



## Being a Diplomat in Difficult Times<sup>§§</sup>

Haz. Muhammed Murat Arslan

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*Being a Diplomat in Difficult Times* is a work of oral history prepared through interviews with distinguished diplomats who have experienced the difficulties of the diplomatic profession in times of war, terrorism, attack, civil war and hostage-taking. In his introduction, Muhammed Murat Arslan, the author of the book, refers to Ömer Seyfettin's *Pembe İncili Kaftan*, one of the great writers of Turkish literature, and states that Muhsin Çelebi, who “represents a spirit that does not violate the dignity of the state”, became a symbol during the preparation of the book. (p. 13) Again, when we read about the difficulties experienced by our diplomats and the precautions they took in the face of these difficulties, we can understand that the diplomatic profession is a very good example of “serving the country and protecting a flag without making any hamasas”.

Arslan mentions that the distinguished ambassador Numan Hazar played an important role in the creation of this work. As a matter of fact, Hazar, who wrote the foreword of the book, cited

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the discomfort caused by certain prejudices about Turkish diplomats, such as being far from the values of the people, as one of the important factors in the emergence of the book. In the foreword of the work, Hazar made the following explanation for being a good diplomat: (p. 11)

*“Competence in all disciplines of law, economics, political science, military service and cultural fields, including literature and fine arts, as well as patience and fortitude, are of great importance. In addition, it is imperative to have a command of valid diplomatic and regional foreign languages. Success in human relations and social contacts is a must. Above all, the diplomat must protect and fight for the vital interests of his or her country.”*

As seen in the statement, what comes first for a diplomat is to defend and fight for the vital interests of his/her country. *Being a Diplomat in Difficult Times* is a valuable work that reflects these struggles.

In the first chapter of the book titled “The Cyprus Peace Operation” (pp. 17-37), we witness the experiences of the distinguished ambassador Ali Vural Öktem. In this section, Öktem stated that he was appointed to the Nicosia Embassy in March 1970 and that he stayed in a house on the Green Line by the Kanlı Creek and described his experiences in his mission, which he successfully fulfilled under difficult conditions. (p. 18) Öktem stated that he was assigned to Political Affairs and Protocol Affairs in Nicosia and that his first year in office was a quieter one. In this section, we first read Öktem’s efforts to obtain visas, the dialogues with Ms. Laura, the secretary of Ambassador Pelagias, who was in charge of visa affairs at the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the results of visa requests, with interesting memories, and then we read the attacks of EOKA-B in 1974 and we deep regret what happened. As it is known, in Cyprus in 1974, the supporters of Nikos Sampson, who escaped from Greek prisons, overthrew Makarios and staged a coup and Sampson took over the Greek administration. Afterwards, in order to prevent the massacres committed by Sampson’s supporters against the Turkish Cypriots, the Turkish army carried out the first operation on July 20, 1974 and then the second operation with the motto “*Let Ayşe go on vacation!*”. In this section, you can read the valuable information that the name of Ercan Airport comes from the name of our commander, Air Pilot Senior Major Fehmi Ercan, who was martyred on the first day of the first operation. The events in Cyprus, where the glorious Turkish army wrote stories of heroism, will always remain fresh in history. As it is told, on the one hand, our army carried out operations with great devotion, while on the other hand, Turkish diplomats heroically defended the rights of their homeland. As a result, Öktem, who successfully fulfilled his duty here, took his place in the records as a Cyprus veteran after his successful activities during the Peace Operation. He shared these successful activities with the readers in this work.

In the second part of the work titled “1984 Tehran Asala Attacks” (pp. 39-67), we read the narration of the distinguished ambassador Hasan Servet Öktem on the attacks of the Armenian

terrorist organization ASALA against Turkish diplomats and the Armenian terrorist attacks in Iran. In this chapter, Öktem, after sharing information about the first attack of the ASALA terrorist organization in Los Angeles and the martyrdom of Consul General Mehmet Baydar and his assistant Bahadır Demir, describes the attacks organized by some Armenians in Iran against Turkish diplomats in Tehran in 1984. In this section, Öktem also recommended reading the book *Maskeli Balo* by the then ambassador Tansuğ Bleda about the events of 1981-1982. Öktem stated that he went to Tehran in September 1983 and returned to the center in 1985, and that he evaluated his period in two parts: before and after the assassination. Öktem, who described in detail the assassination incident on March 28, 1984, in which he came back from the dead, stated at the end of his article that *“Armenia and the diaspora should be seen separately. As someone who was physically exposed to Armenian terrorism, I am not hostile to the people of Armenia. I look at the people of Armenia as ‘neighbors’. I have no prejudice against Armenians.”* Öktem stated that the people of Armenia are a people with whom we should develop our relations as neighbors, but ASALA and the diaspora structures prevent this process.

