

Ismail Cem's Foreign Policy (1997-2002)

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ABSTRACT

Ismail Cem (1940-2007) was a Turkish intellectual and social democrat politician who served as the Turkish Foreign Minister between 1997 and 2002. Ismail Cem's tenure in office as the Foreign Minister after the termination of the Cold War in a sense marks a breakdown from classical Turkish foreign policy. Thus, Cem's look towards Turkey's multidimensional foreign relations and his vision for Turkish foreign policy is important and necessary to understand.

Keywords: *Ismail Cem, Turkish Foreign Policy.*

İsmail Cem'in Dış Politikası (1997-2002)

ÖZET

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) 1997-2002 yılları arasında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dış İşleri Bakanı olarak görev yapmış sosyal demokrat bir politikacı ve önemli bir entelektüeldir. İsmail Cem'in Dış İşleri Bakanı olduğu dönem bir anlamda klasik Türk dış politikasının Soğuk Savaş'ın sonlanmasının ardından revize edildiği bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Bu nedenle İsmail Cem'in Türkiye'nin çok boyutlu dış ilişkilerine bakışı ve dış politika vizyonunu anlamak son derece önemli ve gereklidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İsmail Cem, Türk Dış Politikası.*

İsmail Cem (1940-2007) served as the Foreign Minister of Turkey between the years 1997 and 2002. Cem was often perceived as a peace-seeking and successful minister both within the country and on the international public through his policies. Before his resignation, he was one of Turkey's longest-serving foreign ministers (nearly five years). Ismail Cem was also a social thinker who tried to find social democratic solutions to problems of Turkish modernization. Cem's perspective on Turkish foreign policy is important since he was considered as one of the most successful foreign ministers of Turkey in the international public.

İsmail Cem's book *Turkey in the New Century* is a collection of Cem's speeches, interviews, comments and memoirs about his tenure in office as the Foreign Minister which can help us in understanding his vision of international relations. The book has

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certain aspects of an autobiography but also carries the qualities of an academic international relations book since Cem from the first-hand knows important details about Turkey's foreign policy. In the book, Cem offers a new approach to Turkish foreign policy by criticizing certain aspects of classical Turkish foreign policy and diplomacy. Cem believes that Turkish foreign policy had been alienated from its cultural roots and historical past and it must be replaced with a new understanding which was based on the awareness of Turkey's rich identity and historical assets inherited from the Ottoman state.¹ He assumed that the end of Cold War, the phenomena of globalization and the development in technology created many new opportunities in the foreign policy.² He wanted Turkey to be confident of himself, not ashamed of its past and bold and peace-seeking at the same time for the future. He criticized Turkish politicians' habitude of perceiving foreign policy in the form of idealistic prescriptions such as friendly countries or hostile countries and offered a more flexible and rational approach to problems.³ Cem defined foreign policy as "a mathematical equation of a country's interests".⁴ He tried to create a convenient environment to be more flexible and active in foreign policy. Cem was not afraid to consider diversities in the country as richness and tried to overcome the forced alternatives.⁵ By forced alternatives, he meant the concepts often presented as contradictions such as Islam-secularism or West-East. He thought that these dichotomies are exaggerated considering their relevance in both Turkey's domestic and foreign politics. He defined Turkey as both European (Western) and Asian (Eastern).⁶

Talking about Turkish foreign policy, Cem has always underlined the importance of becoming a "world state" in 21st century.⁷ For him, Turkey, as a democratic country having reached European standards of human rights in the Islamic world, should be presented to other Middle Eastern countries as a model.⁸ Cem in addition to his peace-seeking foreign policy, engaged in friendly relations with his counterparts including Greek foreign minister Yorgo Papandreou, French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, Dutch Foreign Minister Jozias van Aartsen, Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.⁹ Cem admitted that his personal dealings and friendships also helped Turkey to follow an active foreign policy and get some results and personal relationships have an important place in international relations since they could increase sympathy and reliance of both sides towards each other.¹⁰ However, Cem also underlined that although for instance he was a good friend of

¹ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 3.

² *ibid.*, p. 5.

³ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 12.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 202.

⁸ Cem called this as "Turkish model". See; *ibid.*, p. 204.

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 229.

Madeleine Albright, they engaged in serious discussions and harsh polemics since diplomacy is about countries' national interests and these interests could sometimes intersect.¹¹ For Cem, in addition to plan and execute Turkish foreign policy, Turkish Foreign Ministry has always carried an important historical mission of civilizing and modernizing the country similar to Turkish military.¹² He praised all diplomats and staff of Turkish Foreign Ministry for their hardworking and patriotic personalities and criticized prejudiced "mon chere"¹³ approach to Turkish diplomats due to their extreme accuracy in terms of courtesy.¹⁴ He remembered that many Turkish diplomats were targeted by ASALA and died as martyr in the past.¹⁵ However, Cem also stated that Turkish Foreign Affairs have also some deficiencies in terms of reformism, innovation and defending Turkey's interests in a more assertive manner.¹⁶ In addition, Cem underlined that similar to pro-Western Turkish citizens and politicians, Turkish diplomats should have more knowledge about Turkish history and culture and should never feel inferiority complex against Western countries.¹⁷

1. Turkish-American Relations

Historically, Turkish-American relations were very important for both countries. Although at the beginning (after the Second World War with Turkey's accession to NATO) and particularly until the 1990s, relations largely revolved around military grounds, for the past fifteen years efforts have been made to diversify the nature of those relations as should be the case between two equal partners. Turkish-American relations were shaken two times seriously; the first one after President Johnson's letter and Cyprus Peace Operation made by Turkish between 1964-1980, and second one, very recently starting from the refusal of 1 March memorandum in Turkish Parliament. Starting from 2003, Turkish-American relations were progressing in an ambiguous way mostly because of free Kurdistan¹⁸ and moderate Islam¹⁹ discussions emanating from Washington. The general public opinion in Turkey is concentrated on USA's "Greater Middle East Project" and its long term plan of creating an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq which would be enlarged into

¹¹ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 231.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

¹³ Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has often used the term "monşer (mon chere)" in order to criticize and mock with Turkish diplomats.

¹⁴ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 234-235.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁸ Term used in Ralph Peter's "Blood Borders" article, which was published on June 2006 in *Armed Forces Journal* magazine. See; Ralph Peters. "Blood Borders, How A Better Middle East Would Look" in *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006, retrieved on 10.05.2008 from <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/06/1833899/>.

¹⁹ Following JDP's landslide victory in 22 July 2007 general elections, American diplomat and former Secretary of the State Richard Holbrooke defined Turkey and Malaysia as two examples of "moderate Islam" countries. See; *Today's Zaman*, retrieved on 12.05.2008 from <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=123449>.

