

## TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY VIS A VIS RECENT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS\*

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### I — THE RECENT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS

Some of the recent developments vitally affect Turkish national interests and security. They include the United States arms embargo, the now somewhat-stabilized Cyprus situation, the threat of renewed conflict between the Arabs and Israel in the Middle East, the collapse of Western intersets in South-east Asia, communist advance in Portugal, the oil price squeeze and, in general, the question of Turkey's continued role in NATO in an era of *détente* but more particularly in the light of recent American arms cutoff.

Of all these developments Turkey is most concerned over the arms embargo which some Turkish officials have referred to as unfriendly act by an ally of long standing; Denial of critical assistance contrary not only to the NATO Agreement but to the spirit of all the understandings arrived at in recent years between Turkey and the United States. Some have gone so far as to say that Turkey has been deserted by its allies, and must now prepare to go it alone.

Certainly it is true that the continued absence of American military assistance make it extremely difficult if not impossible for Turkey to fulfill its commitments to the Western alliance. It is also true that this event (the arms embargo) more than any other has precipitated a searching for an assesment of the basic elements in Turkey's international relationships. All phases of these links with the outside world no matter how long established or how sacro-

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(\*) This article.

sanct in the past, are now open to re-examination and discussion in the light of what is best for Turkey's own national interests. It is the rational approach that we want to use rather than emotional one : it would be easier to react by simply damning those who now displease us, and retaliating where we can, but the stakes are so high for Turkey that only rational assessment and judgment are acceptable. As the younger generation puts it, it is a time to "keep our cool".

## II — THE ALTERNATIVES FOR TURKEY

Let us take up the alternatives which now present themselves to Turkey with regard to foreign and defense policies.

There are, as I see it, around half dozen possible policies which should be explored either by themselves or linked with one another :

1. Turkey can stay in the Western alliance system.
2. Turkey can go independant leaving Western alliance system and can stay independent of both East and West, thus can choose a neutral stand.
3. Turkey can develop and strenghten relations with the Arab, Middle East and Moslem World.
4. Turkey can choose to join the Third World.
5. Turkey can leave the Western alliance and can enter into an alliance with the Soviet Union.

1 — Turkey can stay in the Western Alliance system in two ways :

A — Turkey can maintain *the status quo*, can keep the things as they are hoping that U.S. Congress will come to its senses, see the light of reason and realize it has been sold a bill of goods by Washington's Greek loby and retract its embargo. The Government of Turkey cannot agree to such a policy even if the people of Turkey already aroused and embittered by such treatment from a friend would accept. Maintaining *the status quo* involves also an examination of Turkey's role in NATO in the light of big Power *Détente*. Let us elaborate a little bit on the *détente*, first. I quote the American Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger on the

*détente*<sup>1</sup> : "The notion that *détente* permits us to disarm is a widespread illusion. Nonetheless, it is an illusion. It is necessary to maintain a worldwide military balance as the underpinning of *détente*. *Détente* rests on a equilibrium of force.

If that equilibrium of force is upset, *détente* and also hopes for improved political relations with the Soviet Union will disappear. We do not base our force structure on the diplomatic atmosphere, which we hope will show improvement. Our force structure must be based upon those external capabilities which we hope to balance. There is a continuing, steady increase in the military capabilities of the Soviet Union, and we must balance that".

In view of this understanding of *détente* with which I concur the present situation is untenable, unless the arms embargo is lifted very soon, Turkey will have no spare or replacement parts for its military equipment and will be unable even if it would, to fulfill its appointed role in the NATO Alliance. Nor, equally obvious, could it defend its national territory from aggressive attack. So it is sort of thinking twice for to Turks to maintain the *satus quo*. As the American Vice-president Nelson Rockefeller suggested Turkey might do, in an unusual airborne interview recently with a number of American newsmen. "Now if I were a Turk" Mr. Rockefeller said (to report his words printed in mid-April in the U.S. press)" and had built my army totally on american weapons and spare parts and was dependent on them and had paid cash for delivery of weapons and then got cut off when I was trying to defend a minority of mine who had really been having a rough time on an island, I'd have to think twice".

