

# The Communism and China Perception Created in Turkey during the Korean War

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## Abstract

The beginning of the Cold War, the Truman Doctrine, and the Marshall Plan have made a radical change in Turkey's foreign policy. In 1946, with the Marshall Aid, sympathy for America and the anti-communism perception were created in Turkey. Within the ideological atmosphere of the Korean War, the China and communism perception began to negatively emerge in the Turkish public opinion. In order to convince the Turkish public opinion with regard to the Korean War, the perception that communism is anti-Turk and anti-Islam, invasive and enemy was imposed by NATO. Turcic, Islamic anti-communist movements were supported by NATO and the Uyghur problem was created in this period to create a China perception. The article explored how the China and communism perception was created through the media and ideological atmosphere in Turkey during the process of Turkey's becoming a member of NATO and the Korean War. In the research, newspapers, publications, and articles covering the Korean War from the period starting with Marshall Plan in 1946 were examined.

**Keywords:** The Korean War, Turkish Foreign Policy, Communism, China, NATO, Uyghur Issue

# Kore Savaşı Sırasında Türkiye’de Yaratılan Komünizm ve Çin Algısı

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## Özet

Soğuk savaşın başlaması, Truman Doktrini ve Marshall yardımları Türkiye’nin dış politikasında köklü bir değişiklik gerçekleştirmiştir. 1946 yılında Marshall yardımlarıyla birlikte Türkiye’de Amerikan sempatisi ve anti-komünizm algısı oluşturulmuştur. Kore Savaşının ideolojik ortamında Türkiye kamuoyunda Çin ve komünizm algısı olumsuz şekilde oluşmaya başlamıştır. Türk kamuoyunu Kore Savaşına ikna etmek için NATO tarafından komünizm, Türklük ve İslam karşıtı, işgalci ve düşman olduğu algısı yerleştirilmiştir. Türkçü ve İslami anti-komünist akımlar NATO tarafından desteklenmiş ve Uygur sorunu bu dönemde yaratılarak Çin algısı oluşturulmuştur. Makalede, Türkiye’nin NATO’ya üye olma sürecinde ve Kore Savaşı sırasında Çin ve komünizm algısının Türkiye’deki medya ve ideolojik atmosfer üzerinden nasıl oluşturulduğu araştırılmıştır. Araştırmada 1946 yılında Marshall yardımlarıyla başlayan dönemden itibaren Kore Savaşı’nı konu alan gazete, yayın ve makaleler incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kore Savaşı, Türk Dış Politikası, Komünizm, Çin, NATO, Uygur Meselesi

## 1. Introduction

With the start of the Cold War, Republican People's Party (Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) (CHP), which was in power in 1946, began to get closer to the US with the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine. Democratic Party (Turkish: *Demokrat Parti*) (DP), which came to power after the CHP in 1950, sent troops to the Korean War and increased the relations by becoming a member of NATO. Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan given to Turkey influenced the Turkish public opinion economically and ideologically, causing the promotion of anti-communist propaganda to convince the Turkish public opinion in the process of deciding to send troops to Korea in 1950.

The interaction between Turkey and China took place during the Korean War for the first time. China's perception of Turkey began to form during this period. A negative China image remained in Turkish people's mind during the Korean War. Turkish media and people were influenced by this anti-communist and anti-China propaganda in the period when Turkey participated in the Korean War as a member of NATO and the Western camp.

Although there are studies regarding how communism perception emerged in Turkey, it has been observed that the studies on the China perception during this period is not enough when doing literature survey.

It would not be right to separate the perception of China and Communism from each other. This is because, during the Korean War, the China perception was depicted by the Turkish public as "Red and communist". It was also observed that the Uyghur problem was created during the Korean War to convince the Turkish public opinion of the war. This study examines China and communism perception in Turkey, which was created in the Korean War. It focuses on how China and communism perception were created by examining the media and ideological atmosphere in the period on Turkey's participation in the Korean War and NATO. It also aims to complete the shortcoming in the literature regarding the beginning of Uyghur propaganda, which was first brought to the agenda during the Korean War. In the research, books and articles about the period of the newspaper (Çağlar, 2008, Erdem, 2018, Gül, 2014, İşler and Analı, 2015, Tekindor, 2012), media organs during the period that started with the visit of the Missouri battleship in 1946 and continued with Marshall's aid, the Korean War, NATO membership, were examined (*Zafer, Akşam*).

