

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH - ARAB RELATIONS *

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Just as in any other country, Turkey's foreign policy is determined by several internal and external factors. Looking upon the factors that determine Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East, one can see that some of those factors are the ones that give shape to Turkey's foreign policy in general, and that some are peculiar to Turkish-Arab relations. Now let us scrutinize both of those groups of factors :

I) GENERAL FACTORS

A) External Factors

1) *Relations with the West*

One can draw from Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East, the conclusion that Turkish-Arab relations have always been in parallel with Turkey's global foreign policy. Especially after 1945, Turkey's efforts to win the alliance of the West, which was the dominant factor in Turkish foreign policy, was also the main factor shaping Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East.¹ When

(*) This article was prepared in June 1971.

(1) The Western factor was again the dominant factor in Turkish-Arab relations in the inter-War period. In that period, the Arab countries were put under the administration of the two Western mandatory powers, Britain and France. Therefore, Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern Arab countries were, in fact, an extension into the region, of her relations with Britain and France. Any dispute that occurred between Turkey and an Arab country, would automatically, become an issue between Turkey and Britain or France. The Mussoul and Sanjak (Hatay) questions are the two typical cases. Both of those questions were, in reality, issues that concerned Turkey and the two Arab countries, Iraq and Syria. However, solution to those problems were found among Turkey, Britain and France, excluding Iraq and Syria.

in return for her demand to join the Western alliance, Turkey was asked to participate actively in the defense system to be organized by Britain in the Middle East, she did not hesitate to comply with it. Throughout the 1950's, Turkey sided with the West in the Middle Eastern developments. The West was the party against which the Arabs had fought for years to gain independence. Therefore, Turkey's pro-Western policy automatically created a rift between Turkey and the Arab countries. This development continued even after the 1950's. Finally, following the Cyprus crisis in 1963 which made it necessary to rethink Turkish foreign policy in general, Turkey's relations with the Middle East, too, began to change. Thus, our above-mentioned conclusion that Turkey's Middle East policy has always been parallel with her global foreign policy, was once more, verified. On the other hand, taking into consideration the fact that the new development in Turkish foreign policy was due to the discontent felt towards the West, the role of the Western factor in Turkish-Arab relations was also once again verified. During those days when Turkey was definitely attached to the West, there existed a rift between Turkey and the Arab countries. But when a rift, this time between Turkey and the West, arose *in the mid-1960's, a natural rapprochement occurred in Turkish-Arab relations.*

The dominant role of the Western factor in Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East can be seen in almost every development in the region since 1945 :

To start with, Turkey opposed the partition of Palestine in 1947 when the matter was put to vote in the United Nations. However, parallel to her increasing tie with the West, Turkey was the first Moslem country to recognize Israel in 1949. Soon after that, following her adherence to NATO in 1952, Turkey was an active supporter of the Baghdad Pact established in 1955. The Baghdad Pact in which Turkey played the leading role, tore the Arab world to pieces and became the *bête noire* of the Arab Middle East. In 1956, another crisis broke out in the Middle East. Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal Company. In response to it, Britain and France, together with Israel, resorted to force against Egypt. This, of course, added fuel to anti-Westernism in the Middle East. Turkey, on the other hand, supported Western proposals in the London conferences that were held to settle the problem before war broke out. After the outbreak of the war, Turkey withdrew her ambassador in Israel to placate the Arabs. But this mere gesture did not

prevent a heavy loss of Turkish prestige in the Arab world. In 1957, another crisis occurred in the region. The crisis was, at the beginning, limited to two Arab countries, Syria and Jordan. But very soon, it became a world crisis with Turkey and the U.S.A. on one side, and the Soviet Union on the other. The importance of the crisis for Turkey was that, it was the first time since 1945, Turkey was involved in a direct conflict with an Arab country. This, of course, had, equally, a direct and unfavourable impact on Turkish-Arab relations. Soon after that, in 1958, still another crisis broke out in the Middle East. Following the July revolution which overthrew the pro-Western monarchy in Iraq, pro-Western regimes in Lebanon and Jordan, demanded military aid from the USA and Britain. In compliance with the demands of the Lebanese and Jordanian governments, the USA and Britain sent soldiers to the Middle East to protect the two pro-Western regimes against the probable repercussions of the Iraqi revolution. Turkey, throughout the 1958 crisis, again sided with the West and extended her support to the pro-Western regimes in Lebanon and Jordan. This, of course, widened the gap between Turkey and the Arab world where anti-Western sentiments were gaining more and more influence after each crisis. On the other hand, after the revolution in Iraq the headquarters of the much-disliked Baghdad Pact was transferred from Baghdad to Ankara. Therefore, Turkey became a more direct target of attacks against the Pact in the Arab Middle East.

