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Parliamentary Debates (1992-1995): A
Constructivist Approach***

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The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkish Parliamentary Debates (1992-1995): A Constructivist Approach

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ABSTRACT

While fully engaged in efforts of suppressing the armed violence in the former Yugoslavia at the turn of the century, Ankara could foresee the coming events, repeatedly called for immediate multilateral action, and argued adamantly about who the aggressor and victim were as opposed to the relevant ambiguity in the West. Central to policy formulations at political parties were Turkey's Balkan heritage/identity, stance against aggression, and the significance of Balkan routes for Turkey. Drawing upon detailed empirical data obtained from parliamentary discussions in three frames, this study examines under which circumstances the Turkish 'state', its identity, interests and intersubjectivities were at work shaping Turkey's foreign policy towards Bosnia. Finally, it is emphasized that Ankara's foreign policy towards the war was competent despite coalition governments composed of different political mainstreams.

Keywords: Turkey, Parliament, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, UN.

Bosna-Hersek Savaşı ve Türk Parlamento Görüşmeleri (1992-1995): İnşacı Bir Yaklaşım

ÖZET

Ankara, bu yüzyılın sonuna doğru eski Yugoslavya'daki silahlı şiddet olaylarının bastırılmasına yönelik çabalara bütünüyle dâhil olmuşken, meydana gelebilecek olayları önceden görebilmiş, sürekli olarak derhal çok taraflı müdahale çağrısında bulunmuş ve Batı'daki konuya ilişkin müphem durumun aksine saldırgan ve mağdur ayrımına dair kararlı bir tutum sergilemiştir. Siyasi partilerin politikalarının temelinde Türkiye'nin Balkan mirası/kimliği, saldırganlığa karşı duruşu ve Balkan geçiş yollarının Türkiye için önemi bulunmaktaydı. Bu çalışma, üç zaman diliminde ele alınan meclis tartışmalarından elde edilen ayrıntılı ampirik verilerden yola çıkarak, inşacı çerçevede Türk 'devleti'nin, kimliğinin, çıkarlarının ve karşılıklı öznelliklerinin hangi koşullarda işlediğini incelemektedir. Son olarak, Ankara'nın savaşa ilişkin dış politikasının, farklı siyasi geleneklerden gelen partilerin oluşturduğu koalisyon hükümetleri bulunmasına rağmen iyi hazırlanmış olduğu belirtilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Parlamento, Bosna-Hersek, Sırbistan, BM.

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Introduction

This Examination of Turkey's foreign policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war and its aftermath aims at analyzing the conditions under which the debates generated by incumbent governments and opposition parties in the Turkish Parliament and foreign policies of incumbent coalition governments influence the foreign policy making process. During the three-year war, opposition parties in the parliament contested Turkey's "inaction" during the war and even went to great lengths by advocating unilateral intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina out of religious sentiment as well as nationalistic hubris. However, the decision-makers did not deviate from the foreign policy line of multilateral intervention, active diplomacy, and public support to Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹ Ankara was also adamant about who the aggressor and victim were as opposed to the initial ambiguity in the West. Although some influential political actors in Turkey viewed the conflict as such, the decision-makers never substituted the notion of Christian-Muslim conflict for mass murder.

By and large, Turkey's Bosnian policy during the war rested on three pillars in the larger picture: its identity as to the Balkan heritage, stance against aggression as the ultimate objective, and to keep the Balkan land/air routes open as they were the major access routes to Europe in terms of trade as the main interest. Furthermore, Turkey tried not to sever its diplomatic relations with Serbia throughout the whole ordeal although both parties had their differences. Within a constructivist perspective, this study examines how the interplay between the embedded identity of the state as to the Balkan heritage, its long-term national interests and immediate foreign policy goals constructed the relevant policies of the political parties in the parliament throughout the war. The study is organized to unfold in five parts, the first of which provides the

¹ From the beginning of the war in April 1992, until the end of it in November 1995, four governments served in Turkey for rather short terms. From 20 November 1991 to 25 June 1993, the 7th Demirel government (49th government), which was a coalition of True Path Party (TPP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*, center-right) and Social Democratic People's Party (SDPP, *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*, center-left), held power. The second government was also a coalition of these parties which held power between 25 June 1993 and 5 October 1995, known as the 1st Çiller government (50th government). After SDPP joined Republican People's Party (RPP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, center-left) on 18 February 1995, TPP – RPP coalition began. The third was the TPP government, known as the 2nd Çiller government, which held power between 5 October 1995 and 30 October 1995 (51st government). Holding power between 30 October 1995 and 6 March 1996, the successor of this government was the 3rd Çiller government, which was a coalition of TPP and RPP (52nd government). The opposition parties in the same period were Motherland Party (MP, *Anavatan Partisi*, center-right), RPP, Democratic Left Party (DLP, *Demokratik Sol Parti*, center-left), Nationalist Movement Party (NMP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, center-right) and Welfare Party (WP, *Refah Partisi*, pro-Islamic). Throughout the article, the English abbreviations of the parties shall be used.

basic premises of constructivism as the theoretical framework to be employed. The second part, which provides the empirical data of the study, constitutes the first section of parliamentary debates between 1991 and 1992, to be followed by third and fourth parts exploring relevant discussions between 1993 and 1994; and in 1995, respectively. The fifth part is the presentation of a way to construe parliamentary debates on the war in a constructivist framework. It concludes that viewed through the constructivist framework, even in the most challenging of times, Ankara's foreign policy making towards the war was consistent and productive, compared to its western counterparts.

Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism

Labelling constructivism as a structural theory of the international system, Alexander Wendt lists its basic tenets as follows:

- (1) states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory;
- (2) the key structures in the states system are intersubjective, rather than material; and
- (3) state identities and interests are in important part constructed by these social structures, rather than given exogenously to the system by human nature or domestic politics.²

With the first and second premises, constructivism subscribes to the argument that states are the principal actors and the structures of the international system are important. And in the third premise, it points to identities and interests as constructed by the social as the well as material world. That being said, the constructivist view of the policy formulations of the Turkish state towards the war in Bosnia fits in with the argument that the policy considerations of the state involved standing against aggression and keeping Balkan routes open within its own material capacities and abilities, which were shaped not in a purely rationally defined manner, but also around intersubjectivities.

Regarding the third proposition, Wendt maintains that "a world in which identities and interests are learned and sustained by intersubjectively grounded practice, by what states think and do, is one which 'anarchy is what states make of it'"³ In other words, actors view the material world through their own lenses and make their own interpretation of it. Constructivism focuses on this lens

² Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No 2, June 1994, p. 385. See also Birgöl Demirtaş-Coşkun, "Ankara ve Berlin'in Bosna Savaşı'na Yönelik Politikaları: Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, Vol. 4, No 13, Spring 2007, p. 62-63.

³ As cited in Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 39-40.

which shapes the identity and interests of the state in question. According to constructivism, identities can change through interaction and shape interests.⁴ As regards the war in Bosnia, the state identity of Turkey embedded in mutual social structures and its Balkan heritage were significant in the policy formulations of the Parliament throughout the war, which, for instance, led to Ankara's marked distinction between the victim and aggressor right from the beginning of the ordeal, unlike the ambiguous, if not aloof, attitude in the West which viewed the conflict as a civil war. Furthermore, constructivism offers a useful tool to the study of international relations also when exploring the concept of responsibility; and in our case, this appraisal is applied to the war in Bosnia. Constructivist theories accept as given a reality from which to start an investigation and they start from "what they posit this reality to be".⁵ More specifically, what is important is how to deal with being part of a reality through interpretations and our practices. Put differently, whether we feel responsible or not shall mostly depend on our interpretation of a reality. The concept of responsibility in constructivist theorizing has eventually brought up the question of how to respond to others' needs "without losing oneself or further endangering both the other and oneself".⁶ Here, constructivism offers a plausible explanation to ascertain political parties' portrayal of the "reality" in Bosnia and their search of possibilities for responsible action, including intervention.

Accordingly, the next sections demonstrate the empirical evidence in examining how these parameters were found to be at work in the parliamentary discussions shaping Turkey's policy towards the war in Bosnia, and investigate whether they proved to be in force all along the war or whether disruptions became possible.

Prelude to and Initial Phases of War (1990 – 1992)

In the years preceding the war, Turkey and Yugoslavia had friendly relations which were recorded particularly in the economic venue. Shortly before the war erupted, State Minister Cemil Çiçek (MP) went Belgrade to attend the 8th Meeting of the Turkish – Yugoslavian Economic Cooperation Joint Commission. Five months later, Yalım Erez, President of the Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges (TOBB), stated that joint investments could be launched between the two states to sell goods to third parties.⁷ In October 1990, the second Turkish – Yugoslavian Business Conference produced the memorandum of understanding signed by Yalım Erez and Milan Pavic, President of the

⁴ Ibid., p.41–43; and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity–Constructivist Approach*, New York, Routledge, 2003, p.15-33.

⁵ Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations*, p.254–255.

⁶ Ibid., p.258.

⁷ "Yalım Erez: Ortak Yatırım Yapalım", *Tercüman*, 13 October 1990.

Yugoslav Economic Chamber.⁸ This reason was enough to argue that in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the two states continued to preserve their economy-wise intersubjective practices and their interests in this domain remained unadulterated.

When separatist tendencies became visible by 1991, Ankara maintained that the constituent republics should resolve their disputes through negotiation, on several occasions, including during Bosnian President Aliya İzzetbegović's visit to Ankara on 15 July, Foreign Minister Safa Giray's (MP) visit to Sarajevo on 30 August, and a Turkish delegation's visit to Yugoslavia on 23 October, respectively.⁹ After the irreversible disintegration process set in, Turkey recognized Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia in February 1992.

In the diplomatic venue, Turkey's initiatives for Bosnia-Herzegovina had been so prioritized in the first half of the 1990s that the Balkans were viewed as "Bosnia and the rest of the Balkans" from the official Turkish perspective.¹⁰ Shortly after supporting the continuation of the *status quo* in the initial phases of war, Turkey changed its position upon increasing Serbian aggression and the irreversible wave of disintegration. The new policy was threefold: to bring an end to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and preserve its independence; to prevent the spillover effect of war in Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Sandjak and Vojvodina; and to draw international attention to the crisis through every diplomatic means possible.¹¹

In the face of increasing attacks, Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin (SDPP) announced that Turkey could send troops to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in January 1992 upon request. The European Community (EC) recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1992, which was welcomed by Turkey. Thereafter, skirmishes turned into full-scale fighting. Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel stated that Turkey would bring the issue to the agenda in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in April 1992. Ankara sent a diplomatic delegation to Belgrade in April 1992 for a six-day visit to hold contacts with the political leaders of Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and missions of the EC and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

⁸ "Üçüncü Ülkelere Yatırım Yapalım", *Milliyet*, 14 October 1990.

⁹ Şule Kut, "Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives for Bosnia-Herzegovina", Günay Göksu Özdoğan and Kemal Saybaşı (eds.), *Balkans – A Mirror of the New International Order*, İstanbul, Eren, 1995, p. 299.

¹⁰ Şule Kut, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Türkiye'nin Balkan Ülkeleriyle İlişkileri", İsmail Sosyal (der.), *Çağdaş Türk Diplomasisi: 200 Yıllık Süreç*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999, s. 395.

