce by occupying Mosul. Consequently, Mosul was included within the borders defined by the 'Misak-i Milli' (the National Pact), even though the parties had agreed during the Lausanne Conference that the matter was to be solved between Turkey and England. If the parties could not come to a consensus, it was decided that the matter would be transferred to the League of Nations. In Istanbul, in May and June of 1924, the negotiations with England ended on the conclusion that England not only insisted on gaining Mosul, but also on the part of the Hakkari province. As a result, the problem was delegated to the League of Nations. Based on a survey among the local population that was carried out by a committee designated by the League of Nations, the League of Nations recommended that Mosul become part of Iraq and this recommendation was approved by the Council of the League of Nations. Turkey accepted this Council recommendation in 1926 and by signing an agreement with England and Iraq, the current borders were recognized. This agreement also stipulated the fact that for 25 years, Turkey would be compensated with 10% of Mosul's petroleum income.

The Mosul case, influenced by the circumstances of that period, was not solved in a way that Turkey intended. However, when the matter is viewed *a-posteriori*, it seems fortunate for Turkey that the region of Mosul encompassing the Northern Iraq and Kirkuk, did not become part of Turkey, as this could create major problems. The main reason for the grievance of the loss of Mosul to Iraq was the presence of energy sources in the region. However, the energy sources are not, per se, a reason for stability. At best, isn't today's Iraq reflecting this aspect with its unfortunate situation? If Mosul had continued to be part of Turkey, wouldn't the Kurdish problem be much bigger? Wouldn't the energy sources of the region provide more support for the Kurds from international actors? Of course, it is not that easy to answer these questions today and make an appropriate analysis. Nonetheless, at that period of

time, it was a rational step of Atatürk not to endanger the benefits that were gained from Lausanne. When the circumstances were more fortunate, Atatürk prepared the groundwork for the annexation of Hatay in the best possible way.

On October 31st 1918, at the moment the Montrose Truce was signed, like Mosul, the Sancak¹ region (which encompassed Antakya and Iskenderun) had not yet been occupied. However, the allies did not end their military operations. When the English handed the occupied Syria over to the French, an Arab resistance front soon appeared. Nonetheless, after a short while, this resistance movement broke down and the French managed to occupy Syria and the Sancak region. The French did not only occupy the Sancak region, but they also took over the cities Maraş, Antep and Urfa from the English. But when the resistance of the people in this area turned into violent clashes, the French sought for contact with the Turkish Grand National Assembly. After the negotiations, it was agreed upon that France would give up the Sevres provisions and it would, (excluding the Sancak region) accept the border demarcation between Turkey and Syria as defined by the 'Misak-i Milli' (the National Pact). As for the Sancak region, a special regime was created. The residents of the Sancak area who were of Turkish descent could benefit from all kinds of facilities to improve their culture, while the Turkish language would be the official language.

In 1936, the French and the Syrians started negotiating to recognize the independence of Syria and, subsequently, France committed to accept the independence of Syria in three years period of time, handing its authority over the Sancak region to Syria. Yet, the Turkish government demanded that this region should be a sovereign entity linked to France. When this wish was not fulfilled, the issue was brought to the League of Nations. Meanwhile, the negative attitude of the French had awakened the indignation of Turks both in Turkey and the Sancak region. The incidents in Antakya resulted in the death of several citizens. In November 1936, during the opening speech of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), Atatürk made clear that the future of Iskenderun and Antakya would be the main concerns of the Turkish people, which should be dealt with seriousness and determination.

After the negotiations with the Council of the League of Nations, a status was prepared for the Sancak region. According to this status, the Sancak region would be under the direct supervision of the Council and remain totally independent in its internal issues, while the region would be connected to Syria concerning its external issues. For both the preparation of this status and the new constitution for the Sancak region, a Committee of Specialists was needed to be set up. After the Committee's report and the proposals were presented to the Council, Turkey and France signed an agreement on May 29th 1937, guaranteeing both the sovereignty of the Sancak region and the Turkish-Syrian borders. Subsequently, the Council

¹ An administrative unit consisting of several provinces in Ottoman Empire

approved the status for Sancak region and the proposals for the Constitution. According to the Constitution, a legislative assembly had to be established, consisting of 40 people.

The Turkish-French Agreement, as well as the decision of the League of Nations, were both unable to solve the problem to the core. The Arabs' demonstrations and the provocations of the French authorities caused new tensions in the summer months of 1937. These events did not only delay the implementation of the status of the Sancak region, but they also postponed the elections that were supposed to take place according to the Constitution. When the electoral system (which was prepared by the Committee created by the League of Nations) was not in favor of Turks, the Turkish Government once again consulted the League of Nations and subsequently cancelled the 1930 Turkish-French Agreement.

In January 1938, the League of Nations created a committee that would examine the electoral system, in which Turkey earlier expressed its' disapproval. The committee prepared the necessary adjustments in March 1938. However, this time, because of the new electoral system, there was disagreement on the preparation of the lists of the Sancak region and, once again, more incidents took place. Therefore, Turkey told France that, in the framework of the Guarantee Agreement that was signed by both parties on May 29th 1937, it wanted to share direct responsibility in maintaining peace and stability in the Sancak region. To stress its determination, Turkey stationed an army of 30,000 soldiers at the border.

During this period of time, the European press was (correctly) broadcasting that Atatürk was quite ill. Yet, to prevent this from being perceived as a weakness, Atatürk still went to Mersin and Adana on May 20th 1938 to inspect the military troops, even being at a big parade.

The fact that Europe was approaching a new World War in 1938 in addition to the rising numbers of incidents, pushed France towards a search for reconciliation with Turkey. Eventually, after Atatürk returned from Mersin and Adana, France gave a positive response to Turkey's request for taking responsibility of the security of the Sancak region. On July 3rd 1938, both sides agreed that 2,400 reinforced Turkish regiments would be deployed to the Sancak region. The Turkish regiment arrived in Hatay on July 4th. On the same day, Turkey and France signed a Friendship Agreement which declared that both countries recognized the Sancak region as a separate and independent entity, while they confirmed the implementation of the agreement of May 29th 1937, which secured the sovereignty of this region.

Following the Turkish-French Agreement, Turks won 22 parliamentary seats from a total of 40 seats during the August 1938 elections, while the Alevis won 9 seats, and the Armenians, Arabs, and the Greek-Orthodox each winning two seats. The parliament that met on September 12th, renaming the Sancak region 'Hatay.'

France was trying to reach an agreement with Turkey after Hatay became an independent state. It agreed, under Ankara's insistence, upon the term that the signed alliance and the final solution on Hatay would be simultaneously implemented. On June 23rd 1939, an agreement was signed, which included Hatay within the Turkish borders and after a period of time, it was officially registered by the League of Nations. As for the Hatay parliament, they had already accepted to be a part of Turkey by voting before the agreement came into force.

Without a doubt, the fact that Hatay became part of Turkey can be viewed as one of the biggest successes of the Republic of Turkey. The conditions of that time were used in the best way possible, the policies of domination and conciliation were balanced in a professional way, and step-by-step, there was a progress towards the end goal. Unfortunately, in the years to come, especially in the Cyprus case, several devastating mistakes were witnessed concerning timing. While seeking the 'best solution,' in the meanwhile, it was not anticipated that the 'good solution' would be lost. The interconnectedness of the problems went ignored many times.

Throughout time, the relations of Turkey with its biggest neighbor in the Middle East region, Iran, have always been of great importance. It has often been argued that, since the Kasr-ı Şirin Agreement of 1639, the relationship between the two countries has continuously been stable. It is true that, apart from a couple of changes, afterwards the border lines have not drastically changed since 1639. However, after this date, disagreements and conflicts between these two countries have constantly been present. In 1720, a war erupted that would last for 20 years. When the two countries clashed again between 1821 and 1823, they signed the Erzurum Agreement that secured the already existing borders. Yet, because the border line was not drawn specifically, the disagreements and the violations continued. In 1847, once again an agreement was signed in Erzurum that confirmed the border lines, but the final border lines were only drawn in 1914.

After the Independence War, Turkey entered a difficult period concerning its relations with Iran. The Iranian Islamists protested against the reforms of Atatürk. During the disagreements in Mosul and the Eastern Anatolian rebellions of 1925, Iranian tribes often violated the rules by crossing the border lines. Along the border lines, the occurrence of such incidents kept on going, even after the conflict concerning Mosul was solved. In 1926, a Security and Friendship agreement was signed between the two countries. By signing this agreement, they both committed to take measures with the purpose of preventing the protests of the tribes which threatened the security of both nations.

When necessary, joint measures would be taken. Additionally, the agreement stressed the point that the Turkish-Iranian friendly relations would be eternal. Yet, despite these

agreements, the violations concerning the border lines continued. In 1926, a new agreement was signed to prevent the incidents in a more efficient way. Subsequently, a new border line in favor of Turkey was drawn in the region of Ağrı. An agreement on consensus, judiciary system and arbitration was signed during the same period. And in 1932, the 1926 Security and Friendship Agreement was renewed. It was after all these developments that the relations between Iran and Turkey became stable and rather friendly.