Turkey is doing just that now, attempting to sort out its relationship with the United States and put things in perspective-including the unusual constitutional confrontation going on in Washington between Ford-Rockefeller Administration, with Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State, which pleads Turkey's case and a Congress dominated by an opposition party which seems determined to wreck the Administration's foreign policy goals and seems unaware of the possible consequences of these acts.

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2) U.S. News and World Report, May 13, 1974.

President Ford, himself, has stated Turkey's case as strongly as he could. He told a joint session of Congress in an address on the United States foreign relations with Turkey. He referred to Turkey as "an old and faithful ally". He said that "the military aid is not simply a favor to Turkey. Its is a clear and essential mutual interest. Turkey lies in the rim of the Soviet Union and at the gates of the Middle East. It is vital to the security of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Southern flank of Western Europe and the collective security of the Western Alliance. Our U.S. military bases in Turkey are as critical to our own security as they are to the defense of NATO".

What happened in Washington in recent months has, to use the words of Melih Esenbel Turkish Ambassador in Washington, substantially weakened Turkish-American relations, particularly joint defense cooperation within the framework of NATO, CENTO is also involved. Ambassador Haluk Bayülken, the CENTO Secretary General has said that the prolongation of the U.S. arms embargo may also adversely effect Turkish - American relations within the CENTO framework.

Both the Turkish spokesmen and the Ford administration have underlined the danger of delay in normalizing relations. Bülent Ecevit, the former Turkish Premier, told the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London : "If nothing is done about Turkey's security, we will have to include that the (NATO) alliance is no longer interested in its southeast flank... We will have to make other arrangements. We cannot afford to have our security suspended indefinitely".

Esenbel similarly has said that it would be a serious mistake to assume that Turkey would wait" for an unlimited period" for Congress to retract the embargo.

As spokemen have made plain Turkey does not like to be left on a hook. Mr. Ford called on Congress to lift the U.S. arms embargo without delay.

Early in July 1975 under the headline of *President Ford and House members report compromise on Turkish aid*, the Official Text of the United States Information Service gave the following news :

“Washington, July 9 - President Ford has approved the terms of a proposed legislative compromise that if accepted by the House of Representatives, would end the embargo on shipment of U.S. arms to Turkey and ease negotiations on solving the Cyprus impasse.

The President told newsmen July 9 that the compromise grew out of a series of meetings he had held during the last two to three weeks with members of the House who oppose a resumption of arms sales. The Senate already had approved a measure that would end the embargo.

Congress cut off arms shipments to Turkey in February under provisions of a law that bans the use of arms sold by the United States for all purposes except defense.

According to House International Affairs Committee Chairman Thomas Morgan, who also spoke with the newsmen, the proposed compromise would permit shipment of equipment already purchased by Turkey but now held in U.S. warehouses under terms of the embargo. Mr. Ford estimated that the embargoed equipment is worth 70 million dollars.

The compromise would also allow resumption of cash arms sales to Turkey, but it would restrict use of the material sold to defensive purposes. Further, it would require the President to report to Congress every 60 days on progress in the Cyprus negotiations and on the status of arms sales to Turkey.

Mr. Ford worked out final details of the proposed compromise at a breakfast meeting July 9 with Mr. Morgan and other leaders of House Foreign Policy Committees. The President said the Executive branch “would do its utmost” to convince Turkey that the compromise is an acceptable method of resuming arms shipments and facilitating Cyprus negotiations.

Representative Morgan told reporters he hopes his committee will clear the compromise this week and that the House will approve it next week. The House measure would then have to be reconciled with the already approved Senate version.

