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A Comparative Analysis Of Turkish and South Korean Foreign Policies And International Perspectives Since the end of the Second World War[1]

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Abstract

This essay makes a comparative analysis of Turkish and South Korean perspectives of international society and the way in which they are translated into the two states' foreign policy behaviour. That both states, in spite of their undeniable differences in culture, history and geography, are middle-rank powers with extensive and intricate links to the United States, is the point of departure for this inquiry. The international perspectives and foreign policy postures of Turkey and South Korea are presented in connection with internal political developments in the countries in question during and after the Cold War. It is argued that the ruling elites in both states allied themselves uncritically with the US specifically and the Western world in general during the course of the Cold War out of considerations of 'high' security interests premised on the perceived threat from (some) members of the socialist bloc. Serious misgivings and sense of mistrust felt by a significant section of the public opinion in Turkey and South Korea escalated into outright hostility towards the aggressive and expansionist posturing and behaviour of the US since the end of the Cold War, *inter alia,* in the Middle East and northeast Asia respectively. In spite of that, however, the essay concludes by a note on the prevailing climate of pragmatism, with imprints on the ruling elites and the common people alike, which prompts both countries to maintain their 'special' ties with the US.

Keywords: *Turkey South Korea foreing policy cold war Korean War threat perception alliance the post-cold war era international agreements internetional disagreements İnternational perspektives.*

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İkinci Dünya Savaşı Sonrasında Türkiye ile Güney Kore'nin Dış Politikalarının ve Uluslararası Perspektiflerinin Karşılaştırmalı Bir İncelemesi

Özet

Bu çalışmada, halklarının kollektif hafızasında "Kore Savaşı" (1950-53) ekseninde "iki dost devlet ve millet" algısı olan Türkiye ile Güney Kore'nin, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrasında izledikleri dış politika anlayışları ve uygulamaları ele alınmaktadır. Bu makalede, Güney Kore'nin Türkiye'den farklı bir coğrafyada ve farklı bir kültürel ve tarihi arka plana sahip olmasına rağmen, yine de bu iki ülkeyi incelememizi anlamlı kılacak bazı ortak hususiyetler olduğu ileri sürülmektedir. Söz gelimi, bunların her ikisi de orta ölçekli devletlerdir ve başta Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD) olmak üzere Batılı devletler grubuyla yakın ilişkileri vardır.

Bu çalışmada hem Türkiye'nin hem de Güney Kore'nin "demokratikleşme" serüveninin hem dönemsel, hem kurumsal ve hem de uluslararası bağlam itibariyle önemli paralellikler içerdiği ifade edilmektedir. Ayrıca, hem Türkiye'nin hem de Güney Kore'nin ABD ile olan askeri ittifakının, bunların kendi halkları nezdinde zaman içinde artan şekilde sorgulanmasına karşın, bu ülkelerin uluslararası ittifaklarında radikal bir dönüşüm olmadığına dikkat çekilmektedir. Bu, hem Soğuk Savaş dönemi, hem de 1990 sonrasındaki dönem için geçerli olan bir gözlemdir.

Katı ittifak ilişkilerinin Doğu-Batı kutuplaşması nedeniyle yeni bir dış politika arayışına girmeyi zorlaştırdığı Soğuk Savaş döneminden farklı olarak, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde hem Güney Kore'nin hem de Türkiye'nin dış politik çizgilerini hem aktör düzeyinde hem de konu düzeyinde çeşitlendirdikleri gözlenmiştir. Böylece her iki ülke de Rusya, Çin ve Hindistan gibi devletlere yönelik yeni diplomatik açılımlarda bulunmuşlardır. Ne var ki, bütün bunlara rağmen, hem Türkiye hem de Güney Kore, "tehdit", "uluslararası toplum" ve "ortak idealler" tasavvurlarını, kavramsal ve normatif sınırlarını ABD'nin çizdiği bir uluslararası stratejik çerçeve içinde kalarak belirlemeye bugün de devam etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Türkiye Güney Kore-dış politika Soğuk Savaş Kore Savaşı tehdit algısı ittifak ilişkisi Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönem uluslararası anlaşmalar uluslararası uyuşmazlıklar-uluslararası perspektifler*

This presentation intends to analyse the normative perspectives and key political choices of Turkey and South Korea, with regard to the outside world in the aftermath of the Second World War. The choice of this subject of enquiry may at first sight seem rather arbitrary and even unnecessary for a variety of reasons: Turkey is a Middle Eastern country and is overwhelmingly Muslim, whereas South Korea is an East Asian country and is home to Buddhists, Christians and others. There is hardly any historical or cultural connection between the two countries. The trade between them is not necessarily impressive. Turkish participation into the Korean War of 1950-53 in support of the United States (US) and South Korea seems to be about the only thread of any significance that binds the two nations together. However this does not alone justify the investigation of the topic at hand.