¹¹ Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish Security in the Shifting Balkans: Reorientation to a Regional Focus", Kosta Tsipis (ed.), *Common Security Regimes in the Balkans*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 102.

(CSCE). Meanwhile, Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Muhammed Cengic called Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister Erdal İnönü (SDPP) to say that despite the recent ceasefire, Serb militia could not be controlled and asked for support.¹² Subsequently, Özal contacted George Bush, François Mitterrand, King Fahd, Hashimi Rafsanjani, and Hosni Mubarak for active support.¹³ Nevertheless, the opposition parties such as the DLP accused the government of being indifferent to Bosnia-Herzegovina by stating that not even a single Turkish minister was sent to Sarajevo, but, instead high-ranking bureaucrats went to Belgrade.¹⁴

As seen in bilateral economic contacts, during the initial phases of war, the positive mutual perceptions between Ankara and Belgrade remained unchanged in the economic venue. However, in face of increasing Serbian aggression in Bosnia, the two states would now have to re-accommodate these mutual perceptions. Subsequently, Ankara played a very active role in the diplomatic venue to stop the war instead of employing a *status quo* rhetoric. However, these efforts did not reflect uniformity on the part of the political parties in Turkey. Political parties converged on stopping the war, but the question as to how to do this brought about discussions in the Parliament, therefore, questioning Ankara's identities and interests.

Escalating War and Increasing Discord in the Parliament (1993–1994)

At the outset of war, in April 1992, State Minister Akın Gonen (TPP) announced that Turkey officially recognized Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia on 6 February 1992 and relations with these new republics would be regulated by the Turkish embassy in Belgrade.¹⁵ Mustafa Baş (WP) emphasized that just as the country-wide spirit of support during the Turkish – Greek War in 1919 - 1922, Turkey's support to Bosnia must display the same intensity and vigor. Baş described the government's attitude as weak after Aliya Izzetbegovic was taken into custody.¹⁶ He stated that after Izzetbegovic's arrest, the government preferred to question the accuracy of the event itself instead of showing an active stance, while Italy, for instance, expressly stated that Izzetbegovic must be released immediately. Baş's speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly (hereinafter referred to as "Parliament") manifested the

¹² "Boşnaklardan Ankara'ya 'İmdat' Telefonu", *Hürriyet* 15 April 1992.

¹³ "Özal, Bosna-Hersek İçin Çağrıda Bulundu", *Cumhuriyet*, 19 April 1992.

¹⁴ "Bosna-Hersek Katliamı Kınandı", *Cumhuriyet*, 27 April 1992.

¹⁵ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 69. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 28 Nisan 1992, Vol. 9, p. 395-396.

¹⁶ Aliya Izzetbegovic was taken into custody on 2 May 1992 and released within 24 hours.

worldview of WP when he stated that they wanted to see the spirit of the 13th century Ottoman Sultan Murat and Osman Gazi in the government.¹⁷

A week later, Bosnian Deputy Minister Muhammed Cengic stated at the Turkish Parliament that Bosnian officials thought the West would not allow ethnic cleansing in the middle of Europe and that the crises in Europe had now become a thing of the past. As the weak measures taken by the UN did not suffice for even moving physically from one point to another in Sarajevo, the Bosnians looked to Turkey for help.¹⁸

On the same day, Adnan Kahveci of MP maintained that the government did not take on an active stance but had developed a new sort of diplomacy that he labeled “statement diplomacy,” based on nice talk and nothing more. Kahveci said that the OSCE was not an effective organization to deter Serbia, and in black humor, added that it was possible to describe the acronym as “*Allah’ın Gariplerinin İç Dökme Klübü*” (Poor Men’s Club of Effusion) in Turkish (AGİK).¹⁹

The session proceeded with Ismail Cem speaking on behalf of SDPP, emphasizing that he spoke on behalf of his group and not the government. Cem described the situation in Bosnia as massacre and not “war” and stated that Turkey engaged in futile attempts by calling upon international organizations such as the OSCE.²⁰ The main problem according to Cem was the failure of aid delivery attempts of medicine and food. He proposed that Turkey withdraw its ambassador to Serbia just as the EC had done.²¹

Speaking on behalf of TPP, Coşkun Kırca touched upon the arms transfer issue. Kırca stated that the issue should not even be mentioned either by the government or the opposition.²² If and when there was to be arms procurement, it would be revealed years later as their transfer and use were confidential issues. He said that UN peace forces could only be stationed in Bosnia after a ceasefire. As such, Turkey could do something else and that was to get the Western organizations to think that the new Serbia did not and could not represent former Yugoslavia in legal terms, and convince the West not to recognize Serbia as a natural successor of the latter. The second option was to cut off diplomatic relations. Third, Turkey should immediately apply to the Security Council.

¹⁷ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 72. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 5 May 1992, Vol. 10, p.247–248. “Saraybosna’da Ateşkes Kısa Sürdü” *Milliyet*, 4 May 1992; “İnönü: Bosna’da Durum Vahim”, *Milliyet*, 4 May 1992.