White House Press Secretary Ronald Nessen furnished newsmen with some of the arguments Mr. Ford has used in briefing

Congressmen, including the President's assertion that the U.S. - Turkish relationship "is not a favor to Turkey". He said the President termed good relations with Turkey is "in clear essential interest of the United States, as well as of Turkey" as "vital to the security of the Eastern Mediterranean, the southern flank of Western Europe and collective security of the Western Alliance".

Mr Nessen said the President believes that the arms embargo "imposes a grave limitation on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's posture in that region"<sup>2</sup>.

Yet as we know on July 24 the House of Representatives rejected by a vote of 206 to 223 the proposal allowing to lift embargo on arms already purchased by cash payment by Turkey. The same proposal was adopted in the Senate by a small margin but as it was rejected in the other House the embargo remains. So all efforts of the American Administration like the veto of two earlier congressional measures restricting aid to Turkey dating back to September 1974 were doomed<sup>3</sup>. Now a final attempt to lift the

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2) O.T. - 75 - LXVII - 7/10.

3) The reaction of some americans to the vote on aid to Turkey can be illustrated by the following letter sent to the column Forum in TIME magazine of August 18, 1975; under the Title 223 Naivniks. Reader Fielding L. Greaves from Silana Beach, California writes "Seldom in our history have so many been dealt so grievous a blow by so few were so meddlesome in matters on which they were so uninformed.

By its July 24 vote on aid to Turkey (August 4), the House allowed 223 political naivniks at ona blow to usurp foreign policy prerogatives of President and Senate, impair the defense of both NATO and the U.S. drive away our staunchest ally, and reduce the potential warning time that may literally spell life or death for millions of Americans in event of nuclear war."

On the other hand, one of the very influential newspapers WALL STREET JOURNAL on July 31, 1975 printed the following leading article under the title of "A Security Disaster."

Thanks to last week's House vote on the Turkish arms embargo, Turkey is taking control of the 20 - odd American bases on its soil and suspending all of their activities not related to NATO. In effect, P.S. monitoring stations along Turkey's 2,000- mile border with the Soviet Union have stopped listening.

embargo will be made in September 1975 when the Congress convenes again. Turkey has not been and is not content to rest its fate in the hands of the others, the alternative to maintain the *status quo* is to be dropped, because from Turkey's point of view the only criterion is what is the best for Turkey and it is obvious now that to depend totally on U.S. has been a grave mistake.

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This leaves a gap in our early warning against missile attack is only partly filled by other sources. It also hampers our ability to check on the strategic arms agreements, and it seriously reduces our ability to eavesdrop on Soviet radio communications, an important element in our intelligence system.

Thus does Congress protect the security interests of the United States. The House voted 223 to 206 to throw away these assets. And for what?

Well, a main theme on the House floor was not yielding to blackmail, meaning the Turkish threat to respond to the embargo by taking over the bases. The embargo apparently is not blackmail. Also, there was a lot of talk about "legality", referring to a rather touching provision in the foreign aid law that U.S. supplied arms should not be used for purposes the U.S. does not approve.

This forgets, for one thing, that Turkey did not start the Cyprus crisis. The late Greek junta set things off by sponsoring a coup led by terrorist fanatics bent on uniting the island with Greece. The 1960 treaty on the independence of Cyprus gave Turkey the right to prevent such enosis. Furthermore Congress has received evidence that arms supplied to Greece were used illegally on the Greek Cypriot side. But Congress hasn't embargoed arms to Greece.

We could understand some of this one-sidedness in terms of constituent pressures, but there seems in addition to be an extra element of self-destructiveness. This was particularly evident in the fact that several arch-conservative Republicans, like Ashbrook of Ohio, Crane of Illinois and Rousselot of California voted against the administration-backed compromise—apparently out of irritation at Henry Kissinger's softness toward the Russians, the chief beneficiaries of the House vote.

It would be nice to have the United States in a position to mediate some peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem, but so far the U.S. seems against all odds to have alienated both sides. For its part, Congress seems intent on proving what a disaster a congressionally-run foreign policy would be.