This unfavourable development in Turkish-Arab relations continued until - as mentioned above - a rift occurred in Turkey's relations with the West due to the Cyprus crisis in 1963. Turkey had expected to be supported by the West in the Cyprus question. Therefore, especially after the US President Johnson's letter to Prime Minister İnönü in June 1964, which was interpreted by the Turkish public opinion as a violation of Turkey's sovereignty, a rift was created in Turkey's relations with the West.² Parallel to this development, a rapprochement arose in Turkish-Arab relations. Turkey's new stand towards the Arab countries was seen during and after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Upon the outbreak of the war, the Turkish government announced that military bases in Turkey would not be used against the Arabs.³ On the other hand, Turkey also

(2) For the text of the letter, see: *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Institute of International Relations, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Ankara, Ankara, 1969, pp. 139-141.

(3) *Cumhuriyet*, 1.6.1967, p. 1.

announced that she was against «the use of force for territorial aggrandizement».⁴ Turkey's new pro-Arab policy aroused sympathy in the Arab World. Moreover, Turkey participated in the Islamic Summit Conference held in Rabat in September 1969. Thus, this change in Turkey's Middle East policy - mainly due to the Western factor, of course - finally broke the ice between Turkey and the Arab world. Turkey's pro-Arab policy from the mid-1960's onwards, turned over a new leaf in Turkish - Arab relations.

2) *Relations with the Soviet Union*

Another factor that has always played an important role in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy, is the Soviet Union. However, although the Soviet Union has, indeed, been a constant factor in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy in general, its effect on Turkey's Middle East policy is quite a recent development. This is simply because the Soviet Union had not entered the region until quite recently. Starting from the mid-1950's, when the Soviet Union began entering the Middle East by the side of Egypt, the anti-Soviet element became an important factor in the determination of Turkey's Middle East policy too. Whereas until then, the Soviet Union had only been an indirect factor in the formulation of Turkey's Middle East policy: From 1945 onwards, when the Soviet Union became a danger for Turkish territorial integrity, Turkey started moving towards the West. Turkey's adherence to the West, naturally, drove her away from the Arab countries which were trying to break up their ties with the West. Starting from the mid-1950's, the Soviet Union became a major factor in Turkey's interpretation of the developments in the Middle East. So much so that, Turkey, from then onwards, even left the Arabs aside and considered the Soviet Union to be «the actual party» in the Middle Eastern developments.⁵ The impact of the Soviet entrance into the Middle East, on Turkey's Middle East policy was that, the Soviet Union, which had until then, only an indirect effect on the deterioration in Turkish - Arab relations, became a major factor affecting directly and unfavourably, Turkey's relations with the Arab world.

(4) *Cumhuriyet*, 11.6.1967, p. 1.

(5) In a note submitted to Syria in January 1958, Turkey stated: «... There is no problem between Turkey and Syria. The real problem arises from the strained relations between the Soviet Union and the peace-loving nations...» *Cumhuriyet*, 22.1.1958, p. 5.

Following the Cyprus crisis in 1963, Turkey's definite anti-Soviet stance of the 1950's began to lose its rigidity. Soon after that, even a rapprochement arose in Turkish-Soviet relations. This development contributed to the relaxation of tension in Turkish-Arab relations. It is indeed interesting that rapprochements in Turkish-Soviet and Turkish-Arab relations both started in the mid-1960's. This, certainly, is not a mere coincidence. It is, therefore, apparent that the Soviet Union continues to be an important factor in the determination of Turkey's relations with the Middle East. We can go further and say that the recent «stagnation» that has arisen in Turkish-Arab relations is somewhat due to the expanding Soviet «presence» in the eastern Mediterranean. Another interesting point is that parallel to the «stagnation» in Turkish-Arab relations, the rapprochement between Turkey and the Soviet Union which began in the mid-1960's, has also slowed down. Thus, the importance of the role of the Soviet Union in the formulation of Turkey's Middle East policy has once again been verified.

