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LEADERSHIP CHANGE: ÖZAL LEADERSHIP AND RESTRUCTURING IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

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The leadership group plays the most important role in foreign policy making in Third World countries. Self-perception, state identity and interests of the leadership group determine the foreign policy orientation and the direction of the state behavior that made based on gathered information and available resources and alternatives. Each leadership group redefines its “national interests,” its “enemies and friends” and its general objectives and expectations. National leaders, some of which are eager to take risks and implement certain policies that bring change, are the main players. While active leaders follow proactive foreign policy, passive leaders pursue reactive foreign policy. The orientation of the leadership group determines the alliance pattern of the state, its foreign economic relations and its ethnic policy.

I posit that leadership group is more than a certain leader in power; it may be collective as well as individual. The regime or the leadership group is a broader concept than the current government. Only with the leadership change, which brings new outlooks

and new orientations into foreign policy of the state, “regime change” occurs. Since leadership group and state identity are closely connected to one another, I discuss the state identity in the context of the leadership group.

With the leadership change in a state, foreign policy orientations change since goals and priorities of the new leadership may require a new understanding in foreign policy making. The official state identity is the basis of state interests and its behaviors. I consider the state identity as socially constructed. State identity is identity or ideology of the leadership since the state identity is created, chosen or constructed by the leadership rather than by different societal groups. State identity cannot be examined without the leadership group since it reflects the main orientation, specific understandings and expectations of the elite of the leadership. When regime changes, state identity is expected to change; however, every leadership change does not introduce a new state identity. After a revolution or regime change in a state, new leaders declare their identity, whether it is a continuation of the old one or a new identity.

This study concentrates on Third World countries most of which are authoritarian and alien to their societies since regimes and state identities are imposed on people from above. Most of them lack political legitimacy based on the Western standards of democracy. They face stronger threats from their people than from other states. When regime created by the leadership group is “foreign” and “intolerant” to the majority of people, transnational threats with their domestic dimensions always exist and challenge the regime. In this article, I analyze Turkey as a case study for leadership change and its effect on foreign policy of the state. I first discuss the leadership change in the country; then, I

examine their respective foreign policy orientations to demonstrate foreign policy change in the country.

Leadership Change in Turkey

Leaders of Turkey, following the footsteps of Kemal Atatürk, have been trying to keep Turkey as a Western-oriented and secular country since the Kemalist leadership group defines itself as Western; not Islamic, Asian, or the Middle Eastern.¹ This has been the main orientation accepted and implemented by the traditional leadership. Based on its strict nationalist, secularist and bureaucratic-authoritarian understanding, the traditional leadership of Turkey was challenged first and the only time by Turgut Özal, prime minister (1983-89) and president (1989-93) of Turkey. Charismatic leadership of Özal was the most important internal factor that affected foreign policy changes in Turkey during the 1980s.² Backed by strong external and domestic connections, his initiatives in foreign policy discouraged the military and the foreign ministry, main actors of traditional foreign policy making of the Kemalist leadership, from opposing his policy changes. Before discussing the restructuring in Turkey's foreign policy, I analyze the leadership change of the 1980s.

1. Kemalist Leadership

The primary change of the 1980s and early 1990s was the subordination of the Kemalist leadership by the Özal leadership. Majority of reforms made by the Kemalist leadership were directed to eradicate Islamic elements in Turkish politics and society. The heritage of the Islamic and Ottoman periods was denied. The Kemalist leadership initiated a total appropriation of Western civilization. Berkes argues that the primary goal of the Kemalist leadership was the “absolute determination to achieve an unconditional

transformation to Western civilization and to destroy all forces of reaction.”³ Atatürk declared the direction to be followed in civil and family law should be that of Western civilization. The Civil Code was taken from the Swiss Civil Code. Among others, the Kemalist regime forced the people to wear hats and to write in the Latin alphabet.⁴

Even though some adaptations have been made in foreign policy issues, I argue that no foreign policy reorientation and restructuring happened throughout the Kemalist period. Despite differences in personalities of the presidents before Özal, all of them were “warrior diplomats” following the path of Kemalism.⁵ The Kemalist leadership is based on six main untouchable principles of Kemalism, namely “republicanism,” “nationalism,” “populism,” “secularism,” “reformism” and “statism.” Even proposing changes in these principles are not allowed by the constitution.

Although there are different formulations about the elements of the Kemalist leadership, all formulations agree that at least three of these factors (military, intelligentsia and bureaucracy) are the backbone of the Kemalist regime.⁶ I consider main elements of the Kemalist leadership group as the military, the presidency, the foreign ministry, traditional bureaucracy, senior leaders of mainstream political parties, and traditional capital of Istanbul, represented by Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen. All these various groups are not necessarily truly “Kemalist,” but their interests kept them together. At least, they are groups that benefit from the implementation of Kemalist principles.

