

**TURKEY'S POLICY TOWARDS  
THE ARAB MIDDLE EAST  
(1945-1970)**

**SUMMARY**

After defining in the introductory chapter, the term Middle East and putting forward the main factors that give shape to Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries, Turkey's policy towards the Arab Middle East has been analysed in four chapters. The chapters, in chronological order, cover the periods of 1945-1947, 1948-1951, 1952-1964 and 1965-1970.

The main factor that has always affected Turkey's policy towards the Arab Middle East, is the Western factor. While Turkey has opted for the West in giving a direction to the foreign policy, the Arab countries have, in general, been in a constant struggle with the West. Thus, the degree and duration of the development in Turkey's relations with the West, affected contrariwise her relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries. In other words, the four chronological chapters dealing with Turkey's policy towards the Arab Middle East, are in fact, the very chapters of Turkey's relations with the West.

In the first chapter covering the period of 1945-1947, Turkey had not yet entered into an alliance with the West, or to be more exact, with the U.S.A. Turkey was, in those years, trying to get rid of the diplomatic isolation into which she had fallen immediately after the end of the World War II. Since Turkey had not yet entered into an alliance with the West, Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East were in a relatively friendly atmosphere. In other words, in the period of 1945-1974, the Western factor had not yet become a divisive influence in Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East. The typical manifestation of those relatively close relations between Turkey and the Arab Middle East was Turkey's siding with the Arab countries against



the UN General Assembly's resolution for partition of Palestine in 1947.

In the second chapter covering the period of 1948-1951, Turkey's relations with the West started to improve. From 1947 onwards, Turkey, within the framework of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, entered into close relations with the U.S.A. On the other hand, with the change of government in Turkey in 1950, Turkey's efforts to join the NATO, gained momentum. All those developments, naturally, urged Turkey to part company with the Middle Eastern Arab countries.

In the third chapter covering the period of 1952-1964, Turkey's attachment to the West became definite. In 1952, Turkey joined the NATO, the Western defence organization. From then onwards, Turkey literally broke with the Arab Middle East. In the period of 1952-1964, Turkey looked upon her relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries, from the view-point of her alliance with the West. Turkey's attitude towards the establishment of the Bagdad Pact and her attitude toward the crises of Suez, Syria and the Middle East (in 1958), are all manifestations of such an interpretation. The Western factor from 1952 onwards, became a really divisive influence in Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East. The attitude Turkey took up towards the international developments in the Middle East in those years, gradually widened the gap between the Arab countries and herself.

In the fourth chapter covering the period of 1965-1970, a rapprochement arose in Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East. This is mainly due to the fact that Turkey had not obtained from the West the support she had expected during the Cyprus crisis which broke out in late 1963. The chilly atmosphere that arose in Turkey's relations with the West and the diplomatic loneliness Turkey was faced with during the UN General Assembly voting on Cyprus in 1965, affected Turkish foreign policy in general and Turkey's policy towards the Arab Middle East in particular. In other words, a rapprochement between Turkey and the Arab Middle East arose only when a «rift» —however superficial and temporary it may be— occurred in her relations with the West. The Western factor, for the first time, became a positive factor, affecting Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East. Thus, a rapprochement arose between Turkey and the Arab countries, none of which had sided with Turkey in the UN General Assembly voting on Cyprus



in 1965. Turkey's new Middle East policy was put into practice during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the 1969 Islamic Summit Conference and the 1970 crisis. This change of policy aroused sympathy in Arab countries and achieved a marked improvement in Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries.

At the conclusion of the dissertation, the graph of Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East has been depicted. After expressing that there was, until 1965, a continual «fall» in Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries, emphasis is given to the two main causes that gave rise to such a «fall». Firstly, the divisive influence of the Western factor is explained. Secondly, while Turkey has looked upon the Middle East question from a rather general point of view, the Arab countries have considered the issue within a narrower framework, namely to remove Israel. Thus, there has not been a concurrence of foreign policy goals between Turkey and the Arab Middle East. After giving the main causes of the «fall» in Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries, attention is called to the real value of the rapprochement which arose from 1965 onwards. The rapprochement in Turkish-Arab relations was mainly due to the «change» in Turkey's relations with the West. However, this «change» was rather superficial and temporary. Therefore, the rapprochement in Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East can not assume a lasting and radical character.

Finally, attention is also called to the fact that an ideal Middle East in peace and stability is vitally important for Turkey. Seeing that the chances of success of such an ideal Middle East are rather poor, one arrives at the conclusion that, Turkey should neither stand against the Arab countries, like she did in the 1950's, nor side with them, as from the mid-1960's onwards. Turkey should side only with peace and stability and not with this or that country.