¹⁸ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 75. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 12 May 1992, Vol. 1, p.21–22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Fourth, Turkey should invite the Security Council to implement the provisions of Section 7 of the UN Charter. Fifth, Turkey should invite the Security Council to impose economic, trade, transportation, and communication embargo against Serbia. Sixth, talks within NATO should begin to discuss possible military measures.²³

Following Kırca, Vehbi Dinçerler (MP) stated that Turkey faced a serious test especially since FM Çetin held the presidency of Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, which put additional responsibility upon Turkey with respect to taking an active stance.²⁴ Dinçerler maintained that Bosnian Deputy PM Cengic had come to Turkey before an official visit on 12 May 1992 and called on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when Cengic and senior officials had lengthy talks with maps open upon which it was decided to send a hundred thousand tons of fuel-oil via one point through the sea. It was soon reported that at least twenty-five thousand tons had reached Bosnia. This meant that aid could reach although the airports and railways had been closed.²⁵

The succeeding discussion on the war was held on 20 May 1992. FM Çetin maintained that efforts were primarily based on forwarding medicine and food aid and emphasized that opening and functioning of the airport in Sarajevo must be ensured under the supervision of international organizations.²⁶ Following Çetin, Mesut Yılmaz (MP) stated that there had been quite a significant misunderstanding between MP and the government regarding the issue of sending troops to Bosnia. MP never supported any suggestion that included Turkey's unilateral intervention in military terms. It supported all diplomatic initiatives in which the government was engaged. More importantly, Yılmaz described their point of divergence as follows: if the government took diplomatic initiative to halt the armed conflict, that initiative had to have a sufficient degree of deterrence to be effective. According to Yılmaz, Turkey had the power of deterrence but it did not use it. Yılmaz said that in case the Parliament opens the issue of multilateral intervention to discussion, MP would agree to grant authority to send troops to Bosnia.²⁷

In the same session, Bülent Ecevit (DLP) criticized those who maintained that the proposals by DLP were based on military solutions. He particularly pinpointed Mümtaz Soysal's (SDPP) comment in which he accused those who wanted concrete and effective measures as "little Enver Pashas".²⁸ However,

²³ Ibid., p. 50-51.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 54.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 56.

²⁶ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 78. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 20 May 1992, Vol. 11, p. 207.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 208.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 232. Enver Pasha was a pro-German military officer and the leader of the Young Turk revolution who also served as War Minister in the Ottoman State. He had pan-

Ecevit said that he never suggested that Turkey become a unilateral interventionist into the war in Bosnia. He submitted his proposal in two headings, the first of which suggested that a force unit similar to Poised Hammer must be set up in Bosnia. Second, Turkey should immediately call upon all countries of former Yugoslavia to convene in Istanbul and leave the EC out of the process.²⁹

No particular session was held for the discussion of the issue in length after 20 May 1992. Developments in Bosnia were deliberated only three months later, on 25 August 1992. This extraordinary session about Bosnia involved heavy criticism of the government.³⁰ In this session, Kamran Inan (MP) warned that Albania and Macedonia would be drawn into the conflict which could lead to a Third Balkan War. Therefore, the most viable strategy according to Inan was to issue an ultimatum to Serbia, giving it twenty four hours for ceasefire. If the Serbs refused, the next step would be to carry out an air bombardment. Inan observed that this was already echoed in the leading British newspapers such as *The Observer* and *London Times* and was not a new strategy. In line with the arguments of other members of Parliament both from the government and opposition, he maintained that Turkey had a moral and historical responsibility which should have prompted Ankara to be preponderant in getting the issue discussed in the U.S. Congress and the European capitals, which he thought had not been accomplished yet.³¹

Meanwhile, Serbian Prime Minister Milan Panic visited Turkey and asked Ankara not to intervene in the Bosnian conflict. Panic called on the Turkish military and proposed to PM Demirel that the Yugoslav Army, under the command of Turkish officers, seize all the weapons in Bosnia and demilitarize the area, which was not welcomed by Ankara³². Inan protested the official reception of the Serbian PM in Ankara. However, more disturbing was a press statement which included the following remark: "Turkey and Yugoslavia invite all parties fighting in Bosnia to bring an end to war".³³ Inan harshly criticized

Turkist objectives on the basis of which he wanted to unite the Muslim-Turkic peoples of Central Asia against Bolshevism, as well as British imperialism in India, which he failed to realize when he was killed in Bukhara in 1922. Seemingly, the reference was made to Enver Pasha's interventionist attitude with the aim of drawing attention to the relevant similarity on the part of those in the parliament who favored unilateral military intervention to Bosnia.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Ankara, Bosna-Hersek İçin Tek Vücut", *Cumhuriyet*, 26 August 1992.

³¹ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 94. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 25 August 1992, Vol. 16, p.44.

³² "Paniç, Türk Subayı İstedi", *Milliyet*, 13 August 1992.

³³ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 94. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 25 August 1992, Vol. 16, p.48.

this statement as it implied that aggressor and victim were treated as two legally and legitimately warring sides.³⁴

The harshest criticism against the government came from Necmettin Erbakan (WP) who accused both the government and international organizations. Erbakan emphasized that the government acted very belatedly in convening the Parliament, that is, after Bosnia was almost totally destroyed. He saw a causal link between the events in Bosnia and what he called the influence of “certain Zionist and other” elements who infused in their societies the idea that Muslims had to be wiped out from Europe.³⁵ Erbakan was struck by the fact that the government dismissed arguments suggesting a polarization between Islam and Christianity while, for instance, Velibor Estovic, Yugoslav Information Minister, openly said they had inherited and undertaken the mission of the Crusaders.³⁶

The OIC foreign ministers had convened in Istanbul in June 1992 at the end of which the international community was called upon to intervene militarily. Furthermore, Turkey allocated a cargo aircraft by which \$ 1.7 million aid was sent to Bosnia. In reply to Erbakan’s arguments, İnönü said that a total of sixteen deliveries were received in Bosnia. The Red Crescent procured \$ 240,000 in aid including food and medicine which was delivered in November 1991. Three tons of medicine and other medical equipment were sent by Turkish Airlines in May 1992. Turkish cargo aircraft carried similar aid of ten tons to Zagreb, Croatia. İnönü refuted the allegations by the opposition as Turkey provided accommodation for more than 15,000 refugees. A Turkish vessel participated in the marine force stationed in the Adriatic for the supervision of embargo on Serbia.³⁷ İnönü reminded participants that Turkey had submitted the Action Plan for Bosnia to the ambassadors of UN Security Council to Ankara in early August 1992. As such, Turkey was the only state to prepare and submit such a plan by then.³⁸ Yet, Ecevit argued that Turkey did not have a well-defined Balkan policy.³⁹

³⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 84.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 95; the plan proposed that the Security Council allow military intervention if the political efforts of the Security Council did not prove effective, the heavy artillery were not handed over to the UN in two weeks, and the fighting did not end in forty-eight hours. In the military operation to be carried out, Banja Luka Airport used by the Serbs would be the first target. The secondary targets would be the heavy Serb artillery deployed on the Bosnian hills. The neighboring states would be called upon to open their airports for use by the UN aircraft. Countries that possessed aircraft carriers would send their fleets to the Adriatic Sea to support the operation. The Action Plan did not target Serbia proper but was against Serbian aggression in Bosnia; see Kut, “Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives”, p.302;

Eventually, this extraordinary session produced the following parameters: 1) The Parliament does not and shall not accept any forced change in the territorial integrity and the boundaries of Bosnia, 2) The Parliament is in solidarity with the Bosnian Muslims subjected to one of the most severe massacres in history and is prepared to extend aid, 3) The Parliament deems international use of force necessary to end Serbian attacks as a humanitarian and peace-bound duty and expects the same from the international community, and 4) Should the international use of force be exercised belatedly, the Parliament shall see it as a humanitarian duty to take every effort to bring an end to Serbian attacks.⁴⁰

On 24 August, the UN General Assembly was convened upon Ankara's initiative and accepted a resolution condemning the acquisition of territory by force in Bosnia which was interpreted as a notable success for Turkey. However, it was easier for the General Assembly to take such bold decisions as a body that did not have any effective sanctioning power.⁴¹ On 27–28 August 1992, an EC conference was held in London, attended by approximately 500 diplomats. After the conference, talk of military intervention was shelved, and the leaders issued a 96-hour ultimatum to Serbia.⁴² As such, the conference was no more than a combination of stillborn efforts.

In autumn 1992, Ankara decided to concentrate its diplomatic efforts on trying to get the UN arms embargo revoked in the case of Bosnian government. Turkey formulated a threefold demand: lifting of the arms embargo, establishment of safe havens, and limited military intervention.⁴³ When the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 781, banning all military flights in Bosnian air space, excluding UNPROFOR and other flights supporting UN operations through October 1992, Turkey began to press for its implementation. After the adoption of this Resolution, the Vance–Owen Plan was proposed to the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians in Geneva in October 1992. Following Izzetbegovic's visit to Ankara in August 1992, Cyrus Vance (former US Secretary of State and UN Special Envoy to Bosnia) and David Owen (EC representative, appointed Co-

“Türkiye'den BM'ye Harekat Planı”, *Hürriyet*; 8 August 1992; “Ankara, Bosna'ya Şafak Operasyonu Önerdi”, *Hürriyet*, 9 August 1992; “Türkiye'den Bombalama Çağrısı”, *Milliyet*, 7 August 1992. On 7 August 1992, Özal also called Bush and called for military intervention.

³⁹ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 94. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 1. Yasama Yılı, 25 August 1992, Vol. 16, p.106–108.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.113. The proposal was signed by Mustafa Kalemli (MP), Turhan Tayan (TPP), Yaşar Erbaz (NMP), Aydın Güven Gürkan (SDPP), Oğuzhan Asiltürk (WP) and Hüsamettin Özkan (DLP).

⁴¹ Kut, “Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives”, p.305.

⁴² Faruk Zabcı, “Bati'dan Bosna'ya Hayır Yok”, *Hürriyet*, 28 August 1992.

⁴³ Philip Robins, “Turkish Foreign Policy”, <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/-publications/mfa3.html>, (Accessed on 12 January 2006).

Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia) paid an official visit to Turkey. In November 1992, Turkey criticized the Vance–Owen Plan for having created ethnically pure zones which punished the victim and rewarded the aggressor.⁴⁴

Through the end of 1992, rather than appealing to the international community to take on full action over Bosnia, Turkey's efforts seemed to be focused on specific diplomatic objectives. When foreign ministers of the Balkan states convened in Istanbul in November 1992, the final declaration of this meeting centered on the aid issue. The draft resolution proposed by Turkey and U.S.A. at the UN Human Rights Commission on 30 November–1 December 1992 was adopted. The resolution defined the Serbs as aggressor and the Muslims in Bosnia as victim while confirming that the main actors of the cleansing campaign were the Serbian leadership in Bosnia, Yugoslav Federal Army and leadership of the Republic of Serbia.⁴⁵

In December 1992, the Parliament voted that the government be given full authority to contribute to UNPROFOR according to Resolution 743 and for deployment of troops in foreign countries. Subsequently, the UN Security Council decided to intervene in Somalia which prompted the government to raise the issue of troop deployment on foreign territories. The Parliament approved both authorizations and the international force in Somalia was later headed by a Turkish General, Çevik Bir.⁴⁶ Two days later, Turkey's Chief of the General Staff repeated in its Bosnia Report that unilateral intervention was impossible. The main reason was the inability of fuel transfer in air; the F-16s could fly only for a limited time.⁴⁷ Eventually, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 47/121 which was proposed jointly by Bosnia and Turkey. Since the resolution condemned ethnic cleansing and stated that Bosnia had the right to self-defense, it asked the Security Council to decide on military intervention unless Serbian militia attacks stopped by 15 January 1993. This was the closest UN resolution to the Turkish position.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Kut, "Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives", p.306; and David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, London, Indigo, 1996, p. 94-159. Owen writes that the said plan had a three part package comprising ten constitutional principles, cessation of hostilities agreement and a map. It defined Bosnia-Herzegovina as a decentralized state, gave autonomy to the provinces, but denied them any international legal character. Vance and Owen argued that the territorial implications in the proposals gave the message of withdrawal to Bosnian Serbs and that in order to convince the critics who accused them of rewarding ethnic cleansing, they emphasized that the Serbs had to withdraw from nearly 40 percent of their land holdings, p. 94 – 97.

