

## **A SHORT APPRAISAL OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC\***

(1923 - 1973)

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### **I**

The War of Liberation that defined the geographical boundaries of the Turkish Republic also delimited its political and military goals. It was not an ideological war, but a war of independence, with its single purpose being to liberate from foreign domination those areas where the Turks were in the majority. The seeds of today's foreign policy can be found in the National Pact (*Misak-ı Milli*) of January 28, 1920.

A multi-national state like the Ottoman Empire could not withstand the pressures of nationalism massing in Europe in the nineteenth century. The first nationalist movements in the Empire were among the Christians early in the nineteenth century, and the strong European nations, on one pretext or another, tried continuously to finish off the "Sick Man" and divide his estate. But the competing nationalisms kept the Empire alive artificially until late in the nineteenth century.

The losses began with the 1877-78 Turco-Russian war when vital territories inhabited by Christian populations changed hands. The political importance of the multi-national idea disappeared as the Moslems began to predominate among the peoples of the Empire. By the end of the nineteenth century the Turks, who were the core of the Muslim population, became aware of themselves as a nation; the Ottoman state ended with the Young Turk era, from 1908 to 1918.

The Anatolian peninsula had been considered their homeland by the Turks, but after World War I even that was inclu-

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ded in the division of the Empire among the European powers. The National Pact, with its unmistakably Turkish emphasis, was thus an act of defiance to the collaborationist government of the Sultan, and indirectly to the Allied European Powers. Adopted by the last Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul, it was a definite break with the idea of an Ottoman nation.

With the declaration of the National Pact, Mustafa Kemal began to mobilize the masses against the invaders, and the War of Independence, lasting from 1919 to 1923, began. Greek forces which had landed in Western Anatolia to resurrect the ancient Byzantine Empire were driven back to the Aegean, and Mustafa Kemal was able to use to his advantage differences that had developed among the Allies after World War I. By December 1920 the Armenian nationalists had been compelled to cease operations, and three months later the Ankara Government concluded a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. In the south the French ended hostilities in Anatolia, and agreed to recognize most of Mustafa Kemal's territorial claims. The War was virtually won by 1922; with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, the Allies made peace with Turkey, assisting at the birth of an independent national Turkish State. The weakest of the World War I belligerents was thus the only one to negotiate a lasting peace settlement to her own advantage.

## II

The first task of Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues after October 29, 1923 was to consolidate the power of the new state. The Sultanate had already been abolished on November 1, 1922. The Defense of Rights Society, made up of local organizations established to organize and lead the resistance against the invading forces, was now transformed into a political party under Kemal's leadership. The Republican People's Party was used as an instrument to concentrate political power in the hands of Kemal the Victor (*Gazi*).

The Treaty of Lausanne had not eradicated all external problems. The Turkish rulers had to deal with such international issues as the Mosul question, which involved the Iraqi-Turkish boundary, the Ottoman debts, and the exchange of populations with Greece. Later there were questions about the posi-



tion of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in Istanbul, the nationalization of foreign companies operating in Turkey, and Turkish language education in minority schools. It was 1930 before Turkish relations with Western European countries were completely normalized.

When Turkish negotiations with Britain about the Iraqi border opened in 1924, the British claimed not only the oil-rich Mosul, but also portions of the province of Hakkari in south-eastern Turkey. Though Turkey was not a member of the League of Nations, the League adjudicated the question, and Turkey complied with its unfavorable decision.

In February, 1925, a rebellion broke out in Eastern Turkey, led by the reactionary Kurdish nationalist Sheikh Said. The Western press fanned the Kurdish cause, though the conflict was entirely a domestic affair of the young Republic. The rebellion was nevertheless quickly suppressed.

A major development in the first years of the Republic was the friendship and non-aggression pact signed by Turkey and the Soviet Union shortly after the negative Mosul decision, on December 17, 1925. The parties agreed not to join any treaty directed against the other, to respect each other's territorial integrity, and to remain neutral during any armed conflict against the other. At the time both countries were fighting against post-World War I Western imperialism, and there was substantial mutual respect. The Turks had benefited from Soviet aid in the early years of the War of Independence.

The issues with France were settled, after a temporary setback that resulted when the Turkish steamship *Bozkurt* collided with the French steamship *Lotus*. In 1930, with the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey, the last loose ends of the Lausanne Treaty were tied up. Turkey was free to seek closer ties with the West.