In order to understand the China perception, we must first assess the ideological atmosphere in Turkey. To understand the change in Turkey's domestic and foreign policy will enable us to issue more accurate statements. The ideological atmosphere experienced in the world and Turkey were inevitably affected the decision taken. The relations Turkey has developed with the United States since 1946, and the changing ideological atmosphere along with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were examined. Secondly, Turkey's participation in the Korean War and afterwards the process of accession to NATO were evaluated. It was examined Turkey decided to participate in the war which atmosphere and why Turkey joined NATO. The incidents taken place during Turkey's joining NATO was observed. Thirdly, the reflection of Turkey's ideological change on media and the public was assessed. Investigations were made on how the ideological environment and external factors direct the society in the formation of perceptions. Particularly, the effects of Truman and Marshall Plan on the China and communism perception were examined. Fourth is, the Uyghur issue between China and Turkey comes to the fore in certain periods. Assessments was issued on the arguments that the start of East Turkestan or the Uyghur issue was brought forward along with the Korean War, and using this situation in convincing the Turkish public opinion of the Korean War.

The main goal of this article is to investigate the perception created in Turkish society after Turkey's approaching the Western camp and becoming a member of NATO. Additionally, how the Uyghur Issue started between Turkey and China, which becomes the main topic of conversation today, and the effect of American propaganda on creating communism and China perception, were also investigated.

## 2. Transformation of Turkey's Foreign Policy: 'Little America Process'

On April 6, 1946, bringing coffin of Mehmet Ertegun, former Turkish ambassador in Washington, by American battleship USS Missouri to Istanbul was interpreted as the beginning of the development of American policy (Hale, 2013:82). Also the battleship USS Missouri visited the Port of Piraeus in Greece on its way back, this situation conveyed message that a front would be formed with Turkey and Greece against the Soviet Union.

There was a radical ideological change in the CHP, which was in power after the Second World War. After 1946, the right wing that defended liberalism instead of statism became more dominant in the party (Atagenc and Toprak, 2019). Articles 141 and 142 were added to the Turkish Penal Code. According to these articles, making communism propaganda was punished with an aggravated penalty between 7.5 and 15 years. In 1946, the Socialist Party of Turkey and Turkey Socialist Workers and Peasants Party were closed due to these articles (Akşin, 2007: 290-299).

The US President Truman proclaimed the Truman Doctrine at Congress on March 12, 1947. This doctrine included military and financial assistance to states struggling against communism. After the draft was accepted, it was decided to make a \$ 400 million financial aid to Greece and Turkey (\$ 250 million to Greece, 150 million dollars to Turkey) (McGhee: 23). On July 12, 1947, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hasan Saka and the U.S. ambassador Edwin Wilson signed an eight-article agreement for the aid coming from the Truman Doctrine in Ankara.<sup>3</sup> In the same year, the U.S. Secretary of State Marshall announced that economic aid would be made to revive the European economy that collapsed with the Second World War.<sup>4</sup>

After the DP had come to power in 1950, the relations with the United States in foreign policy was further developed. In particular, Turkey started to develop its relations with the United States with the Marshall Plan. With the growing influence of the Cold War, the Chinese communist revolution taking place in 1949 and the escalation of tension in Korea created a feeling-under-threat perception for Turkish people. In the newspapers of the period, this perception was reflected to the public and it was stated that cooperation with America and NATO was necessary. Turkey's UN delegate Selim Sarper stated in the headline of *Akşam* dated July 28, 1950 that he could not feel secure unless Turkey allied itself with NATO and so forth (*Akşam*, July 28, 1950:1).

The aid from America was not only economic, but also was aimed at altering the Turkish army's order, making it pro-American and eliminating the gains of the Turkish revolution (Erdem, 2018:309). The received aids were not limited with the army; they also affected Turkey's foreign policy, culture, and economic life. Many researchers evaluate this process as 'Little America' process due to the fact that Turkey's transition to liberal economy increased the American effect.