However, I happen to think that, a deeper insight into the peculiarities of Turkey and South Korea may provide sufficient grounds for such an investigation. After all, both of them may be categorized as middle-rank powers. They both are American allies and thus host to quite a number of American bases in their territory. Contrary to both states' exaggerated reliance on the US and emphasis on the desirability of close links with this superpower, the great majority of the peoples of both countries have a negative view of the US. Both Turkey and South Korea have a non-revolutionary view of the outside world as manifested in their foreign policy behaviour, government pronouncements and voting preferences in international organizations. Turkey is a Middle Eastern country, and yet, at the official level, it associates itself mostly with Western states, whereas South Korea is an Asian state, and yet it often sees the world one to one with the US. Both of the countries in question profess their attachment to democracy, competitive party politics, rule of law, and human rights, and yet their political systems have too often been abused by military regimes and human rights violations. Finally, union with North Korea is the prime national goal in South Korea, whereas Turkey considers the Cyprus and Aegean problems with Greece, which also brings forth the question of Turkish borders, as a 'national' issue/problem. I hope that the accounts given above justify the presentation of this work to our distinctive audience.

Such considerations and observations, I hope, justify the undertaking of such a comparative study. This article focuses on the post-Second World War period, and raises the following questions: What parallels can we draw of the conceptions and practices of Turkey and South Korea vis-à-vis the

world outside them? What differentiates them in the way they perceive the role of international law in contemporary international relations? What sort of expectations do they cultivate vis-à-vis international organizations, and, in particular, the United Nations? What is their conception of human rights and freedoms, and the place they should be assigned in international relations? Do they have a propensity to pursue a proactive or reactive course of action towards international society? Do they consider themselves as part of the Western world or the non-Western world? How do they approach the prohibition of force as a cardinal rule of international law generally and of the UN law specifically? What international strategies do they put into use in the pursuit of "national objectives"? What are the major international disputes that preoccupy their respective foreign policies? These are the substantive questions around which this paper is organized.

Politics, Democracy, Human Rights

As an independent state, South Korea owes its existence, first and foremost, to the protection afforded by the US in the post-Second World War era. The Korean peninsula was partitioned between the north and the south following the surrender of Japan on August 15, 1945. After arriving at an agreement on the future of Korea, the Soviet Union assumed authority in the north of the thirty-eighth parallel and the US firmly established itself in southern Korea. Officially procuring the name, Republic of Korea, South Korea was founded as a republic on August 15, 1948. Within a couple of weeks, on September 9, 1948, the socialist state of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) proclaimed itself as a separate state. The bitter division of Korea was interrupted by the outright occupation of the south by North Korean troops on June 25, 1950. Most of South Korean territories fell into the hands of the invading army within a few weeks. This precipitated the US intervention into the war for the following reason:

"The United States, fearing that inaction in Korea would be interpreted as appeasement of communist aggression elsewhere in the world, was determined that South Korea should not be overwhelmed and asked the United Nations (UN) Security Council to intervene."[3]

This fanned the flame of the Korean conflict that escalated into a devastating war. The Korean War lasted for three years until July 27, 1953.

3 Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, Country Profile: South Korea, May 2005, http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/South_Korea.pdf

There is no doubt that this was a devastating war with enormous casualties on both sides. The war also dashed hopes for unification in the Korean peninsula.[4]

A study of country file on South Korea makes a fine summary of the evolution of South Korean politics after it gained independence in 1948:

"Fair elections in 1952 were followed by corrupt ones later that decade. A succession of military leaders assumed power in South Korea starting in 1961 with a coup led by army officers. Growing frustration with repressive rule among South Koreans led to demonstrations in May 1980 in the city of Kwangju. These demonstrations were violently suppressed, killing hundreds of civilians. Whereas the South Korean economy flourished, democratic institutions and a free press often did not. In spite of political violence in the form of brutal crackdowns against civilian protests and the assassination of government leaders, a civil society emerged to lead the South Korean democracy movement. In 1987, after years of regular protests, the military leaders of South Korea were forced to hold free and democratic elections. Their handpicked successor, Roh Tae-woo, won, as opposition parties failed to unite around a single candidate and split the vote. In 1992 Kim Young-sam was elected, followed in 1997 by longtime opposition leader Kim Dae-jung. In 2002 South Koreans elected a human rights lawyer and relative political newcomer, Roh Moo-hyun president."[5]

The history of democracy in South Korea has striking similarities to that of Turkey. Fair elections in Turkey were held in 1950 when the reign of the Republican Peoples Party, which had been ruling the country single-handedly since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, came to a halt. To the dismay of most people in Turkey, the civilian government formed by the Democrat Party was overthrown by a *coup d'état* in 1960, a year preceding the military takeover in South Korea. While a military junta from 1961 up until 1987 governed South Korea, the political system in Turkey alternated between outright military rule and civilian authority during this period. However even during the course of civilian rule, the hand of the army was always visible right at the heart of politics. The Cold War years were mostly marked by oppression and prohibitions, rather than freedom and political participation in South Korea and Turkey. The denial of basic

4 *Ibid*.