In the third part of the work titled “The Events of January 29, 1990 in Western Thrace” (pp. 69-105), we read the inhuman policy implemented by the Greek State against the Western Thrace Turks as narrated by the distinguished Ambassador Hasan Kemal Gür. This article of Ambassador Gür is of special importance as it conveys the systematic assimilation and oppression policy implemented by Greece against Western Thrace Turks. Moreover, while writing the review of this valuable work, this chapter has a special place for me because of my PhD in the Department of Balkan Studies and my special interest in the Balkan geography. Returning to the work, Gür states that he started his duty as the Consul General of Komotini in Western Thrace in September 1988 and that he had been in Western Thrace before he started his duty and witnessed interesting events. He stated that he was followed by the police as soon as he entered Western Thrace, and even more interestingly, *“Imagine, the policeman who followed me found out about my shaving cologne from the pharmacist Istanbulidis and he bought the same one. We smell the same as him”*. Gür, who successfully carried out his duty in such a surveillance environment, also stated in a dialog with the Greek police that the name *Komotini* was not understood and that he did not want to say *Komotini*, so he used the name *Gumulcina* from the old maps. For Gür, who proudly served his duty in a difficult environment, we read that the process was difficult from the very beginning. Stating that he started to face the difficulties of his duty as soon as he arrived in Komotini as Consul General, Gür shared the story of Sevdije Tahirova, a compatriot MP who heroically resisted the name change policies

in Bulgaria and set out to come to her homeland Turkey, defecting and crossing to Turkey via Ipsala with her child. He explained that these homeland crossings continued throughout his duty and that he witnessed how people from Deliorman and other parts of Western Thrace were embraced by their compatriots.

As it is known, our Turkish compatriots living in Western Thrace have not abandoned their mother tongue despite the oppression and persecution of Greece and have kept their Turkishness consciousness. However, there are some important problems experienced by Western Thrace Turks. In order to identify these problems, it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the 20th century or even earlier. As a matter of fact, with the Treaty of Bucharest of 1913, in which the Ottoman Empire was not among the signatory states, the places in Western Thrace were detached from the Ottoman Empire. Records related to this region, which was subjected to Bulgarian atrocities, can be examined from the archives of the Presidency of War History and Strategic Studies. During this period, Bulgaria's policy was based on the assimilation and conversion of our compatriots. Sadly, every village in Western Thrace witnessed the painful events of these policies. Despite these policies, the Turks of Western Thrace preserved their religion and Turkishness consciousness. Gür's article contains remarkable anecdotes on the subject. It would be appropriate to mention a few of these anecdotes. According to a widely known anecdote, Gür's account is as follows: (p. 80)

*"Yannis Kapsis, the Foreign Minister under Andreas Papandreou (Pasok), went to the town of Şahin in the forbidden zone. The name of Şahin today is Ehinós. Kapsis, out of the blue, started a discussion about religion and ancestry in Şahin. Our compatriots from Şahin gave the following succinct answer: 'If we ourselves became Turks and Muslims, happy for us, and if the Turks made us Turks and Muslims, happy for them, as the reward belongs to them'. There is a Balkan stubbornness in this answer. That is how our Balkan compatriots are. They are big Balkans. When Kapsis got upset, he changed the subject and said, 'You can't watch TV, let's install a reflector here so you can watch it comfortably' and asked which Greek channels you can't receive. The Falcons' response to this was very nice: 'Move Greek channels, our problem is Turkish channels!' They said, 'When there is a national match, young people climb to high places with their battery-operated TV sets. This is torture!' they added. I would like to draw attention to the fact that the national team mentioned in this speech is the Turkish national team. Our Pomak compatriots have another idiom that reflects their longing: 'To become a man, you need to climb the Balkan until you see the minarets of Selimiye Mosque.'"*

These speeches, which show that our compatriots in Western Thrace have kept their Turkishness consciousness until the end, are extremely important. On the other hand, from 1913 until World War I, Bulgaria, France, which had a temporary administration in Western Thrace with the San Remo Conference, and Greece on the other hand made special efforts to blunt this consciousness. According to Gür, the archives in Vichy and Sevres, which contain documents from this period, are closed to researchers. Stating that these documents contain shame and disgrace, Gür emphasized that it is therefore difficult to access the documents in the archives.