### 2.1. Turkey's Accession Process to NATO with the Korean War

The Korean peninsula, which was under Japanese occupation for 35 years, was divided into two whose border was the 38th parallel north at the end of the Second World War, as the north was controlled by Russian army, and the south by the American. In 1948, the American-controlled Republic of Korea in the south and the Soviet-controlled People's Republic of Korea in the north were established. The Soviets considered the American presence in Korea a threat to communist power in the region. Since the Communists came to power in China in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong, the view that the American army could be expelled from Asia was born in the Soviets (Armaoğlu, 2014:676). On June 25, 1950, the North Korean army crossed the 38th parallel north determined as the border and started a military operation to the south.

After the United Nations decided to send troops to Korea, DP made a meeting of the Council of Ministers without consulting the opposition and the parliament and decided to send 4500 soldiers on July 25, 1950. In order to enter the Korean War, DP was hiding behind Atatürk's policy under the name of '*Yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh*' (peace at home, peace in the world). *Zafer* that was the ideological publishing organ of DP underlined that the same attack performed on Korea could be performed on Turkey as well, Turkey

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed information, see T.C. Resmi Gazete, September 5, 1947, Issue:6699, p. 12869, website: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/6699.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> \* With the Marshall Plan, the United States aided Turkey with 792.7 million dollars in total in 1948-52 (687 million dollar for military affairs). Can Erdem, 'Türkiye'nin NATO'ya Girişi ve Basındaki Yankıları', 1st International Turkish Culture and History Symposium Proceedings Book, April 19-21, 2018, p.308.

had to support Korea (Fenik, *Zafer*, July 27, 1950:1). DP was advocating the opinion that sending troops to Korea was an opportunity to join NATO, although the opposition argued that it was not constitutional because no decision was taken in parliament. İsmet İnönü, Chairman of the Republican People's Party changed the opposition's policy about sending troops to Korea, saying 'We have no different thoughts on foreign issues. We are committed to the UN ideal and American friendship' in 1951 (Oran, 2009:545-546). 259 officers, 18 military officers, 4 civil servants, 395 non-commissioned officers and 4414 soldiers, 5090 Turkish soldiers in total, went to Korea from Iskenderun to participate in the Korean War on September 19-20, 1950<sup>5</sup> (Yaman, 2005:259).

Turkey wanted to become a member of NATO in 1949, but it was rejected on the grounds that Turkey geographically have not shore in the Atlantic. After DP decided to send troops to Korea, it applied for the second time to join NATO on August 1, 1950. This is because DP sees NATO as the foundation of the liberal economic order and democracy. Additionally, they wanted to guarantee the economic aid started with the Truman and Marshall Plan. NATO agreed on Turkey's membership taking the regional situation into consideration in 1952 (Yanık, 2012:29-50).

During the voting of the draft law on NATO participation in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on February 18, 1952, Fuad Köprülü, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed that 'NATO is rather material and spiritual solidarity cooperation than just being a military defense.' In the parliament, which had 487 deputies in the parliamentary vote on the accession to NATO, 409 deputies voted for the draft law, and there was 1 abstaining vote. (74 people did not vote)<sup>6</sup>

Turkey's relations with the West and the States rose to peak levels with the accession to NATO in 1952. Turkey had a strategic importance for NATO. This was because, Russia was a land state and its landing had to be prevented geopolitically because it would endanger the sea power of the USA. Russia's landing seas could only be blocked by the States with an alliance with Turkey, Greece, Iran, Pakistan, and Korea. Kissinger stated that the Marshall Plan served as a military bulwark against the Soviet expansion, and that in the Eastern Mediterranean the Soviet expansionism was prevented with Turkey and Greece's participation in this plan<sup>7</sup> (Kissinger, 2000:1277). Therefore, the USA had to strengthen its relations with the countries in these regions. While the foreign policy Turkey followed with the States was developing its relations with the West, it resulted in the deterioration of relations with neighbors.