Having touched upon the two external factors -the West and the Soviet Union- affecting Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East, we can now examine the internal factors that themselves affect those two external factors :

1) Internal Factors

The internal political situation in Turkey, - especially from 1945 till the early 1960's - was definitely in favour of one of the two external factors affecting Turkish foreign policy, namely the Western factor. In 1945, a revolution in Turkish political life took place. Turkey adopted a multiparty system after years of one-party rule. In the general elections of 1950, the Republican People's Party which was founded by Atatürk came out the loser and turned over the power to the Democratic Party. This was the first change in power in Turkey, through elections. The result the Western democratic system had achieved in Turkey in such a short period as five years, naturally, aroused interest in the West. Thus, a fundamental affinity arose between Turkey and the West. By choosing the Western political model and achieving success with it, Turkey had cast her lot with the West in the two-camped world of the post-war era. This development gave justification to Turkey's attachment to the West. On the other hand, the Democratic Party which came to power in 1950, was, more pro-Western in character than its predecessor. Therefore, Turkey's ties with the West showed a definite inc-

crease in the 1950's. This development, naturally, broke Turkey away from the Arabs. For the more Turkey attached herself to the West, the wider became the rift between her and the Arabs who were themselves trying to get rid of their ties with the West.

Turkey's adhesion to the Western camp, from 1945 onwards, was supported by the Parliament as a whole, and by the press which was the main medium that gave shape to public opinion. The Soviet threat in 1945-46, was felt not only by the statesmen, but also by the Parliament, the press and the public opinion. Turkey's search for a Western alliance was widely supported all through the country.⁶ In the 1950's, when the pro-Western Democratic Party was in Power, there was almost no disagreement in the Parliament on Turkey's attachment to the West. So much so that the treaties and agreements Turkey had signed with the West were ratified by the Parliament almost unanimously.⁷ The interesting point is that, parallel to the discord that arose between the government and the opposition on the domestic front, disagreement on foreign policy matters, too, began to arise. Especially after the general elections in October 1957, the internal political situation in Turkey entered into a tense atmosphere. In this atmosphere, the opposition began attacking the government's foreign policy. A typical example is the discord that arose between the government and the opposition during the Middle East crisis in 1958.⁸ The attacks aimed at the government's Middle East policy, was not without effect on at least a certain section of public opinion.⁹ Consequently, the government had to soften its attitude towards the Middle East crisis.¹⁰ Thus, the first important discord in Turkey on foreign policy matters, arose within Parliament and on the Middle East. However, it should be noted that, the opposition's attacks on the go-

(6) To give but one example, when the US warship Missouri paid a visit to Istanbul in April 1946, Turkish public opinion regarded this visit as a guarantee of the USA against the Soviet territorial claims from Turkey. See: M. Gönlübol and H. Ülman, «İkinci Dünya Savaşından Sonra Türk Dış Politikası, 1945-1965», («Turkish Foreign Policy Since the Second World War, 1945-1965»), *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası, 1919-1965*, A.Ü. SBF Yayınları, No. 279, Ankara, 1969, p. 216

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 176.

(8) See: A. Halûk Ülman, «Ortadoğu Buhranı ve Türkiye», («Turkey and the Middle East Crisis») *SBFD*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, (Dec., 1958), pp. 256-261.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 258.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 259.

vernment's policy, were in no way ideological. The opposition criticized the governments's policy mainly because it did not want any longer to keep in parallel with the foreign policy of a government, with whose domestic policy it was already in disagreement. The opposition regarded the Middle East crisis in 1958, and especially the Iraqi revolution, as a natural reaction to despotic rule.¹¹ The opposition's interpretation of the Middle East crisis, hinted at the tightening attitude of the government towards the opposition in Turkey. There were no ulterior motives in the opposition's attacks, and in no way ideological ones. For it is an undeniable fact that ideological criticisms can only be made in a liberal atmosphere and certainly not in the late-1950's when political freedoms were being shackled.

In May 1960, a revolution took place in Turkey and overthrew the party in power. Nevertheless, economic and domestic factors rather than the foreign policy matters, were the main reasons that gave rise to the revolution. The new military regime, too, was no doubt pro-Western. This was manifested in the early announcements of the National Unity Committee which stated that Turkey would keep loyal to NATO and CENTO.¹² However, the mere overthrow of a regime which had caused deterioration in Turkish-Arab relations, might, intrinsically, be a ray of hope for the future of Turkey's relations with the Arab world. In fact, Turkey's new military leaders seemed to be more sympathetic towards Arab affairs and especially towards the Algerian war of independence. However, these hopes were not of long duration. In September 1961, Turkey rendered the promptest recognition to the coup d'état in Syria which severed Syria from the United Arab Republic established with Egypt in 1958. Upon Turkey's recognition of the new regime in Syria, Cairo severed its diplomatic ties with Ankara, Turkey should not have acted so hastily in recognizing the new regime in Syria. Thus, Turkey had once again interfered in inter-Arab disputes. This was, simply, a repetition of what Turkey had very often resorted to in the 1950's. So it became crystal clear that to expect some concrete change in Turkish foreign policy in the early 1960's, was mere optimism.¹³ Turkish foreign policy began to

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 258.