One of the factors that had a positive effect on the Turkish-Iranian relations during that period was the fact that the Iranian Kacar dynasty had come to an end by military coup in 1925, organized by Colonel Rıza Pehlevî, who then announced himself as shah. Pehlevî was a great admirer of Atatürk and his reforms. In 1934, he visited Turkey for one month.

During Atatürk's term, Turkish-Afghani relations underwent a permanent amicability process. Afghanistan was one of the first countries to recognize the Turkish Grand National Assembly Government. After this period, Turkey started to heavily contribute to the Afghan army's training.

Generally speaking, relations between Iraq and Turkey were moving towards a friendly one after the Mosul problem was solved. In 1931, the Iraqi king was the first Arab leader who paid a visit to Turkey. After this visit, Atatürk stressed the point that he wanted to strengthen the relations with all of Turkey's neighboring countries, particularly Iraq, with whom Turkey had important mutual economic interests. Yet, during that period, Iraq could not manage to maintain internal political stability. The Iraqi oligarchy was divided into two, between the ones who were and were not in favor of an alliance with England. Belonging to the latter group, there was also Mahmut Şevki Paşa's brother, Hikmet Süleyman. After the 1936 coup of General Bekir Sidki, Hikmet Süleyman became prime-minister. Both leaders were admirers of Atatürk's reforms, but neither of them would rule for long, as Bekir Sidki was killed in 1937 by one of his opponents within the army.

In the 1930s, the Sattul-Arab conflict erupted, which would last many years. Iran was arguing that the Istanbul Protocol, signed in 1912 when Iraq was the province of the Ottoman Empire, did not justly reflect the border lines, and that these lines should be drawn according to the line of Thalweg (pursuant to international law). Iran and Iraq were disagreeing on several matters, such as the support that Iran was providing to the Iraqi Kurds, the frictions between the Iraqi Sunnis and the Shiites, and the Iranian visit to Kerbela. Iraq, which was pursuing an agreement with Iran in those days, asked for Turkey's mediation.

In 1937, with the mediation efforts of Turkey, both countries signed an agreement related to the borders. Following this agreement, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan were able to sign

the Sadabad Pact. By signing this pact in July 1937, the four countries agreed not to interfere in each others' internal matters, to bear respect to each others' borders, and to have an exchange of ideas on international issues that affect mutual interests. Additionally, these countries agreed to prevent the activities aimed at collapsing other covenant countries' organizations on their lands, undermining the bureaucracy and security, and overthrowing the existing political regime.

As it is evident, there are many similarities between Atatürk's Middle East Policy and Turkey's current Middle East Policy. It seems that in that period, there was already a 'zero problem with neighbors' policy. Yet, this was not propagated through a slogan. It was also in that period that Turkey was mediating between neighbors. Of course, the Middle East of that period was not the Middle East of today. The Palestinian conflict and its consequences did not exist. The Middle Eastern countries were, be it on different levels, part of England and France's authority. In each country, the political balances were different from today. On the other side, it seems important to note that, unlike these years, Turkey has never faced such problems concerning Hatay and Mosul in the years that followed.

During the Second World War, there were no negative developments in the region that could directly affect Turkey because Germany could not enter the Middle East through the Caucasus. Only a coup that occurred in Iraq stood as the reflection of the war. On April 2nd 1941, Rasit Ali, the supporter of Mihver, seized power in the country. Following this event, Naip Abdulilah and Prime Minister Nuri Sait Pasha fled from Baghdad to Mosul. However, when England sent reinforcements to Iraq, the ones who committed the coup d'état could not resist for long, as they later fled to Iran. According to English documents, during the revolt of Raşit Ali, Turkey offered to mediate, but England declined this offer. On the other hand, the request of the Germans to infiltrate into the Arab countries and the Suez Canal through Turkey was denied.

After the Second World War, Turkey took the path of strengthening its relations with the Arab countries. Besides, it reacted positively to the foundation of the League of Arab States. And, on the other side, the League of Arab States stressed the importance of the Turkish-Arab friendly relations. In September 1945, the Iraqi King Naibi Abdulilah visited Turkey. In March of the following year, "The Treaty of Amity and Good Neighborhood" was signed. This was followed by King Abdullah's visit to Ankara on January 5th 1947, where he signed "The Treaty of Amity and Good Neighborhood" between Jordan and Turkey.

The developments that certainly ruined Middle East relations were the Partition Plan of Palestine and the following Israeli-Arab War. On November 29th 1947, when the General Assembly of the League of Nations put a the vote to this issue, 33 countries voted in favor, 13 countries voted against, while 10 countries abstained. Among the ones who abstained

was England. The countries, together with Turkey, who voted against the proposal, were all the Arab countries, Afghanistan, Cuba, Greece, India and Pakistan. Yet, after this date, Turkey's Middle East policy was gradually going to be more compatible with Western countries' policies. While the Arab countries opposed the creation of the Palestinian Reconciliation Committee as suggested by the General Assembly of the League of Nations on December 12th 1948, Turkey accepted the creation of this committee and, together with the USA and France, it accepted to be a member of this committee. Eventually, on March 28th 1949, it became the only Muslim country that recognized Israel.

After the Second World War, relations continued to be problematic with Syria. When Hatay became part of Turkey in 1939, Syria had not yet gained its independence. Regardless of this fact, after signing the agreement, the Syrian Speaker of Parliament Nasuhi Bukhari approached the French government and the Council of the League of Nations with the purpose of arguing that France exceeded its authority that was granted by the 1939 Agreement and the League of Nations' mandate. Initially, having gained its independence following the Second World War, Syria restrained itself from reiterating its claims over Hatay. After the first Syrian government was founded on July 5th 1944, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a diplomatic note to all foreign diplomatic missions with the message that the Syrian government was going to respect all the international agreements that France had signed on behalf of Syria, and that it would also respect the legal consequences of these agreements for individuals and groups. This commitment surely also included the agreements concerning Hatay. However, after France conclusively left the region in 1946, Syria's attitude changed. The statements from Damascus included dialogue that Turkey's control over Hatay was not legal, and other Arab countries simultaneously called upon to support Syria on this issue. With this in mind, Turkey also delayed legally recognizing Syria. Yet, after Iraq's Prime Minister Nuri Sait Pasha played the role of mediation, both countries reached a consensus. Turkey agreed to not persist on officially recognizing Hatay as being part of Turkey, and Syria agreed to not officially put forward the problem. In March 1946, Turkey recognized Syria's and Lebanon's independence.

Independence did not bring stability to Syria. The first government ('the National Bloc') was far from responding to the needs for reforms and the restructuring of the country. The weakness that was especially shown towards Israel caused a stir of criticism. In March 1949, Colonel Hosni Zaim created an authoritarian regime after he took over the country's control via bloodless coup. The colonel who was known for his admiration for Atatürk, in domestic policy, he acted in a way that was inspired by Turkey's reforms. In its foreign policy, which was in line with the vision of the 'Greater Syria,' Syria sought for cooperation with Iraq and Jordan, but eventually coming closer to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The USA was, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, against the close political cooperation between Iraq, Jordan and Syria. Zaim's political career did not last long. In August 1949, he was executed by a firing squad by

the ones who organized a coup against him. The leader of the coup, Colonel Sami Hinnavi, gave priority to the unification project of Iraq and Syria. This policy triggered a new coup in December 1949 under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Edip El-Cicekli.

Together with El-Cicekli's coup, Syria's policy towards Turkey changed as well. Slogans started to appear about how Hatay was forcibly taken from Syria. Additionally, maps where Hatay was included within the Syrian borders were printed. Syria did not respond on the proposal to demarcate Hatay's border lines, while it also did not cooperate to renew the border stones. In 1963, the ruling Baath Party's statute included provisions that Hatay and southern Anatolia were part of the Arab country. November 29th was accepted as 'Sancak day.' Every year on this day, there were demonstrations that seemed to get fiercer with every year. After Hafez Assad's rule that started in 1972, the demonstrations, officially and unofficially, came to an end. However, the Baath Party's statements in its statute were maintained and Hatay continued to be illustrated within Syrian borders in school books and government agencies. Even today in 2010, a year where the Turkish-Syrian relations seem to be heading towards a positive direction, there is no information regarding how the situation has changed.

THE YEARS 1950-1960

After the war, the political view in the world, and especially in Europe, had changed and in Europe, together with the fall of the Iron Curtain, blocs started to form. In that period of time, Turkey was, from a military and economic point of view, weak and alone. The Soviet Union, which profited from the vacuum that appeared in Europe after the war, cancelled the 1925 Turkish-Soviet Agreement for Impartiality and Non-Violence in March 1945, requesting that it should be renewed. Additionally, the Soviet Union demanded a military base in Turkish straits, while the cities Kars and Ardahan were also requested. This left Turkey facing a crucial security problem. For years, this constituted the main problem of Turkey's foreign policies.