Turkey's south-eastern provinces. The anti-American feelings of the Turkish people seem to have reached its highest level in the whole Republican history.²⁰ Although the election of new American President Barack Hussein Obama and his visit to Turkey could mark a new beginning in Turkish-American relations²¹, the problematic aspects between two countries' relations still persist.²² Thus, it would not be wrong to claim that the accord between two countries during Cem's Foreign Ministry seems to have disappeared in recent years.

İsmail Cem met with USA and American culture when he was young in Robert College and his voyage to the USA with the American Field Service exchange program for a year (1956-1957). Cem stayed with an American family (Parkhursts) in San Francisco and had the chance to observe and live the American way of life. Although Cem was impressed by USA's technological possibilities, glorious cities and freedom of thought, his sympathy for the aggrieved side led him to find American system too draconian and disadvantageous for the weaker ones. Cem loved American people and found them helpful and optimistic, but opposed many American policies starting from his youth.²³ He thought that due to conditions of Cold War, USA played a negative role in the development of Turkish democracy by provoking or at least supporting military coup regimes in the past due to security preferences. However, even during the strong anti-imperialist wings of the 1960s and 1970s, Cem's leftism was never close to Bolshevism or Maoism and rather resembled to European social democracy. In that sense, Cem had never been anti-American or enemy of Western civilization although he never approved American imperialism or high degree of American effect on Turkish politics. Cem also did not hesitate to make harsh criticism of American involvement in Turkish politics and US led military coups in Turkey and in many parts of the world during the Cold War.

İsmail Cem during his tenure in office as Turkish Foreign Minister many times stated that he shares the view that U.S. is the leading force in the early 21st century due to its internal creative dynamism and its revolutionary achievements in disseminating

²⁰ In a survey that was made in 21 countries by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), to the question of "Is the re-election of President George W. Bush affirmative for world peace and security?" the highest no replies came from Turkey with 82 %. See; Arnaud De Borchgrave. "Extreme Anti-Americanism in Turkey", retrieved on 10.05.2008 from <http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2005/3/11/182953.shtml>.

²¹ On 6 April 2009, US President Barack Hussein Obama in his speech in the Turkish Parliament praised Turkey's history and the role it can play today as a democratic and secular country having a very high majority of Muslim population. See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 07.04.2009 from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11378421.asp?gid=244>. Political analyst Bülent Alirıza, who directs the Turkey Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C., claims that President Obama's trip to Turkey could be the beginning of new "Model Partnership" between two countries which could create "a modern international community that is respectful, secure and prosperous". See; Bülent Alirıza. "President Obama's Visit to Turkey: Building a Model Partnership", *CSIS*, 08.04.2009, retrieved on 12.04.2009 from <http://www.csis.org>.

²² According to a research made by Pew Research Center, Turkish people who look positive towards USA rose from 12 % to 14 % after President Obama's election but anti-Americanism continued to exist strongly. See; *Cumhuriyet Portal*, retrieved on 27.07.2009 from <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?im=yhs&chn=70870>.

²³ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 38.

information and knowledge.²⁴ Cem thought that USA will continue its leadership in the 21st century but instead of defining USA as a “superpower”, he preferred to use “super generator of knowledge and information”.²⁵ He stated that during his term Turkish-American relations were progressing on solid ground although he disagreed American policies concerning Cyprus and Iraq. Cem was aware of the fact that neither in size, nor in capacity Turkey and United States were comparable, but both countries had interests of global nature since U.S. is a global power and Turkey is a multi-regional power.²⁶ For Cem, it is possible between two sides to “see eye to eye on all issues”.²⁷ Cem had always been disturbed of the asymmetrical relationship between USA and Turkey and during his tenure in office he tried to reduce the huge deficit between Turkey’s trade with USA. However, Cem admitted that Turkey still had important foreign trade deficit against USA especially when military procurement expenditures came into the scene.

İsmail Cem considered Turkish-American relations as an example of stability in foreign relations and explained with three terms; consistency, predictability and reliability. Cem also thought that Turkish-American alliance is not just a matter of ideals, but rather it is “deeply rooted in realities and interests”.²⁸ Cem believed that Turkey’s inter-regional roles and USA’s global roles intersected concerning Balkans, Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo, the Middle East, Arab-Israeli conflict, problems of Iraq, security of the Gulf, the Caucasus and the Central Asia, Azeri-Armenian conflict and oil and energy politics. All these regions and countries, formerly being parts of Ottoman Empire, have important cultural, economic and political links with Turkey which could allow Turkey to be an influential actor in these regions. For Cem, Turkey’s NATO membership was also important in Turkish-American interests and although Turkey supports the development of the European Union’s defense organization, NATO is still pivotal in European defense.²⁹ For all these reasons, Cem called Turkish-American relations as “necessary symbiosis” due to two countries’ common values of democracy and freedom and their overlapping interests in numerous fields.³⁰ In regards to Central Asia and Caucasus, Cem claimed that USA and Turkey were pursuing policies that are somewhat parallel and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project³¹ and the trans-Caspian natural gas pipeline³² are two great projects that both countries have interests against Russia.³³

²⁴ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 72.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 72.

²⁶ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 72-73.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 76.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 77.

³¹ The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline is a 1,768 kilometers (1)long crude oil pipeline from the Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. It connects Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan; Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia; and Ceyhan, a port on the south-eastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, hence its name.

Although Cem had a bright vision for the future of Turkish-American relations, he was very disappointed of USA's Iraq policy which he thought to be detrimental to USA's image and prestige as well as to Turkish-American relations. Cem later told journalist Can Dündar that he and Prime Minister Ecevit had meetings with Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney before the invasion and they tried everything in order to convince Americans about the negative effects of an American attack on Iraq but could not become successful.³⁴ In Cem's view, for the future, Turkey should keep its close relationship with USA, but this did not mean accepting all American proposals. In addition, Cem did not refrain to say that JDP's relationship to USA was colony minded and damage relations between two countries since it wounds Turkish people and thus fuels anti-Americanism. Cem also believed that USA had an important role in the dissolution of coalition government and the take-over of JDP in 2002.³⁵

2. Turkish-European Union Relations

Turkey's application to accede to the European Union was made on 14 April 1987. Turkey has been an associate member of the European Union (EU) and its predecessors since 1963. After the 10 founding members, Turkey was one of the first countries to become a member of the Council of Europe in 1949 and was also a founding member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1961 and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 1973. Turkey has also been an associate member of the Western European Union since 1992, and is a part of the "Western Europe" branch of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations. Turkey signed a Customs Union agreement with the EU in 1995 and was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership on 12 December 1999, at the Helsinki summit of the European Council. Negotiations were started on 3 October 2005 but the membership bid has become a major controversy of the ongoing enlargement of the European Union.³⁶

As Turkey takes steps towards full membership to the European Union, skepticism of the EU countries about Turkish membership -due to historical, cultural, economic, political and psychological reasons- and the political conditions determined by the EU contribute to a growing ambivalence towards the idea of integration in Turkey. According to nationalist political/intellectual circles, the EU is seen as the contemporary version of European imperialism which covertly aims to weaken, divide and rule Turkey. Specifically, EU's perspective on the Cyprus issue, the Armenian problem and the Kurdish question

³² The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline is a proposed submarine pipeline between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. The Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project if built would transport natural gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to central Europe, circumventing both Russia and Iran.