Turkey felt close to the West for a number of reasons. Turkish political regime had aims similar to those of the West. Economic conditions within Turkey influenced Turkish officials to seek economic aid from the West. And though Turkey and the Soviet Union were at the time good friends, the Turks may have suspected long-term Russian designs to reach the warm waters of the Mediterranean.



Yet the first threats to Turkish territorial integrity came from a Western country, Italy. Although a Treaty of Mutual Friendship and Non-Aggression had been signed in May, 1928 with Italy, Turkey was alarmed by Italy's attack on Ethiopia in October, 1935. The Turkish Republic was one of the first nations to join in the sanctions proposed by the League of Nations against Italy. This brought Turkey closer to France and Britain, but contributed to the growing coolness in the Turco-Soviet relations. With the establishment of the Rome-Berlin Axis, however, Turkey was able to pursue closer ties with Western democracies without alienating Russia.

With an agreeable political climate working in its favor, Turkey resubmitted its demands for a change in the status of the Turkish Straits. Under the Lausanne Treaty, she could not exercise full sovereignty over them, although they were surrounded by Turkish territories vital for defense. The aggressive fascist regimes in Europe made it appropriate in 1935-36 for Turkey to renegotiate, basing its request on the *rebus sic stantibus* principle of international law. Italy boycotted the negotiations, which opened in June 1936 in Montreaux, Switzerland, and which produced a new treaty, signed by Turkey, Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, Japan, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia. It provided that Turkey could re-militarize the areas surrounding the Straits; in times of peace free passage would be provided for all nations; and in times of war, if Turkey were neutral, warships of belligerents would not be allowed passage. If Turkey were itself at war, or saw itself in danger, it could regulate passage as it saw fit. No limit was placed upon how many ships, commercial or military, of Black Sea nations could pass through the Straits; non-riparian nations were restricted in both number of warships and tonnage.

In 1939 Turkey obtained another significant revision of the post-war settlement, when France as the Mandatory Power agreed to Turkish annexation of the then-independent State of Hatay. Here again Turkey acted with prudence and perseverance. The reasoning behind reopening negotiations for incorporating Hatay into the mainland was that Turkey had entrusted the fate of the Turks in Hatay to France, not to Syria; now that France was ready to withdraw from Syria, the question



was again open. At a time when Hitler in the Rhineland and Mussolini in Ethiopia were setting an example of unilateral action by force, the Turkish legal approach to the problems of the Straits and Hatay was almost unique, and widely respected.

### III

The most significant foreign policy action of Turkey immediately before World War II was the signing of joint declarations with Britain, on May 12, 1939, and with France, on June 23, 1939. The declarations became a treaty of mutual assistance between the three nations on October 19, 1939. It provided that if a European nation attacked Turkey, Britain and France would come to her aid; Turkey would ally herself with Britain or France if a war in which they were involved should spread to the Mediterranean, *i.e.*, if Italy became involved.

Even as Turkey entered this alliance, she was making an effort to clarify her relations with the Soviet Union. Turkey did not want the USSR to think the alliance was directed against her. Though the war had by June 1940 spread to the Mediterranean, Turkey with one excuse or another managed to stay out, not wanting to earn the enmity of a Russia which was then still on good terms with Germany.

With the impasse reached during the Molotov-Ribbentrop talks in November 12-13, 1940, Germany divulged the Soviet designs on Turkey, including territorial claims in Eastern Turkey and plans for Soviet bases on the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. The German attack on the Soviet Union in June, 1941, apparently saved the Turks from a great potential Soviet danger.

As the war turned in favor of the Allies after their success at Stalingrad and el-Alamein, pressure increased on Turkey to join the struggle on the side of the Allies. On January 30, 1943, British Prime Minister Churchill came to Adana for a two-day consultation with Turkish President Ismet İnönü. In response to Churchill's urgings, the Turks emphasized that they were unsure of Soviet motives, and they needed a substantial amount of war materiel before they could make a real contribution to the war effort.



Turkey succeeded in staying out of World War II until it had virtually ended, declaring war on Germany after victory over Germany was evident, so that Turkey could qualify as a Charter member of the United Nations.