I divide the Kemalist leadership into two subgroups. The first group, “leftist Kemalists,” follow the line of İsmet İnönü, the second president of Turkey and long time leader of Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party (RPP), and Recep Peker, long time secretary

general of the RPP and prime minister in late 1940s. They advocated an authoritarian, statist and ultra-nationalist administration. The second subgroup, “rightist Kemalists,” follows the line of Fethi Okyar, one of the closest aide and friends of Atatürk, and Celal Bayar, president of Turkey from 1950 to 1960. This subgroup support a relatively liberal economic and social structure but still advocated a jacobenist administration and shared most of the Kemalist principles with leftists subgroup. When Atatürk told İnönü, the leader of RPP, and Okyar, the leader of Republican Free Party, “I am now a father. Both of you are my sons. As far as I am concerned there is no difference between the two of you. What I want from you in the Grand National Assembly is an open debate upon national issues,”⁷ he was “confirming” my categorization.

2. Özal Leadership

In the 1980s, the Özal leadership replaced the Kemalist one and introduced a new political identity, alliance pattern, economic foreign policy, and ethnic policy. The Özal leadership changed a number of major principles of the Kemalist leadership and weakened its power. For instance, the Özal leadership reassigned some foreign trade and relations with international institutions from the Kemalist Foreign Ministry to other ministries or directly to the Prime Ministry.⁸ It was aimed to weaken the power of the Foreign Ministry. The Özal leadership abolished statism and populism, two of the “six arrows” of Kemalism, and changed the content and meaning of secularism, nationalism, reformism and republicanism. In order to grasp the real impact of the Özal leadership group and the state identity defined by them regarding foreign policy restructuring, it is necessary to analyze major elements of the leadership.

I demonstrate the impact of the Özal leadership group and the state identity defined by them with several factors. First, his personality and his previous experiences help to understand his ideology, which determined his domestic and foreign policy initiatives. Özal destroyed many taboos and established a new system under his control. Özal's ideology was a synthesis of technological Westernization and cultural Turkism and Islamism. Many Turkish scholars call his ideology the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis."⁹ According to this ideology, only by following Islam and Turkish nationalism could Turkey hope to achieve a powerful position in the international arena. One part of his ideology was the Ottoman and Islamic culture. The second half was economic and political liberalism. He claimed that modernization could only be achieved through liberalization. He used economic liberalism to achieve political pluralism and visa versa.

Özal was born as a "black Turk" and continued his political career as a "black Turk." He comes from a conservative and religious Anatolian family that was despised by the Kemalist elite. Özal was known as a member of the largest Islamic religious order, *Naksibendi*, in Turkey. His first attempt to enter politics was as a candidate of the Islamic-oriented National Salvation Party in the 1977 general elections.

The second important indication of Özal leadership was the structure of Özal's Motherland Party (MP) and overall policies of his administration. The MP was a "nationalist and conservative party," "devoted to national and moral values," and had "a liberal outlook based on free market and free enterprise."¹⁰ Özal described the MP as a party that is reformist, modern, progressive, and loyal to tradition, culture and mores. The MP was a new party and achieved conciliation and moderation in Turkish political

discourse. In different places and at different times, Özal explained that the main principles of the Özal leadership are *the freedom of thought, freedom of religion and conscience and freedom of enterprise*.¹¹ He introduced these principles as those of the MP. He describes three more basic characteristics of the ideology of the MP: nationalism, conservatism and social justice. To him, MP's nationalism was competitiveness with other nations; their conservatism was respectful to history, beliefs, traditions and customs; and their social justice was helping the poor and the community.¹²

The third indicator of the deviation of the Özal leadership from the Kemalist one was the reactions of the Kemalist groups toward the Özal administration and his policies. Özal often said that he was the target of that “oligarchy,” which included Kemalist media, Kemalist political parties, the military and Kemalist businessmen, when he initiated any reform program. “White Turks” could not reconcile themselves to the Özal leadership, especially the presidency. White Turks did not find Özal with his mustache, considered by them as a symbol of backwardness and traditionalism, worthy of the presidency. Kemalists declared Özal as an “Islamist” and a “separatist” since Özal was liberal on these issues and tried to solve them.

Leaders of other political parties that belonged to either rightist or leftist groups of the Kemalist leadership also criticized novel policies of the Özal leadership. Any step taken for further democratization was considered as a further harmful step for the Turkish state. Erdal İnönü, the leader of Social-Democrat Populist Party, claimed that Özal was anti-secularist during his prime ministry and he could not represent the “national will and unity.”¹³ When the Özal leadership repealed the Language Bill, introduced by the military

regime in 1983, Süleyman Demirel, long time leader of rightist Kemalism, claimed that “this is the greatest harm you can inflict on Turkey.” Bülent Ecevit, long time leader of leftist Kemalism, expressed his feeling by saying, “my heart is crying tears of blood.”¹⁴

The fourth indicator of the leadership change was the societal support base of the Özal leadership, which was much different from that of the Kemalist leadership. The power of non-Kemalist groups increased because Özal utilized them as an alternative basis of support. The Özal leadership’s main supporters were the Anatolian capitalists and conservative political and social groups. The Özal leadership emerged from the “black Turks;” therefore, it was very tolerant to the common people. It did not expect any hostility from domestic setting, except from the white Turks.

One of the most quoted sayings of Özal is “service to people is service to God.” With this, Özal synthesized his popular and religious tendencies shared by the majority of the population. He struggled against the “classic powers” and “men who feed themselves with the baby food of the old regime” and supported the emergence of a new conservative elite class having a close relationship with the common people.¹⁵ When Özal died, more than one million people attended his funeral ceremony in Ankara and Istanbul chanting Islamic slogans. The attendants did not let the state band play during the ceremony with the belief that playing music was not Islamic.