³³ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 91.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 242.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

³⁶ For details see; EurActiv - European Union information web site, retrieved on 14.06.2010 from <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/eu-turkey-relations/article-129678>.

increases the uncertainties about European countries' intentions and sincerity about Turkey's accession. The rise of nationalism and "Islamophobia" as well as the takeover of right wing political parties instead of social democratic parties in Europe strengthen the current trend. The German chancellor Angela Merkel's statements about "privileged partnership"³⁷ and the French president Nicholas Sarkozy's insistence on a "Mediterranean Union"³⁸ also contribute to the emerging downward trend in Turkish-EU relations. Turkish public opinion about EU membership seems to be focused on two extreme poles, which constantly degrade or ignore each other. Polls made in the recent years show that support for Turkey's accession to the European Union has been decreasing dramatically and Turkish people have begun to lose their faith in the success of this project. A poll conducted by a respected inquiry company KONDA in 2007 shows that only 39 % of Turkish people think that "Turkey should absolutely become a full member of EU", whereas 24 % of Turkish people are "extremely against EU membership". The other 37 % of Turkish people think that "full membership to EU does not matter for them".³⁹ Another poll by A&G Company verifies KONDA's results and shows that Turkish people who think that "Turkey should absolutely become a full member of EU" fell from 56.5 % to 30.1 % between 2002 and 2008.⁴⁰ The future of the Turkish-EU relationship does not seem bright in the short term because of the complexity of the problems between two sides and the hopeful and energetic situation in the days of Cem's Foreign Ministry and JDP government's early years seem to have lost.

İsmail Cem learned and loved European culture from his childhood since he was brought up in modern Turkish family that adopted European culture and lifestyle. Cem also studied in Lausanne University in the early 1960s and observed European culture more closely. Cem was impressed by the great European culture and became able to speak French and English perfectly. Cem's leftism and his ideal of social democracy was also heavily shaped by European left especially that of French Socialist Party (PS). Moreover, Cem became popular in international media most as the architect of Turkey's acquisition of full membership candidate status to join the European Union.⁴¹ He was largely credited

³⁷ German chancellor Angela Merkel has been promoting the idea of privileged partnership for Turkey for a long time. But after coming to power, she "pledged to abide by commitments Germany had made for Turkish membership." See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 23.05.2008 from <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?newsid=60851>.

³⁸ Before being elected the President of the Republic of France, Nicolas Sarkozy in a televised debate with his socialist rival Segolene Royal few weeks before the elections, stated that if elected president, he will start a debate on Turkey's EU membership and he will be against such membership. He also for the first time said that Turkey could only be a part of the Mediterranean Union. See; *Turkish Daily News*, retrieved on 22.05.2008 from <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?newsid=72308>.

³⁹ Tarhan Erdem. "Yeni Türkiye'yi Anlamak (Understanding New Turkey)", retrieved on 09.05.2008 from http://www.konda.com.tr/html/dosyalar/yeni_turkiye.pdf.

⁴⁰ A&G Araştırma Şirketi, "AB'ye Üyelik (Membership to EU)", retrieved on 10.05.2008 from http://www.agarastirma.com.tr/arastirmalar/ab_uyelik.pdf.

⁴¹ For example see; *BBC News*, "Profile: İsmail Cem - supreme diplomat", retrieved on 29.05.2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2123057.stm>.

with Turkey's declaration as a full member candidate during the Helsinki summit in 1999, after much negotiation with the EU and a night trip by EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and the then EU Commissioner Günter Verheugen to Ankara to iron out the last details. Cem has always loved European culture and expressed his wish for Turkey to become a full member of the European Union but he also added that this is not an obsession for Turkey.⁴² He criticized previous Turkish governments for not believing in Turkey's place in the EU as a first-class member and settled for second-class practices⁴³ such as some disadvantageous clauses in the Customs Union agreement. For Cem, Turkey has a mixed identity of being both European and Asian and both of these identities are important and historical.⁴⁴ In his view, Turkey's European identity has evolved in the 15th century especially after the conquest of İstanbul in 1453. If being European is a geographical category, the large part of Turkish history has taken place in the European continent and contemporary Turkey also has important villages in the Europe. If being European is a historical category, both Turkish and European history consist of interactions between these civilizations and Turks have always been part of European history. If being European is a cultural category, Turkey is a country that has been trying to catch up contemporary European culture in terms of democracy, pluralism, secularism, human rights, men-women equality etc.⁴⁵

In that sense, Cem's first aim was to change classical self-distrusted EU policy of Turkish state and to consider EU relations as an important component of Turkish foreign policy, rather than a separate and independent vision.⁴⁶ For him, Turkey could pursue two goals not conflicting with each other at the same time, which means being a full member of European Union and to become a determining state in Eurasia.⁴⁷ Cem knew negative European look towards Turkey and serious obstacles that Turkey would face during membership process. Thus, he developed a strategy of intimidating EU countries by talking about withdrawing Turkey's membership application and not talking about Turkey's problems with EU officials on important matters including Cyprus and Turkish-Greek relations, human rights issues and Kurdish question if Turkey would not be granted full membership candidacy status.⁴⁸ This strategy did not work in 1997 Luxembourg Summit but after the government and Cem's decisive stance against EU and European countries and after Cem's bold press statements⁴⁹, in 1999 Helsinki Summit Turkey was

⁴² See; *Le Monde*, "Entrer dans l'Union n'est pas une obsession pour la Turquie", retrieved on 02.06.2010 from [http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30\]&objet_id=140457](http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30]&objet_id=140457).

⁴³ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 202.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 203.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 205.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 205-206.

⁴⁸ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 207.

⁴⁹ Few days before Helsinki Summit, Cem spoke to *Financial Times* and stated that "Turkey could give up from EU candidacy if an option like privileged partnership or conditional membership is offered". See; *ibid.*, p. 208.

finally given full membership candidacy status by the EU.⁵⁰ For Cem, this success was the result of a self-confident, not begging stance against EU, in addition to a cold and realistic profit and loss account analysis in foreign policy.⁵¹

Although he was the architect and the champion of Turkey's EU membership, İsmail Cem was realistic enough to declare that Turkey's EU full membership is very difficult to be realized because of rising Islamophobia in European countries and European people's negative look towards Turkey's membership if referendums would take place after the termination accession negotiations.⁵² Cem also knew that Turkish public opinion was also skeptic about accession to EU⁵³ and the basis of this skepticism go far beyond technical problems. However, he underlined that Turkey should continue to pursue this path and should reach EU standards for its own people's sake even if full membership to the Union would not be realized in the end.⁵⁴ Cem also wrote a book specifically on Turkey's relations with EU and tried to summarize the events in his tenure in office.⁵⁵ The book had an autobiographic characteristic but it also had important "off the record" information about Helsinki Summit.