#### IV

The policy of stubborn neutrality saved Turkey from the fate of the Balkan neighbors, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, but her position on the path of natural Soviet expansion yet left her vulnerable to Soviet threats. As an Allied victory became clear, the Soviets first denounced the 1925 Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression with Turkey and a day later put forth claims to the Eastern portion of Turkey and the joint defense of the Straits. Stalin's claim at Potsdam, as reported by U.S. President Truman, was that the *assignment* to Russia of the Eastern Turkish provinces of Kars and Ardahan would restore the frontiers that had existed between Russia and Turkey after the Turco-Russian war of 1877-78, and until the Treaty of Brest Litovsk in 1918. Stalin also contended that Turkey was not strong enough to defend the Straits; the provision of the Montreux Convention that gave Turkey the right to close off these vital waterways if her defense was threatened meant "that a small state supported by Great Britain held a great State by the throat and gave it no outlet."

Such Soviet demands ended Turkish neutrality, maintained throughout World War II; Turkey sought closer ties with the West, particularly with the United States. The relations began when the U.S. extended foreign aid to Turkey first under the Truman Doctrine and then under the Marshall Plan, and resulted eventually in Turkish membership in NATO in 1952. Admission to NATO was not, however, a simple matter to achieve.

American hopes to continue war-time cooperation with the Soviet Union had come to a halt in 1947, as Soviet demands more and more contradicted U.S. interests. Neither the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, nor the Mutual Aid Treaty among Britain, France, and the Benelux countries were powerful enough to stop Soviet expansion. The Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and the Berlin crisis of 1948, brought



developments to a climax. And while the United States still had a nuclear monopoly, this clearly would not last long; nor could it prevent Soviet expansion.

On April 4, 1949, twelve "North Atlantic" countries established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Turkey was not among the founders. The Turkish application for membership in NATO in 1949 had been rejected although it had been one of the first countries to receive post-war American aid to stop Soviet expansion. The rejection created substantial anxiety throughout Turkey; although the Americans provided considerable military aid, the Soviet attitude continued to be aggressive. Turks also feared that American aid, which had been instrumental in checking the Soviet threats, might be reduced.

Acceptance of the Turkish application for NATO membership in 1952 reflected changes in the Turkish position in the world. Turkey had joined the United Nations war efforts in Korea with a contingent of 5,000 men who provided both heroic and successful services in battle. American leaders and the American people began to believe that Turkey might become a useful ally. Turkey also had twenty-two combat-ready divisions, which could be used to balance the European forces against the manpower superiority of the Soviet Union. Finally, Britain, planning to organize the Middle Eastern countries into a regional defense pact led by herself, had seen no need for Turkey to be included in the North Atlantic alliance. When Turkey promised to take initiative in such an alliance, Britain withdrew her objection.

Some northern flank members of NATO saw no need to chance armed conflict with Russia on account of a remote Turkey. Others did not consider Turkey a part of the "Western, civilized world." All the objections were withdrawn when the United States put her weight on the side of Turkey.

After 1952, Turkish foreign policy loyally followed the Western line. When the Bandung Conference was convened in 1955 to discuss the common problems of Asian and African countries, Turkey, though itself underdeveloped, acted as spokesman for the developed Western nations. And when the Algerian question was brought before the United Nations in 1958, Turkey voted either with fellow NATO member France, or abstained. The positive attitude of Turkey to the West conti-



nued even after the National Unity Committee took power with the May 27, 1960 military coup. Indeed, the first public declaration of the new government contained a reaffirmation of Turkish solidarity with NATO and CENTO.

In the atmosphere of freedom created by the new liberal constitution of 1961, works of many socialist writers and leaders such as Marx and Lenin were freely translated and circulated in Turkey. Intellectuals of Marxist following began to reinterpret the goals of Turkish foreign as well as domestic policy along Marxist lines, and eventually their criticism focused upon American attitudes towards Turkey. NATO for them was an instrument of American imperialism, and Turkey thus had no choice but to free herself from NATO if she wanted to achieve "real" national independence.

Until 1964 most people considered these criticisms mere leftist prejudice, but tolerated them. The general discussion of the character and direction of Turkish foreign policy continued to be mostly academic, until the Cyprus crisis of December 1963. The armed clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots stimulated the interest of the general public in foreign policy matters.