5 *Ibid*.

human rights, such as freedom of expression, was justified on a long list of arbitrary grounds in both countries. "The survival of the homeland" was one of them. A 1990 study on South Korea noted that, "in divided Korea, almost any act of opposition to the South Korean government could be and has been characterized as benefiting North Korea".[6] Similar restrictions on the freedom of expression in Turkey during the course of the Cold War were justified, *inter alia,* by referring to the possibility of the partition of the "Turkish homeland". While the military junta in South Korea was obliged to step down in 1987 on account of public protests, the hard grip of the Turkish army in civilian politics began to loosen roughly in this period.

The rise to presidency of Kim Young-sam in 1993 was more than a simple replacement in South Korean politics, since he was the first civilian president after well over 30 years of military rule in this country. The degree of democracy that South Korean people enjoy today far exceeds the limited rights and freedoms that the authoritarian state had permitted in the past. This development likewise has its parallels in Turkish politics. Turkey's morally and culturally conservative, but politically and economically liberal-minded Prime Minister Turgut Özal became the new president of Turkey in 1989. Almost all of his predecessors in the presidential office had been generals with little interest in democratising the country. By contrast, Özal's term in office was marked by a liberalization of Turkish politics and higher standards of human rights protection. It was during this time that Turkey recognized the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights, while according Turkey's Kurds the right to publish in their own language. An episode in Turkish politics, which separated out Turkey from South Korea between 1997-2002, was the abrupt dissolution of the government as the result of the collaboration between the president, the armed forces, the dominant media and civilian bureaucracy. This incident is commonly known in Turkey as the post-modern coup d'état of February 28 –1997. The threats and intimidations which caused the resignation of some ministers from the cabinet and some parliamentarians from their parties gave way to a new coalition government that chose to act as the mouthpiece of the pro-status quo forces in Turkey. However the elections held in November 2002 brought the newly established Justice and Development Party (AK Party) to power. Those who wanted change in Turkish politics and resented the post-modern *coup d'état* of February 28 and the

6 http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12353.html

suppression of rights that this process had unleashed, voted for the new party. The government of Justice and Development Party has embarked on an ambitious reform program in the economic and political realms which is commensurate with the "road map" which the European Union (EU) had presented to Turkey to lay the necessary ground work so that Turkey and the EU could begin accession negotiations at the appropriate time. Greater transparency in Turkish politics, better guarantees of human rights protection for all sections of Turkish society, harsher punishment for torturers and other abusers of human rights, a lessening of the overweening powers assumed by the army, and higher priority to international human rights treaties in the Turkish legal system have been some manifestations of the changing face of Turkish politics.

Relations with the US

As said before, both Turkey and South Korea may be considered as middle-sized powers with close association and military alliance with the US. There is no doubt that the US perspective of the outside world has significantly influenced their official worldview. South Korea owed its existence and the ejection of North Korean forces from the south during the Korean War of 1950-53 largely to the US. Not unexpectedly the 1954 Mutual Defence Treaty with the US is the most significant treaty which South Korea has signed with a foreign country. The extent of South Korea's identification with the US during the Cold War was such that South Korea did not hesitate to dispatch 320,000 troops to Vietnam to fight alongside the US against the North Vietnamese forces. Besides, for too long the US has been South Korea's number one trading partner and a vital source of foreign investment.

While in the 1950s South Korea was economically poor, politically fragile, and militarily weak, this began to change in the decades that followed:

"During the subsequent four decades, …Seoul came of age economically, politically, and even militarily and was no longer as economically or militarily dependent on the United States. Instead, by the 1990s it was seeking to establish a partnership for progress. The Seoul-Washington relationship in this transition was increasingly subject to severe strains."[7]

These strains were caused by frictions over the trade surplus of South Korea in its trade with the US, by the dilemma as to whether the US should maintain its troop presence in South Korea, and by the resentment of many

7 http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12357.html

South Koreans about the US involvement in the crushing of the radical opposition in the country.[8] While the US is fond of portraying itself as the champion of democracy, human rights and freedom in the world, it apparently allied itself with oppressive political forces as it has done in much of the non-Western world. Hence the US image was also tarnished by the long time US support for succeeding South Korean governments that committed egregious human rights violations and all sorts of other abuses. This naturally resulted in the questioning by many Koreans of US motives in South Korea. The new American image was as worse as it could be. As a result, "the past image of the United States as a staunch supporter of democracy in South Korea was replaced with that of defender of its own interests, a policy impervious to injustices committed in South Korea."[9]

Today, even when listening to those in the high echelons of the South Korean state who tend to paint a rather rosy picture of the US-South Korean alliance, one could hear views that draw on the pitfalls of the intricate network of relations between the two countries: "Unfortunately, even such a strong and well-founded partnership as the one between the two countries has no immunity to new challenges."[10] The fury and hatred felt towards the US by most of the South Korean people have become even more intense in the last few years. There is now utter frustration and anger about the US invasions and interventions in many parts of the world and its lack of respect for international law since the termination of the Cold War and, *a fortiori,* since September 11, 2001.