Foreign Policy Orientation During the Kemalist Period

Continuity and change in Turkish foreign policy was largely a product of Kemalist leaders until 1980s. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist leadership was determined to tie the future of Turkey to the Western world. For the

Kemalist leadership, the only possible way to maintain independence of the state was the alliance with West.¹⁶ The Kemalist leadership group viewed foreign and domestic policies as inseparable aspects of the same issue using foreign policy for domestic purposes. While some scholars argue that internal and transnational considerations pushed the Kemalist leadership toward the West, others contend the global power structure and the pressure of the Soviet Union were the main determinants of the Turkish entrance into the western alliance.¹⁷ Foreign policy orientation was mainly the result of Westernism and persistent threats facing the Kemalist regime.

1. Westernism

The Kemalist leadership had been supporting a Western-oriented foreign policy during both one-party and multi-party periods. As Vali suggests “being European [was] neither a geographical nor a linguistic question; it relates rather to a way of life, mores, philosophy of life, in other words, to ideology.”¹⁸ Atatürk explained that throughout history Turks always went towards the West and would continue in that direction.¹⁹ For Kemalists, European countries were natural friends and Europe was natural arena to play international game and to form alliances. Turkey’s decision to enter into the European Union was thus a natural political act.

Ideological foundation of the regime that determined the direction of Turkish foreign policy as well as domestic policy was the “six arrows” of Kemalism. Acting according to the principle of secularism, Kemalists eliminated Islamic and theocratic foundations of the old regime to achieve Westernization. Mentioning the Islamic world and “outside Turks” had been considered “rupture from the West and reactionism” and “racism,

chauvinism and Turanism” respectively.²⁰ For the same reason, Turkey refused to ratify the Agreement of the Charter of the Organization of Islamic Conference in the 1970s since it “contains references to Islamic principles, the unity of the Islamic community, and solidarity of Muslim.”²¹

2. Transnational Threats

Even though Kemalist Turkey sought a Western identification, conditions in which the state was born did not allow the Kemalist leadership to follow a Western-oriented foreign and domestic policy. The Kemalist leadership chose to follow an authoritarian policy to eliminate their adversaries in domestic politics. They were concerned about both domestic and regional challenges. They were “intolerant toward the periphery,”²² those with religious and ethnic identities. The main transnational threats were Kurdish nationalism, political Islam, and the socialist movement.

The Kemalist leadership consolidated Turkish ethnicity as the core identity of the state. Carley argues that “the very concept of the new Turkey depended directly on uniformity of nationhood, and the notion that the republic might contain people who belong to some other nation was extremely threatening. This aspect of Atatürkist thought has changed little through the generations.”²³ The Kurds, who initiated more than twenty rebellions during the first two decades of the republic, played the most important role as an ethnic threat against secular Turkism policy of the Kemalist regime.

The second transnational threat to the Kemalist regime was the Islamic ideology embedded in the social life of those in the periphery. As Toprak argues, “religion in Turkey, especially during the formative years of the Turkish Republic, has been the most

important centrifugal force with a potential to challenge the state.”²⁴ The threat of political Islam was used to justify the entry into the European Union. Kemalist regime warned Western countries that if the West does not support them, the Western countries would lose a geostrategic and powerful ally in the Middle East.

The Kemalist leadership considered any communist activities as treason and those who supported these activities as the Soviet agents. They crushed any socialist legal and illegal organizations in the country and took actions against communist governments in the region. The constitution prohibited any legal organization defending communist principles since socialist groups were critical of Kemalist principles. They opposed authoritarian and oppressive policies in domestic politics and dependence on the West in foreign policy orientation.

3. Regional Threats

Under the Kemalist leadership, although Turkey had some agreements with the neighboring states, it was geographically isolated. Kemalist Turkey joined several defensive regional pacts mainly to preserve its independence and to eliminate transnational threats. Kemalist leaders turned their back to regional countries preferring alignment the West. Many analyses of Turkish foreign policy concentrate on threats from the Soviet Union, the fascist Italy and Greece.²⁵ Aggressive policies of fascist Italy contributed to Turkey’s alignment with France and Great Britain in 1939. Likewise, one of the most important reasons for Turkey’s entry into NATO alliance was the threat of the Soviet Union to its territory after the World War II.

As elucidated by omni-balancing theory, with the emergence of more challenging threats, regime leaders tend to ally to the state with the less threatening one in order to balance against the more threatening one. Turkey did this during the first two decades of the Republic by quickly allying with Western colonial powers against Kurdish nationalism and political Islam. The Kemalist leadership continued to follow the same strategy after the military intervention in 1980. With the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, Kemalist leaders established closer relations with Sunni states in the domestic and regional context. In order to counter anti-regime ideologies such as communism and radical Islamic movements and states, the military government quickly became actively involved in traditional Islamic international organizations and began closer cooperation with conservative Muslim countries.