3. Struggle Against Terrorism

Maybe the most important event in Cem's tenure in office as Turkish Foreign Minister was the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the Adana Agreement made between Turkey and Syria. Adana agreement was made between Syria and Turkey on 20 October 1998 about not supporting terrorist organizations to each other. This led to the deportation of Abdullah Öcalan from PKK camps in Syria and eventually his capture in Greek embassy in Kenya. Adana agreement was not easy to be made.⁵⁶ Cem remembers that 1998 was the peak for PKK terror and there was extreme anger towards terrorism among Turkish society. In this situation, Cem thought that Turkey should do something against Syria, an obvious supporter of PKK terrorism.⁵⁷ In a fall National Security Committee meeting in 1998, a consensus was made and upon this consensus Chief of Turkish Land Forces General Atilla Ateş went to Hatay, a city on the Syrian border, and made a harsh speech against Syrian administration for its support to PKK terrorism.⁵⁸ Ateş said; "Some of our neighbors like Syria is misjudging and exploiting Turkey's good intentions. They support the bandit called Apo and harmed Turkey. We are at the end of

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 208.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 209.

⁵³ For details see; Ali Çarkoğlu. 2003. "Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Turkish Public Support for EU Membership" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*. New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

⁵⁴ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 209.

⁵⁵ İsmail Cem. 2005. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya İkinci cilt: Avrupa'nın "Birliği" ve Türkiye*, İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

⁵⁶ For details see; *Milliyet* (daily newspaper), 8-9-10 November 2007.

⁵⁷ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 225.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 226.

our tether. All kinds of troubles are caused from Syria. Turkey is strong enough to protect its lands and respond to these troubles. If Turkey does not get what it wants, it would acquire the right to take any kinds of precautions".⁵⁹

Ateş's speech, in which he warned Syrian government that its support for terrorism may lead to a war between Turkey and Syria, packed a punch and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak assumed a mediator role between Turkey and Syria in order to prevent a war.⁶⁰ Turkish Chief of General Staff of the period Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu later confessed that they were not completely ready for a military operation but the Turkish press played an important role in Syria's retreat by giving the image of upcoming war.⁶¹ The fear of Turkish coalition government was a military move from Greece in the Aegean islands if Turkey engages in a war situation with Syria.⁶² In addition, Ecevit at those days correctly predicted that the terrorist organization may settle in northern Iraq if they are driven away from Syria.⁶³ Cem, on the other hand, thought that if a military operation is made, Arab countries, China and Russia would react against Turkey and only potential support to Turkey may come from France due to Cem's special efforts. USA was also against Turkey's use of military power against Syria and President Bill Clinton's letter to President of the Republic Süleyman Demirel was clearly stating that Turkey should support Mobarak's mediatorship.⁶⁴ Mobarak's mediation between Syria and Turkey turned out to be successful mostly because of Syria's stepping back against Turkey and events led finally to the Adana agreement between Syria and Turkey and to the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan eventually near Greek embassy in Kenya. Adana agreement on the other hand was signed by Turkish Deputy-Undersecretary Uğur Ziyal and Syrian Major General El-Hasan on 20 October 1998 and by this protocol Syria had undertaken several commitments in regards to Turkey's security concerns.⁶⁵ Cem knew this did not mean that the terrorist organization in Syria had been totally annihilated, but this was a sign of good faith between two countries.⁶⁶

Cem always underlined that "nothing can justify terror" and Turkey has always been at that point.⁶⁷ However, Cem asserted that Western political elite and media, due to their misunderstandings and prejudices, contributed to the tragedies that Turkey went through from 1987 to 1997 by supporting or at least ignoring racial based ethnic and separatist PKK terrorism. Cem thought that Europeans were completely unaware of the realities in Turkey and their public opinion was in favor of terrorist organization's false claims but he was able to convince some of his European colleagues to look into realities and to see

⁵⁹ *Milliyet*, 8 November 2007, p. 20.

⁶⁰ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 227.

⁶¹ *Milliyet*, 9 November 2010, p. 20.

⁶² *Milliyet*, 10 November 2010, p. 22.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶⁵ Ismail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 85.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 86.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 103.

through different optics as well.⁶⁸ Cem also thought that over-emphasizing ethnicity and ethnic and racial based politics led and may lead again disasters in Europe and elsewhere in the world.⁶⁹ Cem gave the plight of the Balkans in general and the genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular as example of the dangers of ethnic based politics and warned his colleagues to be very cautious in dealing with criteria based on race.⁷⁰ Cem knew that Turkey had a Kurdish problem but he believed that this could be solved in a fully democratic regime that Turkey has been making consistent steps to reach and supporting ethnic nationalisms would lead to disasters.

Cem thought 9/11 incident was catalysis for the increasing will for struggling against terrorism but due to the wrong steps taken by Bush administration this created polarization between Western and Muslim world⁷¹ and Turkey was negatively affected from this situation.⁷² After the 9/11 disaster, Cem tried to orientate his Western counterparts in order not to use the term “Islamic terrorism” by claiming that “terrorism has no religion, nationalist or excuse”.⁷³ Cem also underlined that ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims and anti-Turkish rhetoric in European Union give the impression of a newly initiated anti-Islam crusade to populations both in Turkey and in Western Europe and strengthen fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world.⁷⁴

4. Cyprus Problem and Relations with Greece

The relations between the Turkey and Greece have been marked by alternating periods of mutual hostility and reconciliation ever since Greece won its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Since then the two countries have faced each other in four major wars; the Greco-Turkish War (1897), the Balkan Wars of (1912-1913), the First World War (1914-1918) and the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). Two powerful and visionary postwar leaders, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Eleftherios Venizelos, were determined to establish normal relations between the two states.⁷⁵ After years of negotiations, a treaty was concluded in 1930 and Greece renounced all its territorial claims over Turkey. This was followed by the Balkan Pact of 1934, in which Greece and Turkey joined Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Romania in a treaty of mutual assistance and settled

⁶⁸ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 103.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 106.

⁷¹ Former U.S. President George W. Bush in one his speeches after 9/11 disaster, made a reference to “crusade” against terrorism which was unnoticed by Americans, but rang alarm bells in Europe and in Muslim world due to fears of “clash of civilizations” between Western and Islamic world. See; Peter Ford, “Europe cringes at Bush ‘crusade’ against terrorists”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, retrieved on 27.07.2010 from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0919/p12s2-woeu.html>.

⁷² Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 241.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 240.

⁷⁴ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 110.