(12) The Baghdad Pact, after the Iraqi Revolution in 1958, took the name CENTO, (Central Treaty Organization).

(13) However, it can be argued that Turkey's recognition of the new regime in Syria was aimed at achieving a rapprochement between the two countries.

change not earlier than the mid - 1960's. However, the new Turkish Constitution adopted in 1961, with its liberal character, paved the way for a revision of Turkish foreign policy. In the politically liberal atmosphere brought in by the 1961 Constitution, foreign policy matters started being subjected to bitter criticism. Especially, the left wing which entered the Turkish political life after the adoption of the new Constitution, aimed strong attacks at the Turkish foreign policy in general. The Turkish left criticized Turkey's links with the West and pressed for nonalignment. However, these arguments had, at least at the beginning, some effect only on a limited circle of intellectuals. The Turkish public opinion in general was not much affected by those criticisms. Just as anywhere in the world, the public opinion in Turkey was more concerned with the domestic affairs rather than the foreign policy matters. In fact, in the early 1960's, developments on the domestic front, were, indeed, important enough to attract the public attention. In February 1962 and May 1963, two abortive coups d'état took place. In such an atmosphere of internal instability, it was natural that the Turkish public opinion did not take much interest in foreign policy matters.

However, following the Cyprus crisis which broke out in December 1963, foreign policy matters did come to the forefront. The Cyprus question was, since the mid - 1950's, regarded by the Turkish public opinion as a national cause. Therefore, the crisis in 1963, naturally, drew public attention to foreign policy developments. Thus, criticisms of Turkish foreign policy would no longer fall on the deaf ears of public opinion. Disappointed by the Western- and especially American - attitude during the Cyprus crisis, the Turkish public opinion began to think on the necessity of drawing the balance - sheet of Turkey's relations with the West. Thus, a favourable atmosphere was created for the anti-Western elements in Turkey. On the other hand, the Turkish statesmen, too, began to realize the necessity of reconsidering Turkish foreign policy as a whole. In this atmosphere, general elections were held in Turkey in October 1965. What is interesting is that, in the not pro-Western atmosphere of the mid - 1960's, a pro-western political party, namely the Justice Party won the elections and put an end to the period of coalitionary governments under the leadership of the Republican People's Party.

The Justice Party's coming to power in 1965 is a turning - point for the 1961 Constitution. For only after then, the extensive freedoms of the new Constitution began to work in the full sense:

First of all, by 1965, the political unrest of the early 1960's had relatively calmed down. Secondly, the pro-Western Justice Party that came to power in 1965, was, in favour of the application of the Western democratic system from which the 1961 Constitution had drawn its inspiration. The new Turkish leaders seemed to be tolerant of criticism. Thirdly, the intellectuals who were, by nature, the most likely to use the intellectual freedoms, were, generally speaking, against the Justice Party. The use of the intellectual freedoms aimed at bringing problems out into the open, would in the end, diminish the powers of the government. But a worn-out Justice Party was not something the intellectuals did not want. Therefore, from 1965 onwards, Turkey entered a dynamic atmosphere of discussion. The public opinion became an increasingly effective factor in the Turkish political life.

In this atmosphere, the pro-Western Justice Party which came to power in 1965, pursued an interesting foreign policy. Under the influence of the new factors that made themselves felt in the Turkish political life, the Justice Party managed to keep the West at a distance and on the other hand, created a rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Reciprocal official visits between Turkey and the socialist countries in the years 1965-67, gave the Turkish foreign policy a new outlook and increased its ability to manoeuvre.