It is known that unimaginable atrocities were committed against the Western Thrace Turks after World War II, during the civil war in Greece (1946-1949). Gür stated that the institution

established as the Special Pedagogical Academy in Thessaloniki and serving Greek politics was called as a kind of project of raising Greek Muslims and that even the Greeks themselves laughed at the concept of *Hellenic Muslims*, which was tried to be put forward by the Greeks in this period. In addition, it is clear that the population statistics were not very reliable due to the propaganda of “*There are no Turks, there are Greek Muslims?*” launched by the Greek government during this period. However, Gür stated that approximately 60% of the population in rural Western Thrace, 40% of the population in Xanthi, a little more in Komotini and 5% in Alexandroupoli remained Turkish after the exile events. In doctoral dissertations, the Turkish population in Western Thrace is estimated to be around 1.5 million.

Western Thrace Turks lived under oppression in the late 19th century and especially throughout the 20th century. Due to the Greek electoral engineering during election times, various means were used to ensure that the Greeks won the elections in Komotini and Xanthi. However, Western Thrace Turks were able to make significant progress in human rights issues with the resistance of the great patriotic leader Dr. Sadık Ahmet and his friends. Dr. Sadık Ahmet, while studying at Ankara University Faculty of Medicine, transferred to Thessaloniki Faculty of Medicine in the 4th grade, overcame the problem of diploma equivalence and trained himself as a person with a very good command of Greek. Dr. Sadık Ahmet was arrested in 1986 in Thessaloniki while distributing a brochure on human rights violations against Western Thrace Turks at a human rights conference. Dr. Sadık Ahmet was a patriot with big ideas. In June 1989, November 1989 and March 1990, he led the Western Thrace Turks to participate in the elections by forming independent lists under the name of *Iqbal* in Xanthi and *Güven* in Komotini and thus showed an important reaction against the Greek political parties that turned a blind eye to the violation of the rights of our compatriots. Dr. Sadık Ahmet had entered the parliament from the Trust List by receiving a large percentage of votes in the June 1989 elections. Despite this, the Greek authorities claimed that Dr. Sadık Ahmet lacked a document in order not to let him into the parliament and prevented his candidacy in the November 1989 elections. He was also accused of propagandizing for Turkishness before the elections. Dr. Sadık Ahmet and İbrahim Şerif, the elected Mufti of Komotini, were taken to court with accusations. According to Gür, who stated that he watched this court as the Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Komotini, Dr. Sadık Ahmet made a very good defense in Greek in this court. In spite of this, both of our compatriots were sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, a fine of 2,800 US dollars and 2 years of disenfranchisement in a trial *that “can be described as a complete buffoonery”*. However, as a result of intense pressure from the Council of Europe and the European Union Parliaments, they were released within six months. Following the events, the governors of

Komotini and Xanthi declared a ban on gatherings for Turks. Following this announcement, on January 28, 1990, parliamentarians from the Greek parties New Democracy, Pasok and the Internal Communist Party called on the Greek people to take to the streets. During the incidents, Turkish businesses, Kır Mahalle Cemetery and Hacı Bektaş Mosque were attacked. Thus, the pressure of Greek politicians against the Turks of Western Thrace increased. Then the events of January 29, 1990 took place and the March for Turkishness was organized by Western Thrace Turks in Komotini.