As Turkey was preparing to intervene on behalf of the Turkish Cypriots, U.S. President Johnson sent a letter to Premier İnönü, warning him of the consequences of any unilateral act by Turkey. The letter was drafted as a peace agreement dictated to a defeated enemy country. It evoked at first utter bewilderment, then anger, not only among the Marxists but also in the general public. It indicated that contrary to the current belief, the image of Turkey among government officials in the U.S. was not positive. More important and interesting was the section reflecting the American interpretation of NATO. It read:

*I must call your attention, also, Mr. Prime Minister, to the obligations of NATO. There can be no question in your mind that a Turkish involvement in Cyprus would lead to a military engagement between Turkish and Greek forces. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, declared in a recent meeting of the Ministerial Council*



*of NATO in The Hague that war between Turkey and Greece must be considered as 'literally unthinkable.'*

*Adhesion to NATO, in its very essence, means that NATO countries will not wage war on each other. Germany and France have buried centuries of animosity and hostilities in becoming NATO allies. Nothing less can be expected from Greece and Turkey.*

*Furthermore, a military intervention in Cyprus by Turkey would lead to direct involvement by the Soviet Union. I hope you will understand that your NATO allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies.*

The provisions of the 1960 Treaties of Nicosia which gave birth to the Republic of Cyprus had given Turkey the right to intervene to uphold her rights in the Island. Yet government officials later confirmed that upon receiving this letter, which arrived shortly before her intended intervention, Turkey chose not to act.

Reaction to this letter was so strong that it pushed the question of Cyprus to the background. When the letter was revealed in January, 1966, the Marxists had already made foreign policy issues more popular than ever before. Anti-NATO and anti-American slogans were heard everywhere; starting early in 1970 the demonstrations were accompanied by the bombing of American bases in Turkey, and kidnapping of personnel.

Animosity toward NATO and the United States was not, of course, caused solely by the American stand on Cyprus. The Marxists have a basic dislike of "Western capitalism" and the "Western way of living." Since the most powerful and effective representatives of these concepts in Turkey are the United States and NATO, these have become the main targets for attack. Some of the criticism related to Turkey's relations with NATO and the United States are justified, but the critics also raised others on purely theoretical and ideological ground, with little respect or understanding for the rules of international politics.



mitation Talks. These developments did not much affect Turkish foreign policy until after the middle of the 1960's. Turkey maintained its political posture not alone because of ideological or security considerations but for a variety of internal reasons. Government economic policy made Turkey increasingly dependent upon foreign aid; the reasoning thus was that the more obedient Turkey was to the United States, the more aid she would receive. Such blind attachment to an aging policy left Turkey far behind the changes in the world at large.

Her policy with regard to mainland China is a vivid example. Many NATO members chose to recognize the Peking government, for economic and political reasons. Turkey, on the other hand, withheld recognition to China until August, 1971, no doubt under the influence of her most powerful ally.

Turkish foreign policy was so closely allied to the American that Turkey was identified as a U.S. satellite by other developing countries, particularly her Arab neighbors; this was a rather obvious disadvantage. But the international image of Turkey did not become clear until the 1963 Cyprus crisis. From March 1964 on the United Nations General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions detrimental to Turkish interest, ending with that of December 18, 1964, which greatly limited Turkish rights on Cyprus. The vote was 47 for, 6 against, 56 abstentions. The negative votes reflected the six votes cast for the Turkish position; they were cast by Iran and Pakistan, both CENTO allies, Libya, with whom Turkey had maintained strong ties of traditional friendship, by the United States, by Turkey, and by Albania. Albania was then completely isolated in the Balkans and Europe, and hoped to be recognized by Turkey.

The U.S. vote was a contradiction of her previous record; it was aimed at pacifying the violent anti-American sentiment created in Turkey by President Johnson's letter. The abstentions belonged to the NATO members and to the Eastern bloc countries. The abstention of the Communist countries probably reflected positive results of recent efforts by Turkey to normalize her relations with the members of the Eastern bloc.

The first indication of these normalizing efforts had been the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Moscow on October 30, 1964. From this visit and subsequent others, with ac-



Yet despite the extra-parliamentary Marxist opposition to the Western countries in general, and to NATO in particular, there was no apparent change in official Turkish foreign policy until the mid-1960's.