Between 1950 and 1960, Turkey, together with being confident and very active in its policy towards the Middle East, also appeared quite distant from its previous discourse of being traditionally balanced and cautious. The main focus of Turkish policies was to safeguard the Middle East against the Soviet Union. Against this background, however, it seems important to note that Turkey made crucial evaluation mistakes.

When on April 9th 1949 NATO was founded, Turkey attempted to join this defense organization. However, aside from the Scandinavian countries, England also opposed this idea. England perceived the Mediterranean region and the Middle East under its zone of influence and it aimed to build a defense system with Turkey and the Arab countries under its leadership. Yet, this project, with which the USA did not agree, was not implemented. However, Turkey, together with Greece, was granted NATO membership in September of 1951.

Even after Turkey overcame its' NATO bid rejection from England and it was directly connected to the NATO Commands, the efforts to build a new defense system in the Middle East continued.

Initially, it had been envisaged that the Arab countries, especially Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Jordan, would be included in such a system. Yet, except for Iraq, none of these countries had the intention to be part of such a plot. Egypt, even before the 1952 Revolution, had announced that it was against such a project. There were even thoughts that Egypt would be more moderate after the revolution. However, this was not a realistic view. Following the revolution, Egypt's main priority was the withdrawal of the English military forces from the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, Turkey was acting according to a political discourse that was similar to the Western powers' policies towards Arab states. It often supported France concerning the Algerian issue in the United Nations. Turkey kept an ambassador in his office, who was sent to Cairo before the revolution, although this ambassador did not hide his recation concerning the nationalization of the Egyptian land of his wife by the new regime. After

General Eisenhower was elected as the American president in 1953, the US started to play a more active role in the Middle East. For this purpose, Foreign Minister John Foster Dulles went on a tour in the Middle East and in May 1953, he met Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes in Ankara. During this meeting, Dulles, who became famous for his struggle against communism, was surprised to see that Menderes quite willing to cooperate with the US. For example, Menderes focused on the fact that the Suez Canal region was of great geopolitical importance and for this reason, he argued that the English forces should not withdraw from this area. Additionally, Menderes pointed out that the existence of French forces in Northern Africa was crucial for NATO's defense strategies. As for the defense strategy of the Middle East, Menderes stated that he had lost the hope that Arab states would participate in a joint defense system, but he believed that Turkey would be able to form the backbone of this system if it would get reinforcement for its defense forces. In response, Dulles said that 'this backbone should be encompassed with some flesh' and together with the acceptance of the strategic importance of the Suez Canal, he argued that it would also be improper to hold onto this region despite the Egyptian people's desire. Nevertheless, at the end of his visit, Dulles did proclaim the concept 'Northern Chain.'

As expected, Turkey was the country that took the initiative to realize the 'Northern Chain.' Initially, Turkey and Pakistan signed a 'Friendship and Cooperation Agreement' in April of 1954. Additionally, in February 1955, Turkey and Iraq signed the 'Baghdad Pact.' Yet, by signing this agreement, Prime Minister Nuri Sait was taking a big risk, given that he was openly opposing the policy of the Egypt's leader Nasr, Arab nationalism was thoroughly supported in the region. For this mistake, he would pay the ultimate price: with his life. England became part of the 'Baghdad Pact' in April 1955. In September of the same year, this was followed by Pakistan and by Iran, directly after Prime Minister Mosaddeq was overthrown. Abstaining from the possible reactions of the Egyptian and Jewish lobbies, the US took part in the meetings of the Pact Council or other organs of this pact, yet it restrained itself from becoming a member.

The Baghdad Pact would not last for long. It ended after the military coup on July 14th 1958, when the Iraqi monarchy came to an end and Nuri Sait was killed. This pact had not only worsened the relations with the Arab countries in its three years of existence, but it had also affected the Soviet-Turkish relations in a negative manner. Thus, the Soviet Union had managed to seize more opportunities to enter the region after the pact caused backlashes, and when France, England and Israel started that unfortunate military operation against Egypt in 1956. The Soviet Union benefited from these developments at that specific moment.

After the crisis that started in 1956, together with the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the discrepancies of Turkey's Middle East policy became more and more apparent. On the one

hand, even though it had no direct interests, it joined the Suez Company stakeholders in London. On the other hand, like all the Arab countries, it denounced the war and it withdrew its ambassador from Israel. After this period onwards, the Israeli-Turkish relations would be characterized by ups and downs.

During this period, the relations with Syria were also tense. Syria was buying more and more weapons and military equipment from the Soviet Union and it adopted a hostile political discourse towards Turkey. The US also condemned the Soviet infiltration into Syria and the resultant security threat for the region. With the 'Eisenhower Doctrine' that was stated in January 1957, the US aimed to protect the region from 'international communism's indirect invasion.' On the other hand, Syria was accusing Turkey of stationing military forces at the border. In a diplomatic note that the Soviet Union had sent to Turkey, the Soviet Union accused Turkey of having the intention to attack Syria. Consequently, Egypt sent two battalions to Syria, while Syria conveyed the controversy to the United Nations General Assembly. When two opposing proposals were withdrawn in the Assembly, the growing crisis was prevented, and Turkey withdrew part of its military forces from the border.

It is worth mentioning that, during these crisis periods, Turkey's attitude caused a backlash. Turkey was already the member of NATO, and the most solid guarantee for its security was being a member of this alliance. Actually, there was no need to involve the US in the region's disagreements and the Eisenhower doctrine was also unnecessary. The pointless zeal that Turkey displayed in those days in the Middle East was conflicting with its' traditional policy of being neutral in the region. This zeal caused problems. Following the Revolution of 1958 in Iraq, Lebanon soon found itself at the edge of a civil war, because of the struggle between the supporters of Egypt's leader Abdel Nasser and its enemies. Consequently, after President Chamoun's request, the US had taken the decision to send maritime and land forces to Lebanon. The land forces that were gathered at the Incirlik military base and sent to Lebanon did not have the permission from the Turkish government beforehand. On the other hand, Turkey and Pakistan, for the continuation of the Baghdad Pact after the Iraqi revolution, persisted on the membership of the USA to the pact. While the USA rejected the membership of the pact, it did agree to sign bilateral agreements with the rest of the member countries. The preamble of the agreement signed on 5 March 1959 was focusing on "the will of all parties to, directly or indirectly, resist against any violation". This clause caused tensions in internal politics because the opposition suspected that, if needed, the government was going to request the US's support for the clearance of itself based on the agreement. In reality, the March 1959 Agreement was entirely ineffective. While it did not contribute to Turkey's security, this agreement also affected the Arab-Turkish relations in a negative manner.

After the Iraqi revolution, there were also efforts between Israel and Turkey to come closer to each other. Israeli Prime Minister Ben Gurion and Foreign Minister Golda Meir secretly

came to Ankara, where they met Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and Foreign Minister Fatin Rustu Zorlu. Both sides decided to expand their diplomatic relations to the level of establishing embassies, while they also aimed to develop the political cooperation between each other. Yet, this project was not realized.

THE YEARS 1960-1970

In the 1960s, changes started to appear in the general approach of the Turkish Middle East policy. Turkey distanced itself from the Baghdad Pact's zeal. In a proclamation, published by the leaders of the May 27th military intervention, it was announced that Turkey, from that moment on, was going to support the national wars for independence. This was especially the case for the Algerian struggle. Sometime, Turkey's role as a mediator between France and Algeria was even discussed. Nevertheless, it was not always possible to prevent small incidents along this road towards new policies. When Syria decided to separate itself from the United Arab Republic that was founded with Egypt in 1958, Turkey recognized this decision at once and consequently, Egypt cut all its diplomatic relations with Turkey as a sign of protest.

Turkey also had weak relations with the new regime in Iraq that was built after General Kasim's revolution. The fact that the Kurds would receive new rights made the Turks concerned regarding the consequences for Turkey. Another source of concern was the revolt that started in April 1962 by Mullah Mustafa Barzani. Yet, this revolt, apart from the two violations of the Turkish airspace by Iraqi war planes, did not affect Turkey directly.

The Justice Party Government that came into power in Turkey after the 1965 elections had already confirmed in their party program that they would conduct an initiative policy towards the Middle Eastern countries. The first positive reaction to this message came from Iraq. The Iraqi Prime Minister who visited Ankara, did not only stress the fact that Iraq too wanted to strengthen bilateral relations, but that they would also support Turkey regarding the Cyprus conflict. A Trade Agreement was signed with Egypt. The President visited Tunisia. The Saudi king came to Turkey, and his visit exhibited a friendly atmosphere between the countries. During a meeting of ambassadors in Ankara in May 1967, three points were stressed concerning the Middle East policy: bilateral relations with all Arab countries were going to be established; there would be no interference in Arab mutual conflicts and there would be no partiality; Turkey would not sign pacts or regional agreements that would divide the Arabs.