However in spite of growing misgivings of the South Korean people about the US motives, those who shape state policies seem determined to maintain the "special" ties with the US. Indeed South Korea has always been vocal about its support for US designs in Asia, if not elsewhere. It did not hesitate to send 3,200 South Korean servicemen to the US-occupied Iraq to serve the US war aims. South Korea has thus chosen to contribute to this imperial American project "despite the persistent efforts of Koreans to stop deployment of Korean troops and to withdraw existing troops."[11]

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8 *Ibid*.

9 http://countrystudies.us/south-korea/27.htm

10 Sun Joun-yung, "Notes from the Field: North Korea and the Security of Northeast Asia and Beyond", *Santa Clara Journal of International Law*, Vol. 3, 2005, 1-16, p.10, speech given at Santa Clara University, September 29, 2004, www.scu.edu/scjil

11 Quoted from the "Summary of the Decision" taken by People's Tribunal on War Crimes, in the Case entitled Charges Regarding the War Crimes Committed in Iraq. http://www.worldtribunal.org/main/?b=38

Like South Korea, Turkey became a US ally in the aftermath of the Second World War. It is common knowledge that Turkey is the most secular of all the Muslim countries in the Middle East. Most of its territories lie in Asia, and only a small fraction in Europe. The destiny of the people of Turkey had long been historically tied to the Arab and Kurdish peoples of the Middle East. As a world power which remained in existence from the end of the 13th century up until the end of the First World War, the Ottoman Empire skilfully brought together numerous ethnic and religious communities in the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans under its sovereignty. Turkey has an obvious commonality of religion (Islam), culture (common traditions mostly rooted in Islam), history (Islamic empires from the Abbasids to the Ottomans) and geography (Near East or Middle East) with the countries of the Middle East. In spite of that, however, the state has chosen to identify and ally itself with the Western world as manifested in its membership of NATO in 1952 and current negotiations for membership of the European Union. "State ideology" that idealizes and idolizes pro-Western outlook is the key to understanding the motives behind the Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has opened its soil to a significant number of American bases since the 1950s. Furthermore, it became the first Muslim country to recognize Israel (1949) to please the US. It has always maintained contacts with Israel, if at times they were kept secret. In order to obtain the approval of NATO members concerning its request for membership, Turkey did not hesitate to send 4,500 of its soldiers to South Korea right at the start of the war in 1950 to fight alongside the US-led coalition against North Korea and its allies.[12] Consequently, Turkey became part of NATO in 1952. It soon began to receive US military and economic aid on account of its NATO membership, its permission of the privileged use by American troops of the Turkish soil in the form of American bases as registered by bilateral treaties, and of Turkey's sympathetic view of and often support for American arguments in the international arena.

This relationship survived the vicissitudes and mutual frictions springing from issues such as the Johnson Letter of 1964, written by the US President, which sent a threatening signal to Turkey in case it intended to take military action to protect the Turks of Cyprus against Greek militias, the American arms embargo imposed against Turkey in the period between 1975-78 as a punishment for Turkish military intervention in Cyprus in 1974, and Turkey's frequent complaints about the inadequacy of American aid to a "self-sacrificing Turkey" throughout the Cold War.

12 Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası*, 6th edition, Vol.1, (İstanbul, İletişim, 2002), pp.545-47.

Although the Cold War ended and the “Soviet threat” disappeared in the early 1990s, Turkish-American relations, contrary to what one would expect, gained a new lease of life under a new concept called "enhanced partnership" which was introduced in 1991. Only a few months earlier, Turkey had given its full political and logistical support to the US endeavours pertaining to the ejection of Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1990-91 under the strong Presidency of Turgut Özal in this first major international crisis that erupted after the Cold War. In the official website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is said that the enhanced partnership has been aimed at “diversifying and deepening the Turkish-American relationship as well as developing it on a more substantial basis.” Besides, the text goes, Turkey and the US are “close allies” that “consult one another, coordinate their efforts and cooperate, as appropriate, in conflict prevention and crisis management and in containing regional conflicts, deterring rogue states, curbing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.” We are also told that “the values and ideals that they subscribe to are identical.”[13]

Although, since November 2002, Turkey has been supposedly ruled by an “Islamist government” (which is, of course, a misnomer), the government of Justice and Development Party under the premiership of Tayyip Erdoğan signalled its willingness to cooperate with the US in the run-up to the latter’s impending invasion of Iraq. The extent of mutual commitment between the parties on a host of different issues had been so broad that Turkey’s new government felt that it could not afford to refuse any cooperation with the US in the matter of the Iraqi campaign. Besides, the government of Justice and Development Party was looked at suspiciously by Turkey’s conventional elites, ranging from the army to the dominant media, on account of its conceived threat to Turkey’s hard-line secularism. Internal threats hanging over its head like Democles’ sword, the government feared that its survival could be at risk without the external support of the US. Turkey’s excessive economic and financial reliance on the US and the largely US-controlled IMF and World Bank meant, from the spectrum of the government, that outright rejection of US designs might directly or indirectly cripple the Turkish economy. I think that these three factors explain a great deal about why the Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, enjoined the parliament to vote in favour of allowing a large contingent of US troops

13 Official site of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Turkish-U.S. Political Relations”, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-u_s_-political-relations.en.mfa, September 23, 2008.