⁴⁵ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 34. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 2 December 1992, Vol. 22, s. 103–104, see Orhan Kilercioglu's speech.

⁴⁶ Kut, "Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives", p. 307-308.

⁴⁷ Haluk Geray, "Müdahale Olanaksız", *Cumhuriyet*, 13 December 1992.

⁴⁸ Kut, "Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives", p. 308.

In the framework of new efforts, the Turkish delegation comprising State Minister Orhan Kilercioğlu (TPP), Ismail Amasyalı (TPP, an MP who spoke Bosnian), medical staff, and correspondents of the TRT, Anatolian Agency, and other journalists went to Zagreb in January 1993. The delegation contacted the Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakkı Turajlić, among other officials, who requested aid delivery to 270,000 people who were confined in six regions, deprived of aid for nine months.⁴⁹ Due to heavy fire, Kilercioğlu had to hold the meeting with Turajlić at the airport. After the one-hour meeting, while Kilercioğlu flew back, Turajlić was assassinated by fire from two Serb tanks, in the presence of a UN convoy. President Özal argued that the assassination clearly showed the extent to which mediation efforts were undermined by the Serbs.⁵⁰

In January 1993, Atilla Mutman (SDPP) underlined that although it had the resolve, Turkey would not unilaterally engage in an intervention. First, any attack outside the UN framework would not be legitimate. Second, Turkey would have to ask Bulgaria for flight permission and call off the blockade in the Adriatic Sea, and neither proposal would curry favor.⁵¹ Turkey eventually joined the NATO operation in 1993 in accordance with the UN Resolution 816 for enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia. A squadron of eighteen F-16s joined the operation.⁵² This was followed by fervent demands of the opposition with respect to the proposal of holding a general session on the Bosnian issue on 13 April 1993.⁵³

Amidst these efforts, it was alleged that Turkey received imports valued at approximately \$7 million from Serbia. In a written question, the government was asked if this was true, and if so, what were the goods that Turkey “had to” import from Serbia. It was emphasized that sustaining trade relations with the Serbs while requesting harsh measures against Belgrade was but hypocrisy. In reply, Çetin stated in writing that there was no record of such trade. The issue

⁴⁹ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 53. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 2. Dönem, 12 January 1993, Vol. 27, p.18–19; Kut, “Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives”, p. 307.

⁵⁰ “Özal: Cinayet Batı’nın Çifte Standardım Gösteriyor”, *Sabah*, 10 January 1993.

⁵¹ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 53. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 12 January 1993, Vol. 27, p. 29, 30-37.

⁵² Sezer, “Turkish Security in the Shifting Balkans”, p.104. Upon the adoption of UN Resolution 816 on 31 March 1993 which allowed the member states to implement the no-fly zone by force, Turkey declared it would send eighteen war planes to NATO’s “Operation Deny Flight”. The F-16s flew to Italy through the Mediterranean as Greece did not give upper flight permission. The operation began on 12 April 1993. See Kut, “Turkish Diplomatic Initiatives”, p.311.

⁵³ This proposal was given by Şevket Kazan (WP/Kocaeli) on behalf of the WP. The proposal stated that Turkey could use force within the framework of Article 51 of the UN Charter against the Serbs. *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 90. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 13 April 1993, Vol. 34, p.13–14. See also *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 115. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 2. Yasama Yılı, 22 June 1993, Vol. 37, p.11–13; 274–277.

was also forwarded to the Under Secretariat of Treasury and Foreign Trade. The answer by both state agencies confirmed that there had been no record of imports from Serbia between June 1992, the date of government's ban on trade, until August 1993, the last date of available recorded data.⁵⁴

In February 1994, NATO gave an ultimatum telling the Serbs to pull back all the heavy artillery. NATO announced that if the Serbs did not comply with the ultimatum, it would bomb the Serb targets. This was welcomed by Turkey. The following day, news headlines read that the newly elected U.S. President William Clinton gave clear signals to Serbs, Greece and Russia in three ways: 1) NATO now openly confronted the Serbs, 2) it announced recognition of Macedonia after the last NATO Summit and 3) the decision to intervene implied that the U.S.A. was the only superpower. Indeed, it was soon stated by PM Tansu Çiller that the NATO plan had already been proposed to the UN Security Council by Turkey in August 1992 and it was in essence the Turkish thesis.⁵⁵

By March 1994, UN approved the deployment of Turkish troops in Bosnia.⁵⁶ Following this, the Bosnians and Croats signed a peace treaty in Washington to establish a federation.⁵⁷ Upon increasing Turkish efforts, the UN decided unanimously to send Turkish troops to Bosnia despite Greek opposition. President Demirel openly expressed that Turkish troops did not go to Bosnia to revive the Ottoman Empire but to help bring peace.⁵⁸ It is not clear where the concept of "neo-Ottomanism" came from, but it was a frequent rejoinder in the European media about Turkish foreign policy activism.