Within the framework of 'strengthening the relations with Egypt,' Foreign Minister Caglayangil visited Egypt in 1967 and he was received by President Nasr. During this meeting, Nasr did not restrain himself from openly showing his resentment concerning Turkey's anti-Egypt policies in the previous years. Nasr even threatened that, for a moment, he wanted to give a positive response to Greece, who requested to position its planes in Egypt in case of a possible Turkish intervention was made into Cyprus. Yet, at the last moment, 'being a Muslim' made Nasr change his mind.

In 1967, a new war threat between the Arabs and Israel appeared on the horizon. As a response to the border disputes between Syria and Israel, Egypt's President Nasr requested the withdrawal of the United Nations military forces from the Sinai peninsula that were positioned there after the 1956 War. Without any doubt, this attitude would trigger an Israeli attack on Egypt. Because the Turkish government foresaw the threat openly, Prime Minister Demirel sent an urgent message to Nasr, stressing the fact that a possible war between Egypt and Israel was going to have severe consequences for Egypt. Yet, Nasr did not change his decision. He positioned 100,000 soldiers at the Israeli border and he closed the 'Tirana Throat' to Israeli ships. On June 5th, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt. Under the delude that Egypt was going to win the war this time, Jordan also attacked Israel. Syria also joined this war. It was only after six days of war that Israel claimed the Sinai peninsula, Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Except for the Sinai peninsula, Israel still possesses all the land that it occupied during those six days of war.

After the war ended with disappointment for Egypt, Turkish President Süleyman Demirel sent a new message to Nasr stressing that he believed that Nasr shouldn't be in despair, and that Egypt would compensate the losses it had suffered. On June 22nd, during a special meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Foreign Minister Caglayangil said that Turkey could not accept that a country could enforce land reclamation and it voted, together with the Arab states, in favor of a decision taken by the United Nations General Assembly, which demanded that Israel should withdraw to the borders that existed before June 5th. The fact that primarily Egypt, together with other Arab states, appreciated Turkey's support demonstrated that Turkey was perceived in a much more positive way in the region.

The fact that Turkey joined the Conference for Islamic Organizations (CIO) in the 1970s, should not only be perceived as an act of a Muslim country, but in fact as part of the 'real-politics' discourse that Turkey followed at that period of time. It is important to remember that there was no huge solidarity especially among the Arab members of this organization that they had a lot of disagreements among each other, and that they even fought against each other.

An Islamic Conference idea was born as a protest on August 21st 1969, when the Al-Aqsa Mosque was burned during the Israeli occupation. With the initiative of Jordan, and the support of the Moroccan and Saudi Kings, a National Leaders conference was organized in Rabat, and the Turkish President was also invited. Concerning the participation of Turkey at this conference: the fact that Turkey is a secular state stirred debate. Yet, President Demirel stated that the meeting in Rabat was not religious, but a political meeting, and that this would not be in conflict with Turkey's secularism. Nevertheless, it was agreed that there would not be someone present at this meeting from the State Minister level, but instead of the Foreign Ministers level. The Turkish Secretariat of the Committee, during a Conference

for Foreign Ministers in Jeddah in March 1970 (that also made the first steps towards the organization) stated in black and white that ‘they would agree with the decisions of the conference, as long as these decisions were compatible with the Turkish Constitution and Turkish Foreign Policy.’ After all, almost all the political decisions taken by the Conference for Islamic Organizations are not implemented and they only remain written on paper.

The hesitations that appeared initially in Turkey concerning CIO, disappeared day-by-day. At a certain moment, in 1976, the Conference was even organized in Istanbul after Turkey’s invitation. President Korutürk sent a message to the Conference, and Prime Minister Demirel personally joined this Conference and he stressed the fact that Turkey would support the Arab countries concerning the Palestinian issue. During the same meeting, with the initiative of the Turkish delegation, it was decided that two centers for scientific cooperation would be established. One of these centres was going to be in Istanbul covering Islamic history, culture and art research center, while the other center in Ankara would include statistics, economic and social researches and an Education Centre.

THE YEARS 1970-1980

In the beginning of the 1970s, some of the developments in the Middle East posed problems for Turkey. Especially the Baath regimes in Syria and Iraq were heading towards policies that were advocating the Soviet Union's policies. The leftist organization's militants, who organized violent activities in Turkey, went to Lebanon through Syria, where they were trained in Palestinian camps before they returned to Turkey. While the relations with Syria and Iraq worsened, the Turkish-Egyptian policies started to be more and more like-minded. A radical change appeared in Egypt's policies when Anwar Sadat came into power after Nasr. In July 1972, Egypt closed the Soviet military facilities while Soviet technicians were welcomed.

After the Arab-Israeli War started on October 6th 1973, Turkey continued to support the Arabs. On the one hand, Turkey declared that it would not allow the US to use the Incirlik airbase to support Israel, while on the other hand, it allowed Soviet planes to use its airspace in order to bring aid to Arabs. The Arabs answered to this support by stating that Turkey was going to be exempt from petroleum export constraints. Before this, in August 1973, an agreement was signed to build the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline between Turkey and Iraq. The line that was finished in January 1977, provided two-thirds of Turkey's petroleum needs. The improvement of the relations with the Arabs was also yielding positive results in the military field. During the 1974 Cyprus intervention, Libya had provided the petrol and tire needs of the planes that participated in the operation. On October 10th 1975, Turkey had voted in favor of the controversial decision of the United Nations Assembly that stated that 'Zionism' was 'racism.' This decision was eventually cancelled.

In the 1970s, Turkey was improving its relations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). It recognized the PLO in January 1975, and it later also permitted the PLO to open an office in Ankara. Yet, regardless of this rapprochement, Turkey did not leave its main political discourse concerning the Middle East. It continued its relations with Israel. Following the Camp David Agreement in 1977, Israel and Egypt signed a peace accord. As a consequence, the Arab world suspended its relations with Egypt. Additionally, the Arab League ended Egypt's membership and the headquarters of the Arab League moved to Tunisia. Yet, Turkey supported the peace process and it continued its relations with Egypt.

Turkey-Iran relations undoubtedly constitute an important component of Turkey's Middle East policy. These relations have illustrated a remittent course during the history of both countries. During Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's reign, both countries had continued their friendly relations and they demonstrated the same approach during the dramatic developments of the Middle East. However, a never-ending competition of influence could be sensed between the two countries. When Iran increasingly enriched itself through its petroleum resources, it became more reluctant to develop its cooperation with Turkey on

the economic and energy fields. From time to time, the historical competition between the two countries emerged on the surface.

The 1979 Revolution, the governing system that was established in Iran and the way Iran perceived the relations between religion and state, were the anti-thesis of Turkey's governing system and its secularity. Both countries started to feel suspicion and distrust towards each other. While Turkey was showing its discomfort concerning the anti-Atatürk publications, Iran was complaining about the negative propaganda in Turkey regarding their revolutions and leaders. Iran's efforts towards exporting its revolution was constituting a serious problem within the bilateral relations. Iran was regarding Turkey as the country into which it would export its revolution, while Turkey perceived Iran as the country that was aiming to break down its constitutional order. Yet, Turkey avoided an open anti-Iran position. It did not follow in the footsteps of the USA that put an embargo on Iran, after the occupation of the American embassy in Tehran.

THE YEARS 1980-1990

After the September 12th 1980 military intervention period, Turkey did not leave its traditional foreign policy line. Under new conditions, it was inevitable that the cooperative relations between Turkey and the European Union would be virtually suspended. The relations continued with the European Council and to realize this, great efforts were exerted to safeguard the relations with the West, and success was eventually reached. The same cooperation continued with NATO. The claim that Turkey was distancing itself from the West in that period and the claims that it concentrated more on Middle East Policies are not valid. Turkey did not, excluding several adjustments that were required given the changing circumstances, leave the traditional discourse concerning its Middle East policies.

Unquestionably, among the changing conditions, the Iran-Iraq War was of utmost importance. Regarding this war, which started ten days after September 12th, Turkey could not pursue another policy rather than being neutral. Additionally, it joined the mediation committee that was founded by the Conference for Islamic Organization with the aim to end the war. First, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and then the Prime Minister joined this delegation that would frequently travel between Baghdad and Tehran. Iraq and Iran trusted the neutrality of Turkey to a degree that they both entrusted the protection of their mutual interests to the Turkish embassies in Baghdad and Teheran. Meanwhile, Turkey's relations with the Gulf countries were established, which would provide Turkey with economic interests in the future. During the Iran-Iraq War's petroleum crisis, Turkey was able to meet its petroleum needs more easily. It reached an agreement in 1981 that stated that the capacity of the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik petroleum pipeline was going to be enhanced. Tehran was warned to prevent Iranian forces from harming the pipeline, and Iran abided by this warning.

