

TURKEY AND THE UNITED STATES : A NEW ALLIANCE (1)

Fahir H. ARMAOĞLU

The ideas to be set forth in this lecture will start from a basic assumption: the necessity to keep the relations between Turkey and the United States at a certain minimum level. This necessity is not a prejudgment accepted without any dispute. This is a fact which makes itself acceptable upon close examination and a reappraisal of developments of the Turkish-American relations, experiences, logic and even today's objective conditions. One cannot easily urge Turkey to break off the existing ties with the United States unless it is purposely overlooked and eliminated the objective realities of these ties. It is a fact that there have taken place some important changes in the objective and subjective conditions which influenced Turkish-American relations in this or that way. But in spite of such changes, neither the benefits to the United States maintaining these relations with Turkey, nor the national interests to Turkey in preserving her relations with the United States at a certain level have been eliminated. As ex-President Eisenhower recently put it: "*We must remember that the cold war is never going to be over until the communists have clearly abandoned their purpose of world domination*".

Even if we disregard all this, we can't say that the development of close relations between the two countries has caused any substantial disadvantage to Turkey in terms of her national goals and vital security objectives. On the contrary, we must

(1) Text of a Lecture given at Turkish - American Association in Ankara on December 21, 1966, and at Turkish - American Association in Adana on March 10, 1966.

sincerely admit that we owe a lot to those relations. It is not easy to prove the opposite of this judgment to those who remember vividly, as we do, the cold days of a month of December full of anxiety, twenty years ago.

However, we don't intend to deny that some or a lot of mistakes have been committed on the part of both parties in their respective attitudes and actions. But the very existence of these relations is not an obstacle to the criticism and correction of past errors. On the other hand, we should turn to ourselves a little bit with an objective self-criticism in order to determine the sources of these mistakes. If we do this, our evaluations will, I am sure, be more objective and especially more correct.

I. *Change in objective conditions*

It is a fact that Turkish-American relations do not have any longer the same appearance and structure as they used to have twenty, or even ten, years ago. The underlying reason for this is that, compared with the past, many factors are nowadays in a position to affect those relations. Consequently, Turkish-American relations have become more complicated at present and their handling requires a great deal of skill and tact on both sides. So, if we analyze these factors, we believe, we will more or less be in a position to determine the elements that should be taken into consideration to give an appropriate direction to these relations.

We may take up the factors which have come to affect the relations existing between the two countries during the last ten years particularly in two categories. The first category of factors consists of those which made their appearance within the general frame-work of international relations. We describe the emergence of these factors as *the change in objective conditions*.

It would be an incomplete analysis to limit the factors that affect the relations between the two countries to the general development of international relations. There is no doubt that the developments within Turkey itself during the last ten years at least have brought to light some important new elements which made an impact to some extent on the relations between Turkey and the United States as much as they brought about some

changes in the atmosphere in Turkey. We prefer to qualify these changes in Turkey as *the change in subjective conditions*.

If it is necessary to indicate with one sentence, we should say that the change in objective conditions particularly consists in the passing of international relations in the last ten years from a bi-polar system to a multi-polarized or polycentric structure. It would not be wrong to assert that this change was an immediate following of Stalin's death and was also due to the course of action which has been adopted by collective leadership in the field of foreign policy as a consequence of power struggle within the Soviet government. Khrushchov's policy brought a thaw to the international relations in general and to the East-West relations in form and in atmosphere, if not in content. In fact, it is hard to deny that this apparent mildness in the Soviet foreign policy which was only a change in the tactics of international communism, was successful enough in presenting some sinister realities under a rosy light.

Beside this apparent change in Soviet foreign policy, some other developments also within both the Western and Eastern Blocs substantially contributed to give a new content and structure to international relations. In this context, we should mention, first of all, the emergence, in a relatively short time, as a result of independence movements, of new countries in large numbers, especially in the African continent, and the coming to an end of Western colonialism. The end of colonial era and the break with the West of the former colonies upset the latter, and from the standpoint of balance of power has weakened it vis-à-vis the Eastern Bloc.