Gür, who was always on the side of the Western Thrace Turks during his term as Consul General, states that during this period, he was informed by the governor of Komotini that it was dangerous for him to go out on the streets, and in response to this, in a letter he wrote to the governor, *“I stated that it was natural for me to go out on the streets to see the damage suffered by the cognate tradesmen on the spot”*. Gür, who heroically defended the Turks of Western Thrace, was declared *Persona non Grata* after a while. This situation is related to the concept of *Ethnic Theme* (National Issue) in Greek politics. Gür makes the following assessment about this paranoia: (p. 98)

*“The Greek people and their government cannot get rid of the obsession and prejudices about Turks and Turkey. Every street, every corner is haunted by the ghost of the Ottoman Empire. Public buildings, train wagons, tobacco warehouses,, and registry offices have the crescent star and tughra. All mosques are of historical value. Minarets reach to the skies with the moon and stars. Train routes and railroads also date back to the Ottoman Empire. So are the highways in northern Greece... Likewise, fountains, baths, bridges, madrasahs and almshouses have never made the Greeks forget us. In every Greek city there is a Turkish neighborhood that remained abandoned after the exchange.”*

Gür, who also makes evaluations and suggestions for the policy of the Republic of Turkey in Western Thrace, states that this policy is full of some mistakes and deficiencies. One of Gür’s evaluations and suggestions on this issue is as follows: (pp. 99-100)

*“For example, we have not been able to raise well-equipped cognates. The number of cognates whose education and Greek language skills are sufficient to stay in their place and resist the oppressive policies of the Greeks has been insufficient in every period. Seventy percent of the cognate students study in Turkey and cannot learn Greek. However, encouraging them to learn Greek and even to study in Greek universities would be the greatest contribution to the Turkish community in Western Thrace.”*

According to Gür, action should be taken and steps should be taken to equip Western Thrace Turks. Continuing his article, Gür states: (p. 100) *“The purpose of the residence and education facilities we provided to cognate students should not have been to encourage them to settle in Turkey, but to provide them with the know-how to return at the end of their studies to live in Western Thrace and fight against oppressive policies...”* Stating that Western Thrace Turks were always among his priorities even after his service here, Gür wrote that he followed the developments after his retirement, kept in touch with our compatriots and gave conferences on this issue. In this regard, he stated the policy that could be applied against Greece, which he described as the spoiled child of Europe, as follows: (p. 104)

*"I claim that the most important developments that can be considered positive for the Turkish community in Western Thrace today and for the future are the young compatriots graduating from the Law Faculties of Athens and Thessaloniki. These are the young people who can do whatever they want. Compatriots who are registered in Greek bar associations and speak Greek as well as Greeks. There are some from Xanthi and some from Komotini. Among the cognate lawyers, there are also those who have a PhD in human rights in Europe. These young people have started to get Greece convicted one after another before the ECtHR. Greece is now in a very difficult situation in the field of human rights before the ECtHR, the CJEU, EU bodies and the European public opinion. Encouragement of Greek-speaking cognates with careers such as specialized doctors, engineers and lawyers will contribute to the Turkish community in Western Thrace in every way. A modern society does not oppress itself in the field of human rights. I think this is the easiest method to bring the spoiled child of Europe to its knees by European hands."*

Gür concludes his article with some recommendations and at the end of his article, he presents his love and respect to everyone who has made and continues to make attempts to find solutions to the problems of Western Thrace Turks and says: *"Western Thrace is life. It hurts, angers and harasses, but it also makes you very happy when it makes you laugh. This brother's heart will beat for Western Thrace until doomsday"*. We thank Mr. Gür for defending the rights of the Turkish community in Western Thrace on all platforms. We also recommend that Gür's views should be carefully considered in the research on this subject.

In the fourth chapter of the book, titled "Gulf War I" (pp. 107-121), the distinguished ambassador Mehmet Necati Utkan shared his memories of the period he served as ambassador to Iraq between 1990 and 1992. In the introduction of his article, Utkan emphasized the difficulties of a war by stating how many times he had read the book *Zeytindağı*. Utkan also stated that he kept a diary during this assignment, and in his diary there was a record of the period from his departure to Baghdad until the outbreak of the war. Utkan explained that he arrived in Baghdad on December 25 and had to return home on the evening of January 14. He wrote that he was the last ambassador to leave Baghdad before the war to protect the reputation of the state. Some time after his return home, he settled in Diyarbakır and opened an office to deal with the affairs of the refugees who had fled the war and especially the fear of Saddam's violence and arrived at the Turkish border. As Utkan states in his work, he successfully fulfilled his duty as an ambassador without an embassy during this period. You can read about these events in the fourth chapter of the book.