Domestically the government introduced some changes such as the constitutional law making “education and instruction in religion and ethics compulsory part of the curriculum in all primary and secondary schools.”²⁶ The Kemalist leadership recognized the “Turkish-Islamic synthesis” as a “legal ideology” in Turkish politics to prevent an Iranian-style revolution in Turkey and to isolate the Islamic groups.²⁷ Leaders of the military government participated in Islamic international cooperation activities and allowed some liberalization toward Muslim masses in domestic politics.

Foreign Policy Restructuring During the Özal Period

The Özal leadership shifted the foreign policy orientation of the country. Özalist approach to foreign policy characterized by his determination “to depart from established policies, to take calculated risks, and to search for new alternatives and options.”²⁸ Özalist

Turkey followed a diversified, active, daring, and outward-oriented foreign policy and was “eager to contribute actively to all actions aimed at improving multilateral cooperation.”²⁹

In this section, I analyze restructuring of Turkey’s alliance pattern under the Özal leadership.

The alliance pattern was restructured from being dependent on the Western bloc into an interdependent and interconnected network of alliances. Özalist Turkey improved its relations with the newly independent Turkish republics, the Islamic world, neighboring, Eastern European, Eastern Asian countries and the United States. Turkey began to emphasize its common affinities with the Islamic world and became more active in Islamic and other regional organizations. The context of Turkish relations with the West changed during leaving its strong unidimensional Western oriented and Western dominated foreign policy for a diversified and multidimensional alliance pattern. For instance, the Özal administration signed more international agreements than any other administration in Turkish history.³⁰ The isolationist policy of the Kemalist leadership was considered as an obstacle in the path of economic development. Özal characterized diversification policy during his leadership as “spreading out the weight of Turkish trade” and political power.³¹ Turkey initiated “alternative patterns” such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the East Asian market and the Economic Cooperation Organization to balance its Western partnership.

One of the best indications of the independence of Turkey’s alliance policy from the Western influence was the meeting of the Iraqi Kurdish leaders with Turkish officials. The US ambassador in Turkey learned the meeting after it was revealed in the Turkish press.³²

Meanwhile, Özal was very close to the Islamic world, including Islamic Iran. Yesilada points out political connections with Muslim Middle Eastern countries have “no parallel [development] in the Turkish Republic’s history. In this sense, rapprochement with Islamic states truly opened a new chapter in Turkish foreign policy.”³³ The Özal leadership followed a policy of co-existence in both the Western and Islamic world. Özal argued that there was no contradiction between the things he did and the religion of Islam since pro-Western strategy was a means rather than an objective.³⁴

The Özal leadership did not accept *all policies* of the Western alliance, including those of NATO. During the Gulf crisis for example, Özal even criticized the NATO’s stance against Islamic fundamentalism. Özal recognized differences between Turkey and the West saying, “We are an Islamic country. We have differences from the West... We are the bridge between the West and the East. We need to take the science, technology, thinking, understanding, and compromise of the West. But we have also our own values that the West do not have.”³⁵ In conclusion, the commitment of the Özalist Turkey to Westernization was much weaker than that of the Kemalist leadership. By trying to solve the Kurdish problem and to diversify its economic relations, Özalist Turkey tried to decrease its dependence on the West since Turkey’s reliance upon the US military aid for its war against the Kurdish separatists and economic relations with the EU have been the most important factors deepening Turkish dependence on the West.

Özal explained his policy during the Gulf crisis as a continuation of his understanding of being a bridge between the East and the West. Özal testified that Turkey’s involvement on the side of the international coalition during the Gulf War was not only a

result of Turkey's alliance with the Western countries, but also a result of the consent and similar behavior of other regional Muslim countries such as Iran and Syria.³⁶ Below I analyze Turkish relations with different categories of states and single states that occupy a significant place in Turkish security concerns to show diversification in Turkish alliance pattern.

1. The Central Asian Republics and the Turkish World

Özal abandoned traditional isolationist Kemalist policy toward the Turks of Central Asia. Turkey became the first state that recognized the Central Asian republics. Turkey, with its market economy, relatively democratic system, and ethnic and cultural links was viewed as a model to be emulated. "Traditionally minded Turkish foreign ministry and a great portion of the Turkish establishment, which had adhered fairly closely to traditional, isolationist Atatürkist policies,"³⁷ abstained from following an active foreign policy toward the new Turkish states. It was the Özal leadership who encouraged new relations with those states. Özal visited Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan in March 1991 and the President of Kazakhstan paid the first foreign visit to Turkey in the same year. It was followed by visits of presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

While Özalist Turkey encouraged the Muslim Turkish republics to enter Islamic international institutions such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Economic Cooperation Organization, it initiated bilateral cooperation in many issue areas exclusively with these states. Leaders of these states signed the Ankara Agreement to improve mutual and multilateral relationships and to act together in international organizations on 30-31 October 1992. Leaders agreed to support transportation and

information projects, improve commercial and economic cooperation, establish joint projects in industrial, agricultural, energy and service sectors, and search for natural resources, especially natural gas and oil. Turkey even suggested establishing a “Turkish common market.”