(above thirty thousand) to use the Turkish territory in order to enter northern Iraq, although the overwhelming majority of the people detested the idea of the US troops invading Iraq and a Turkey collaborating with this hegemonic and aggressive power. Surprisingly enough, the motion tabled before the Grand National Assembly on March 1, 2003 did not get the necessary votes, because some members of parliament from the AK Party voted against the motion alongside those from the opposition Republican Peoples Party. When two years later, the US introduced its Greater Middle East (GME) plan which was purportedly devised to inject political and economic reforms into the Muslim World, especially in the Middle East, triggering structural changes in this part of the world, Turkey immediately jumped to the US bandwagon. It thus supported the plan, albeit distancing itself from its imperial overtones, and became one of the co-chairmen of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue, as part of the GME initiative.

To make an overview of the issues raised in this section, although it is clear that the prevailing view about the policies pursued by the US around the world is fairly negative in Turkey[14] and South Korea, the governing elites in both countries have no intention to abrogate their alliance with the US. This political strategy is commensurate with the pragmatism of the peoples of both countries: In spite of their deep-seated mistrust and misgivings of the US, public opinion in Turkey and South Korea seems to have resigned to the idea of sustaining military alliance with the US out of sheer "national interest" considerations.

Respective Perspectives of International Society

South Korea failed to act truly as an "independent" variable in international relations for a very long time. During the Cold War, "South Korea found itself swept over by ideological confrontation as it lacked the capability to function as an independent, sovereign state."[15] The division of Korea into two separate states, South Korea and North Korea, in the aftermath of the Second World War, and South Korea's reliance on the US for protection and integration into the prevalent world economic system, debilitated its capacity for independent action vis-à-vis other actors in international society. South Korea maintained its hope of unification with its

14 The most recent survey conducted by German Marshall Fund in 2008 showed that, only 14 percent of the people in Turkey nourish warm feelings towards the US, a figure far below the sympaty felt towards the EU (33 percent), Iran (32 percent), and slightly less than the level of sympathy for Russia (18 percent). (*Zaman*, September 11, 2008).

15 Sedat Azaklı, "Republic of Korea", in Wolfgang Gieler, Kemal İnat, Claudio Kullmann (eds.), *Foreign Policy of States: A Handbook on World Affairs*, (İstanbul, Tasam, 2005), 453-462, p.453.

northern brethren which was the leitmotif in the overall construction of its foreign policy. This "national cause" was the linchpin against which all other deliberations were to be assessed. The polarization that characterized the international system up until the early 1990s undermined the possibility of a union between the two Koreas, considering that they acted submissively towards their respective bloc leaders, namely the US and the Soviet Union. The constraints of the Cold War reverberated, at a micro level, at South Korea's parochial approach towards the outside world.

There is no denying that South Korea does not, unlike Turkey, consider itself as a "Western" state. Rather it tends to emphasize its Asian character and expresses some affinity to developing nations by virtue of its unceasing search for economic expansion. Turkey too occasionally emphasizes its difference from Europe and the US on account of its inadequate level of economic development. However none of the two states has made any tangible contributions to the struggle of the Non-Aligned Group of States to achieve a more just, egalitarian and peaceful international order. It is solely out of pragmatic considerations that Turkey and South Korea have paid some attention to the activities of the Non-Aligned grouping. To be able to muster at least a fraction of the support from members of the Non-Aligned Group of States during the UN General Assembly discussions (and voting) on Cyprus, was a cardinal motive behind Turkey's more sympathetic approach towards the group. Similar pragmatism underlined the motives behind South Korea's attempts to improve relations with the Non-Aligned Group "in apparent competition" with North Korea. However even in this case, South Korea tends to emphasize the classical principles of international law such as "the principles of good neighbourliness, reciprocity, and equality"[16], a language hardly palatable to those seeking to force radical changes in the international system and international law. This language strikes a chord with the static and formalistic overtones of Turkish foreign policy that characterised Turkish foreign policy until very recently. Both Turkey and South Korea have been inclined to emphasize rules and principles sanctified by conservative forces which have been, for the most part, shaping international society, while "the language of change" is presumably dismissed as "irrelevant" and "unresponsive" to their national priorities. The ideas and principles espoused by the Western group of states, which are the dominant actors in international society, are taken by these two American allies as truisms in order for the international order to function smoothly.