While relations with Iraq were, to a certain degree, open to collaboration within the framework of mutual interests, the relations with Syria were stressful. After September 12th, different activists who were members of leftist parties from Turkey together with Kurdish and Armenian terrorists, were active in Syria, and this constituted a crucial problem. Since the 1981 'Extradition and Mutual Cooperation in Punishment Issues Agreement' that was signed between the two countries, it left political refugees out of scope and therefore, it could not be implemented effectively. Although the definition of political refugees did not include terrorists, in practice, terrorists were treated as refugees.

Against the background of the terroristic activities against Turkey, Damascus repeatedly responded that it had nothing to do with these activities after Turkey notified Syria on this matter. After Turkey hardened its attitude, Syria banned ASALA and PKK terrorists from its soil, while in 1983, sending them to Iran, Northern Iraq and the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon. Yet, the Beka'a Valley was actually under Syrian control.

The fact that the PKK was settled in the Beka'a and Iraq, posed a serious problem for the security of Turkey. In February 1983, the 'Border Security and Cooperation Agreement' was signed between Turkey and Iraq. During the same year, on May 10th, three Turkish soldiers were killed in Hakkari Uludere by PKK terrorists and consequently, a military operation was started by Turkish forces, where they entered five kilometers within Iraqi territory. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Kurdistan Patriotic Union (KYB) argued that they suffered the most, while they accused the Iraqi government of making possible such a situation.

After 1983, the PKK explained its decision to start a 'professional guerrilla war.' Following the Eruh and Semdinli attacks in August 1984, a 'Security Protocol' was signed with Iraq in 1984. This protocol granted the right of hot pursuit for both countries to enter inside each other's borders as much as five kilometers. Within the frame of this protocol (that was going to be ended by Iraq after the Iraq-Iran War), a window of opportunity appeared to launch the 1986 and 1987 Northern Iraq operations. The biggest response to these operations came from Iran, and the KYB and KDP, which Iran supported.

Turkey had the possibility to organize operations in Northern Iraq in these years. But Syria, on the contrary, was providing the biggest support to the PKK. In 1987, during Prime Minister Özal's visit in Damascus, a protocol was signed. In this protocol, both sides agreed not to permit operations on their own territories that were directed towards the other country. Additionally, they also agreed to extradite the persons who participated in violent activities. Yet, Syria continued to tolerate the fact that PKK used Syrian territory as a transit point.

Together with the end of the Iraq-Iran War in 1988, Turkey faced a thoroughly complicated problem. Iraq made a move to punish the Kurds, who organized an armed resistance during the Iraq War. Approximately 250,000 Kurds were forced to migrate. In August, Iraqi forces used chemical weapons against the Kurds who were living near the Turkish border. The Kurds, after the Iranian border was closed, crowded together at the Turkish border. Although Turkey initially announced that it closed its borders with Iraq, it explained that the Kurds would be granted with temporary residence while they would not be recognized with the status of 'refugees.' In September 1998, there were 63,000 Iraqi refugees in Turkey.

In those years, the struggle against PKK was a reason for renewed frictions between Turkey and Syria. Syrian President Hafez Assad's brother declared that the establishment of a Kurdish state was necessary, while he did not restrain himself from openly announcing that Syria was giving political and logistical support to PKK.

Likewise, the relations with Israel were also worsening in the 1980s. Israel, that started to build Jewish settlements in the West Bank since 1978, declared in July 1998 that they also annexed East-Jerusalem and the United Nations Security Council decided that this annexation was invalid. Turkey moved a step further with its reaction. In that period, Turkey and Israel's mutual diplomatic representation level was not that of an embassy, but of a *charge d'affaires*. This level stayed the same, but the rank of the *charge d'affaires* was lowered to *Second Secretary*. As for the military and intelligence relations, these did continue in some manner. The intelligence relations also included the operations against ASALA. In the 1980s, the relations with Palestine were improving. On November 15th 1988, when it was declared that the Palestinian state was established, Turkey announced on that same day that it too recognized the new state, ahead of many Arab states.

During the 1980s, the relations between Turkey and Iran were continuing on an ambivalent level. Sometimes, problems arose because of ideological reasons. For example, Iranian officials avoided visiting Atatürk's Mausoleum, and the Iranian embassy also refused to hoist the flag to half-mast on November 10th (the anniversary of Atatürk's death), the media of both sides were polemics regarding subjects as secularism and Islamism, and Iran was acting as the Iraqi Kurds' protector. Meanwhile, the economic and commercial relations between both countries were developing. The trade volume reached \$2 billion in 1985.

THE YEARS 1990-2000

Reflecting on these years, especially from Turkey's point of view, this was an era where in the Middle East's internal and external problems came in intensive interaction with one another. Especially in the relations with Iraq and Syria, the PKK issue became the primary concern.

The first trigger over the developments in the 1990s was again Iraq when they occupied Kuwait on August 2nd. Be it for the Middle Eastern petroleum or for Israel's security threat, the USA, under these circumstances, acted immediately. The United Nations Security Council, which, after the Cold War, no longer had a political decisions mortgage, rapidly took the situation in hand. After Iraq did not act upon the decisions of the Council that demanded its withdrawal from Kuwaiti soil, a new decision was taken that gave Baghdad an ultimatum until January 15th 1991. Otherwise, it warned Iraq by saying that 'for the international peace and security in the region, all kinds of means will be used.' When Saddam Hussein did not abide by this decision, a US-led coalition started a military operation. From the Arab countries, Bahrain, Egypt, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates joined the coalition forces. Among the Western countries, Greece was also present. On the contrary, Palestine supported Saddam Hussein and therefore, it found itself boycotted by the Arab countries long after the war ended.

During the First Gulf War, Turkey, while being highly active, followed a policy that was cautious, as they did not foresee joining the war from the beginning. President Özal's principal measure was to close the petroleum pipeline of Kirkuk-Yumurtalik directly at the beginning of the war. Özal became one of the leaders who had the most contact with American president George Bush before and during the war. President Bush and Brent Scowcroft (the National Security Consultant during the Bush presidency) both specifically reported this in their jointly written book 'The Changing World.'

In his book, Bush stresses the fact that he was continuously in touch with Özal since the beginning of the Gulf War. Two days after the war started, Bush called Özal, later learning that Özal started his diplomatic contacts right away. Özal talked to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, who was reluctant to take a definite stand in those days, while Özal tried to clarify that Hussein needed to learn his lesson, and that otherwise the Iraqi dictatorship could invade Saudi Arabia as well. While informing Bush about this conversation, Özal notified that he perceived Saddam as much more dangerous than Qaddafi. Additionally, he added that, against a possible attack from Iraq, Turkey was expecting a sign from NATO that they would come for the rescue without delay. Bush immediately notified the NATO Secretary General. On November 10th, Bush suggested Özal, within the framework of 'Operation Desert Storm,' that Turkey should send a Turkish armor brigade to Saudi Arabia. Özal contented himself by saying he would consider this request, but ultimately, no forces were sent. Nevertheless, as

a dissuasive force, he accepted the deployment of the allied airplanes in Turkey, but but he stated that if these planes were going to be airborne for combat mission from these Turkish air bases, this was unacceptable.

On November 25th , when Özal met Bush during an AGIK meeting in Paris, Özal once again made the right prediction when he said that the air operation was going to be sufficient and that the war was not going to last for long. Following the Iraqi air strikes that started on January 16th 1991, Israel was hit by scud missiles and consequently, the USA was concerned that Turkey could face the same outcome and it consulted with its NATO allies. Chancellor Kohl called Bush, and he informed him that Germany was ready to fight and was prepared to send military forces to Turkey. As a result, NATO airplanes were deployed at the Turkish airbases. Additionally, Bush wrote in his memoirs that, after the war ended, they hoped to overthrow Saddam Hussein by a people's revolution or a military coup. Yet, he pointed out that Turkey and the other countries in the region, as much as the US, definitely did not want a shattered Iraq, and that giving the Kurds the right for self-determination did not correspond with realistic policies.

The Özal government that was ultimately blamed for inflicting Turkey with huge economic losses and opening the pathway for the Iraqi Kurds that would strengthen PKK, had actually protected Turkey's rights in the best way possible. It had permitted allies to deploy their airplanes at the Incirlik airbase. Yet, it had prohibited them to join combat missions and Özal government had only closed the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline. As for the economic losses and the fact that the Iraqi Kurds entered the foreground: these were inevitable, regardless of the political discourse that Turkey had followed. If there was someone responsible, then this was Saddam Hussein.