The China and communism perception was built on negativity in Turkish media during the Korean War. The most important reason stems from NATO and Turkey's foreign policy keeping closer to the West. Ergo, the China perception on the Turkish public opinion is full of bad descriptions. The news about the Korean War and China was came from the Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo-oriented western media. Therefore, pro-Western and anti-communist ideas were arriving in Turkey as already written without any needs to intervene news reported in Turkey (Üngör, 2006:410).

## **2.2. The Marshall Aid in Turkey and American propaganda in the media**

The Marshall aid is briefly referred to economic aid to revive the European economy that collapsed after the Second World War. But the Marshall Aid was political as well as economic. The first condition for receiving aid was to declare communism as a traitor (Çağlar, 2008). US Air Force General Secretary J. Milhell Kelly stated the importance of American propaganda, 'I think the most critical war mission is to convince the American people that the communists are waiting at the door to grab us.' (Çağlar, 2008:43). Marshall aid consisted of military equipment assistance. There was also the establishment of the Agency for Unconventional Warfare. In the preface of 'The CIA's Greatest Hits' translated by Adnan Akfirat, it is summarized briefly that the main duties of the Agency for Unconventional Warfare are to support the central democratic forces against the communist movements (support the anti-communist group, organizations), the media propaganda in line with the U.S. interests, and organize operations in small countries.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See also: Zafer, 'Birliğimiz Kore Yolunda', September 29, 1950.

<sup>6</sup> For the articles of the agreement signed with NATO, see also: TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, Session 4, Seance 1, 02.18.1952, p.343.

<sup>7</sup> See also: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52044.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm). (Accessed on 27.01.2020)

<sup>8</sup> \* Adnan Akfirat is the President of the Turkish-Chinese Business Development Association. He is an 18-year journalist and representative of the Vatan Party. Mark Zepezauer, "'CIA'nın Büyük Operasyonları'" Kaynak Yayınları, p.6.

Adnan Menderes gave great importance to the United States in his speech in which the Democratic Party announced its government program after coming to power. ‘Our greatest hope was to strengthen it with a spirit of familiarity every day, and to understand our political, economic and cultural relations with our great friend, the United States, whom we are grateful for as the nation, for supporting’ our peaceful policy with the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan (Abou, 2018:75). In addition, before the Democratic Party came to power, the relations with the States were defined with the statement of ‘our biggest wish is to strengthen our political and economic relations with the USA every day in an atmosphere of sincerity and mutual understanding,’ (Demokrat Parti Tüzük ve Programı, 1946:21) in the Party By-law. Even in 1956, Thornburg, member of the California Standard Petroleum Company Engineers Board and Petroleum Advisor the U.S. government, was going to become the personal advisor to Menderes on economic affairs (Abou, 2018:93). In such an ideological environment, American propaganda were seriously strong in the Turkish public opinion.

Before the government decided to send troops to Korea, a positive perception of the war was tried to be created in the society. DP Istanbul deputy' Seniha Yürüten's son, Tevfik Yürüten, declared that he would establish a community named ‘Aid from Turkey to Transgressed- Free Nations’ to war against the communists sending a letter to the gazettes. In his letter, he asked citizens who wanted to fight alongside our Korean and American brothers for the sake of world peace came to his address. Some sources stated that approximately 3,000 people applied to this call within two days (Gül, 2014:875).

In the Turkish media, propagandas creating anti-communist perception were issued in order to make Turkey enter the Western camp. The lies that Soviets would invade Turkey, and that they wanted Ardahan and Kars for themselves, was spreading. Whereas South Korea was introduced as "Democratic Korea" in the *Cumhuriyet* of the period, North Korea was referred to as "Red Korea". The *Vatan* was translating the article written by the British Foreign Minister (dated July 18, 1950), who described the Korean war as a competition between the free world communism (İşler and Analı, 2015:92).

In 1950s, Turkey's national newspapers were *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Ulus*, *Vatan*, *Akşam* and *Zafer*. *Zafer*, which was founded in 1949, was used as a publication organ of DP that served as an ideological and public propaganda. Ahmet Emin Yalman, founder of *Vatan*, became a mentor to DP. Commentaries such as ‘his biggest fear is communism, he did not see any difference between leftist and communism, he admires America’, was issued about Yalman, who studied in Columbia University in America (İşler and Analı, 2015:89).