There is no doubt that the NATO membership has provided Turkey with much more basic security than the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. This is true even though in March 1953, only two months after the death of Stalin, the new Soviet leadership presented Turkey with a diplomatic note renouncing all previous Soviet claims on Turkish territories, and expressing a sincere desire to establish ties of friendship with Turkey within a very short time. Anti-NATO circles within Turkey suggested that if Turkey had stayed outside NATO, she could have grasped the opportunity to pursue a more flexible policy toward her neighbor, and thus eased the tensions between the two countries. It was not, of course, possible to foresee that Stalin would die one year after Turkey joined NATO or that his successors would follow a different course in foreign policy. While antagonisms at the international level do not last forever, neither do they dissolve at the first peaceful initiative.

Turkish foreign policy makers do seem to have made a series of mistakes after joining NATO. They did not, for instance, realize that the Khrushchev speech before the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956 advocating peaceful coexistence indicated a real thaw in East-West relations. True, the change in the Soviet attitude could have been a mere change of tactic, but tactical changes in time may lead to changes of substance. In fact, despite certain international events that operated to slow the East-West detente, both sides were making concerted efforts to lessen the tension. A direct telephone line was established between the White House and the Kremlin to prevent accidental outbreak of nuclear conflict, for instance. We should point out here, however, that this direct link between Moscow and Washington had created some apprehensions among smaller NATO members about big-nation accommodations at the sacrifice of smaller state interests.

The first concrete developments of post-war East-West cooperation were the signing of the partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of August 1963, and the continuing Strategic Arms Li-



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companying declarations, came the Turkish decision not to participate in the Multi-Lateral Force (MLF). The MLF was a scheme propounded by the United States to include Western Germany in a joint nuclear force; it was vehemently denounced by the Soviet Union.

On January 14, 1965, Washington officially announced that Turkey had refrained from participating in the MLF and had simulataneously withdrawn her eleven-man crew from the destroyer "Claude Ricketts", staffed by seven NATO nations. At this time, Moscow revised its pro-Makarios attitude on the Cyprus question, announcing officially that the Soviet Union now accepted "the right of existence of two separate communities" in Cyprus. They also declared their support for a "federative" administration for the Island, a position more in line with the Turkish stand on the question.

The Cyprus question illuminated Turkish isolation on the international scene; it also revived the awareness by the Turkish public of matters of foreign policy. For perhaps the first time, Turkish people became involved in a thorough discussion of foreign policy problems as well as domestic, with a view towards the best course to secure Turkey's own national interests.

The debates did not go unheeded by the governing, pro-Western Justice Party. While preserving the existing ties with NATO and the United States, the government made several attempts to normalize relations with the Eastern bloc. This led to visits not only to Moscow but to other countries of Eastern Europe, and the Middle East as well.

The extreme left naturally benefited most from these developments. The leftists of Marxist-Leninist conviction had never been happy with Turkey's NATO membership; they saw NATO as a major obstacle to establishment of a socialist order in Turkey. Their campaign against NATO eventually affected even segments of the public that had been neutral, and contributed to the gradual loss of prestige of the Justice Party government, which reached its lowest point just before the military intervention of March 12, 1971.

## V

Two main factors make up the general foundation of Turkish foreign policy. They are national security and the ideolo-



gical impact of Westernization, and they have had a continuing impact on the formation of Turkish foreign policy since the very beginning of the Republic.

Geography provides the first foundation for the importance of security to Turkish foreign policy. The coastlines of Turkey extend over 2,500 miles, and its land frontiers extend over 1,900. Such long borders are not easy to seal and defend. The mountainous inland borders to the east were relatively easy to defend with conventional warfare until the advent of new weapons. On the other hand, the barrenness of the terrain makes it unsuitable for the type of prolonged guerrilla warfare we have seen in Vietnam.

The Turkish Straits constitute the only outlet to the Mediterranean for countries that border on the Black Sea, and they have been a constant source of contention between Russia and Turkey throughout history. On the other hand, such major non-riparian nations as England and the United States have always favored free passage through the Straits for warships. The strategic importance of the Straits has somewhat diminished in recent years, however, with the 1936 Montreux Convention giving the Soviet Union a privileged position as a Black Sea state, and with modern technological advances making it impossible for non-Black Sea ships to slip by in secret.