But the Eastern Bloc, particularly the Soviet Union, was not in its turn able to maintain its advantage over the West. In fact, it could not find any way of maintaining it. Because, national independence movements in the colonies have greatly contributed to speed up the appearance of tendencies toward cracks and later splits within the Eastern Bloc. The end of colonialism became an important reason for the divergencies of views between the Soviet Union and Communist China on the policies to be pursued in transforming the independence movements into universal communism. While Communist China, with a clear view of the Soviet achievements in space and war technology, preferred to

use the method of violence in international relations, the Soviets, realistically evaluating the danger created for everyone by thermo-nuclear weapons, now seemed to have chosen a more cautious path.

The important effect of the Moscow-Peking split on the East was the sign of new attitudes of Bloc members as to change or to loosen their allegiance to Moscow. Thus the Eastern Bloc was beginning to slacken its characteristics of monolithism and to show polycentric tendencies. This was mainly responsible for the belief that the possible danger from the East was from now on not as imminent as it was recently.

The development of this polycentrism within the Eastern Bloc could have given an apparent advantage to the West in the balance of power relations. But this time it was the West which was not able to keep this advantage. Further developments of polycentrism in international relations and some pressures within the Soviet bloc itself toward more liberal ties with Moscow seems to have prompted President de Gaulle of France, in his turn, to a policy of his own which is commonly called "Grandeur de la France". However, it must be admitted that this new line of action adopted by de Gaulle's France has affected the West much more than the liquidation of colonialism.

Thus, the growing number of power centers and the increase in the elements which play a role in international politics have opened up new opportunities before the Powers in terms line of classical balance of power policy which is still valid in our world today. This is a fact. But we must not forget that the use of these new opportunities is not possible in the same degree for every Government, and that geopolitical factors still continue to retain their important place in the conduct of a country's foreign policy, since conventional armament has a substantial share in defensive systems despite all the developments in technological warfare. We should particularly not lose from sight that the present form and structure of international relations does not have the same impact on a government in equatorial Africa and one in Europe or Asia.

III. *Change in Subjective Conditions*

It was impossible for the change in objective conditions outside of Turkey not to affect Turkey and her foreign policy.

But it was another reality of Turkish foreign policy that Turkey seemed for a time unable to follow the changing circumstances in which international relations were taking a new course. One must, however, admit that the emergence of new forces in world arena and the new structure of international relations were not so obvious as we see them today as we look back now. This must be underlined by two reasons: (a) Changes in world conditions made themselves felt but after 1960's; (b) The political party in power between 1950-60 insisted upon keeping Turkish foreign relations within a rigid mold.

After the Revolution of May 27, 1960, developments which were taking place within Turkey itself seems to have gained momentum. The most interesting part of it was the fact that these rapid changes in subjective conditions of Turkey have generally directed themselves against the United States and, willy-nilly, was damaging for Turkish-American relations.

Let us summarize Turkey's subjective and internal developments.

1. *Revolution of May 27:*

Prior to this revolution the United States were successful enough to make mistakes in evaluating Turkey's internal developments. It is our sincere belief that the responsibility for this misjudgement principally lies with the American representatives in Turkey. We believe again that all American representatives in Turkey, no matter what function and mission they have, must avoid from now on quick judgements in evaluating the problems and developments this country is trying to tackle.

The erroneous evaluation of Turkish politics by the Americans before May 27 seems to be made in this way: From 1954-55 on, and especially from 1957 on, the party in power started losing its prestige among intellectuals, and the opposition by the intellectuals to the government became more effective as time went on. The foundations of the party in power began to appear to be shaky. Since the United States government was not able enough to notice this, it was insistent upon supporting the gradually weakening a party in power. This somewhat unrealistic attitude of American Government might be considered one of

the principal reasons for the rising tide of unsympathetic attitude towards America among Turkish intellectuals. On the other hand, the fact that the party in power acted so as to give the impression that it had growing support of the United States in the face of the gradually increasing internal opposition and the fact the United States did not care to take any step to deny this impression has greatly contributed to strengthen the anti-Americans in their feeling that their dislike was in essence justified.