On the first page of *Zafer* dated July 5, 1950, he made a report titled “Korean War is increasingly threatening peace” and in the photograph he used, it was shown that several soldiers killed someone. Under the photo, "Communists kill the people in the middle of the street in the cities they occupied, just like this" is written (*Zafer*, July 1950:1). Again, newspapers in the period published articles claiming that unless Turkey help Korea, it could be occupied by the Soviets. Generally, in the language of the newspapers of the period, the Soviets, China, Korea were described as "Communist-Red-Occupier". America was depicted as "friend-ally-democratic" (Tekindor, 2012:524).

According to many researchers and writers, the years 1949-53 are depicted as the years when the pro-McCarthy movements were most violent. The participation of Turkey in NATO ranks strengthened pro-McCarthy trend in Turkey. In other words, hatred and fear were created by showing communism discourses in the memory of the society as expansionist (İşler and Analı, 2015:93). In its issue dated July 3, 1950, *Vatan* depicted South Korea trying to escape from wild killer hand of communism to America, England, and Turkey.

On the first page of the *Cumhuriyet*, dated July 5, 1950, the first page of a photograph showing people leaving their places of residence because of the war, with the subtitle ‘South Koreans fleeing from the communist invasion’, made a reference to the invading identity of the communists.

In addition, there were efforts to combine the perception of society with religion in participation in the war in Korea. The head of Religious Affairs issued a fatwa stating that the Korean war took place between believers and non-believers, that Islam rejected communism, and that soldiers who lost their lives would be considered martyrs since fighting the red communists in Korea was to fight in the way of Allah (Yaman, 2005:241). Thus, it was also ensured that the people was persuaded from the aspect of religion.

A record whose words were ‘America, America / Turks as the world stands still / With you in the war of freedom / This is a song of friendship / It is an echo of brotherhood / We are blood brother in Korea

/ The fire of this friendship does not fade / It is our determination to live free / To Provide peace / Fluctuating for this cause / The love of independence is in our souls/', was created with the name of "Friendship Song", voiced by Celal Ince, by DP in order to make the Turkish society love the American society. Thousands of copies of these recordings made in the States were sent to Turkey and were distributed free to the public as a symbol of Turkish-American friendship (Göze, 2017:156). It was reported that the American influence was felt even in the songs of the children's games in 1940s. For instance, a children's play song said to be used in Izmir consists of the lyrics of 'One-two-three, long live the Turks / Four-five-six, Italy (or Poland) sunk / Seven-eight-nine, German (or Russians) pig / Ten-eleven- twelve, America first' (Oran, 2009:493).

In order to gain the public support for the Korean War, the most effective propaganda tool of the period, cinema, was also used. *Turkish Heroes in Korea* (1951, Seyfi Havaeri), *Korean Veterans* (1951, Seyfi Havaeri), *Turkish Bayonet in Korea* (1951, Vedat Örfi Bengü), *I'm Coming from Korea* (1951, Nurullah Tilgen) and *Return to Homeland* (1952, Nedim Otyam) films were shot and shown to the public. In an article examining *Turkish bayonet in Korea* and *Return to Homeland*, Şimal Yıldızı stated that real war images and newspapers of the period were used to increase the reality in the films to convince the public (Göze, 2017:162-166). In the content of these films, the people of South Korea was depicted as the oppressed nation, the United States and the UN were shown as free world saviors who reached out to them. On the other hand, the Chinese were shown as the enemy supporting North Koreans, and messages warning against the danger of communism were conveyed in these films.

Those who opposed the decision to go to war were accused of being communist. Members of *Barişseverler Cemiyeti* (English: Peace Lovers Association) founded by Behice Boran on this issue were accused of being communists and a court process was initiated against them. It was claimed that *Barişseverler Cemiyeti* took directives from communists, and they were discredited<sup>9</sup> (Zafer, September 21, 1950:1). Thus, opposing participation in the Korean War was tantamount to being communist.

Communist poet Nazim Hikmet pointed out in an interview that Turkey was under domination of anti-communist propaganda against China by the United States. In his interview 知识 (shijiezhish), Nazim Hikmet, who went to Beijing in October, 1952 to attend the Asia Pacific Countries Peace Conference, summarized the Turkish public opinion as 'The Turkish Government is trying to prevent news about China by any means necessary, on the other hand, the reactionary gazettes are reporting all kind of false news about the new China.' (Yang, 1952).