⁷⁵ Atatürk was even nominated for Nobel Peace Prize by Venizelos. See; Nomination Database for Nobel Peace Prize; “Nomination Database - Peace”, retrieved on 27.07.2010 from http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/nomination/nomination.php?action=show&showid=2046.

outstanding issues. Both countries became members of NATO and together with Yugoslavia formed a new Balkan Pact for mutual defense against the Soviet Union. Turkish-Greek relations began to spoil in the late 1950s, mostly due to problems in Cyprus, a British protectorate that became an independent federal state in 1960.

Starting from the early 1960s, Greek Cypriots desired unity with Greece (enosis) and this desire turned into violent actions and massacres against Turkish Cypriots especially after the coup made in Greece and the take-over of a fascist Greek junta in 1967. On 15 July 1974, a band of Greek Cypriot nationalists that organized around a junta called EOKA B, staged a coup against the Cypriot President and Archbishop Makarios. EOKA B leader Nikos Sampson was appointed President. On 20 July 1974, Turkey, using its guarantor status and rights arising from the trilateral accords of the 1959-1960 Zurich and London Agreements, occupied the northern part of Cyprus lands. Years later once again war between Greece and Turkey seemed inevitable but it was averted when Sampson's coup collapsed a few days later and Makarios returned to power. At the mean time, the Greek military junta in Athens, which failed to confront the Turkish invasion, also fell from power but the damage to Turkish-Greek relations was done and the occupation of Northern Cyprus by Turkish troops would be a sticking point in Greco-Turkish relations for decades to come. After eight years of failed negotiations with the leadership of the Greek Cypriot community, the north declared its independence on 15 November 1983 under the name of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. This unilateral declaration of independence was rejected by the UN and the Republic of Cyprus.⁷⁶ In recent years the politics of reunification has dominated the island's affairs. It was hoped that Cyprus's planned accession into the European Union would act as a catalyst towards a settlement and in 2004 a United Nations-brokered peace settlement was presented in a referendum to both sides. In the referendum a majority of Turkish Cypriots accepted the proposal, but Greek Cypriots overwhelmingly rejected it. As a result, Cyprus entered the European Union as a divided island, with Northern Cyprus effectively excluded. Cyprus issue is still a serious source of problem in Turkish-Greek relations and also an obstacle in Turkey's accession to EU.⁷⁷ Another important problematic between two countries is about sovereignty rights in the Aegean Sea. Both sides currently possess 6 nautical miles (11 km) off their shores in the Aegean Sea but Greece claims a right to unilateral expansion to 12 nautical miles.

İsmail Cem attracted the attention of the global media mostly when he made enormous efforts to improve the relations between Turkey and Greece together with his counterpart Yorgo Papandreou. Turkey and Greece signed many important treaties in

⁷⁶ For a short and useful summary of Turkish-Greek relations and Cyprus issue see; Tozun Bahçeli. 2003. "Cycles of Tension and Rapprochement: Prospects for Turkey's Relations with Greece" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Mustafa Aydın (ed.) *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.

⁷⁷ For details see; Semin Suvarierol. 2003. "Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey's Road to Membership" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (ed.) *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration and International Dynamics*, New York: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd.

Cem's period and began to cooperate in many areas by erasing the bad memories of Kardak crisis, Greek support to PKK terrorism and Greek treatment of the Turkish community in Western Thrace.⁷⁸ In February 1999, Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos was forced to resign following the abduction of Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan. He was succeeded by his deputy Giorgios Papandreou and the former under-secretary Ioannis Kranidiotis. Just as relations between Greece and Turkey had reached rock bottom, two men who favored rapprochement came into the scene and changed the destiny of two countries according to many international observers. However, while Turkish-Greek rapprochement took positive critics from the international media, in Turkey Cem was criticized for not driving Greece into the corner when he had chance after the discovery of Greek contributions to PKK terrorism.⁷⁹ Due to his works for world peace, Cem was awarded together with Yorgo Papandreou as the "Statesman of the Year" in 2000 by the East West Institute. Relations between two countries began to improve after successive earthquakes hit both countries in the summer of 1999. The so called "earthquake diplomacy" generated sympathy in both countries and was praised by the international media.⁸⁰ The earthquake diplomacy was followed by the warm personal relations between Cem and Papandreou. In a famous scene which made headlines in both countries, Cem and Papandreou joined in Greek dancing "sirtaki" and singing on the Greek island of Samos. This meeting was followed up with a much-photographed holiday in Turkey of the two men and their families.⁸¹

Thanks to Cem and Papandreou's efforts, Turkey and Greece signed important treaties in Cem's period and began to cooperate in many areas. The first visit made by Papandreou in 17 January 2000.⁸² For Cem, Papandreou's visit, first official visit of Greece to Ankara after 38 years, was "a new page even a new era" in two countries'

⁷⁸ The situation of Turkish community in Western Thrace (numbering an estimated 125.000) who were accusing the Greek government of neglecting their economical and educational needs as well as restricting their freedom to choose their muftis was another irritant in Turkey. See; Tozun Bahcheli, "Cycles of Tension and Rapprochement: Prospects for Turkey's Relations with Greece", p. 168.

⁷⁹ However, Cem's speech towards Greece at that period (March 1999) was not that soft; "Unless Greece cleans herself of her new definition of a flagrant terrorist state, we do not take her as an interlocutor, for any relevant issue. We demand from this country (Greece) to put an end to the support it extends to terrorism and cut off its close links with terrorist organizations". See; İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, pp. 126-127.

⁸⁰ About the success of Cem and Papandreou's earthquake diplomacy see; Niels Kadritzke. 2000. "Greece's earthquake diplomacy", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://mondediplo.com/2000/06/06greece> and Dimitris Keridis. 2006. "Earthquakes, Diplomacy and New Thinking in Foreign Policy", *The Fletcher Forum*, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from http://www.jura.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/we3/honorarprofs/bolewski_wilfried/dokumente/2_Multilateral_Diplomacy/Keridis_earthquakes_diplomacy_and_new_thinking_in_foreign_policy.pdf.

⁸¹ For details see; *Ntvmsnbc.com*, "Ege'de önemli buluşma", retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/90123.asp>.