16 http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-12362.html

Today, as in the past, South Korea's international outlook and conception of universal goals very much reflect the US perspectives and priorities. This country seems to be strongly lured into Western liberal triumphalism and is gripped equally by the "phantom of terrorism", the enemy of the civilised world so to speak, which the US and its loyal cohorts have been hyping up since the Cold War ended. In the website of the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, one comes across with statements such as the following:

"Korea will actively participate in the international endeavour to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and international terrorism, which pose the greatest threats to international peace and security... The Korean government will actively participate in the international effort to promote democracy and human rights"[17]

However this is not to deny that some significant changes have occurred in South Korean foreign policy since the early 1990s. The excerpt below explains the new dynamism of South Korea well:

"The most significant change in South Korea's post-Cold War foreign policy is Seoul's emergence from the predominant influence of the US, which has enabled the pursuit of a more multidimensional policy outlook. Following diplomatic normalization with the SU and China, South Korea promoted improved relations with all four of its surrounding powers – China, Japan, Russia and the US- in a bid to create conditions conducive for national security and peaceful unification, while earning non-permanent membership in the UNSC."[18]

Together with North Korea, South Korea became a member of the UN in August 1991. It is a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), set up in 1993. This organization has been prompted by the economic motive of seeking to bring about a free trade zone among members of the group at some time in the future. The APEC was pioneered by the US which made it appealing for South Korean participation. A brief regard to South Korea's relations with China and Japan, as the surrounding nations with significant economic and political clout, is timely here. South Korea did not have any diplomatic links with China during the Cold War on account of deep-seated hostilities between the two states dating back

17 The Website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Key Diplomatic Tasks", http://www.mofat.go.kr/me/me_a003/me_b010/me03_02.jsp

18 Azaklı, *op.cit*., p.454.

to the Korean War when China supported North Korea. South Korea was a staunch ally of the US and the Korean peninsula was a major theatre of rivalry between the socialist and capitalist camps. The parties established formal diplomatic links in 1992 at which time the Cold War was over. Both states are today among the members of APEC and their ties are improving. South Korea's relations with Japan seem somewhat more confusing. Although both states were ardent supporters of the capitalist camp led by the US during the Cold War, lack of trust about Japanese motives underlines the South Korean perception of this country. Japan was engaged in the brutal occupation of the Korean peninsula for about forty years in the first half of the 20th century, which is vividly remembered and talked over in South Korea (and, in North Korea, of course). Japan has never brought itself into admitting and apologising for its past crimes in China, Korea, and parts of Southeast Asia. Nonetheless as their membership of APEC and the credits which South Korea receives from Japan indicates, the economic rewards that both nations reap from mutual cooperation are too enticing to be sacrificed for historical frictions.

Similar to South Korea, Turkish multilateral diplomacy has concentrated more on the established norms and principles of international law such as the sovereign equality of states, the right to collective self-defence, and the principle of non-intervention, rather than on the creation of new norms and structures in the evolving process of a new international legal order. Indeed, it has been a party to only a fraction of the multilateral treaties conceived under UN auspices dealing with "progressive" issues of international law. Contrary to an overwhelming majority of states, particularly those in the Third World, Turkey has rarely contributed to legal endeavours pertaining to the codification or the progressive evolution of matters relating to "human rights", "the principle of self-determination", "the establishment of a New International Economic Order" and so forth.[19] Indeed, the Turkish foreign policy establishment is inclined to see the United Nations as a forum for defending Turkish national interests rather than, *inter alia,* as a vehicle for norm-creation. It can therefore be asserted that Turkey is yet to fully accept that the United Nations system in general and the General Assembly in particular are not merely designed to preserve international peace and security as defined in military terms, but are equally entrusted with the task of mobilizing world public opinion on

19 For a review of Turkey's voting preferences on these cardinal issues in the UN General Assembly, see Berdal Aral, "Fifty Years on: Turkey's Voting Orientation at the UN General Assembly, 1948-97", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Mar. 2004, pp.137-160.

major issues of global concern, such as underdevelopment, food, human rights, disarmament, technology, law of the sea, and the distribution of culture and information.

As suggested earlier, a main conceptual and normative barrier in this respect lies in Turkey's official identification with the Western world that, so to speak, holds the key for Turkish accession into the "gate of contemporary civilisation". Indeed, the Western-orientation of Turkish foreign policy justifies a distorted view of the outside world which considers "international society" as synonymous with "the US, Europe and their close associates elsewhere". (However, we need to put a bracket here, so as to do justice to the present AK Party government which has managed to break a number of deadlocks which stifled Turkish foreign policy until a few years ago. The new "breathing space" which Turkey's current rulers have opened up for Turkish diplomacy and the structural and historical constraints which debilitate their ability to challenge existing paradigms are debated below) opportunities which they have). Turkey has conventionally (after the Second World War) registered its advocacy of "grand international projects", UN Security Council resolutions or international treaties once they have been (almost always) approved by the Western group of states and presented to the world as "the will of international society". For instance, it followed in the footsteps of the US before recognizing Peoples Republic of China as the legitimate representative of China in the 1970s. It declined to perceive the Palestinian issue from the perspective of the self-determination of a people under foreign occupation and, instead, emphasized the Palestinian "refugee problem". It did not hesitate to join in the international sanctions against South Africa from the end of the 1970s for its systematic practice of racist policies. Turkey was actively engaged in the process leading to the independence of Namibia in 1990, a cause espoused by the UN General Assembly. Turkey remained mostly indifferent to the causes, such as disarmament, search for a new international economic order, end to colonialism and neo-colonialism, espoused by the Non-Aligned group of nations simply because these demands were mostly unpalatable for the Western world.