Although the Turkish Armed Forces, which took power on the morning of May 27, confirmed their attachment to the Western alliances with which Turkey was bound, and did not give any sign of hostile feelings for the United States, the thought that the revolution of May 27 was at the same time also directed toward America was a widely shared view among intellectuals. Developments after 1961 and, as we shall later discuss, the emergence of a leftist movement in Turkey, and the American policy in the Cyprus conflict between Turkey and Greece were additional events that strengthened the hostility toward America, a hostility which was already carried over from before the May 27.

2. *Constitution of 1961*

The constitutional system brought about by the Constitution of 1961 has, on the other hand, given rise to results which were to change the old form of Turkish-American relations and were to have impacts, to some extent, on the nature of these relations. There is no doubt that the Constitution of 1961 is perhaps so perfect democratic a constitution that it went well beyond the structural conditions of Turkey. Besides that, this Constitution provided the leftist movement with broad opportunities of action to a degree never seen before in the period from the founding of the Republic until today.

These consequences, that is to say, on the one hand, the possibility to discuss freely every kind of subject within a broad system of freedoms, and on the other hand, the sudden emergence of a leftist movement which were taking advantage of this very liberal atmosphere, and even exploiting it, resulted in the fact that many subjects which had not been usually discussed before in internal politics of Turkey were from now on controversial

issues and objects of wide discussion and criticism. The matters concerning the foreign policy of Turkey were not the exceptions of this new development. There is no need to say that the leftist movement was seeking to reach, in the first place, its own objectives by reviving these discussions. To this end, they made the most serious attacks on Turkish-American relations and on the Western alliance with which Turkey was deliberately and heartily bound.

Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that this debate on Turkish foreign policy was not at all useless. First of all, this criticism was helpful indeed to clarify what was wrong with the relations between the United States and Turkey. We must admit that the hitches in the relations between the two countries were the natural outcome of the fact that these relations had lost touch with realities on certain points. This was especially true with regard to some important developments inside and outside of Turkey, and more important, to the continuing dependence on the rigid conditions of ten or fifteen years before.

3. *The Leftist Movement in Turkey*

We understand more clearly today that the leftist movement was operating with great skill before May 27 and that it suddenly emerged as a consequence of the 1961 Constitution. We do not intend here to go into the details of the character, the form and the methods of the leftist movement. We shall confine ourselves to the limits within which its activities were mainly concerning Turkish foreign policy.

The leftist movement which made its appearance clearly in early 1962, while it was defending a philosophy of a new social order, was, interestingly enough, directing most severe criticism toward the practice of Turkish foreign policies. While doing this, and without trying to impose any specific line on Turkish foreign policy, it has chosen apparently an innocent way of making the general outlook of this foreign policy but a subject of debate and discussion. What was lying behind these methods of action was that it was trying to provoke and increase doubts about the very foundations and the correctness of principles on which the current Turkish foreign policy was based. Following this step, it

was intended to present neutralism as a chief alternative to the current line of action adopted in Turkey's international relations. The present endeavours of leftism in contemporary Turkey to divert Turkish course of action in international politics from present objectives do not present any difference as compared to five or six years ago. It is understood that after it has been successful in changing the main trend of Turkey's international relations and when neutralism is a fundamental of Turkish foreign policy, it would not be difficult to establish close ties between the Eastern Bloc and Turkey.

As one can conclude from the foregoing that the most important point in these leftist tactics consists of separating Turkey from the United States and, to this end strengthening a widespread anti-Americanism in this country. At present, all the activities of this kind seems to have affected but only a small portion of Turkish public opinion. However, we must not overlook the fact that all the efforts in this direction try systematically, and from time to time effectively, to have larger grip on a wider section of the Turkish people. For this reason, it is our belief that the United States should always count the existence of this element in its relations with Turkey, and must take necessary measures to free these bilateral relations from this adverse influence. The very first step that should be made is to keep in mind at all times that factors conditioning Turkish-American relations are not the same as they were, let us say, ten years ago.