### 3. Propaganda of the Korean War: The Uyghur Issue

Turk is the general name given to all Turkish-speaking peoples after the Göktürk state established in the 5th century AD (Roux, 2008). In 1759, both the west and east of the God Mountains (天山 Tianshan) came under the rule of the Qing dynasty, and they named the area Xinjiang (新疆 new land or new frontier). After Russia invaded Khiva, Bukhara and Hokand khanates in the mid-19th century and established the "Governorship of Turkestan" here, western geographers called it "Russia Turkestan" or the east of West Turkestan as "Chinese Turkestan" or East Turkestan. East Turkestan remained a geographical definition (Li, 2014:266).

On November 12, 1933, the Islamic Republic of East Turkestan was declared in Kashgar. The characteristic of this Republic, East Turkestan, used as a geographical term, was used as a political term for the first time. The Islamic Republic of East Turkestan sent envoys to Britain, Turkey, India, Afghanistan, and Iran to be recognized officially, however, they failed, and the life of the republic lasted only 3 months. The Chinese government and the Soviets entered the city on February 7, 1934. The leader of the East Turkestan Republic, Hodja Niyaz, was arrested. However, Mehmet Emin Buğra, the leader of the Hoten uprising, fled to the British-controlled Kashmir region and from there to East Turkestan to maintain the struggle for independence (Li, 2014:276-284).

On November 7, 1944, the Ili Rebellion took place against Chinese rule, consisting of Uyghurs, Kazakhs and White Russians, and supported by the Soviet Union. After the provincial uprising, the second East Turkestan Republic was established under the leadership of Ali Han Töre, who was accepted as the Islamic leader of the region on November 12, 1944 (Benson, 1990: 42-46). Leaders such as Mehmet

<sup>9</sup> Also see: Zafer Gazetesi 'Kökü Dışarıda Bir Cemiyetin Tahriki' 29 Temmuz 1950, p.1.

Emin Buğra, İsa Yusuf Alptekin, Mesut Sabri Beykozi, who were working for the independence of East Turkestan outside of China after the Ili Rebellion, were excited and returned again and took various positions in the governments established in East Turkestan. Tao Chi-yüeh, who was the commander-in-chief in China after the Communists approached the East Turkestan border in 1949, agreed with the communist administration and entered East Turkestan without any resistance. After the communist government entered East Turkestan, İsa Yusuf Alptekin and Mehmet Emin Buğra fled abroad again (Tuncer and Kırkıl, 2019:295-306).

In the production of the Uyghur problem, first of all, the news of "Reds commit murders in Turkestan" published in *Hürriyet* dated November 24, 1951, and "They killed 8 million Muslims in China" published in *Cumhuriyet* on May 12, 1952. The red communist invaders created the connection between East Turkestan and the Korean War in the mind of the Turkish people, and strengthened the hypothesis that it was anti-Islam. The from Uyghur issue the political conjuncture in Turkey and assessing the period of anti-communist propaganda would not be right to keep separate. It is stated that under the name of combating "communism", initiatives were carried out similar to "security priorities of America". It is said that while struggle, "Turkism" and "Islamic" understandings were allowed (İlhan, 2015:251).

In the 1950s, NATO advocacy was adopted in the center-right, nationalist right, and conservative Islamic right, and these nationalist movements and anti-communist groups were supported by NATO against left groups. Organizations such as *Anti-Communism Association (Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği)*, *National Turkish Students Association (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği)*, *Aydınlar Ocağı* are among the organizations that support NATO (Doster, 2012:37). For instance, Hayrani Ilgar, who was active in *Anti-Communism Association of Turkey*, stated that 'The sworn enemy of Turks is Moskof, the present name of Moskof is now Communist Russia. The enemy of Turks is Communism' (Meşe, 2017). It was dedicated in Turkey that Turks were incompatible with communism, and therefore the anti-communist perception was strengthened.