⁸² For all news about this visit see; T.C. Başbakanlık (2000), *Dış Basında Yunanistan Dışişleri Bakanı Papandreou'nun Türkiye Ziyareti (17-24 Ocak 2000)*, Ankara.

relationships.⁸³ Cem and Papandreou signed a series of agreements covering tourism, environmental protection, investments and the fight against crime and terrorism. Papandreou's visit was followed by Cem's reciprocal visit to Athens in February 2, 2000. Cem's visit was punctuated by the signing of the bilateral agreements focusing on technology and science, cooperation in sea transports, heightened economic cooperation, education and culture as well as a pact on establishing a framework to avoid customs violations.⁸⁴ Turkish-Greek relations starting from these 9 agreements have been showing an upward trend and relations between two countries getting stronger and deeper. About the Cyprus issue, İsmail Cem declared in 2001 that "Turkey might be forced to take measures in the event of a Greek Cypriot accession prior to an agreement on the Cyprus question".⁸⁵ Cem's speech was followed by Prime Minister Ecevit's statement about Turkey's annexation of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus if Cyprus becomes a member of EU before a peace settlement in Cyprus.⁸⁶ However, during JDP rule, Turkish policy towards Cyprus changed and Turkey did not do much against Cyprus' entry into EU without a settlement on the island although the peace process was supported by Turkish Cypriots. İsmail Cem also wrote a book specifically on Turkey's relations with Greece and Cyprus issue and tried to inform the public about the development of rapprochement process and the important role of personal relations and friendship in diplomacy.⁸⁷

5. Relations with Eurasia

İsmail Cem had always stated that Turkey was both a European and a Eurasian country. Thus, Cem believed that Turkish foreign policy should be multi-dimensional and Turkey should try to use of advantages of its "historical geography (*taribi coğrafya*)" in order to increase its influence in different regions that had previously stayed under Ottoman rule.⁸⁸ Cem also underlined that he has a "strong belief that Turkey's strategic future is linked with the emergence of Eurasia".⁸⁹ Cem thought that the most important reason for Eurasia's increasing role in Turkish foreign policy was the end of Cold War and the emergence of a new paradigm of power based on economic vitality and persistence rather than sheer military force. During Cold War, due to highest priority of military issues, Turkey's relations with Western-Atlantic bloc was the major determinant of the country's

⁸³ *BBC News*, "Greece and Turkey strengthen ties", retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/612554.stm>.

⁸⁴ For details see; T.C. Başbakanlık. 2000. *Dış Basında Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem'in Atina Ziyareti (2-7 Şubat 2000)*, Ankara. Also see; Kaşif Eryalçın. "Türkiye ile Yunanistan Arasındaki Ticari ve Ekonomik İlişkiler", T.C. Dış İşleri Bakanlığı, retrieved on 28.07.2010 from <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ile-yunanistan-arasindaki-ticari-ve-ekonomik-iliskiler.tr.mfa>.

⁸⁵ Semir Suvarierol, "Cyprus Obstacle on Turkey's Road to Membership", p. 62.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁸⁷ İsmail Cem. 2004. *Türkiye, Avrupa, Avrasya Birinci cilt: Strateji Yunanistan Kıbrıs*. İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

⁸⁸ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 206.

⁸⁹ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 67.

foreign policy whereas contemporary Turkey has many new economic and political opportunities since it has a pivoting role in the emerging Eurasian reality. Cem asserts that contemporary Turkey “aspires to be the leading economic and political actor in Eurasia”. While talking about Eurasia, Cem thought of large territory stretching from Western Europe to Western China.⁹⁰

İsmail Cem tried to clarify Eurasia’s importance in Turkish foreign policy for the future under three headings. The first is related to the integration of Europe and Asia in the near future in terms of production, communication and information technologies thanks to the possibilities of open-market economies. Cem wrote that “much of the next millennium’s economic development will take place in Asia and the advent of new energy resources and communication corridors bears witness to this emerging reality”.⁹¹ Secondly, Cem thought the post-Cold War political framework provided Turkey a new international environment of historic and cultural dimensions in Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia as a long-standing actor in these geographies and Turkey has become a vital partner in many new countries’ economic restructuring.⁹² Thirdly, Cem believed that this strategic change also corresponds with a new consciousness in Turkey in terms of the use of shared history and parallel cultural characteristics in foreign policy.⁹³ For all these reasons, Cem thought that Turkey, having the most dynamic economy, most advanced armed forces and the longest running democracy, “has optimal conditions to contribute to stability and to enjoy the opportunities presented by the new Eurasian Order”. For Cem, “coupled with a new foreign policy combining economic progressivism with historical and cultural affinities, Turkey is riding the wave of a new economic momentum, transforming its former regional role into a global one”.⁹⁴ However, Cem also noted that he may not be an “objective commentator” while talking about Turkey although he believed his views are realistic aspirations.⁹⁵

For Central Asian countries, Cem thought that, Turkey as a country having cultural ties with these countries that actively supported their independence, has chance to start a new phase in relationship with these countries. Cem thought that this phase would be less intuitive and informal perhaps, but which “will grow in its intensity and substance, in the quality of its means and mechanisms”. This could be achieved only Cem realized if “we can now leave the over-emphasis on idealistic concepts and concentrate more on interests, on plans and details”.⁹⁶ Cem thought that considering Central Asia, Turkish and American interests are common against Russia, which became another important actor again in the region after Vladimir Putin’s take over compared to ex-president Boris Yeltsin times.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 67.

⁹¹ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 67.

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 68.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁹⁷ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 92.

Cem thought that although Turkey had not got intention of pursuing a policy of hostility towards Russia or any other policy that will force the Central Asian and Caucasus countries to make a choice between Turkey and Russia, Russia and Turkey as two great civilizations of the region compete in some domains.⁹⁸ Cem made it clear that Turkey attached highest significance to peace and stability in the Caucasus as well as the preservation and consolidation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in that region. In that sense, the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and Armenian occupation of Azeri territory were two problems that worried Cem rather than Russia.⁹⁹

6. Relations with Middle Eastern Countries

Although he was raised in a modern European like family, Cem always had curiosity and sympathy for Islamic culture and he tried to raise his knowledge of Islam since his youth. This quality of Cem, which was rare in Kemalist-leftist intelligentsia, allowed him to have good relations with the pious and Islamist segments of the country and to develop a more peaceful and moderate language on the deep secular-Islamist cleavage in Turkey. In foreign policy too, Cem wanted Turkey to establish peaceful relationships with the Islamic world and to help their progress and modernization by acting as a model country that has been able live both Islam and democracy.

İsmail Cem thought that during his tenure in office, Turkey achieved to make peace with Middle East and improved Turkey's relationships with Organization of the Islamic Conference.¹⁰⁰ Cem thought that although OIC was (and is) not an influential international actor, due to the small steps taken during his Foreign Ministry, later Turkey was able to make its candidate Eklemeddin İhsanoğlu as the Secretary General of OIC.¹⁰¹ Cem also showed great efforts in order to prevent the use of the term "Islamic terror" after 9/11 incident and was the first person to state that "terrorism has no nationality, religion or excuse".¹⁰²

İsmail Cem had also established friendship and close relationship with chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and previous Palestinian National Authority Yasser Arafat. Cem thought Arafat was a true fighter who had engaged in terrorism in the past in order to keep Palestinian liberation movement together but also at the same time was a compassionate person in his personal relations.¹⁰³ Cem tried to take an active mediator or conciliator role in Palestine-Israel conflict and especially after Arafat's request in 2001, tried to relax the tension between two camps by contacting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami (whom Cem found reasonable) and U.S. Secretary of the State

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁰ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 237.