With the exception of security/military matters, Turkey failed to take initiatives in international affairs during the course of the Cold War. This "bureaucratic foreign policy", as Mehmet Gönlübol, a Turkish professor of International Relations, puts it, fails to respond appropriately to changes in the international system. This Turkish inertia was clearly witnessed dur-

ing the historic changes that took place in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union following the demise of the communist regimes when Turkey passively watched the events as an "outsider".[20] No doubt, Turkey diversified the range of international actors and issues in the 1990s with which it was diplomatically engaged. Turkey became more visible in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Some rapprochement between Turkey on the one hand, and Russia, China, and India was beginning to take shape as a result of the new opportunities generated by the demise of old divisions and rigidities that were the hallmark of the Cold War. In spite of that, however, Turkey's pro-Western inclinations and reflexes did not entirely die out in the 1990s.

In fairness, the above statement is better understood with the caveat that Turkey's present government has been pursuing a multi-dimensional policy and displaying some awareness of the significance of Asian and African continents. Indeed under the AK Party government, Turkey has acted as a key member of the diplomatic process known as "Iraq's Neighbours Conference" which it initiated back in 2003 to prevent the American occupation of this hapless country and then to bring Iraq a semblance of stability after the occupation, it sought to create a diplomatic platform to establish a meaningful dialogue between the EU and the Muslim world, it pursued a shuttle diplomacy involving all the relevant regional actors to end the Russian-Georgian war in August 2008 over the South Ossetian problem and to defuse a crisis which could escalate into a larger war, it has indicated deeper interest in the Middle East, Russia, Central Asian republics, China, Africa, and, finally, it has taken bold steps to bring the Cyprus dispute to an end. These are courageous and imaginative moves which have increased Turkish influence and prestige in the outside world.

In spite of all that, however, I would argue that Turkey's international outlook is still embedded in the Western paradigms, norms and geopolitical conceptions of the international system. Indeed when one takes a look at the Website of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs today, one immediately realise that it is written in a language that is akin to Western perspectives, priorities, goals, and perceptions of threat. In other words, Turkish foreign policy establishment appears to have internalised a Western view of the world. In the website, there is no mention of Third World perspectives and priorities such as imperialism, neo-colonialism, the fail-

20 Mehmet Gönlübol, in *Olaylarla Türk Dış Politikası,* seventh edition, (Ankara, Elif Matbaası, 1989), pp.631-632.

ure of existing institutional mechanisms to effectively deal with global problems, the privileged status of the G-8 countries in key international organizations, poverty, unfair international trade, and the search for a new international communications order. While Turkey's links with Western group of states and countries in geographical proximity are accounted in the website, no separate headings are spared for Turkey's ties with the rest of the world. This is in spite of the fact that Turkey is ruled by a government that is assumed to be sensitive about notions such as justice and fairness, about the fate of the Muslim world, and about the overall plight of the non-Western world.

We may begin with the website's definition of "common threats to humanity". It is said that, in the aftermath of the Cold War,

"the world witnessed the emergence of new threats to security, such as ethnic nationalism, xenophobia, irredentism, fundamentalism and international terrorism, giving rise to regional instability and conflicts, and casting a shadow over the initial optimism engendered by the prospects for a new peaceful era…The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a growing tangible threat in the 21st century."[21]

This exposition of threats is hardly indigenous to Turkey's own context. These "threats" are mostly constructs designed to demonise the "unruly and unpredictable Third World", to create new threats to justify militarization, to consign the Third World demands and struggle for a better world into marginality, and finally to manufacture a new hegemonic discourse so that the dominant actors of international society maintain their privileged positions in international organisations. Turkey seems to be taken in by this hegemonic discourse. There is no mention, in the said website, of the US/Israeli/British aggressions in the world, of hunger, poverty and environmental problems mostly created and/or abetted by the US and most other industrialised countries in the world. If they are not threats to the welfare and well-being of humanity, what on earth can be considered as "threats"?!

This Western-centric vision, considered in combination with its own struggle with terrorism inside[22], explains a great deal about Turkey's enthusiastic support for anti-terrorism conventions during and after the Cold

21 Official site of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Synopsis of the Turkish Foreign Policy", http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa, September 23, 2008.

22 The terrorist groups challenging the authority of the state in Turkey include the PKK (seeking Kurdish separatism), and DHKPC (seeking to establish a socialist state).

War. This is another area that brings Turkey and South Korea closer. Indeed both of these states are parties to nearly all of the anti-terrorism conventions, sponsored mostly by Western governments. Turkey, for instance, boasts in the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about adhering to all of the "twelve UN Conventions and Protocols on the combat with terrorism." Some of the anti-terrorism treaties which are approved by both states are as follows: Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed Onboard Aircraft (1963); Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970); Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971); Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents (1973); Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (1988); International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1998); International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (2000).