Ten different times, Turkey brought together and hosted the Muslims and Croats. Upon the initiatives of Ankara, the basis of trilateral cooperation between the Bosnian Prime Minister Sladzić and Croatian Deputy Prime Minister Granić was established, followed by the Washington Agreement. Çetin emphasized that it was not fair to criticize the government when the Turkish position regarding the war had reached such a desired level despite Greek opposition at international platforms.⁵⁹ Çetin's remarks regarding the "desired level" implied sending troops to Bosnia, in a multilateral forum espoused by Ankara.

Eventually, the first and second group of Turkish troops went to Bosnia on 15 and 25 June 1994, respectively⁶⁰ and arrived in Zenica in July 1994 to

⁵⁴ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 57. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 3. Yasama Yılı, 27 December 1993, Vol. 50, p.380–381.

⁵⁵ "Bill İyi Vurdu", *Sabah*, 11 February 1994.

⁵⁶ "Ve, Türk Askeri Bosna'ya Gidiyor", *Hürriyet*, 6 March 1994.

⁵⁷ Savaş Süzal, "Anlaşma İmzalandı", *Sabah*, 19 March 1994.

⁵⁸ "Bosna'ya 2700 Türk Askeri", *Cumhuriyet*, 25 March 1994.

⁵⁹ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 88. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 3. Yasama Yılı, 12 April 1994, Vol. 57, p.242–247, 248.

⁶⁰ "Güle Güle Sana ..." *Milliyet*, 16 June 1994.

participate in the UNPROFOR. A week later, President Demirel's visit to Sarajevo was cancelled due to serious Serb threat.⁶¹ In November 1994, while the war intensified, Vehbi Dinçerler put forward a list of proposals. First and foremost, he proposed that sub-commissions be set up in the Parliament for close follow-up of developments. Second, a research commission should be established, which would undertake on-site research temporarily as almost all of the representatives of NATO member states did in Bihac. Third, a joint action commission should be formed to coordinate steps to be taken by the government, military, and the executive. Finally, Dinçerler suggested that a delegation should be formed to facilitate the follow-up and coordination of state efforts to be directed by the President himself. These proposals were received positively by the speaker of Parliament.⁶²

In sum, on the one hand the decision makers made efforts to get a clear view of what was taking place with the end of the bipolar structure at the international level and regimes changes at the regional level, on the other hand they tried to formulate policies towards the war in this tumult. Political parties mostly converged on the impossibility of unilateral intervention, advocated multilateral intervention in the UN framework, and appealed also to Islamic countries to act. In the final analysis, in this period, Ankara made efforts as much as its power, capacity and abilities allowed.⁶³

Through the Final Act (1995)

The Bosnia Inquiry Commission was set up through December 1994 and conducted investigations in Turkey, Croatia, and Bosnia, as the first field search to provide support to the Turkish PM. The research visit took place in February 1995. The fact that a Bosnia inquiry commission was set up within the Parliament was welcomed by Bosnian officials during the Commission's visit in Bosnia, carried out in three phases. The first stop was Croatia where the Commission had official contacts with the Speaker of the Croatian Assembly, Speaker of the Federal Assembly, Prime Minister, leaders of the Muslim community, and Ambassador Yasushi Akashi of the UN.⁶⁴

The Turkish delegation expressed its concerns regarding the safe delivery of aid to Bosnia through Croatia and this was positively received by Croatia.

⁶¹ Barçın Yinanç, "Demirel'in Gezisine Sırp Tehdidi", *Milliyet*, 15 July 1994.

⁶² *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 43. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 29 November 1994, Vol. 72, p.648-649.

⁶³ Mustafa Türkeş, "Türkiye'nin Balkan Politikasında Devamlılık ve Değişim", *Avrasya Dosyası, Balkanlar Özel*, Vol. 14, No 1, 2008, p.256-258.

⁶⁴ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 74. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 14 February 1995, p.2-3. http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_b_sd.birlesim_baslangic?P4=610&P5=T&PAGE1=1&PAGE2=51, (Accessed on 05 February 2009).

Turkish officials and Izzetbegovic agreed that there was no peace in Bosnia but just a ceasefire, not adhered to by the Serbs. It was the common diagnosis of Izzetbegovic and the Turkish military corps in Bosnia that fighting would begin again very soon.⁶⁵

When the Bosnian Foreign Minister, Irfan Lubjankic was killed, the failure of the UN was seen once again in May 1995. Regarding the event, Abdullah Gül (WP) stated in June 1995 that Turkey did not make all the efforts that it could have and that as news reports had reflected, considering future relations, it instead gave positive messages to Serbia when it should be acting as Bosnia's "representative".⁶⁶ Almost simultaneously, NATO and UN defense ministers and chiefs of staff convened in Paris to discuss an urgent intervention force of 4,000 soldiers and Defense Minister Mehmet Gölhan (TPP) said Turkey would also participate with F-16s in this multinational urgent intervention force".⁶⁷ Subsequently, Serbian attacks on the Turkish division in Zenica and the embassy in Sarajevo coincided with Turkey's declaration.⁶⁸ From then on, the UN became one of the Serb targets which began to take UN soldiers hostage. The UN could not protect its own soldiers anymore and rumors spread that it would pull back. However, right after the UN headquarters in Sarajevo was hit by the Serbs, injuring Colonel Mahmut Ergün and a French captain,⁶⁹ Turkey announced that it would not pull back.⁷⁰ Turkey and Bosnia signed an agreement of military cooperation on 10 August 1995.⁷¹

The belated NATO intervention began through the end of August eventually, joined by sixty war planes including Turkish F-16s. A total of ninety targets of ammunition depots, command centers and defense systems were hit with approximately 300 sorties.⁷² Shortly, diplomatic traffic in Ankara accelerated. Izzetbegovic came to Ankara on 4 September and met U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke. During the visit, Holbrooke stated that any peace operation would necessitate Turkey's participation. It was also reported that the U.S.A. wanted Turkey to use its influence upon the Bosnian Muslims in future peace talks.⁷³

On 8 September, the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia reached a compromise in Geneva. Bosnia was divided into "Croat-Muslim

⁶⁵ Ibid., s. 30.