After the war in Iraq ended, the Kurds in the North and the Shiites in the South rebelled, having lived under pressure for a long time. Especially in Saudi Arabia, but also in the Gulf states, this revolt created a fear concerning a second Shiite state and thus, this was an important development that safeguarded Hussein's reign. Before and during the war, the US did not manage to find an alternative to Hussein, who would unconditionally surrender. But, Saddam mercilessly responded to the revolt with heavy weaponry, and in a bloody way and the US had to condone this repression. In March 1991, after the revolt was violently repressed, hundreds of thousand Iraqi Kurds and Shiites sought refuge at the Turkish and Iranian hilly border region. Following these events, with Turkish and French initiative, the United Nation Security Council demanded that Iraq immediately halt the violence against civilians. Later on, this decision formed the basis for the installment of a secure zones in Northern Iraq, the flying prohibition in the 36th latitude for Iraq, 'Peace Operation' and the 'Combined Task Force.' Within this framework, Turkey gave permission to use the Incirlik airbase for air operations.

Between the 1991-1999 years, relations were built with Kurdish leaders Celal Talabani and Massoud Barzani. The Turkish army cooperated especially with Massoud Barzani's forces in a great number of operations against the PKK. The most important ones were conducted in 1992, 1996 and in 1998. In some operations, there were more than 35,000 soldiers that entered Iraq. After the clashes between the forces of Barzani and Talabani, the Turkish forces played a role in the implementation of the armistice. A part of the units that were sent to Iraq in that period of time are still stationed in the northern region. In this era, within the framework of 'the Ankara Process,' a close cooperation with the US was established. In 1998, Turkey was not included in the 'Washington Process,' which was started with the aim of strengthening the position of the Kurds in Northern Iraq against Saddam Hussein.

Within the framework of Middle East policies, it seems useful to view the 1996-1997 period when Necmettin Erbakan was Turkey's prime minister. In essence, Erbakan's politics was based on distancing Turkey from the West while getting it closer to Islamic countries. Erbakan argued that his religious references constituted certain assets for himself. Yet, during his Libya trip, he experienced a public apathy by Qaddafi. The Egyptian President distanced himself from Qaddafi, because of his connection with the Muslim Brothers. Even the Saudi Arabs did not consider him a credible leader. It should never be forgotten that most Muslim countries, in certain situations, have closer ties and common interest-linkages with the Western countries than they have with Turkey.

In 1998, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, regardless of Ankara's warnings, was residing and coordinating operations from Syria, making the already tense relations between the Turkey and Syria even more strained. On September 16th 1998, the commander of the Turkish land forces was in the Hatay region and he condemned Syria's behavior with firm language: 'if Turkey does not receive the expected response, it will gain the right to take any kind of measure.' Consequently, a serious crisis had begun. In response, the Commander of the Turkish Armed Forces and the president gave the message that, if necessary, Turkey would use force against Syria. Forces were stationed in areas near the Syrian border. Some Arab countries advised moderateness to Turkey after they saw that a military intervention was unavoidable, while Egyptian President Mubarak and Iranian Foreign Minister Harrazi engaged in a shuttle diplomacy to solve the conflict. After Turkey's military and diplomatic pressure that were triggered by these events, the Syrian government was forced to deport Öcalan. Through Russia, Öcalan wanted to stay in Italy for a while, where he wanted to be politically active. Yet, with the pressure of Turkey and the USA, he could not seek refuge in Italy. Russia, the Netherlands and Switzerland also did not accept him. At the end, even Greece could not keep Öcalan in its country, and they transferred him to Nairobi, where they lodged him in their embassy. A year ago, the American embassy in Nairobi was bombed by terrorists and therefore, there were a great deal of American intelligence agents in the city. With their help, a team coming from Turkey, captured Öcalan.

After Öcalan was sentenced to the death penalty on June 29th 1999, he gave the instructions to PKK activists to leave the country until the end of the year. A great deal of the activists obeyed these instructions and they went to Northern Iraq, the Kandil region. In Turkey, there were only some 400 terrorists left. It was not very difficult to deal with them. The commander of the Turkish Armed Forces had already stated that the work of the military was completed, and that, from that moment on, the problem's solution was in the hands of the civilians. Turkey was holding a golden opportunity to solve the Kurdish issue. This window of opportunity lasted almost until 2004, because until that date, the terroristic activities almost entirely stopped. If the current 'Democratic Opening' was started in those days, then the chances for success, compared with today, would be higher.

In the 1990s, the Israeli-Turkish relations were increasingly strengthened. The start of the Middle East Peace Process, the moment that Turkey started to accept the importance of the Jewish lobby in America, and the fact that Israel started to value its relations with Turkey from the perspective of Middle Eastern relations, were all elements that enhanced this development. In 1991, both countries, for the first time, raised their diplomatic relations to the level of opening mutual embassies. Mutual visits of high level officials continued. While the military collaboration was extensively strengthened, the economic and commercial relations also made progress. After the Israeli aid sent following the 1999 earthquake in Turkey, Israel was, especially according to Turkish public opinion, perceived as a friendly country.

Meanwhile, the Turkey-Iran relations were experiencing an unstable period due to ideological reasons, in addition to Turkey arguing that Iran was supporting PKK. Especially during Refah Party's reign, there was a great deal of tension caused by the support that Iran was giving to the Islamic groups in Turkey. Meanwhile, the crises were present during the period that Ecevit was Turkey's prime minister and the governments condemned each other. Yet, after a certain period, the relations were able to normalize once again.

THE YEARS 2000-2010

The terroristic attack of Al Qaida against the US that took place on September 11th 2001, has also determined the fate of the Middle East for the next years. It was inevitable that, with the United Nations Security Council's approval and under American leadership, there would be a military operation in Afghanistan, where Al Qaida was based after the September 11th attacks.

It was in January 2001 when George W. Bush took over the American presidency and his advisors, who were called 'neo-conservatists,' adopted an ideological approach concentrated (as their real aim) on Iraq. Forgetting the rational reasons why Bush Sr. had refused to eliminate Saddam Hussein from Baghdad after the First Gulf War (which started with the support of all the Arab countries) served the purpose. Out of the blue, there were supposed intelligence reports arguing that Iraq possessed chemical and nuclear weapons and that it supported radical-religious terrorism. It even went to a level where then British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who supported President Bush blindly, would argue that Iraq was able to organize a nuclear attack in as soon as 45 minutes. It was not taken into account that starting a war against Iraq would upset the relations in the Middle East and that Iraq could become a playground for Al Qaida terrorists. Against this background, it seems important to note that Iraq, until then, had been a country that had closed its doors to radical-religious terrorism.

In Turkey, the AKP party that came into power in November 2002 faced difficult foreign policy problems. The Cyprus issue constituted one of the most important problems. AKP found itself in a very strong discussion at political platforms and among institutions regarding the Annan Plan, which is directly related to the EU membership and it found it difficult to determine on an open attitude. Even a more incomprehensible problem was Iraq. At that period of time, it was clear that the US was going to declare a war on Iraq, no matter the potential cost of this war. President Bush had not been able to free himself from the influence of the consultants, with whom he was casting his lot. Long before September 11th, these officials had developed doctrines like 'Preemptive Strike' and 'Evil Axis' in the thinks tanks of which they were members. Consequently, September 11th had given them the opportunity to implement these radical ideas with a kind of religious fanaticism. Within their doctrine, there was no concept contributing to the solution of the Palestinian conflict, aiming to empower the stability of the Middle East.

Given that US policies left the rational discourse, there was no other option for states than pursuing their own interests. Some countries, such as Germany, were against the war, but still permitted the use of their countries' airbases. Greece also opened its air bases. Russia and China were trying to conduct a quite cautious and balanced political discourse. As for the Central and Middle European countries, they did not forget that they owe their

liberation from the Soviet hegemony to the US and supported the US. Spain and Italy, regardless of their public opinion, supported the US. Additionally, the Arab countries, such as Egypt, Syria and Jordan, were aware of the disasters that this war would produce. Yet, they understood that it could not be prevented either. From the Gulf States, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait had opened their countries to American soldiers.

Within this situation, the AKP started their peace tours once again. The prime minister visited Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Some meetings were organized in Istanbul. Undoubtedly, the prime minister's efforts and progresses, and the unilateral and multilateral messages that were transmitted to Saddam, were all reflecting well-intentioned approaches. Concerning internal politics, it was an understandable goal that the government tried to create the image that it did everything it could to safeguard peace.

The US, while preparing itself for war, had principally two requests from Turkey: to use Turkey's harbors and airbases for the planned operation in Northern Iraq and to be able to send soldiers to Northern Iraq through Turkey. The government, by principle, was giving the impression that it was the proponent of accepting this claim. Hence, on February 6th 2003, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) approved the arrival of US technical and military personnel, given that they would renew the military base, facilities and harbor. While these personnel came to Turkey and started their preparations and their work, the US had already put their soldiers on the boat since they saw the TBMM's decision also as a sign that would give green light, which would allow the American units to enter Northern Iraq through Turkey. After the March 1st Memorandum was disapproved, they were diverted towards Kuwait to join the operation from the South.