4. *Cyprus Dispute*

It can be fairly argued that until the middle of 1964 the efforts deployed by the leftist movement to disturb Turkish-American relations had not achieved any real progress. But the attitude chosen by U.S. Government with regard to the Cyprus conflict, and especially the fact that it preferred to close its eyes to the most justified position of Turkey in the case, with the sole purpose of a simple policy of balance of power in the region, created the paradoxical situation that the opportunity for which the leftist movement was looking was provided by the United States Government itself.

The Cyprus conflict, and particularly the developments of the first 8-9 months, did not at all directly affect the conduct of

Turkish foreign policy. But this same period was also a test and trial for the relations between the two countries. When this test and trial ended with a great disillusion from the standpoint of the wishes and expectations of Turkish public opinion, the establishment of a close relationship between the Cyprus affair and the changing tendencies in Turkish foreign policy was unescapably a conclusion.

The U.S. Government, while considering the Church and the Monarchy in Greece as the pillars of stability, viewed the new conditions of Turkey which were brought about by the Constitution of 1961 as evident signs of a precarious situation and upon which it built up the whole structure of its Cyprus policy. In a sense, America was not completely unjustified in taking such a position, especially after it has witnessed, between 1960 and 1963, some attempts by the military to end the civilian rule again. But it was a serious mistake for the United States to establish a long term policy on the basis of these short-lived developments. As a matter of fact, efforts and developments toward stability in Turkey during 1965-66, as expressed through the general elections of 1965, showed in a single year how much erroneous was the American evaluation of Turkish politics. But the outcome of this mistake was harmful and damaging for Turkish-American relations the repair of which will no doubt take some time. In this connection, it would not be wrong to see a parallel between the American policies pursued in the Kashmir dispute and those applied to the Cyprus conflict. To the extent that while the failure of American policy in Kashmir was mainly responsible in bringing Pakistan closer to Communist China, its mistakes in Cyprus have encouraged Turkey to readjust her relations with the Soviet Union again. Consequently, by pushing Turkey toward the Soviet Union, United States was successful enough in making the task of the Soviet policy easy.

5. *Turkey and Europe*

The general situation in Europe twenty years ago and the great vacuum created in the European balance of power as the consequence of World War II had substantially contributed to bring Turkey and the United States together. It is a historical fact that Turkey has always sought to counter-balance the threats

coming from abroad by a recourse to the inter-play of forces prevailing in Europe. But since the existing circumstances in Europe had been far away from providing this traditional possibility for Turkey after the last war, this country have had nothing to do but to turn to American alliance.

Today's Europe, leaving far behind the dark days of twenty years ago, is now deeply involved in a new inter-play of forces. This new form and structure of European international relations seems to have given some European governments the chances to recuperate the possibilities for the removal of the United States from continental scene. It is a common belief in some European circles that Europe is back again in its own era of classical diplomacy and has finally established its own balance of power.

We can hardly share the views expressed and the assumptions put forward to the effect that Europe is now able itself to re-establish the continental balance of power particularly to create an independent counter-weight against the long-term Soviet policies. And for this reason we should indicate our disapproval of the efforts made to exclude American presence from Europe.

However, putting aside all the details of a discussion concerning the relationship between the United States and Europe, we should rather point out that the European developments which have taken place in recent years in Europe have been a point of interest to Turkey in two ways: (1) In our world today in which geographical factors continues still to have their own impact on international relations Turkey is bound to follow closely what is going on all about in Europe. And, furthermore, from an international point of view, all these developments in Europe will willy-nilly have to have an influence on Turkey to some degree. (2) The European Economic Community, i.e. Common Market, has already begun to take Turkey under its influence. Taking into serious consideration the important role played by geography and distance factor especially in international economic relations we can easily admit that Turkey is obliged to have close partnership, for its own future, with the European Common Market. The economic links between Europe and Turkey will, of course, automatically and to a substantial degree, force the latter to have political ties too with the former.

All of these developments which took place in Europe during recent years have become factors affecting Turkish relations.