¹⁰¹ For details see; Ozan Örmeci. "Turkey's Role in the Organization of Islamic Conference, JDP Government and the Greater Middle East Project", retrieved on 12.06.2010 from http://www.cfr.org/publication/22373/caspian_weekly.html.

¹⁰² Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 240-241.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

Madeleine Albright.¹⁰⁴ Cem admitted that his efforts did not bring victory but still he had prepared a plan for the partition of Jerusalem by analyzing Ottoman model of partition for Jerusalem and also achieved to relax the tension.¹⁰⁵ He had also reminded that his efforts were praised both by Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat in the international public. Cem pointed out Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as the main reason of the failure of his efforts to create peace in Palestine.¹⁰⁶ Cem together with his Greek counterpart Yorgo Papandreou visited Arafat in 2002 and tried to attract world's attention to his miserable situation in his home where he kept nearly as a prisoner.¹⁰⁷ For Cem, this was a humanitarian stance rather than an ideological-political attitude and together with Papandreou they contacted Shimon Peres for ameliorating Arafat's situation, although their efforts were prevented by Sharon.¹⁰⁸

During Cem's tenure in office Turkish-Israeli relations had also developed in various domains. Cem thought that Turkish and Israeli economies were of complementary nature and this was strengthened by several agreements previously made between two countries which constituted the basis for our economic, commercial, scientific and military cooperation.¹⁰⁹ However, Cem made it clear that the military aspect of this cooperation with Israel was of "defense industries cooperation" and "military training agreements" (Turkey had parallel agreements with some 20 countries some of which were members of the Organization of Islamic Conference) and this was not directed against any third country.¹¹⁰ Cem supported peace in the Middle East and never compromised Turkey's good relations with Israel or Arab world in order to be on better terms with the other side.¹¹¹ Cem was critical of Israeli government's extreme use of military power in the region and he knew that speaking about peace in the early 21st century was still very difficult due to escalating violence.¹¹² Thus, Cem believed only final peace settlement might bring an end to the escalation of violence and both sides should take steps for reaching peace.

Another important issue related to Middle East during Cem's tenure in office was the situation of Iraq and its dictator Saddam Hussein. Cem was aware of American preparations for the war and in order to prevent the war, he tried to organize a conference between Iraq and its neighboring countries. However, Cem thought that these efforts could not save Iraq and Saddam Hussein since Saddam did not trust in his efforts although many neighboring countries including Iran and especially Jordan was ready to

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 215.

¹⁰⁷ See; *BBC News*, "Turkey and Greece in Mid-East effort", retrieved on 28.07.2010 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/1949787.stm.

¹⁰⁸ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁹ İsmail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 87.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 88.

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 89.

take responsibility for preventing the war.¹¹³ Cem had also personally met with Saddam Hussein and tried to convince him that this effort was not an American plan, but rather a Turkish project to prevent the war that would spoil the stability in the region.¹¹⁴ Cem was thinking that this was a huge and also last opportunity for Saddam, but he was disappointed of Saddam's incomprehension of the seriousness of the situation.¹¹⁵ Cem thought that what had happened and today still happens in Iraq is a tragedy and Saddam also has a huge responsibility in that.¹¹⁶ In his interview with journalist Can Dündar, Cem told that as the Foreign Minister he always tried to prevent the coming of American soldiers into Turkey soil for invading Iraq since it would have terrible consequences both for Turkey and USA. He also added that Justice and Development Party's sudden rise and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's contacts in Washington gave him the impression that JDP's sudden rise was related to 1 March memorandum.¹¹⁷ Similar interpretation was also made by journalist Fikret Bila¹¹⁸ but Bila was starting the civil coup from Ecevit's pacification and illness, whereas Cem was focusing on the role of Kemal Derviş and the sudden rise of JDP and Tayyip Erdoğan. Cem also pointed out that actively supporting and military engagement in American invasion in Iraq would mean the loss of many hundreds of Turkish soldiers, spoiling relations with Turkey and the Arab countries and Muslim world and also new security problems for Turcoman population in Iraq.¹¹⁹ However, he also told Can Dündar that he understood USA's decision was precise war after 9/11 incident and American government was expecting more support and help from its ally Turkey.¹²⁰ Adjustment of relations with Syria was the other important issue during Cem's Foreign Ministry (which had previously explained in the struggle against terrorism part).

7. Contributions

İsmail Cem served as the Foreign Minister of Turkey between the years 1997 and 2002. İsmail Cem's deeds as Turkish Foreign Minister are extremely important as they represent a breakdown from classical Turkish foreign policy. During the Cold War, starting from the 1950s, as a NATO member Turkey's foreign policy was based primarily on American preferences and focused on security issues. However, after the fall of Berlin Wall and the collapse of USSR, Turkish foreign policy in a sense began to feel existential problems but could not be able to redefine its aims, test its limits and puts forward a new vision for Turkey in the 21st century until Cem's tenure in office. In that sense, Cem's effort to make Turkey first a regional power and then a world state and to force people to think "bigger"

¹¹³ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, pp. 220-221.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 224.

¹¹⁶ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 225.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 242.

¹¹⁸ Fikret Bila. 2007. *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerde 1 Mart Tezkeresi*. Ankara: Güncel Yayıncılık.

¹¹⁹ Can Dündar, *Ben Böyle Veda Etmeliyim*, p. 242.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 242.

and act more assertive in foreign policy in accordance with the imperial heritage of the Ottoman State, was a new chapter and a turning point in Turkish diplomatic history.

Starting from the 1970s, Cem had always praised some communitarian aspects of the Ottoman Empire and in a sense brought Ottoman model as a preliminary example of contemporary pluralistic democratic society. In convenience with his positive views about Ottoman model, in foreign policy also Cem defended Ottoman vision and wanted Turkey to become a more influential actor in international relations. He always underlined that Turkish foreign policy had been alienated from its cultural roots and historical past and it must be replaced with a new understanding which was based on the awareness of Turkey's rich identity and historical assets inherited from the Ottoman state. He wanted Turkey to be confident of herself, not ashamed of its past and bold and peace-seeking at the same time for the future and criticized the classical lack of pragmatism of Turkish politicians in foreign policy as well as their habitude of stigmatizing countries as friend or foe instead of thinking rationally and realistically about Turkey's interests. Cem tried to offer a multi-dimensional and realistic foreign policy and wanted Turkey to be more flexible and active in foreign policy. Imperial vision in his foreign policy approach could be criticized since Cem was a peace-seeking leftist, but it should be noted that Cem never thought this vision as imperialism or colonialism but rather as a tool to increase his country's economic and cultural effect.