Coming to the effect of this development on Turkey's relations with the Arab countries: It was mentioned above that Turkey's closeness to the West automatically drove her away from the Arabs. A logical consequence of this observation would be that a «cooling-down» in Turkey's relations with the West, would create a natural rapprochement between Turkey and the Arab world. On the other hand, strengthening of the relations with the Soviet Union, too, would affect favourably the Turkish-Arab relations. Thus, Turkey's new foreign policy from 1965 onwards, created a convenient atmosphere for improvement in Turkey's relations with the Arab countries. On the one hand, the West was kept at a distance and on the other hand, close relations were entered into with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. It was, therefore, natural that the Turkish-Arab relations would improve in that favourable atmosphere. Moreover, there was still another reason why the Justice Party government would pursue a pro-Arab Middle East policy: The Justice Party that won the 1965 elections, was widely supported by the conservative peasant masses for whom religion is a do-

minant factor. Therefore, this was another reason urging the Justice Party leaders to pursue an especially friendly policy towards the Moslem Arab countries. In the government program of the Justice Party, Turkey's relations with the Arab world were treated as follows.¹⁴

«It will be one of our main goals to enter with our Arab and Moslem brothers in the Maghreb and the Middle East into close and genuine relations and profitable cooperation in many fields... The Arab countries can rely on Turkey's support and understanding to their legitimate causes.»

Thus, from 1965 onwards, Turkey's pro-Arab policy was supported both by the generally left-oriented intellectuals who sympathized with the anti-Western - in fact anti-American - character of the Arab struggle, and also by the rightists due to the religion factor. The coming together of both camps on a pro-Arab policy - though due to different reasons - paved the way for improvement in Turkish-Arab relations. On the other hand, there was a practical reason, too, that necessitated a rapprochement in Turkey's relations with the Arab world and that was the UN General Assembly vote on the Cyprus question in December 1965 which showed up Turkey's diplomatic isolation in the international arena. To win the friendship of the 14 Arab countries¹⁵ was another reason that necessitated an improvement in Turkish - Arab relations.

Turkey's new Middle East policy from 1965 onwards, achieved success and especially the cautious attitude taken during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, aroused sympathy in the Arab world. Reciprocal official visits between Turkey and the Arab countries paved the way for a common understanding and even unanimity on many issues. However, as we are entering the second half of the year 1971, it is possible to observe that Turkish-Arab relations have entered a period of «stagnation». If we seek its causes we can see that first of all, the Western factor which has always been an effective factor on Turkish-Arab relations, has undergone a change. The unfavourable atmosphere of the mid-1960's in Turkey's relations with the West has somewhat softened. The antipathy the Turkish public opinion felt against the USA, due to the American attitude

(14) See : İsmail Arar (Ed.), *Hükümet Programları, 1920-1965*, (Government Programs, 1920-1965), Burçak Yayınevi, İstanbul, 1968, p. 482.

(15) The fourteenth Arab country is the People's Republic of South Yemen which won its independence in 1967.

during and after the 1963 Cyprus crisis, seems to have calmed down. In fact, the USA took a more cautious attitude during the second Cyprus crisis in 1967. On the other hand, the student demonstrations which in the summer of 1968 broke out in Turkey too, and which using anti-American slogans turned gradually to terrorism, aroused apprehension and even outright reaction among the public. During the student demonstrations, acts of violence were directed to American citizens and yet the US authorities cautiously refrained from taking steps that might be interpreted as intervention in Turkey's internal affairs. This restrained attitude of the USA, at least prevented the anti-American sentiments that arose in Turkey in the mid-1960's from becoming chronic. On the other hand, the USA undertook to review the bilateral agreements signed between Turkey and the USA, which led to a basic agreement in July 1969. Moreover, the USA turned some of the military bases in Turkey to the Turkish authorities and withdrew part of its personnel from Turkey. The American authorities saw to it that the remaining personnel refrained from acts that would draw upon them the antipathy of the Turkish people. All those developments saved the American from being regarded by Turkish public opinion as «ugly» as he was in the mid-1960's. Thus, the haemorrhage in Turkish-American relations has, finally been stopped.

On the other hand, the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and its allies, damaged the socialist movement in Turkey too. This factor, together with several others, led to a decline in the socialist Turkish Labour Party vote at the 1969 elections. Upon this development, the «national democratic revolution» movement, which gave up hope of bringing socialism to power in Turkey through democratic elections, began to spread especially among the university students. Thus a new «extra-Parliamentary» opposition arose, which, in the Middle East, strongly supported the Palestine guerilla movement.¹⁶ According to the theory of the national democratic revolution», the struggle in the Middle East was that of the Palestinian people against imperialism. It is, by now, known that some members of the «Revolutionary

(16) The Palestine guerilla movement, too, like the Turkish «extreme left», had given up hope of the normal way. The defeat the Arabs suffered at the hands of Israel in June 1967, aroused in the Palistinians the belief that they should themselves try to find a solution to their cause and not expect anything from the Arab government forces.