B — Besides maintaining *status quo* Turkey can stay in Western alliance leaning harder on other NATO allies still united with Turkey in a common cause and apparently ready and willing to help pick up the slack caused by the American embargo.

Turkey has been a loyal member of NATO, the western military alliance built around american military strenght for 23 years. For the moment at least there is no intention in governmental as well as opposition circles to leave NATO as the Greeks have done, in what some describe as an act of diplomatic desperation and others as an of act little consequence which will do no real harm to NATO. The President of The Republic Fahri Korutürk in his statement of April 23, 1975 on the 55 the anniversary of the gathering of first Turkish Parliament in Anatolia on April 23, 1920 said that our longest period of peace during the last 500 years of Turkish existence was during Republic with some fifty years. And I can add that during 23 of these 50 years Turkey was a member of NATO.

NATO defensive Alliance has, it must be acknowledged kept the peace in Europe through the years despite some critical flareups elsewhere-in Korea, in the Arab-Israel Wars, in Southeast Asia and in the Cuban Missile Crisis, for exemple. Even to-day, though there have been doubts expressed by some, recently about Ame-ca's reliability as an ally; some NATO allies suggested a special NATO fund to finance emergency defense needs and West Germany has risen to the occasion and agreed to ship vitally-needed supplies in large quantities.

Mr. Kissinger who has warned Congress that the cutoff of aid imperils the entire southeastern flank of NATO, has even dispatched a top assistant to Brussels with the job of pooling NATO efforts to send emergency supplies to the Turkish Army.

Besides West Germany other West European countries have also indicated a willingness to discuss new arms supply arrangements and (even if the U.S. Congress does not, at the moment) still regard Turkey as an invaluable member of NATO. Western Europe remembers, even if the U.S. Congress does not, that Turkey maintains NATO's largest standing army.

Even though Turkey has a legitimate quarrel with the United States there seems to be no good reason why, in the heat of the



argument, we should burn the whole quilt for the sake of a flea. Turkey can separate itself from the United States so long as Washington refuses to live up to its solemn obligations but there is no reason for Turkey to project the quarrel into a confrontation with the rest of its NATO allies.

The countries of Western Europe, committed of the same goals as Turkey, and vitally interested in her defense, remain steadfast for the most part despite the current storm, anxious to repair the damage and do what they can to assist Turkey in this moment of trial. Atatürk made the right choice when he pointed Turkey toward the West. Let us make no dramatic change in his course because of pique or temporary frustration. Now especially is a time for rational deliberation. We can continue our associations with those NATO members who remain steadfast.

The questions we must ask ourselves today are whether our reasons then for adherence to NATO are still valid and if they now conflict with Turkish national goals or demean Turkish honor. The arguments for adherence may be even stronger to-day as we contemplate the imminent reopening of the Suez canal, an event which will make the Turkish Straits even more of a strategic prize than before.

Turkish foreign policy, it has been noted has had a remarkable consistence and continuity over the last half century. This is no time for any radical change in course without due deliberation. There may be uncertain trumpets elsewhere. This is all the more reason for Turkey to speak out with clarity and wisdom.

No man, it has been said, is an island. Neither is Turkey which is a middle sized country, not a super power. Some kind of collective defense then is necessary and the question seems to be : what kind? With whom should Turkey choose to be allied for a common cause? Such an alliance whatsoever it requires close cooperation it also requires mutual interests and mutual trusts. Significantly, this is the way that the members of NATO have regarded the NATO alliance over the years. In the beginning back 1949, when the threat was more evident than it is today, the free nations of Western Europe allied themselves with the United States and

Canada to provide for a collective defense in Europe, this regional alliance is, as we know part of United Nations Charter.