In the first several years, over 300 agreements of all kinds have been concluded between Turkey and the newly emerged Turkish states covering such diverse subjects as civil aviation and prevention of double taxation.³⁸ Turkey founded the Turkish Cooperation Development Agency in the Foreign Ministry in 1992 to organize Turkish relations with these countries and to foster cooperative opportunities. Thousands of students and public servants from these republics were sent to Turkey for training and academic studies. Özalist Turkey “has pledged about \$1.5 billion in aid, mostly in export credits and promised scholarships for some 10,000 students in Turkish universities.”³⁹

Turkey improved its relations with the Turkish World significantly. Three “Turkish summits” are an indication of close relations. Hundreds of Turkish companies entered these countries and many joint ventures have been created in different sectors. Thousands of students were given scholarships by the Turkish government. The Turkish press has expanded into the new republics. The volume of trade between the two sides was estimated between \$2.5 and \$4 billion. Turkic states provided potential opportunities for Turkey to reduce dependence on the Middle East oil by producing huge amounts of oil and natural gas.⁴⁰ As a result, the Özal leadership considered Turkey as the “power center” for the Turkish world to be one of the “major league countries.”⁴¹

2. The Middle East and the Islamic World

Before coming to power in 1983, the Özal leadership declared that Turkey had to take its “proper place” and had to have good relations with Islamic countries, Arab countries, and neighboring countries, since they are *natural* markets or even allies for Turkey. Only by having good relations with the Islamic world as well as with the West could Turkey achieve the role of being a bridge between the West and the East. While examining the impact of domestic change on Turkish foreign policy, Fuller emphasizes the influence of the Özal leadership on Turkey’s economic and strategic view of the Middle East beginning in the early 1980s. Fuller argues that two factors influenced Özal’s policy: “First, the emergence of an export-oriented economic policy lent even greater weight to ties with the Arab states. Second, Özal’s personal interest in facilitating the restoration of a more Islamic emphasis in Turkish life led to an interest in improved relations with other Muslim states, including the Arabs.”⁴² The only Muslim state with a long state tradition, Özal transformed Turkey to the center of the Islamic world.

Turkey pursued an active and independent policy and gained self-confidence in Middle Eastern issues. Turkish foreign policy toward the region collided with the Western policy in the 1980s and early 1990s.⁴³ First, Turkish foreign policy deviated from American policy during this period in the Arab-Israeli conflict, following a “low-key policy” toward Israel in order to gain Arab and Islamic support for Turkey.⁴⁴ After the military takeover in 1980, Turkey downgraded embassy in Tel Aviv to secondary status, *charge d’affaires*. Özalist Turkey became one of the first countries that recognized Palestine. However,

Özalist Turkey did not take a hostile position toward Israel. It offered to mediate and host peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis.

The “peace water pipeline project,” supplying Turkish waters to regional countries in the Middle East to both Arabs and the Israelis, was one of several Turkish proposals for involvement in the peace talks. The project was planned in 1986 and proposed to regional countries in 1988. According to this project, Turkey would supply extra waters of two Turkish rivers, *Seyhan* and *Ceyhan*, with two pipelines. The western pipeline would go through Syria and Jordan to Saudi Arabia. The eastern pipeline would go through Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. Arab countries rejected the project since it would give water to Israel too.⁴⁵ Turkey tried to contribute to the peace process by proposing an interdependent regional economic bloc and securing free exchange of goods, labor, and services in the region.

Second, Özalist Turkey followed an “active neutrality” policy during the Iraq-Iran War. In contrast to most countries in the world, including the Western and eastern blocs, Turkey did not pursue an overt or covert anti-Iranian foreign policy during the war. Third, Turkey did not participate in Western efforts to isolate Iran and Libya during the 1980s. Rather, Turkish economic relations dramatically increased with these countries, with Turkish companies becoming very active in Libya.

Turkey attached greater significance to the Islamic world and Muslim minorities in the region. The Iranian Islamic Revolution in February 1979 and the Afghan invasion by the Soviet Union in the same year pushed Turkey to enter closer relations with the conservative Muslim countries. Economic, political and cultural cooperation with the

Islamic world increased in the 1980s. Turkey emphasized the unity of the Islamic world and Islamic values when proposing solutions for the Iran-Iraq conflict and the Bosnia-Herzegovina secession, or taking sides in many international disputes.

Turkey improved its relations with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). First, it extensively increased its share in the Islamic Development Bank, contributing 10 million Islamic Dinar (ID) in 1981. The first Özal government increased Turkey's share to 160 million ID in 1985, becoming the fifth largest shareholder of the bank, and therefore gaining the right to be represented at the Executive Committee.⁴⁶ Second, during the 4th Islamic Summit held in Morocco in 1984, the Turkish President was elected as permanent chairman of the Organization of Islamic Conference Economic and Commercial Cooperation Permanent Committee. President Özal not only attended the meetings but also called for additional meetings to discuss issues such as the Bosnian problem. Turkey benefited from the OIC when dealing with the Cyprus question and Muslim minority problems in the Balkans. Turkey played the main role in the acceptance of the Central Asian Muslim republics to the organization. Özal freed the OIC from Arab domination and inter-Arab conflicts by opening its doors to the vestiges of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Turkic republics. Özal attached great importance to the non-Arab states of Iran, Indonesia and Malaysia in order to balance against Arab domination in the organization.