Youth Federation»,¹⁷ had been trained in the Palestine guerilla camps and had even fought shoulder to shoulder with the guerillas. Thus, on the one hand, the terrorism of the «extreme-left», and on the other hand, the increasing number of Soviet warships in the Mediterranean somewhat isolated the Turkish left. Turkey's relations with the socialist countries were affected too. The improving relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union (and the other socialist countries) in the mid-1960's, have in the early-1970's, entered a period of «stagnation».

Thus, both the deterioration in Turkey's relations with the West, and the rapprochement with the Soviet Union have, by the early-1970's, entered a period of «stagnation». Then, as a corollary to our above-mentioned observation on the dominant role of the Western and the Soviet factors on Turkey's Middle East policy, Turkish-Arab relations, too, have, by the early-1970's, entered a period of «stagnation». In fact, what is noticed in Turkish-Arab relations in the mid-1971, is in agreement with our observation. An interesting change of government took place in Turkey in March 1971. The commanders of the Turkish Armed Forces handed in a memorandum which urged the government to resign to be succeeded by a new one capable of dealing with the anarchy and bringing in the necessary reforms. The Demirel government, accordingly, resigned and a new «non-partisan reformist government» was formed under the premiership of Nihat Erim. In the program of the new government, which immediately after its formation embarked upon a campaign against the «extreme-left», such statements were expressed on Turkey's relations with the West, the Soviet Union, and the Arab countries :¹⁸

«...Turkey will do her best to improve her relations with such international organizations as the Council of Europe, European Economic Community, of which she is a member.

We find the safest guarantee of our external security in the North Atlantic Alliance which was and is a defense organization. We believe that NATO, as a forum where the conditions of a secure peace in Europe is discussed, plays a role in harmony with our foreign policy goals.

(17) The student organization which disseminated the «national democratic revolution» theory in the universities.

(18) *Hükümet Programı, (Government Program)*, Başbakanlık Basımevi, Ankara, 1971, pp. 18-19.

...Our close relations with the USA, are based on mutual respect and understanding. The fact that the two countries, from time to time, look at certain questions from different angles, should be regarded as a natural outcome of the friendship between Turkey and the USA based on mutual understanding and sincerity. On the other hand, this occasional difference of views is a manifest testimony of the strength of the friendship between the two countries and is inherent in the Western philosophy to which both countries have acceded.»

In the government program, relations with the Soviet Union were treated as follows :

«We believe that parallel to our traditional policy, it is possible to improve our relations with the Soviet Union, our great northern neighbour based on good-neighbourhood, mutual respect for independence, territorial integrity and non-intervention in internal affairs and in harmony with the spirit of the 1921 Treaty of Moscow.»

In the government program, the following expressions were stated on Turkish-Arab relations :

«We shall improve our relations with the Arab countries with which we have valuable historical and traditional ties.

We wish that a solution that will satisfy all the concerned parties be found to settle the sanguinary conflict between the Arab countries and Israel. We are of the opinion that such a solution should be found within the framework of the UN Security Council's resolution of November 22, 1967.»

As can be seen, the program of the new government heralds no concrete change in the Turkish foreign policy. The program is just in harmony with the general outlook of Turkish foreign policy in the early - 1970's. It reflects the softening of the anti-Western sentiments of the mid-1960's. On the other hand, the program brings in nothing peculiar in Turkish-Soviet relations which after a speedy development in the mid-1960's, have, by the early-1970's, entered a period of «stagnation». Therefore it is understood that the «stagnation» in Turkey's relations with the Middle East that has arisen recently, will continue to exist in the foreseeable future.

Having touched upon the general factors affecting Turkey's relations with the Arab Middle East, we can now go into some other factors particular to Turkish-Arab relations :

The history of Turkish-Arab relationship goes back to the 16th century when the Arabs came under the power of the Ottoman

II) SPECIFIC FACTORS

Empire. Due to the religion factor which was a natural tie between the Moslem Turks and Arabs, the latter were granted an exclusive status within the Empire. This closeness of relations continued until the developments of the late - 1890's. The rivalry of the European Great Powers on the territories of the Ottoman Empire, created a rift between the Turks and the Arabs. Britain and France urged the Arabs to revolt against the Ottomans who have sided with Germany. The developments of the early - 1900's led to the First World War which finally put an end to the Empire. But the irony of fate was that the Arabs could not win their independence though the rule of the Ottomans had ended. They were put under the mandate of Britain and France. Thus the Arabs had to struggle for independence against the two mandatory powers.