The March 1st Memorandum was based on an agreement that was established after long-lasting and effort filled negotiations. It is possible to gather the advantages of this agreement for Turkey under three points. The first one was the statement that the Arabs, Turkmens and Kurds were the founding actors of Iraq. Secondly, on the Iraqi side of the border, within the range of 20-25 kilometers in a strip where the potential of the PKK threat was concentrated, there would be approximately 30,000 Turkish soldiers stationed with the authorization to fight against PKK. The third one was related to the weaponry that would be given to the Iraqi Kurds. The Turkish and American military officials would operate jointly during the distribution of these weapons and during the collection after the operations ended.

The ones who were in favor of the March 1st Referendum were putting forward the following advantages: the referendum would ensure that there would be no independent or nearly independent Kurdish establishment in Northern Iraq (where the petroleum and gas sources of Kirkuk are located), and it would eliminate the PKK groups in this area. The Kurds would

not be able to be the indispensable ally of the Americans. It was groundless that the Arab countries would be opposing the Turks either. The US forces had entered Iraq from the South through Kuwait. The Americans had a huge military headquarters in Qatar. The Arab countries were not criticizing them. Yet, it is important to mention the following: It was not possible to say that the course of the history would certainly fit in with the then perceptions. Even if the referendum had been accepted, there could have been crucial disagreements with the USA. Turkey could have been disappointed. There could be conflicts to the extent that Iraqi Kurds would be involved in armed conflicts.

In 2003, there was another dilemma. The March 1st Referendum had, inevitably, influenced the relations between Turkey and the US. The US army and the 'New Conservatives were especially offended. In July 2003, the 'sack incident' occurred and the relations became more tense. On October 7th 2003, after the occupation of Iraq by the USA, Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved to send a huge number of military forces to Iraq in cooperation with the Coalition Forces, under the consent of the UN Security Council. Yet, after the US entered Iraq and the violence and terror erupted, the implementation of this decision would be more risky than the earlier mentioned implementation of the March 1st Referendum. Consequently, Turkey's national politics would immensely suffer if Turkish soldiers were killed in Iraq. Fortunately, with the opposition of the Arabs and the Kurds, the decision of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was not implemented.

The ones who argued that the Iraqi war was about to open the Pandora box in the Middle East were proven right. The false predictions of the Bush government inflicted a heavy blow on the credibility and political power of the Americans. The US upset the regional balances, weakened Iraq and led it towards instability. By strengthening Iran and empowering its extremists' movements, the US turned Iran against itself. Within this chaotic environment, Turkey, by its active, inventive and to-the-point politics, further strengthened its place in the Middle East both geopolitically and economically. Yet, on the other hand, the doubts and critical sides of this political discourse have, from time to time, also appeared. For example, protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq was certainly a righteous goal. Yet, until 2009, this goal was not supposed to prevent the reasonable relation with the Northern Iraqi Kurds who had gained autonomy and who were able to follow a more independent political discourse due to Baghdad's infirmity. The military operations that were carried out until 2007, against Northern Iraqi Kurdish terrorists in the Kandil region, caused just as much friction in the relations with the Kurdish government as much as it caused for the US. The fact that there was not any opening policy for the solution of the Kurdish Initiative until 2009 stood as weakness in its nature.

The efforts of the AKP government to strengthen the bilateral relations with the Middle Eastern and African countries are to be highly appreciated. Additionally, the attempts to be

chosen as a temporary member of the United National Security Council were successful and Turkey was able to gain support to an extent it had not even expected to receive. The relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries were also greatly strengthened and Turkey attracted economic investments from these countries, which led Turkey's economy to grow immensely. The trade volume with all the countries in the region (and even with Northern Iraq) reached its peak level.

One of the reasons for this success story is that micro-diplomacy was used effectively. The engine behind this idea was that relations with only the governments of these countries would not be sufficient, but a dialogue with all the actors of the political arena would be necessary, like contacting the Shiite and Sunni tribal leaders in Iraq. Turkey displayed the same approach in Lebanon as well. After the Israeli attack to Lebanon in 2006, Turkey contributed to the United Nations forces in Lebanon while it also played the key role in the maintenance of a consensus in internal politics.

Today, Turkey is the country that gives the most support to the Palestinians via its political and economical aid. After the 2008 attacks on Gaza, it was again Turkey that reacted most harshly to Israel. Although many Arab and Muslim countries reacted to the disproportionate power that Israel used, almost none of them reached the level of Turkey's criticism. Concerning the Gaza blockade, the Turkish attitude contradicted with the Egyptian attitude that was clearly unwilling to open its borders to Gaza. The reason why Egypt insisted on not opening its borders to Gaza was that it disliked Hamas which it regarded as an extension of Muslim Brothers.

Turkey, contrary to Egypt, had reached out a friendly hand towards Hamas from the beginning. This occurred to an extent that, directly after Hamas won the elections in Gaza in February 2006, Hamas' leader in exile Khalid Mesha'al visited Ankara, even before the Palestinian Assembly came together. This visit, which resulted in a lot of debate during those days, might be paid in rush concerning its timing, many people understood that they could not circumvent Hamas. Yet, it seems important to note that while directing Hamas towards peaceful channels and dialogue, Turkey did not want to feed the image of being Hamas' advocate and religious ally. It seems also worth mentioning that the elements that make Turkey's position in the region respectable and desirable are, apart from being a Muslim country, maybe the fact that Turkey is a democratic country that has close relations with the EU, NATO and other Western countries.

The Turkish-Syrian relations have been continuously strengthened for the last years. Both countries signed more than 40 agreements on different matters and they mutually lifted the visa requirements. A Strategic Cooperation Council was founded between the two countries. Before Netanyahu was elected, Turkey also attempted to mediate between Israel and Syria,

after the request of both countries. Yet, this process was soon interrupted. After Netanyahu's coming to rule, the Turkish-Israeli relations worsened to a level that it could not operate as a mediator anymore. This relation had even worsened to a degree that during an January 2010 interview with 'Monde Diplomatique,' on a question about Turkey's role as a mediator, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad replied that 'actually Turkey and Israel needs a mediator.'

It seems necessary to clarify one aspect. Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that Turkey did not act as a mediator, but that it played a role as facilitator. The minister is right in this aspect. Mediation requires a detailed solution plan by the individual or country that proposes the mediation. Yet Turkey's role was to bring together both parties and to create an atmosphere of negotiation. The foreign minister clarified one more point. He stated that he never used the concept of 'Neo-Ottomanism,' and that this was a stereotype based on prejudices. This concept, that was developed by the media and certain think-tanks, is likely to result in some misunderstandings and wrong associations. The correction by the minister has been to the point in this sense.

It is seen that the Middle East policy of AKP finds appreciation not only by the governments in the region but also the citizens of the region. Unlike the past, Arab media has recently given an unprecedented amount of attention to Turkey in their news or press conferences.

The contemporary big role of Turkey in the Middle East has been noticed by the US, the EU governments, its media and think-tanks. A large majority of the ones who are supporting Turkey's membership to the EU are stressing this role. In France, these thoughts are also present. A while ago, the 'Club de Vigilants' Group published a report that stated that Turkey had a large influence on Iran, Iraq and Syria, and that it was the only Muslim ally of Israel, which Israel could not afford the risk of losing their support. It mentioned that France was in a disadvantaged position during its approaches towards the Middle East because of the absence of dialogue and mutual trust with Turkey. According to the report, this was caused by France's stiff attitude towards Turkey's membership to the EU.

Turkey's relations with the Central Iraqi Government are also strengthened. Additionally, vast amounts of cooperation agreements have been signed with Iraq. Turkey is one of the countries that has strongly supported the territorial integrity of Iraq. Until recently, the relations with the independent Northern Iraqi Kurds were based on mutual distrust, while the relations kept being tense. Jalal Talabani's visit to Turkey on March 7-8th 2008, under the official status of being Iraq's president and the contacts of the representatives in the status of ambassador, have opened the path towards the gradual normalization of the relations. Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's visit to Erbil on October 30-31st 2009 constituted a

turning point. During this visit, it was declared that an embassy was going to be opened in Erbil.

The future of Iraq after the American withdrawal in 2011 seems unclear. The plausible contributions of reinforcement by the American forces with 35,000 extra soldiers during President Bush's governmental period were quite exaggerated. This could be seen from the ongoing terror and violence there. It is clear that the conflicts between Arabs and Kurds will not be solved easily. Most probably, even if a civil war can be prevented, Northern Iraq will preserve its broad freedom of movement in any case. It is clear that Turkey's security interests require a stable relation with Northern Iraq. Otherwise, Iran will be the most influential country within this region. It is for this reason that the Iraqi Kurds have felt the need to approach Turkey because they are afraid of this possibility. It seems beneficial that Turkey's latest democratic initiatives towards Northern Iraq continue in the future.