For Cem, Turkey was both an Eastern and Western, an Asian and European, a Muslim and secular country and he believed that this could be Turkey's most important advantage in foreign policy if Turkey develops a strategy of using all these identities for increasing its interest. Although he was fully committed to Turkey's full accession to EU, he knew that there would be serious problems in accession talks and Turkey should never act as a lowly begging country against EU. Cem believed in the necessity of Turkish-American alliance for world peace but he always stated that this did not mean that Turkey should accept all American requests. In that sense, he tried to increase Turkey's portfolio in foreign policy by developing closer relations with Eurasian and Middle Eastern countries. In his view, Turkey should develop a rational and peace-seeking multi-dimensional relationship style with all important organizations and countries based on protecting and developing Turkey's interests. He pointed out Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project as the earliest example of Turkey's strategic energy agreements made in the Eurasian zone.

During Cem's tenure in office, Turkey had growing economic, social and diplomatic relations with its neighboring countries and became able to solve its problems with Greece and Syria. In doing this, Cem used both diplomacy and power in order to reach peace in the region. Concerning Turkish-Greek rapprochement, Cem used public diplomacy extremely well and changed negative views and prejudices about Greece in Turkey similar to his counterpart Papandreou. Cem used the media and civil society organizations (especially during the earthquake diplomacy) while trying to change enmity perception between Turkish and Greek people. However, concerning relations with Syria Cem used Turkey's military power as a threat against Syria and became successful in

solving Turkish-Syrian disagreement about cooperating against terrorism. In that sense, Cem used the methods of both Realism¹²¹ (against Syria) and Liberalism¹²² (against Greece), two major schools in international relations theory. In relations with Middle Eastern countries Cem did not afraid to mention Turkey's Muslim identity though he never had a problem with secularism or Turkey's secular state structure. He wanted Turkish diplomats to be more confident and aware of their glorious history while having relations with countries that ruled for centuries under Ottoman rule. Cem thought that this cultural heritage of Ottomans could increase Turkey's power and sympathy in these regions if it is used successfully.

Cem thought that nationalism in foreign policy is a necessity (but in domestic politics Cem never approved nationalism especially ethnic kind of nationalism since it could easily turn into racism and separatism towards other ethnic groups) since foreign policy is "a mathematical equation of a country's interests" and an area of power struggles. In that sense, Cem could be classified closer to realism rather than liberalism in international relations theory. However, Cem had never been a pro-military or pro-war actor in foreign policy. He thought that military solution is the last resort and could be made only for humanitarian reasons. In the 1970s as a young leftist intellectual and the head of TRT, he supported Cyprus Peace Operation since it was a humanitarian intervention against an illegal military junta and made in order to prevent massacres. Likewise, he thought that there should be a strong cooperation between countries against terrorist organizations and no one should support or ignore the negative aspects of terrorism. Cem wanted peace in everywhere, in his own country as well as in Palestine, in Kosovo or in Rwanda.

After Cem's tenure in office, Turkey under JDP rule tried to carry on this vision and tried to become a more influential regional and international actor during Abdullah Gül's, Ali Babacan's and Ahmet Davutoğlu's Foreign Ministry periods. Thus, Cem could be labeled as the first man who opened Turkey's doors for a multi-dimensional foreign policy and broke the limits of classical Turkish foreign policy of Cold War. However, Cem's multi-dimensional foreign policy, aiming Turkey to become a regional power, could be stated as more in cooperation and friendly with the West compared to Justice and Development Party period, especially Davutoğlu's foreign policy since JDP's relation with the West has been more closely questioned by Western countries in recent months and

¹²¹ Realism in international relations theory is one of the dominant school of thinking within the international relations discipline. Realism or political realism prioritizes national interest and security over ideology, moral concerns and social reconstructions. This term is often synonymous with power politics and also with Realpolitik.

¹²² Liberalism in international relations theory holds that state preferences, rather than state capabilities, are the primary determinant of state behavior. Unlike realism where the state is seen as a unitary actor, liberalism allows for plurality in state actions. Thus, preferences will vary from state to state, depending on factors such as culture, economic system or government type. Liberalism also holds that interaction between states is not limited to the political (high politics), but also economic (low politics) whether through commercial firms, organizations or individuals.

JDP's multi-dimensional foreign policy was more ideological and had Islamic appeals for some observers.¹²³ Especially Turkish-Israeli relations also were harshly deteriorated during JDP rule and finally the tension nearly reached the point of state of war between Turkey and Israel after Israeli commandos' attack towards a Turkish ship (Blue Marmara) carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza under blockade.¹²⁴ During Cem's tenure in office, no such crisis had happened Turkey's multi-dimensional foreign policy was perceived more in conformity with the West by international observers. In that sense, Cem's multi-dimensional foreign policy was not ideological and did not reflect Islamic aspirations, but rather it was aiming to use Turkey's historical-cultural assets inherited from Ottoman State in a rational and secular manner. Some observers claim that after Cem, multi-dimensional Turkish foreign policy has changed and Islamism became an ideological instrument in Turkey's foreign policy.¹²⁵ Here it should be noted that Cem in his multi-dimensional foreign policy was giving higher priority to Turkey's European identity and Western coalition since he wanted his country to become a consolidated democracy and democratic regimes are to be found only among Western-European countries.

Since İsmail Cem worked as the Foreign Minister of Bülent Ecevit, an experienced Turkish politician and an authoritarian party leader who is really interested in foreign policy and international relations, one could claim whether Turkish foreign policy during Cem's tenure in office was masterminded by Ecevit or Cem. Here, many observers including Yaman Başkut claimed that although Cem was very respectful towards Ecevit, he was very active and independent in shaping Turkey's foreign policy.¹²⁶ Moreover, Cem was the intellectual force behind Turkish foreign policy since he tried to conceptualize his policy and deeds on the academic level and wrote books and made important speeches in order to clarify his aims. It should be also noted that Turkish Foreign Ministry has always been a well-rooted and important institution that probably guided Cem a lot in ruling Turkey's international relations. In that sense, although Cem's foreign policy was certainly guided by Turkish Foreign Ministry and was not contrary to Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's preferences, it would not be wrong to claim that he was the primary actor in determining and implementing Turkish foreign policy during his tenure in office.

¹²³ For instance, see; Mary Beth Sheridan. "Turkey's foreign policy raise concern in West and at home", *The Washington Post*, retrieved on 07.06.2010 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/06/AR2010060604052.html?hpid=topnews>. Also see; Andrew Mango. "Turkey and the U.S.: Ottoman Past Shadows Turkish Present" in *Wall Street Journal*, retrieved on 19.07.2010 from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703615104575328622438027714.html>.

¹²⁴ Although the ship was full of human rights activists from the world, 9 Turkish people were killed by Israeli commandos. For details see; *BBC News*, "Israeli navy storms Gaza aid ship", retrieved on 02.06.2010 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle_east/10195997.stm.

¹²⁵ See; Barry Rubin. "Turkish Regime Changes Sides, West Averts Eyes", retrieved on 09.06.2010 from <http://rubinreports.blogspot.com/2010/06/turkish-regime-changes-sides-west.html>.

¹²⁶ Yaman Başkut, *Aferin İyiydin... Bir Diplomatın Amları*, p. 136.

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