After the First World War, from amidst the ruins of an Empire, a new Turkish state was born. The new Republic of Turkey, following its foundation, embarked upon a campaign of social reforms. Especially the Turkish reforms in the field of religion, gave the new Republic a much different and modern character than the late Ottoman Empire. Turkey's becoming a lay state was regarded by the Arabs as parting with Islam. This, alone, created at least a moral rift between Turkey and the Arab world. Moreover, not long after its foundation, the new Turkish Republic entered into gradually improving relations with Britain and France. Whereas the Arabs were struggling for independence against those two Great Powers. Thus, from the 1930's onwards, the Western factor, as has been explained above, became a divisive influence in Turkish-Arab relations.

Turkey's relations with all of the Arab countries had shown some uniformity until the mid-1950's. In other words, Turkey's relations with any one of them were not much different from those with any other. But following the Egyptian Revolution in 1952, the anti-Western factor in the Arab world gained an ideological-though rather pragmatic- look and from the mid-1950's onwards, the Soviet Union entered the Middle East siding with Egypt. These developments aroused apprehension in Turkey. Consequently, Turkey made a stand against Egypt and Syria¹⁹ which went in the wake of

(19) In fact, due to the Sanjak (Hatay) question. Turkey's relations with Syria have almost never been good.

Nasser. Turkey, from the 1950's onwards, sided with the West in the Middle East which became a new area of conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union. In the inter-Arab disputes of the 1950's, Turkey extended her support to the pro-Western Arab regimes. Thus, Turkey had entered into close relations with some of the Arab countries whereas her relations with the other Arab countries became more and more unfriendly. When looked at, one can see that the first category constituted the conservative (reactionary) wing of the Arab world and the other were the radical (progressive) Arab countries. This bifurcation continued until the rapprochement with the Arab world from 1965 onwards. Only after this has it been possible to «normalize» relations with the progressive Arab countries. However, what has been achieved in the relations with the progressive camp, is, indeed, not much more than «normalization». In other words, even today, Turkey has closer relations with, for instance, Jordan, than with the United Arab Republic.²⁰ Nevertheless, the difference in relations with the two opposite camps, has, by now, become much smaller than it was in the past. This, alone, is an important and favourable development in Turkish-Arab relations.

Having thus analysed the factors affecting Turkey's relations with the Arab world, we can now arrive at certain conclusions :

CONCLUSION

First of all, we should note the fact that Turkey, being at least geographically close to the Middle East, will somehow or other be affected by the future developments of the region, just as in the past. This is almost inevitable, no matter how much Turkey seeks

(20) However, Turkish-Iraqi relations have been an exception to our observation. Until the Iraqi Revolution in 1958, Turkey was naturally on good terms with the pro-Western regime in Baghdad. But even after 1958, Turkish-Iraqi relations did not deteriorate. With the 1958 revolution, Iraq joined the radical camp of the Arab world. However, Turkish-Iraqi cooperation in many fields continued. The main reason for it was that there were certain questions common to both countries. The Kurdish question was one of the common issues. The high number of Kurds both in Iraq and Turkey, necessitated cooperation between the two countries. On the other hand, the Turkish minority in Iraq; and economic problems such as the common use of the rivers Euphrates and the Tigris, and the production of natural gas, etc., prevented any deterioration in Turkish-Iraqi relations.

her future in the economic and political integration of Europe. Whether or not peace is achieved in the Middle East, will concern Turkey too. Turkey, for her part, has not much contributed to stability in the Middle East. On the contrary, especially in the 1950's, Turkey caused the innate instability of the Arab countries to become even more chronic. On the other hand, Turkey, unconsciously, added fuel to the leftist trend in the Arab world, which was, no doubt, something she did not like. The typical case is Syria. Turkey has always made her strength «felt» by Syria with which Turkey's relations, due to the Sanjak (Hatay) question, have never been friendly. Turkey, especially in the 1950's, often resorted to military concentrations and manoeuvres on the Turkish-Syrian border. This was a method of exerting «political pressure» on Syria. Turkey's attitude towards Syria, created in the latter what we can call a «Turkey complex» which gradually led to an increase in the Soviet influence upon Syria. This development did not, of course, please Turkey. However, Turkey should have realized that it was the West that obliged the Arabs to seek the Soviet alliance. The Western attitude towards the Arabs paved the way for Soviet entrance into the Middle East. Turkey, on her part, instead of cooperating with the West, should have extended her support to the Arabs in their legitimate causes. Thus, Turkey, as a powerful state of the region, might have somewhat prevented the Soviet penetration into the Middle East. But Turkey could have pursued such a policy only if she had taken into consideration those conditions peculiar to the Middle East. It was natural that Turkey as a medium power, did not have much say in global issues. But Turkey's position in the Middle East was different. Turkey had the potential to become «the Great Power» of the Middle East. Therefore, Turkey should have pursued a far-sighted policy in the Middle East.