Turkey and South Korea also appear as enthusiastic supporters of international treaties on the prohibition of certain weapons which are in most cases sponsored by Western governments. Besides the founding treaty of the UN (UN Charter), the following instruments are worth mentioning: Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols relating to the laws of war (adopted in 1949 and 1977 respectively); Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968); Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (1972); Chemical Weapons Convention (1992); Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1996). In 1999 the US Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty which was signed by President Clinton. When the US openly declared that it felt no obligation to abide by the terms of the Geneva Conventions in the course of its occupation of Afghanistan (2001-), neither Turkey nor South Korea aired its objection to the US' dismissal of the laws of war which it had adhered to.

Although there is strong similarity between Turkey and South Korea in the way they perceive international society and the rules and principles of international law, there is an apparent wedge between Turkey and South Korea on international environmental law. It is true that both Turkey and South Korea are parties to the following environmental agreements: Antarctic Treaty (1959); Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989); Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (1991); Convention on

Biological Diversity (1992); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992). Unlike South Korea, however, Turkey has not become a party to the Law of the Sea Convention (1982), the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (1972), and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997). While South Korea is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (1977), Turkey has signed but not yet ratified it. Turkey has no plans to accede to the Law of the Sea Convention because the terms of this agreement conflict with Turkey's perceived national interests. Just as South Korea is entangled in a long-standing dispute with Japan over the possession of some tiny islands known as the Liancourt Rocks (in South Korea and Japan, they are called Tok-Do and Takeshima respectively) in the East Sea, so is Turkey embroiled in border disputes with Greece concerning the delimitation of the Aegean Sea. This convention confers on islands the same rights as the land territories and allows coastal states to extend their territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles. In consideration of the proximity to the Turkish coasts of countless Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, Turkey has refused to participate in this convention. Turkey's failure to endorse the Kyoto Protocol derives from economic considerations. However the government, under pressure from the EU, is currently thinking of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol which will soon be voted for possible approval by the parliament.

Conclusion

During the course of the Cold War, neither Turkey nor South Korea appeared as dynamic and prominent players in international society. Officially they strongly identified with the US and the US perspectives of, and behaviour in, the outside world. Their alliance with the US, and, in the Turkish case, additionally, with NATO, was the crux of their international perspective and foreign policy behaviour on account of security considerations. Both states had a rigid conception of the Cold War, which, in their view, called for an unquestioning loyalty to the capitalist camp. The Soviet territorial demands and call for joint administration of the Turkish Straits in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War provided an ideal pretext for Turkey's pro-Western ruling elites to irrevocably integrate Turkey into the Western world. The Korean peninsula, even more so than Turkey, was a major theatre of East-West conflict that produced the Cold War. The devastating Korean War of 1950-53 solidified the demarcation

line that had split the peninsula into two Koreas at the close of the Second World War. North Koreans fought alongside the Chinese against South Koreans, the Americans, and contingents from other countries that supported the Western cause. Although there were some grievances and clash of interests between Turkey and the US on the one hand, and South Korea and the US on the other, as in the case of the Johnson Letter of 1964 and the US arms embargo of 1975-78 which had harmful consequences for Turkey, none of the states in question considered abandoning the American bloc or embarking on new diplomatic initiatives with non-Western group of states to counterbalance its inflexible reliance on the Western bloc.

The end of the Cold War removed old certainties and brought about new opportunities that called for new and imaginative thinking as far as the actors of international society were concerned. There is no doubt that both South Korea and Turkey have tried to adjust their foreign policy to the structural changes in the international environmental by pursuing a more proactive and multifarious diplomacy. As old certainties, rigidities and unilateral reliance on the US have disappeared, so has the public support for enhanced partnership with the US has dwindled in both countries, although there is no mass movement that demands an end to alliance with the said state in these countries. US unilateralism and aggressive posture vis-à-vis the outside world, as the occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq, and unlimited support for Israel have all testified, have been condemned and widely criticised all around the world, including Turkey and South Korea, although most governments have opportunistically chosen to collaborate with the US. South Korea has found a new lease of life in its increasing engagement with its immediate neighbours such as North Korea, China and Japan, as well as with distant neighbours such as Russia. Turkey has similarly opened the frontiers of its foreign policy by establishing extensive trade ties and political contacts with states such as Russia, China, and Central Asian republics that used to be in the "enemy camp" during the Cold War. Meanwhile governments in both countries have had to pay greater attention to the protection of human rights which became the catchword of the New World Order as if replacing old ideologies. The two cases of Turkey and South Korea also demonstrate the extent to which the middle sized powers can change the course of their foreign policy and international perspectives when a paradigmatic shift has occurred in the international system. Although both states have somewhat availed themselves from the new opportunities presented by the demise of the Cold War, their alliance

with the US on the one hand, and close identification with Western conceptions and perspectives, and with the largely Western-dominated legal and institutional framework of international society on the other, has endured the test of time in spite of truly historic changes in the international system.

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