Since World War I, Turkey has at one time or another had a common border with most of the major powers - in Syria with France, through the Dodecanese Islands with Italy, and through Iraq and Cyprus with Great Britain - as well as the continuing border with Russia to the north. While England and France were satisfied with the colonies and mandate territories and Russia was preoccupied with internal matters, there was little danger to Russia. The aggressiveness of Italy, on the other hand, was a constant threat. It was because of the potential danger from Italy that Turkey in 1939 signed the Mutual Aid Agreement with England and France. Mussolini had quite unreservedly expressed future plans for the southwestern areas of Turkey, making the attack on Ethiopia even more alarming.

As for the Soviet Union, Turkey was a prime target when attention turned outwards. The demands of the Soviet Union in 1939, 1940, and 1945 for Turkish territories were made even



more emphatic by the inclination of Russia to spread its ideology wholesale to the world at large. Recent ideologically motivated events in Turkey have been traced to Soviet involvement, direct and indirect. It appears that as long as the Soviets pursue expansionist policies, Turkey, will seek friendships to counterbalance the Soviet power.

Geographical proximity unites Turkey's future with that of other Middle Eastern countries, especially its Arab neighbors. An unfriendly regime in any one of the Middle Eastern states can affect Turkey seriously, and instability of Middle Eastern regimes, as well as the Arab-Israeli conflict, closely concern Turkish foreign policy makers.

Turkey saw the first concrete example of the meaning of her location on the routes to the heart of the Middle East in World War II. Germany wanted to reach the oil fields of Iran and Iraq, and the Suez Canal. It asked for a right of free passage. Today, the shortage of energy sources and the consequent need for Middle Eastern oil have further increased the strategic importance of Turkey.

The War of Independence was fought against Western imperialism, but not against Western principles of government and the Western way of life. The Turkish Liberation Movement grew from a liberal and progressive mentality nurtured by the ideas of the West. Mustafa Kemal had emerged himself from a group of intellectuals with such a mentality. In rejecting imperialism, he did not reject the economic and social system of the West, he had specifically rejected the socialist system of the Soviet Union.

As soon as the danger of Western occupation was removed, Turkey moved toward the West. The attempt to establish the Liberal Party in 1930 probably involved a desire to be more acceptable politically to the West. Indeed, when Turkey was not included in a European Union proposed by French Foreign Minister Briand, there were numerous complaints in the Turkish press that Turkey too was a Western nation.

Membership in such international organizations as OEEC, NATO, and the Council of Europe, established by the Western nations following World War II, has been a source of deep



national pride for the Turks. Soon after the 1958 agreement that established the European Economic Community, debates began in Turkey about whether to apply for membership, and the debate became intense when Greece was accepted as an associate member. Turkey made a formal application.

There have been differences of opinion as to the effect, positive or negative of EEC membership on the developing Turkish economy, and as to the length of the waiting period before full membership. Only the Marxists have been vehemently opposed to Turkey's entry. Others interpret Turkey's commitment to future membership as a further step toward Westernization and Europeanization. The only political parties making objections are the National Salvation Party and the insignificant Turkish Unity Party, which has of late been advocating extreme leftist ideas, and seems to be attempting to replace the defunct Turkish Labor Party. The religious reactionary National Salvation Party, which advocates closer relations with the Islamic countries, gathered some 11 per cent of the popular vote in the October 1973 elections, but did not do so well in local elections that December.

Turkish intellectuals equate being Western with being modern and developed. Even many Marxists use the Western model to support some of their arguments. Although the Cyprus crisis brought some flexibility to Turkey's blind adherence to the West, none of the Turkish foreign policy makers have actually turned against the West. An awareness of Turkey's security needs continues to prevail.

## VI

The 1921, 1924, and 1961 Turkish constitutions, like those of many other countries, gave the legislature some important responsibilities in the determination of foreign policy. In practice, however, the executive branch of the government has exercised all the power in foreign policy matters. One important exception was the close watch the Grand National Assembly held over Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence. But even then Mustafa Kemal, with his strong views, was able to influence the legislature.