Turkey pioneered the reestablishment in 1988 of the Economic Cooperation Organization among Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Although Turkey had some concerns with Islamic Iran, the fear of exporting political Islam to regional countries including Turkey and

the competition over the Central Asian republics and the Azeri nationalism, the Özal leadership enjoyed a close relationship with Iran.⁴⁷ In addition to the other two original members, Iran and Pakistan, Özalist Turkey encouraged the Central Asian Muslim states and Afghanistan to join the organization; making it a truly regional organization. Özalist Turkey brought together powerful economies to create a powerful regional economy with the ECO.⁴⁸

3. The Former Socialist Bloc and the Balkans

Turkey had improved its relations with the Soviet Union/Russia and with other socialist countries before the collapse of the socialist bloc. Turkey opened the border station at Sarp in September 1988, which had been closed since 1937. It signed a number of agreements with the Soviet Union during the period of 1986-1990, including the Agreement on Exchange Commodities, the Convertible Currency Protocol, and the Long-term Program: Economic, Trade, Scientific and technological Cooperation. Turkish trade with the Soviet Union increased from \$411 million in 1985 to \$1.5 billion in 1990.

During Özal's presidency further cooperative acts were also taken. Turkey solved the 17year-old problem of the Flight Information Region over the Black Sea in 1989. They signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1991. Turkey opened its consulate in Baku, and the Soviet Union opened a consulate in Trabzon. In spite of some problems on some issues, similar improvements in political and economic fields continued with Russia. Özalist Turkey pursued a policy of mutual interdependence in order to solve bilateral political conflicts (in Caucasus and Central Asia). Turkey signed trade and investment

agreements in natural gas, construction and trade sectors. Having economic interdependence made Turkish economic activities in Central Asia easier.⁴⁹

Turkey enjoyed closer relations with countries having a higher percentage of Muslims. When Özal paid an official visit to Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Croatia in February 1993, it was interpreted by many as an historical step taken by Turkey toward expressing friendship with Muslims while containing aspirations of Yugoslavia and Greece.⁵⁰ After his visit, Özal stated that “the most effective power in the region is Islam” for Turkey and he advised religious organizations in Turkey to spread the religion in these states.⁵¹ This “Ottoman-Islamic” cooperation was a *balancing* policy against the “Orthodox Christian-Slavic” bloc in the Balkans.

After the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, Turkey invited leaders of states bordering the Black Sea to Istanbul on 19-21 December 1990. The objective was to transform the region into a peaceful, prosperous and stable region by creating the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Zone. The organization was established in Istanbul on 25 June 1992 after the summit meeting. The BSEC was a significant step in bringing many conflicting states together and improving political, economic and social cooperation at the state as well as societal levels. The BSEC facilitated integration of Turkey with the Balkan countries and the ex-Soviet states. While some observers argue that it became the second door opened to Europe, some others argued that it was an alternative to the EU.⁵²

4. Greece and Cyprus

There were a number of territorial and social conflicts between Turkey and Greece. Among them are territorial issues of Cyprus, Aegean continental shelf, limit of territorial

waters, control of the airspace, militarization of the Aegean islands, and responsibility for the Aegean Sea. Social issues include the plight of the Turkish minority in Western Trace and the issue of the main Orthodox Church of Istanbul. Of these issues, the Cyprus question has been the most intractable. Solving that issue has been a pre-condition for resolving other issues.

In accordance with principles of good neighborhood and membership in the same alliance the Özal government initiated dialogue with Greece.⁵³ After very tense relations that brought two countries at the brink of a war, Özal's meeting with his counterpart Papandreou in Davos, Switzerland, on 30-31 January 1988 heralded a brief, but friendly era and significant détente in Turkish-Greek relations. Often referred to as "the spirit of Davos" in the media, two countries agreed to cooperate on less controversial matters first, then try to solve problems step by step.

According to a press communiqué published by the Foreign Ministry, two prime ministers agreed to establish two committees: one to explore areas of cooperation such as economic cooperation, joint venture trade, tourism, communications, cultural exchanges and one to define problem areas, explore possibilities of closing the gap and move towards lasting solutions. Özal visited Greece in the same year becoming the first Turkish prime minister in decades.⁵⁴ Government change in Greece (1989) and government change in Turkey (1991) hindered the two countries from improving their relationships. Thus, domestic politics in both countries brought new leaderships to power and ended the conciliatory spirit of Davos. Steinbach refers to the Davos meeting as "the most dramatic attempt at creating a political environment in accordance with the priorities set by the new

regime in Ankara.”⁵⁵ Özal tried to diffuse tensions with Greece rather than taking a firm position preferred by the Kemalist leadership. The Özal leadership abolished the requirement of having visas for Greeks to enter Turkey without the consent of the Foreign Ministry, but the main “establishment forces,” media, the Foreign Ministry, and the military opposed the Davos process.⁵⁶

Turkey under the Özal leadership considered the Cyprus question as a burden on Turkish foreign policy and preferred a compromise from both sides. It followed a pragmatic and economic-oriented policy toward the Cyprus question. For decades Greece and Kemalist Turkey followed reactionary policies, refusing alternative means of solution. When the Özal leadership evaluated the Cyprus question on economic rather than merely on political and ideological terms, it recognized the question as an obstacle to an active Turkish foreign policy toward the West.