The climate of stability and confidence resulting from NATO not only made economic progress possible, but enabled the allies to negotiate with the Soviet Union for mutual and balanced reduction of military forces and other measures aimed at easing tension. The existence of NATO, it could easily be argued, made possible the trend toward *détente*. Fifteen countries joined NATO each after extensive parliamentary debate. Each country joined of its own free will, no nation can be forced to remain against its will. Because these are sovereign independent states, there have been clashes in viewpoint, with the Cyprus issue between Turkey and Greece the most critical one through the years. The Cyprus issue and the American reaction to Turkey's policies there, now threatens to wreck the alliance.

Arms requirements, insofar as is possible, from other NATO countries, and, if necessary, from others, too, outside of NATO. Special arrangements such as with West Germany providing for 25 million dollars in used equipment, or Italy selling 18 "F-104 S" jet fighters, very possibly could be worked out with others. The countries of Western Europe have historical links with Turkey dating back even Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's decision to orient Turkey westward. United States assistance now has dominated help from West through the years, of course, amounting to 3.7 billion dollars in military and 2.9 billion dollars in economic aid from 1946 through 1973. But international agencies, funded by the West, have also provided more than 1 billion dollars in assistance and other western non-communist countries added 824 million dollars in the period 1960-1972. All communist assistance amounted to a total of 565 million dollars in the period 1955-1973.

Besides mutually-prized cultural links with these other European NATO partners, Turkey has built a strong economic and trade relationship. Europe is already Turkey's largest trading partner, in terms of both exports and imports. Turkey is now a provisional partner in the EEC and is to receive full membership by 1995. Turkey is also a full-fledged member of several important European regional organizations. Hundred thousands of Turkish

workers have gone to West Germany and other West European countries. Their remittances have contributed large sums to Turkey's foreign exchange holdings.

2 — Another alternative policy which Turkey can apt to follow is to go independent of both East and West, independent of the oil producers, independent of its Arab and Middle East neighbors, independent of the Third World, and most of all, independent from the United States as a monopoly-arms supplier. Turkey must do for always the political or moral disadvantages of such a state of dependence. It is true that after the Second World War "the forces on which in the last analysis the security of the European nations depended were under the direct control of the President of the United States' Thus these nations, forgetting their former pride, came to really on a powerful ally to preserve their liberty. Busy rebuilding their cities out of rubble, they were in no position to weigh the political or moral disadvantages of such a state of dependence"<sup>4</sup>.

Turkey itself now lacks the capital whither for financial investment or purchase defensive weapons. It needs both and an neutral-Turkey will hinder rather than help obtain them.

3 — A third possibility as Turkey searches for a way out of its present dilemma is to develop and strenghten relations with the Arab, Middle East and Moslem World. Relations with Libya, especially, have already improved considerably since the 1974 Cyprus Crisis. Many of these oilproducing Middle Eastern countries are building up large treasuries in petrodollars and other reserves, and although they appear dedicated to the reasonable proposition that this new wealth is best spent at home, they have shown signs of being willing to collaborate with and assist friendly neighbors, especially those linked with them by ties of history, religion and culture. Iran, one of the wealthiest, shares a common sense of caution with Turkey concerning a mutual neighbor to the North. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have similar views.

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4) General Paul Stehlin, "Atlantic Policy, The Evolution of Western Defense" *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1963, v. 42, no : 1, p. 72.

However, oil money is one thing, but access to the weapons Turkey needs is another, even if the oil-producing countries were willing to provide Turkey with as much money as the United States was spending on military assistance, there would still be the problem of obtaining spare parts for present equipment at a reasonable cost and finding a seller for the sophisticated equipment Turkey wants to add to its arsenal, ranging from electronic warfare gear to nuclear weapons. Some spare parts now being acquired on the open market are three to five times the American price tag. In theory, money from the wealthy oil countries should make it possible for Turkey to convert to aircraft, tanks, navy ships and other equipment from Western European suppliers, such a re-equipment program would take time, presuming even that these countries were willing to sell. Libya and some other Arab states might be willing to transfer aircraft and tanks of Turkey from their present inventories, which would speed the process, but there might be some reluctance to provide such assistance at a time when Arab war against Israel remains a possibility.