In the fifth chapter of the book titled "Somali Civil War" (pp. 123-133), the distinguished ambassador Müfit Özdeş stated that he went to Djibouti in late 1987 and served in Somalia for 2-3 months in late 1992 and early 1993. Özdeş stated that there were three Somalis at the time and that the places known as British Somalia and Italian Somalia merged to form the Republic of Somalia, while the place known as French Somalia remained under the name of Djibouti. At the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, when he was serving in Somalia, the UN Security Council decided to end the Somali Civil War and on December 14, 1992, together with ten

officers from Turkey left Esenboğa Airport for Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, and Özdeş mentioned that some diplomatic activities were carried out.

In the sixth chapter of the work, titled “The Bosnian War” (pp. 135-161), we read about the genocide perpetrated against Bosniaks in the Balkans at the end of the 20th century, as narrated by the distinguished ambassador Şükrü Tufan. This chapter is extremely valuable due to Tufan’s death on April 30, 2024. Indeed, the late Tufan’s narratives have a very important place in history as he was the first ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, the timing of the late Tufan’s letter of credence is also historically significant as it coincided with the day President Turgut Özal died. The late Tufan explains that he was able to present his letter of credence to Aliya Izzetbegovic under very difficult circumstances. Thus, as it is known, Bulgaria was the first country to recognize Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the Republic of Turkey was the first country to open an embassy. The embassy building was first opened in Zagreb and then moved to Sarajevo after much labor. In his article, the late Tufan, among the things that attracted his attention, gave the anecdote *“I saw the temples of four major religions in a circle 200 meters in diameter. One Catholic cathedral, one Serbian church, a synagogue and a mosque (Gazi Husrev Bey Mosque)”* as an example of coexistence in Bosnia in the past. However, it is extremely sad that between 1993 and 1996 there was no sign of this tolerance. Indeed, what happened between 1993 and 1996 was the largest mass killing of human beings, a war shame and genocide since World War II.

There are many things to be said about the Bosnian War. As the ambassador of the Republic of Turkey during this period, the late Şükrü Tufan did extremely important work and tried to use diplomatic channels to end the war. During these years, Turkey stood by the Bosnian people in the face of the events in Bosnia in the Balkans. It is also useful to look at the events from the memoirs of the late Tufan. In his memoirs, the late Tufan wrote the following about this war, describing some of the deeply upsetting events he experienced: (pp. 152-153)

*“There was no regular war. It was an attack. If you ask me, it was a huge shame on humanity. It was an ethnic genocide targeting the civilian population, their religion, their culture. Look, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many new states were established, none of them experienced the tragedy that happened in Bosnia. There is no doubt that the loser of this tragedy is humanity. There were six safe zones declared by the United Nations. Srebrenica was one of them. Before the war, it had a population of around 24 thousand. With the refugees who came with the war, it rose to around 60 thousand. The UN sent a Dutch unit there. A Dutchman named Karremans was in charge. They collected the weapons of the Bosniaks there. When the Serbs started to attack, the Bosniaks there said ‘We were attacked, give us back our weapons’. They refused this request, and then the French general he was instructed by told them to leave the place and come back. And then the massacre started. We had a lot of conflicts with those French people. We couldn’t even talk to them as diplomats. They had a fixed idea in their minds that they were ‘the protector of Bosniaks’ and we couldn’t get past that. After 13 years, they caught Mladic. They said that this was recognized as genocide, but we cannot accept the Serbs as responsible. In my opinion, it remains the only genocide in the world that remains unsolved (!).”*

According to the late Tufan, the Bosnian War, although it has the necessary importance in the world public opinion in some aspects, has still not been fully recognized and remains unsolved.



It is our greatest wish that these events do not happen again. The late Tufan wrote that he was caught between bullets in the building he was in at the time, and then lived in the house of the famous Galatasaray football player Tarık Hodzic. The late Tufan shared another memory of an incident that happened one day when he was on his way to meet the Minister of Interior Yusuf Pushine: (p. 144)

*"I am going to the Minister of Interior. Yusuf Pushkin was the Minister of Interior at that time. There is bloodshed. Snipers, shootings, a disaster. Just as I was about to go in, a bomb fell. The minister's wall collapsed. We faced each other; the Minister in his office, me on the street. Me there, him there. I didn't know what to do. I had an interpreter. She was a Croatian woman. A girl of twelve or thirteen years old in the arms of a man... I cannot forget those eyes for the rest of my life. Two wide-open eyes. I said, "What is she saying?" The Croatian woman choked up. She started crying. I said, "What happened, madam?" She said, "Do you know what she's saying? By that time the girl's legs were broken. On the ground... The man picked her up and was going to take her to a hospital somewhere. She told him, 'Uncle, we forgot my legs. Such a surrealist atmosphere. I still get goosebumps when I talk about it. I will never forget that pair of eyes and the words 'we forgot my legs'..."*