Özal began giving direction to the negotiation process. Çandar calls this policy a continuation of Özal’s Ottomanist policy: administering policy of dependent lands from the center.⁵⁷ Özal proposed Turkey and Greece to participate in the negotiations directly and begin quadripartite meetings. However, the Turkish Foreign Ministry did not agree to this proposal.⁵⁸ Özal did not insist on his proposal since he was not persistent to solve the Cyprus problem at any price. He just tried to uproot the image of Turkey as “hardliner” and unwilling to solve the problem. Özal attempted make the Greek side responsible for the deadlock in the negotiations.

5. The West

The Özal leadership attempted to engineer a “qualitative change in Turkey’s role in the Western alliance”⁵⁹ and improve Turkey’s relations with the US and the European Union simultaneously in order to prevent Turkish dependence on either side (the EU or the US). Turkey attempted to diversify its alliance pattern within the Western alliance in order to enhance Turkey’s bargaining position. Below I analyze Turkish relations with Western countries under two sections: the European Union and the Turkish-US relations.

The European Union (EU): With major structural transformations in political, economic, and social fields initiated in the 1980s, Turkey improved its relations with the EU. The economic stabilization program indirectly fulfilled its obligations toward the EU and Turkey applied to the Council of Ministers for full membership on 14 April 1987. The Council of Ministers referred it to the European Commission. The Commission sent its opinion to the Council on 18 September 1989 stating that it was unlikely to be able to discuss Turkish membership before 1993.

Kemalist elite groups such as the Foreign Ministry and members of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce considered the application as a major step toward Westernization and civilizing mission paved by the Kemalist principles. However, unlike the Kemalist leadership, the full EU membership was not the final objective for the Özal leadership. It aimed to benefit from the EU mainly in economic terms. Özal believed that membership of the EU would bring competition between Turkish goods and services and those of the EU. This competition would increase the quality of Turkish goods.

There was a political dimension of Turkey's application for full membership. It was a counterbalancing move against possible US dependency and a result of multilateral foreign policy, i.e., the Özal leadership expected from the customs union with the EU to provide a dynamism that the Turkish state alone could not create. Özal viewed the EU as a means to improve Turkey's industrialization and economic development rather than a political objective. According to the Foreign Ministry, Turkey is an inseparable part of Europe in every aspect. The Özal leadership, who consider the basis of the relationship between the EU and Turkey as the understanding of balancing mutual interests, attempted to change this understanding. Özalists considered the application for full membership as interconnected with the domestic structure of the country in which they were competing with the Kemalist group. By utilizing foreign policy dynamics, they tried to maintain the favorable balance-of-power in domestic politics. For Özal, Turkey needed to decrease its dependence on the European countries, since the European view of Turkey was biased due to its religion and its historical background.

Furthermore, membership in the European alliance pattern was not the only alternative for the Özal leadership. Özal acknowledged that if Turkey solves its domestic cleavages such as political Islam and the Kurdish problem, it does not matter whether to enter the EU or not. Furthermore, "still by keeping the priority of the European context, we have to attach great importance to the United States, Black Sea Economic Cooperation and East Asia."⁶⁰ That is, the Özal leadership diversified its alliance pattern both within the Western context and within the overall context.

The United States: Turkey has traditionally been viewed as one of the most dependable allies of the US. During the Kemalist leadership, the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) signed in 1980 was the basis of Turkish defense cooperation. After making some revisions, the Özal leadership renewed DECA in 1987. However, bilateral relations started to diversify, economic cooperation gained momentum, the basis of bilateral relations was broadened during the Özal period. The two governments agreed to improve defense cooperation and to modernize the Turkish armed forces. As a result of these developments, the US launched an extensive program to modernize the Turkish armed forces with the participation of Turkish and American companies in the joint production of various weaponry systems. General Dynamics and Turkish Plane Industry Joint Company began production of F-16 fighter plane in Eskisehir. Turkish Military Electronics Industries Inc. obtained licenses from Litton, a US company, for production of tactical communication equipment and digital message devices. The Machinery and Chemical Industries Establishment began producing air-to-ground FFAR rockets under a US license.⁶¹

The main goal of the Özal leadership toward the US was to improve Turkey's relations over "zero option," which means challenging the US without any alternative policies.⁶² The primary threat exercised by the Kemalist leadership against the US was the closing the US bases in Turkey. Under Özal, Turkey diversified its relations with the US. Unlike the previous governments, which lacked strong cultural, historical, and economic ties with the US, the Özal leadership initiated a significant economic relationship with the US, even discussing the idea of free trade.⁶³ According to Özal, Turkey needed to have a

close relationship with the United States, not only in security and strategic areas, but also in economic terms as an important market for Turkish exports. Trade issues were one of the main problems between Turkey and the US during the Özal period. Turkey sought more trade liberalization and not just military aid. The Özal leadership established an interdependent relationship with the US by giving priority to economic rather than military and political cooperation.

Eralp et. al. confirm that diversification of Turkey's relations with the US and Turkey's involvement in the Middle Eastern politics caused strained relations with Europe.⁶⁴ For instance, Özal argues that Europe always supported Greece and the Cypriot Greeks in the Cyprus question. What he did was to involve the US to balance Europe with the US. In today's unipolar world, such American role is more beneficial for Turkey.⁶⁵ Turkey and the US were more interdependent than Europe and Turkey. With the removal of the Soviet Union, Turkey's strategic importance for Europe declined dramatically. However, after the domestic restructuring in the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US focused on the regional balance-of-power in the Middle East and Islamic "fundamentalism" directed toward the US targets, many of which were also a source of concern for Turkey.