Turkey, of course, would it self be reluctant to substitute dependence on the oil producers or any-one else for dependence on the United States. It would rather be able to arrange it so that its arms are obtained in future from a variety of friendly sources, rather than from a single source of supply. Neither would Turkey want to commit itself to close association with either a radical or unstable regime.

4 — A fourth alternative for Turkey would be to cast its lot with the Third World, as one of the most advanced and most promising of the developing countries. The Third World is extremely active at the United Nations and in other international organizations. It speaks with a loud, although sometimes discordant voice; and it does make itself heard. Turkey could try to become a leader of the Third World, although the People's Republic of China, which now regards itself as the leader, might offer some competition.

The Third World, however, although it might boost Turkey's ego and offer some verbal support, could not provide much else. It makes itself heard, but it has no political, economic or military

power. It is essentially a hollow shell, without defense and mutual economic development, then the Third World will not do it much good.

5 — The fifth alternative, as we search about for a new Turkish policy, is to turn to the Soviet Union and/or its Warsaw Pact allies for military supplies. If nothing else, hints of a Turkish intention to take such a course might induce the NATO countries of Europe, and possibly The United States, too, to pay, more attention to our needs and requests along this line. There is no doubt that the Soviet Union has the capability of meeting Turkey's military needs, on the basis of massive shipments of military goods it has sent in the past to countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Cuba, India, North Vietnam and North Korea.

Because of the background of Turkish-Soviet relations over the past two centuries, most Turks really see little value in becoming dependent on the USSR for arms to day. Russia as a partial supplier, one of a number of suppliers, would of course be another matter, and this is a possibility which might bear investigation. Some have suggested that a non-aggression pact with Moscow might pave the way for this and other assistance. There has been little support for such closer links with the USSR, however, except from such sources as the clandestine Turkish Communist party and Radio Moscow's Turkish language propagandists.

The Russians, for their part, might find it difficult to fit military aid to Turkey into their scheme of things. They have their own international goals which, in many instances, (Cyprus is an example), are at variance with Turkey's. The Russians, obviously, would strongly endorse a Turkish withdrawal from NATO-That has been their hope for years-and might offer the lure of sufficient arms if such an offer would accomplish that purpose. But the Soviet intention would be to neutralize Turkey, not to strengthen Turkey. Moscow has already advised us to reduce our military expenditures and build the national economy instead. It has suggested that military bases only weaken us, and lay us open to attack. The Russians, in our case, have encouraged disarmament, not armement. If it is true, and it seems to be, that at least some elements in the United States would use military aid to apply pressure on Turkish national

policies, it is equally true that the USSR does exactly the same thing. Egypt sent back 15,000 Russian advisers only a few years ago for this very reason. We have sufficient grounds already to be suspicious concerning attempted Soviet subversion of Turkish youth and Turkish workers; we need be wary of providing further opportunities for such clandestine activities through the vehicle of an arm supply program.

Turkey does have strong counters, however, in negotiating a new position with the USSR. These include Turkish control of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles and over direct air routes between Moscow and the Middle East. Turkey can use these to bargain with the USSR in any attempt to establish more flexible arms arrangements.

### III — WHAT COURSE IS TURKEY TO FOLLOW?

NATO has been a pretty good deal for Turkey up until recently, despite the inevitable differences which erupt periodically in any free association of sovereign states. Most of the alternatives to a NATO alliance have serious drawbacks. But the arms embargo imposed unilaterally by the United States on Turkey has destroyed the image of a fair and equal NATO partnership which Turkey cherished these many years. Mutual interests and mutual trusts make an alliance work. The United States must remember as Three Wise Men said in their report of 1956 "No state, however powerful, can guarantee its security and its welfare by national action alone". The other members of NATO are willing to repair the damage done by arms embargo. Turkey's first choice must be her NATO allies except the United States.