Certain individuals in the executive branch have had a particularly strong effect on the direction of Turkish foreign policy. Atatürk, for instance, either made the decisions himself or reviewed the decisions of others. Between 1938 and 1950 President İsmet İnönü was the most important foreign policy decision-maker. After the beginning of the multi-party system in 1950, who the decision-maker was depended on the personality of the foreign minister, the premier, and the president.

The 1961 Constitution provided for a National Security Council which would take an important role in foreign policy decision-making. The Council consists of the President, the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff, certain ministers, and the commanders of the three armed services. Their meetings are closed, and their decisions are secret. Although its decisions are considered simply advisory, this is one of the most important foreign policy sources in Turkey today.

Under the long tenure of Tevfik Rüşü Aras (1925-1938), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was built into an effective political organization. In the early years the most important ambassadorial posts went to former generals or ex-cabinet ministers. Recently there is a trend to fill such posts with well-trained and experienced career diplomats.

In Turkey, as in most other developing countries, the general public is uninformed, perhaps uninterested, in foreign policy matters. There has been, however, a growing interest in foreign policy among those who read newspapers regularly. Each of the most important dailies carries a regular column on foreign policy, and lead editorials often deal with foreign policy questions. A study prepared by students of the School of Journalism and Broadcast of the University of Ankara revealed that of those Ankara residents who were asked what NATO was, 65 per cent gave an understandable definition, and only 35 per cent had no idea at all. The rate for France was 68 per cent who knew and 32 per cent who did not. The public opinion makers in Turkey are the newspapers, radio and television, and the intellectuals; there has been no quantitative study to determine the extent of their influence on foreign policy.

Mob actions of the type seen too frequently in other underdeveloped countries are rare in Turkey. The first of the post-



World War II period was that of September 6-7, 1955, when a mob in Istanbul, with the covert support of the government, demonstrated in favor of the Turkish position on Cyprus by destroying many shops kept by Greeks. Some leftist-organized student demonstrations apparently had some effect later in the friendly gestures of the Turkish government toward the East European countries as well as its Arab neighbors.

Another government tactic has been to put pressure on either the extreme right or the extreme left as the situation demanded. In 1944, when relations with the Soviets were at a low, the government tried to mollify the Russians by prosecuting radical right pan-Turkists. A year and a half later when there was no hope of repairing Turco-Soviet relations, a giant student demonstration, with the blessings of the government, destroyed the properties of three left-wing newspapers whose publishers were suspected of being controlled by Moscow.

Turkish political parties tend to agree on the general foreign policy goals of the country. Only the old Turkish Labor Party and the Turkish Unity Party have advocated a definite departure from established foreign policy guidelines. There was no significant opposition to Democratic Party policies between 1950 and 1960; discussion of foreign policy was indeed taboo until 1961. Today the two most important parties in Turkey, the Justice Party and the Republican People's Party, agree on the basic conduct of pro-Western foreign policy.

## VII

The chief concern of Turkey, a relatively small and weak country, has been to maintain its independence and its territorial integrity. Independence during the Republican period has been threatened more than once, by Italy between the two world wars, by Germany and the Soviet Union during World War II, and since the war by the Soviet Union. The most important external factor influencing Turkish foreign policy decisions is clearly the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which has pursued an ostensibly ideological, but in reality largely classical expansionist policy that is Turkey's greatest worry.

Since Turkey can not meet the Soviet threat with her own resources, she has chosen to enter into alliances with other states



or groups of states; this explains the wholehearted Turkish support of NATO. On the other hand, recent international developments, and the changes which have occurred within the Western alliance, have placed Turkey in a position to make new choices. The East-West detente has in a very short time caused a loosening, even a disintegration of the Western alliance. Europe, as it becomes stronger, becomes less and less dependent on the United States, politically as well as economically. Yet as long as Europe is unable to balance the Soviet Union militarily, it is unlikely to make a complete break with the United States. Within this context, Turkey places herself near the United States militarily, while developing economic and political ties with Europe. So long Soviet expansion policies remain in force, and so long as no new power center emerges to counterbalance the Soviets, the relationship between Turkey and the United States is likely to continue.

The Cyprus question is likely to remain sensitive for a considerable time.

With all these givens externally, and the fact that the most likely contender for power in Turkey, the Republican People's Party, has campaigned on a foreign policy platform much resembling that of the Justice Party, Turkish foreign policy is unlikely to change in the near future.

#### For Further Reading

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