IV. *Evaluation of the Changes*

In view of these objective and subjective changes that we tried to explain, if we think that relations between the two countries should continue within the framework of friendship, we should say that both Turkey and the United States must take into consideration all these changes with regard their respective attitudes and policies.

We should record here with great satisfaction that the U.S. Government has been recently careful enough as to observe the three of the five factors which have been enumerated and explained above. That is to say, the United States, in its policies towards Turkey, tries to avoid the mistakes she made before May 27, closely follows the intellectual movements in Turkey, admitting that a new democratic order is in operation, makes new adjustments, and, finally, acting on the basis of the fact there is a leftist movement in Turkey, tries to formulate new attitudes accordingly. In short, the United States is now tending to smooth the sharp edges in Turkish-American relations, inherited from the period of 1950-60 and not approved by Turkish public opinion.

However, unless the Cyprus dispute between Greece and Turkey reaches a solution satisfactory for the Turkish public opinion, the errors committed by the United States in the handling of this affair will continue to be damaging for the relations between the two countries. One should not forget that in Turkey there is a party in power which is at the right of the center, and an opposition party at the left of the center, and an extreme left with the tactics of making the United States responsible for every problem of Turkish foreign policy. On the other hand, because of the reactions which it may arouse, the settlement of the Cyprus problem in this or that direction will greatly affect the nature of Turkish foreign policy in the future. Consequently, if the U.S. Government attaches any importance to its ties with Turkey, it must agree that it still has a serious responsibility in finding a solution to Cyprus conflict and must deploy serious efforts to look for that this solution will not be unjust for Turkey and the Cypriot Turks.

As for Turkey's relations with Europe and especially the Common Market, we should keep in mind certain points. In the first place, the changing conditions in and out of Turkey have led her to a multi-lateral foreign policy in which Europe constitutes one of the essential elements. Secondly, Turkey's connections with Europe today are based on long-term economic rather than political considerations, Common Market as being the central point. Thirdly, European developments have not yet made this continent the most essential basis of Turkish foreign policy as it was before. Finally, a sharp distinction must be made between the nature of the factors which connect Turkey to Europe and those which push Turkey to the United States. Relations between Europe and Turkey are not of a nature to cause any radical change in Turkish-American relations. Furthermore, as long as NATO exists, Europe will stay as a common link between Turkey and the United States.

V. Need for a New Alliance: A Flexible Alliance

After our attempt to analyse recent developments of the relations between Turkey and the United States, it seems necessary that we should find answers to some crucial questions. Is the existence of an alliance between these two countries necessary? Or, do the changing international conditions not necessitate this kind of an alliance any more? Have the paths of Turkey and the United States been separated?

What has brought Turkey and the United States closer twenty years ago was the imminent danger of expansionism of international communism directed from Moscow. It would be naive to think that dangers emanating from Moscow have been completely thwarted. On the contrary, the very nature of objectives of Soviet foreign policy and international communism do not present any difference from the past, and, despite all apparent thaws, it has not lost any bit of its dangerous and threatening nature which still includes Turkey in its sphere of expansion. As compared to the past, the only difference lies in the fact that, as a result of the intrinsic nature of its own conditions and due to the developments within the structure of international relations, in general, the Soviets are resorting now to milder methods of

policy and, consequently, any strong Soviet pressure on Turkey seems to have removed. But, as we are witnessing on many occasions, the Soviets and international communism have never given up their subversive activities and are closely watching opportunities to strike suddenly, politically and in terms of local wars.

Then, there is nothing more normal for Turkey than to take measures to protect its own security against unfortunate eventualities. Since Turkey does not have today enough strength of its own to set the balance against threats coming from outside, she has to lean for some time against an outside power. This can be NATO or any other alliance. But we should not lose from sight the fact that when Turkey pressed for NATO membership, she was seeking first of all to have an alliance with the United States.