As it is understood from the above, the late Şükrü Tufan, as the ambassador of the Republic of Turkey during the Bosnian War, did very important work. As a result of these efforts, great importance was attached to the late Tufan in Bosnia after the Dayton Agreement. The late Tufan was given honorary fellow citizen status and diplomatic passport after his duty in Bosnia. The fact that Ambassador Şükrü Tufan passed away shortly after his interview in this work has increased the value of this article infinitely. Ambassador Şükrü Tufan has taken his place in history as an important diplomat who is remembered with goodwill.

In the seventh chapter titled "PKK Attacks and Hostage Crisis in Europe" (pp. 163-175), the distinguished ambassador Numan Hazar shares his experiences during his assignment in Bonn, the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. Hazar, who was appointed as the Ambassador to Bonn in October 1991 during the unification process of the two Germanies, described in his article the pro-PKK actions that took place in Germany since 1992. He emphasized the deterioration of Turkey-Germany relations during the ministry of German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher and stated that relations started to normalize again under Dr. Klaus Kinkel, who replaced him as foreign minister. Ultimately, Germany's decision to list the PKK as a terrorist organization on November 26, 1993 was a positive indicator for Turkey-Germany relations. It is recommended that Turkey and Germany, historically close and friendly countries, develop positive relations as allies.

In the eighth chapter of the work titled "Afghanistan Civil War" (pp. 177-223), the distinguished ambassador Aydemir Erman recounts the events he experienced during his duty as the coordinator of Afghanistan. Erman, who spent his childhood years in the region, shared detailed information about the region. In this section, one can learn about the ethnic groups living in Afghanistan over time. Again, while reading about the love and respect of the people of Afghanistan for the Turks, it is seen that the Turks have provided great services in Afghanistan.

You can read that the person who established *hıfzısıhha* in Afghanistan was Dr. Rıfkı (Urga) Bey, who was very popular among Afghans, and that his room is preserved as a museum. Then, you can find detailed information about the Afghanistan Civil War, which is the main subject of the chapter, and witness the events experienced by Erman, who served as the coordinating ambassador during this period. The fact that Erman, who was able to be in close contact with all parties here due to the interest and love of the Afghan people for the Turks, provides a detailed account of the dynamics in Afghanistan in his article is important in acquiring information about the region.

In the ninth chapter of the work, titled “The 2nd Intifada/Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” (pp. 225-283), the distinguished ambassador Dr. Hüseyin Avni Bıçaklı shared the important events he experienced during his duty regarding the events between Israel and Palestine. Bıçaklı stated that he took office as the second secretary at the Tel Aviv Embassy in November 1986 and that the diplomatic representation between Turkey and Israel was carried out at the level of the second secretary. It is known that the reason behind this decision was the reaction to Israel’s declaration of Jerusalem *as the eternal capital* in 1980. Bıçaklı left his position as second secretary in September 1989 and went to his new post in Switzerland, and then was appointed as the chief of mission in Jerusalem on September 1, 2000. With this appointment, he became, in a sense, Turkey’s ambassador to the State of Palestine. Bıçaklı has shared important experiences and knowledge that should be acquired by those interested in the subject, especially Middle East experts. In this respect, considering the current events, this is an article that should definitely be included in the book and highly recommended reading.

The interviews in *Being a Diplomat in Difficult Times*, each of which is valuable in its own right, cover a wide geographical range of topics such as Cyprus, Iran, Western Thrace, Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Federal Germany, Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine. The fact that the diplomats who shared their experiences in the interviews are diplomats representing the diplomatic memory of the Republic of Turkey has made the book extremely valuable both for the history of Turkish diplomacy and for young diplomats. In addition, the fact that the experiences of diplomats who practiced their diplomatic profession in difficult times such as war, terrorism, attacks, civil wars and hostage-taking have been conveyed to the reader in a book has also greatly increased the value of the work. As a result, *Being a Diplomat in Difficult Times* has *taken* its place in the literature as a reference source for young diplomats as well as those interested in these issues.