The last part of our criticism of Turkey's long-term Middle East policy, goes for the present policy too. Although Turkey has relatively improved her relations with the Arab countries, her present Middle East policy is again not a far-sighted one. Turkey's present policy is formulated according to daily developments in the Middle East. Turkey's main concern is to refrain from incurring the antipathy of the Arab countries. Whereas Turkey should have a responsibility in the future of the Middle East. The present situation in the region has led to developments not pleasant for Turkey. The Soviet Union that has always been a dominant factor in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy, has, thanks to the Middle

East dispute, entered the region and become an increasingly influential power.

Thus, the Middle East conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union has become a threat not only for the region but for world peace in general. This situation will, no doubt, concern Turkey too.

Therefore, Turkey on her part, should make some effort to bring about peace in the Middle East. How will peace be achieved in the Middle East? In other words, how will the Arab-Israeli conflict be settled? It stands to reason that today's Middle East question arose from the birth of Israel as a new state in the region, subsequently leading to other problems such as the Palestinian refugees issue. Will the annihilation of Israel be the shortest cut to peace in the Middle East? This is simply unthinkable. First of all, the three wars that broke out in the last 20 years manifested that the Arabs, by themselves, can not defeat Israel on the battle-field. Therefore, to think of a solution by force is in no way realistic. In fact, the Arabs, themselves can not any longer deny that Israel is a reality. From time to time, Arab leaders give declarations to the effect that if Israel withdraws from the occupied territories, the Arabs will sign a peace treaty with her. On the other hand, the UN Security Council's resolution of November 22, 1967, which the Arab countries excluding Syria, did not reject, recognized Israel's right to exist. In any case the Arabs, when speaking about going to war against Israel or making peace with her, indirectly yield recognition to Israel. For it will be with Israel that the Arabs will make peace or again upon Israel that they will make war. The Arabs are well aware that Israel is a reality.

So, what should Turkey's Middle East policy be like in order to achieve peace in the region? I am of the opinion that Turkey should press for Israel's withdrawal from all the territories she occupied in June 1967. Today peace in the Middle East seems to hinge upon Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. If the Arab leaders can wrench this *quid pro quo* from Israel, it will be less difficult for them to thrust the reality of Israel down the throats of the Arab masses. Therefore, Turkey should aim her policy at the realization of Israel's withdrawal from the territories under occupation. In fact as has been expressed in the program of the new Turkish government, Turkey has already extended her support to the UN Security Council's resolution of November 1967

which calls for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories. However, the UN resolution does not mention a «complete» withdrawal. Therefore, Turkey should take a further step and press for Israel's withdrawal from all of the occupied territories. In fact, Turkey's opposition to the use of force «as a means of territorial aggrandizement» necessitates Israel's withdrawal from all of the occupied territories, which have, no doubt, been invaded by force. Therefore, Turkey should openly defend such a solution. By doing this, Turkey will at least show to the world that as the powerful state of the region, she has realized the responsibility that falls upon her for the achievement of peace in the Middle East. This alone will contribute to Turkey's prestige in the international arena. On the other hand, Turkey will thus strengthen her relations with the Arab countries. Strengthening of relations with the Arab countries will pave the way for friendly relations with many Moslem Asian-African countries. This will, no doubt, procure Turkey an indispensable political support in the UN. Moreover, the Arab world is also a promising market for the developing Turkish industry. Improvement in political relations will pave the way for closer economic ties. Turkey's pro-Arab policy from 1965 onwards, led to a considerable development in Turkish-Arab economic relations. A Chamber of Commerce was established to regulate the trade between Turkey and the Arab countries. According to the announcement made during the Chamber's meeting held in Ankara in May 1971, Turkey's exports to the Arab countries in 1970, have, in comparison with the preceding year alone, increased by % 38.4.²¹ Parallel to the development in Turkish-Arab diplomatic relations, it is natural that Turkish-Arab economic relations, too, will flourish. The fledgling Turkish industry will certainly benefit from such a development.

Taking all these factors into consideration, therefore, one arrives at the conclusion that Turkey's maintenance of her pro-Arab policy in the Middle East, will not only politically but also economically produce profitable results for her.

(21) *Milliyet*, 11.5.1971, p. 7.