Mesut Sabri, Mehmet Rıza Bekin, Mehmet Emin Buğra ve İsa Yusuf Alptekin, went to India and then came to Turkey after China entered into Xinjiang in 1949. Turkish passports were given to them. In 1951, Mehmet Emin Buğra moved to Turkey. Alptekin had good relations with the Turkish press. At the same time, Refik Koraltan, the head of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü allowed 1850 East Turkestan immigrants to settle in Turkey on March 13, 1952 (Shichor, 2009:15). *East Turkestan Immigrants Association* and *East Turkestan* magazine were founded in the 1950s. Mehmet Emin Buğra founded a quarterly called '*Türkistan*' in Istanbul in 1953, where he conducted propaganda against China's Uyghur policies.

Mehmet Emin Bugra, and İsa Yusuf Alptekin continued their propaganda activities towards the independence of East Turkestan in Turkey. For example, Emin Buğra was accused China of invading East Turkestan, changing the structure of the region, and was defined China as a liar, red and insidious; in the publication that he published after Xinjiang became an autonomous region (Buğra and Alptekin, 1955). They were particularly following a path resembling the way of the American propaganda conducted in the Turkish public opinion.

In his letter, Mehmet Emin's response to the vice president Zhu Jiahua of Guomintang is as follows: 'Communists are hostile to Turkestan as well as to China and to all humanity. Our struggle against this enemy is for the liberation of China and all humanity as it is your homeland.' (Buğra, 1954:32). At the end of the letter, he stated that it was not possible to establish Turkestan unless communism was destroyed, and that he and his friends had decided to work with Taiwan in the fight against communists. Mehmet Emin Buğra believed that educated youth should be educated especially in military schools for the struggle in East Turkestan. For this reason, he took nine students with him to receive education; one of them was Mehmet Rıza Bekin (Bakır, 2019:7). Mehmet Rıza Begin After studying in military schools



in Turkey participated in the Korean War and then served as chief liaison to CENTO in Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> He was the president of the East Turkestan Foundation until his death.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

This article investigated the China and communism perception created in Turkey during the Korean War, examined NATO's influence in the creation of the Uyghur problem between Turkey and China. As a hypothesis; the thesis that the Uyghur issue was used to persuade the nationalist circles in Turkey to join the Korean war, and to created the perception that communism is a negative ideology against Turks, were defended. Especially in most of the studies regarding the Uyghur issue, it has been observed that this kind of study lacks.

Since 1946, Turkey has been severely under the influence of American propaganda. Especially with the Marshall Plan developing Turkish-American relations, Turkey have experienced an ideological change with the Korean War and the accession to NATO. The ideological atmosphere NATO created was caused significant changes in Turkey's foreign policy, culture, and public opinion. The perception of anti-communism created by the American and the support of ultra-nationalist movements in Turkish society has adopted the 'China Perception' as invader, communist, anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish. These perceptions stem from Turkey's accession to NATO and being under the influence of pro-American propaganda. The media, in particular, is mostly controlled by America.

The beginning of the Uyghur issue on the agenda between Turkey and China is based on the Korean War. In fact, Turkey did not accredit the state established as East Turkestan, and did not establish a diplomatic relation. But, after the East Turkestan leaders had fled into India and then came to Turkey after the communism under the leadership of Mao Zedong came to power in China in 1949, this problem was created between Turkey and China for the first time. Turkey-China relations continued until 1949. Turkey took a stance against the leadership of Mao Zedong in China due to the NATO-centered foreign policy. Since Mehmet Emin Buğra's propaganda of East Turkestan, anti-communism, Turkish nationalism played a positive role in persuading the Turkish public to participate in the Korean War, he was also supported by the media.

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<sup>10</sup> CENTO was the Middle East equivalent of SEATO, which was established in 1954 to protect Southeast Asian countries against the Chinese communism. Mao Zedong defined NATO, SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact in 1958 as three separate groupings of imperialism. Zekeriyya Akdağ, 'Türkiye Çin ilişkilerinin Tarihsel Gelişimi', Hafıza, Issue 1, Volume 1, December 2019, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> For detailed information, see: <https://www.doguturkistan.org/2011/04/12/m-riza-bekin-pasa-kim/>.

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