On the other hand, in spite of all these realities, there are attempts today in our country to withdraw Turkey from all alliances and in doing so to condemn her to an isolation. Even if we assume that Turkey is far from dangers and threats, the geographic and geo-political location of this country forces it to get involved in the inter-play of balance of power combinations rather than shifting it to a neutralist and non-aligned line. When we take a look around at the countries surrounding Turkey, we will have no difficulty at all in catching the very fact that each of these neighbouring countries represents a typical position of its own. That is to say, Turkey is surrounded with a belt having very precarious elements. If we add to this the Great Powers deeply involved in the area with their conflicting policies, we can duly appreciate how complex a situation Turkey has in this part of the world. Due to the complexities, consequently instability, of international politics at this crossroads of three continents at which Turkey constitutes a central point we, the Turks, have to be alert and vigilant at all times with regard our own security, instead of slipping into a neutralist bloc.

It becomes quite obvious from the foregoing that Turkey and the United States have the same paths to follow. But it is also clear that, despite the ever existing danger, we need to re-adapt Turkish-American relations to the changing conditions of international order. But in what sense and in which direction?

We rather think that bilateral relations between Turkey and the United States should be handled within the framework of a new alliance which we call the Flexible Alliance. Let us try to inquire briefly about the nature and features of this new system of relations between the two countries.

The most distinctive feature of the Flexible Alliance is that, rather than operating within the rigid limits of written documents, it should develop and strengthen the domain of moral and spiritual values common to both countries. This is necessary because, although in comparison with the past the world has become much more interdependent prevalent tendency in international relations of our time has been the fact that no nation approves any action which might give the impression of an interference into others' internal affairs. This is a point which the United States must care most in the future with regard its relations with Turkey. Respecting this principle, there is no doubt that cooperation and close contacts between the two countries will concentrate on the expansion of common values and principles. The expansion and development of common values may strengthen our bilateral relations to the extent that it would be substantially easy to activate a natural alliance between the two countries in any case in which these values are endangered.

It may be argued that unless such a kind of alliance is materially supported and strengthened it would not endure sufficiently the tests of times of crises. That is true. But contemporary international conditions have brought to light some disadvantages of the extreme rigidity of alliances based only on material relations. Here, an alliance based on military partnership come to the fore.

In present-day Turkey leftist circles and some intellectuals who pretend to be impartial attack vehemently, each from his own standpoint, both Turkish-American relations and NATO. We sincerely believe that *military ties* between Turkey and the United States should develop within the framework of collective partnership of NATO, not within the narrow limits of bilateral relations. On the other hand, we strongly oppose the complete elimination of bilateral *military relations* with the United States. In this connection we must say great responsibilities are incumbent upon both parties. For Turkey, it is to its own interest to

safeguard her military relations with the United States. For the United States, the objective of her bilateral military relations with Turkey should not be a naked "policy of influence" but should aim at bringing Turkey up to a point where she can defend herself alone with modern conventional armament. Turkey must be kept up at a level at which she may be able to face by herself a reasonably limited crisis directed to her from without.

Another material measure for the safeguarding of common moral values and principles is the necessity that Turkey must achieve a rapid economic development. In a society in economic collapse neither these moral values can save anything, nor can they maintain their existence. Whether from within or from without, Communism always finds a fertile ground in economic ruins. Therefore, it is vitally important that Turkey should economically develop if we seriously care for the protection of our common values which will be the core of the new Turkish-American alliance against odd possibilities. We are confident that these common values will become powerful enough on the very day Turkey stands on her own feet economically.

Mention should also be made here that American economic aid to Turkey creates opposition and causes some criticism in this country. But those who prefer to take such an adverse attitude should not overlook the other side of medallion. The United States, as people and government, are not any more as generous as they were before in giving away economic aid to other countries. Because she is not anymore eager to buy antipathies with her own money. No reasonable objection can be found to such a change of attitude and policies. But, even if so, this new trend of American policy of economic aid and assistance should be applied much more carefully when Turkey is in question. United States has a responsibility in Turkey's planned economic development and must fulfill some time more her responsibilities with regard to Turkey.

In short, our Flexible Alliance which will include all these conditions and characteristics must not be a rigid alliance squeezed into the inflexible mold of classical alliances, but must be an alliance with strong spiritual foundations which provides wide range of freedom of action for both parties during the peace, but can immediately meet the conditions of times of crisis and tension.