In addition, Özalist Turkey was aware that the US was capable of threatening any country in the world. Özal had to bandwagon with the US in order to avoid Kemalist threats. Özal benefited from the US support on many problems with third parties preventing anti-Turkish policy initiatives. For instance, with the help of the US, Turkey was able to persuade the UN to support the Security Council Resolution 649 regarding Cyprus.

Likewise, the US put pressure on the EU in favor of Turkey vis-à-vis many problems between Turkey and the EU. The backing of the US created opportunities for the Özal leadership to deal with the European pressure.

Conclusion

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Turkey restructured its foreign policy from being “the tail end of Europe” into “the center of its own newly emerging world.”⁶⁶ Özal attempted to transform Turkey from being simply a base for the Western alliance into a regional power that considers the NATO alliance as part of its interdependent alliance network. Relations developed during the 1980s with the East, South, and North became vital for Turkey’s interests. The Özal leadership transformed the orientation of Turkish foreign policy and attempted to spread Turkey’s sphere of influence to the East.

As suggested by Vali, Turkey is “too important to play no role in international politics, but she is not strong enough to keep other powers in balance. She must therefore seek protection from that group of powers which does not constitute a threat to her security and independence.”⁶⁷ Both leaderships followed a balancing policy against certain threats they face. The Kemalist leadership pursued a Western-oriented alliance pattern and formed some regional pacts in order to balance against the threat of political Islam, Kurdish nationalism and regional threats. Main reasons for Kemalist Turkey to enter into the Western alliance are valid for the Özal leadership as well, i. e., balancing and bandwagoning strategies against threats. The Özal leadership allied with Islamic and conservative groups and the US against the Kemalist leadership and Europe respectively.

Different state identities defined by different leaderships led them to follow different alliance patterns. While the Kemalist leadership led Turkey to follow a Western-oriented alliance pattern, the Özal leadership led Turkey to follow a policy that served as a bridge between the West and the East. As indicated by Calis, “if the internal structures identified with Kemalist identity and world outlook are not changed, Turkey’s Western-oriented foreign policy would hardly be affected by events occurring outside the country.”⁶⁸ The Özal leadership developed an interdependent network of alliance to maintain the security of the state. Özal’s main policy was to make Turkey to be able to compete with the West. Meanwhile, Özal was well aware that without the Western support it is quite difficult to maintain its regime in one of the most strategic and unstable regions in the world.

As part of diversification policy Özalist Turkey had to maintain close relationship with the West, main foreign supporters of Kemalists, in order to balance against the Kemalist powers. In the end, Özal won the support of the West and deterred the military from taking any action against his leadership. Many critics, mostly from the Kemalist leadership group, claim that the Özal leadership was totally dependent on the US support in its foreign policy orientation. Even if the claim is true, the Özal leadership group was also strongly Islamic-oriented, regional-oriented and Eastern-oriented, an indication of the Özalist strategy of diversification.

Turkey experienced a dramatic change from its traditional Kemalist isolationism into Özalist proactive and diversified alliance pattern and regional foreign policy. Therefore, Kemalist leaders considered Özal’s active foreign policy as “adventurism.”⁶⁹ Under Özal, Turkish foreign policy increasingly concentrated on regions such as Central

Asia, Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East. Özalist Turkey attempted to be the political and economic center or the “regional hegemon” of these regions. It shifted its strategic priorities and began to focus on regional issues rather than playing largely with global powers.

Today, Turkey still confronts a dilemma between the West and the East. Turkey faces difficulties in balancing its relationship between regional and global politics due to the controversial nature of the Kurdish question and political Islam, and the nature of the Turkish governing leadership. On the one hand, Turkey sought a new role in Central Asia with the dream of the extending its influence from the Adriatic Sea to the wall of China. On the other hand, the ethno-nationalist movements, the Kurdish problem in particular, emerged as a mortal threat to multi-ethnic Turkey. “A Kemalist ‘do nothing’ approach to the Middle East is no longer either possible or advisable for the Turkish state.”⁷⁰

After the end of the Özal leadership in 1993 and the Kemalist leadership reassumption of power, Turkey abandoned its “balanced foreign policy” in the Middle East, retreated from the Islamic world, and initiated strategic, political and economic cooperation with Israel and followed its former Western-oriented policy in regional matters. For instance, it was after the Özal leadership that the first foreign minister (H. Çetin in November 1993), prime minister (T. Çiller in November 1994), and president (S. Demirel in March 1996) visited Israel.⁷¹ The post-Özal Kemalist leadership returned to its “isolation policy” toward the Turkish world as well as toward other parts of the world.

As a result, this article demonstrates that the leadership group and the state identity defined by them is the main determinant of foreign policy orientation and restructuring.

Leadership groups first try to maintain their interests and then secure national interests. In many cases, interests of the leadership group are proposed as national interests. It is not different in Turkish case. First the Kemalist leadership then the Özal leadership followed policies that designed to keep them in power.

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