Turkey's relations with Iran have developed immensely during AKP's rule. At the end of 2008, the trading volume with Iran reached \$8 billion, and Iran became Turkey's 8th largest trade partner. 36.4% of Turkey's oil is imported from Iran. After Russia, Iran is the largest gas supplier of Turkey, at 11%. Both countries have signed the following agreements: Turkmen natural gas will be imported to Turkey through Iran, Iranian natural gas will be imported to Europe through Turkey and some sources of the Northern Pars would be exploited by the TPAO.

Certainly, nobody can object to Turkey's economic relations with Iran and its cooperation within the field of energy. Yet, on the other side, Iran's nuclear program is causing concerns within the UN Security Council and especially the European countries, Israel and the Gulf countries, while Iranian civil society itself is responding critically towards its own autocratic regime. Thus, turning a blind eye to these facts is another point to be discussed. Besides, it seems also noteworthy to remember the US's large embargo on Iran. During the International Atomic Energy Agency's vote over Iran's nuclear program, Turkey, unlike many Western countries, abstained from saying that Iran was not acting transparent with its nuclear arsenal. After this attitude, many were wondering how Turkey would act if there would be a vote as such at the UN Security Council as requested by the USA. The issue does not end here either. By giving the impression that Iran's nuclear power would not pose a potential threat to Turkey's security, and by arguing that Iran did not plan a nuclear weaponry, Turkey actually somehow became a guarantor of statements that nobody believed. Additionally, it implies that Iran has similar rights of producing nuclear weaponry as Israel has had. However, Israel had produced this weaponry in the beginning of the 1960s with the help of France. It was not a signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation agreement, contrary to Iran. Also, it is not arguable that Israel's nuclear weaponry targets Iran. It is not

Iran here that has the right to complain about Israel's nuclear weaponry, but the Arab states. Most of them are more suspicious of Iran than of Israel.

The theocratic and autocratic state system, after the controversial elections once again boosted Ahmedinejad to the role of president, has been protested by large masses in Iran. Of course, it is not proper to interfere in Iran's internal affairs. Yet it would not be correct to give the impression that Turkey remains indifferent when it comes to these Iranian democratization efforts. Turkey could show more empathy towards the struggle of the Iranian people who want to be able to choose their own government, just like the Turkish people can do. Especially the young Iranian generation should not get the impression that Turkey has totally turned its back to them during their struggle.

Following the events after September 9th 2001, Afghanistan and Pakistan should also be considered as countries in the Middle East region. Turkey is also involved in the common conflicts of these countries, as they have both been viewed as the allies of Turkey for a long time. While Turkey has, under the mandate of NATO, a unit of between 700 and 1,300 soldiers stationed in Kabul, it also aids these countries economically, socially and culturally. Additionally, Turkey is organizing joint meetings with the Afghani and Pakistani leaders to be able to solve the problems between them. Just as it seems impossible to end the Al Qaida and Taliban terror in Afghanistan without the cooperation of Pakistan, the spill-over effects of Afghanistan's war towards Pakistan are also crucial.

In recent years, Turkish-Israeli relations have been troubled. The Turkish government is, justifiably, criticizing the Israeli politics of oppression towards the Palestinians, the disproportionate use of power applied in Gaza, the vast amounts of children and women who being killed, and the merciless blockade on Gaza. The response to the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister's disrespectful attitude shown towards the Turkish ambassador has been just to the point. Yet, it cannot be denied that the extent and the style adopted by Turkey in its reactions to Israel is problematic. One of Turkey's successes concerning its Middle East policy has been that it has both managed to strengthen its relations with Israel and closely cooperated with Arab states. It cannot be denied that the cooperation with Israel on military and defense fields has been quite beneficial for Turkey. Ultimately, it should be noted that the Israeli lobby in America provided Turkey with crucial support during difficult periods. It is also a fact that the anti-Israeli rhetoric and an infamous (recent) Turkish television series have bolstered anti-Semitism and racism in general.

Another facet that seems remarkable within the Turkish government's reactions to Israel is that Turkey has exceeded almost all the Arab countries as such, whereas the Palestinian cause was in fact an Israeli-Arab conflict. The role of the Arab countries cannot be ignored when it comes to the fate of the Palestinians. Turkey has, from time to time, been more 'a

royalist than the King is,' which has inevitably been viewed as peculiar. Today, Turkey is praising the Organization for Islamic Conference (OIC) more than any other Arab or Muslim country. Yet, this organization cannot play an important role in the international field with its design or its structure.

The fact that Turkey's foreign policy has concentrated mainly on the Middle East, has raised the question if Turkey is undergoing an 'axis shift.' As the matter of fact, Turkey's active Middle East policy is not contradicting with the status of a country that is the member of the NATO and that maintains its membership negotiations with the EU, regardless of certain problems in its style and extremely religious-sensitive statements. The EU's countries seem to be more responsible for the deadlock than Turkey is when it comes to the EU accession negotiations. Besides, the most difficult and complicated problems in the world nowadays are taking place in the Middle East, and it should not be surprising that this situation is concerning Turkey more than the European countries. It seems also noteworthy that the current Middle East policy of Turkey is not contradicting, at this stage, with the American policies.

CONCLUSION

It would be proper to state that Turkey's Middle East policy, since the foundation of the Republic, has been all about common sense and has been dominated by rationalistic perception in its basic needs, by deliberation and the search for stability in the region. The only exception within this scope has certainly been the years between 1950-1960, when Turkey sided against Arab nationalism and it was the ally of the only Arab country that openly opposed this thought. Besides, from time to time, there have been failures driven by misleading assessments. Anyway, none of them have yet had long-lasting effects. Another point that should be noted is the fact that the Middle East is a region that has undergone the deepest ruptures, as it had been in the Cold War era. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the subsequent wars, the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the First and Second Gulf War, the conflicts and competitions among the Arab countries, the sectarian wars and conflicts, the economic differences between the countries that possess and do not possess energy sources: they have all created a suitable environment for instability and conflicts. To this list, the following can be added: the conflicts with Turkey's direct neighbors namely Iran, Iraq and Syria; the terrorist PKK organization that was deployed in neighboring countries and that was supported by them.

Today, it is natural that the Middle East is holding a preferential position within Turkish foreign policy. Of course, the problems concerning the EU policies, the Cyprus issue and the Caucasus energy security are equally important, and maybe even more important, in the long-run. Yet, none of them are a security threat to the degree that the Middle East is posing. It seems utterly difficult to make predictions on the situation in Iraq after the US military withdrawal. The possibility of breakup of Iraq cannot be ignored, although almost all neighboring countries (except Iran) and the USA are against such a possibility. It seems inevitable that Turkey should assess the Iraqi political situation with all its possible scenarios. Against this background, the policies towards the autonomous region of the Northern Iraqi Kurds, who were concerned about the Arabs and Iran, has come to the forefront. Additionally, the developments in Northern Iraq should be viewed within the frame of the Kurdish issue.

The efforts of the government to solve the problems arising from the Iran's nuclear program, can only be appreciated. Yet, while doing so, Turkey should restrain itself from giving the impression that it is becoming a guarantor of the claims on the safety of Iran's nuclear programs. It is worth mentioning that Iran's nuclear program does not only cause unrest in Israel, but also in the Gulf countries and other Arab states. Additionally, Turkey's Middle East policy, together with the policy towards Armenia, has constituted the key elements in US-Turkish relations.

Turkey's response to the different aspects of Israeli policies, and Israel's disproportionate use of power that was used last year in Gaza, is reasonable. Yet, it seems crucial to understand the relations with Israel beyond the bilateral relations. The consequences of anti-Semitism in Turkey should not be underestimated.

As within Turkey's global policies, it seems beneficiary to restrain oneself from religious themes and references within Turkey's Middle East policy. In foreign policies, there is always room for sensibility, but not for sentimentality.

Ultimately, within a country, it is impossible to separate foreign policies from national policies. Turkey is trying to solve the following crucial problems: ending the terror, strengthening its democracy, enlarging the area of freedom, prevention of tendencies towards social violence and racism, the harmonization of the relations between organizations, the removal of the polarizations within the public, the completion of the reforms required by the EU, and creating a dialogue environment among political parties. It is impossible to argue that the internal perceptions of a country will not influence its value judgments on its foreign policy.

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Former Minister/Ambassador

He was born in 1927 in Istanbul. He graduated from the Galatasaray High School and University of Ankara's Faculty of Political Science. In 1949, he started working at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he took different offices: in 1968, he was the Ambassador in Athens, in 1972 in Moscow and in 1975 he was the Permanent Representative to the United Nations. During the rule of former Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu (September 21st 1980 – December 31st 1983), he was the Foreign Minister of Turkey.

In 1983, he was the Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Genève, in 1985 the Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and in 1988, he took office as the Ambassador in Paris.

For a certain time, he taught at Galatasaray University's Department of International Relations. He still writes foreign policy articles for the Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet*.

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