⁶⁶ *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 119. Birleşim, 19. Dönem, 4. Yasama Yılı, 6 June 1995, Vol. 87, p. 389.

⁶⁷ "Bosna'ya İkinci F-16 Filosu", *Cumhuriyet*, 14 June 1995.

⁶⁸ Faruk Zabcı, Celal Sönmez, "Sırlardan Türk Birliğine Füze", *Hürriyet*, 18 June 1995.

⁶⁹ "Albayımız Vuruldu", *Milliyet*, 19 June 1995.

⁷⁰ Leyla Sariibrahimoğlu, "Türk Birliği Geri Çekilmeyecek", *Cumhuriyet*, 19 June 1995.

⁷¹ "Türkiye-Bosna İşbirliği", *Cumhuriyet*, 11 August 1995.

⁷² "Körfez Savaşı Gibi", *Hürriyet*, 1 September 1995.

⁷³ "Türkiye Balkanlar'a Ağırlığını Koydu", *Cumhuriyet*, 6 September 1995.

Federation” and “*Respublica Srpska*” which meant that the Serbs officially recognized Bosnia. Serbs began to pull back in September upon which NATO ended its air strikes.⁷⁴ Accordingly, the fighting parties convened in New York in late September for peace negotiations. The final document of the negotiation came into being as the Dayton Peace Accord and constituted the final settlement of three-years of fighting. How this episode fits into constructivist interpretation follows.

A Constructivist Interpretation of Policy Formulations during the War

First and foremost, it should be noted that this study discerned the Parliament, which includes the government and the opposition parties, as the “State” within boundaries of its scope, still mindful of the other actors⁷⁵ which constitute the Turkish “State” in terms of foreign policy making. In the case of the war in Bosnia, the Turkish “State” was the main actor influencing foreign policy making and could use its capacity in accordance with the material forces. And yet, the latter were not the sole determinant in the foreign policy making process; intersubjectivities and identities were also effective as the parliamentary debates of the political parties lay bare.

Second and related with the first, moving from the premise that international structures are intersubjective and not driven solely by material factors, constructivism holds that they are socially constructed by cognitive structures that assign meaning to the material world. In this respect, Turkey’s active foreign policy making towards Bosnia explains to what extent the political parties’ perceptions towards Bosnia, socially constructed by cognitive structures embedded in Turkish state through its Balkan heritage and cultural identity, converged on stopping the war and advocated a multilateral intervention in the UN framework. Viewed in retrospect, the shared knowledge due to its Balkan heritage, the common denominator of culture, the existence of people of Bosnian origin in Turkey all spoke for themselves. The welcoming attitude towards Bosnian officials at the Parliament during the war, as opposed to that towards Serbian officials also affirms the existence of a positively perceived intersubjectivity towards Bosnia on the part of Turkish political actors. However, Turkish foreign policy makers still employed caution and self-restraint in their policy calculations in order not to be viewed as trying to revive neo-Ottomanism.⁷⁶ In contrast, occasional visits by their Serbian counterparts would

⁷⁴ “Sırlar Verdikleri Sözde Duruyor”, *Cumhuriyet*, 18 September 1995; “NATO, Hava Akınlarna Son Verdi”, *Cumhuriyet*, 22 September 1995.

⁷⁵ Other actors are the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Armed Forces, and National Security Council.

⁷⁶ See Şule Kut, “Turkey in the Post-Communist Balkans: Between Activism and Self-Restraint,” *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, 4, Annual 1996–1997, 1999, p. 39–45.

trigger rather negative responses among the political parties, which also denoted a change for the worse in intersubjectivities after the break of war towards Serbian political actors. It can safely be maintained that the case was not different in respect of Turkish officials who had contacts with relevant counterparts abroad. As the minutes display, all political parties' discourses seem to point out a positively perceived intersubjectivity *vis-à-vis* Bosnia.

Third, constructivist theorizing maintains that as opposed to neorealism, states' identities and interests are not given exogenously, but constructed in time and space. Since the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, Turkey's identity is known to be western-oriented, which was also observed in its attitude towards the war in Bosnia. Although this was questioned and harshly criticized on occasion by the religious and nationalist parties in the Parliament at the time, Ankara never deviated from this established path. It acted along with the western line, especially in the initial phases of the war by temporarily arguing for the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, for instance. Likewise, when the West recognized the breakaway republics, Ankara followed suit. While it appealed to the Islamic countries as part of its efforts, it never substituted this with its efforts to attract the attention of the West.

It should also be recalled that as opposed to the pro-status quo tradition in foreign policy making adopted thus far, Turkey had embarked on an era of active foreign policy introduced by Özal starting with the policy pursued during the first Gulf War. It was articulated more concretely in PM Mesut Yılmaz's government program in July 1991, which stated that Turkish foreign policy would take on an active path thereafter.⁷⁷

In the face of developments in the Balkans and elsewhere, Turkey had already begun to restructure its foreign policy from being "the tail end of Europe into the center of its own newly emerging world" in Fuller's description of the state of affairs.⁷⁸ According to Fuller, this was an abandonment of Turkey's traditional policy of non-involvement in regional conflicts in the new post-Cold War openings.⁷⁹ This entailed that the main thrust of Turkey's response to the new post-Cold War situation was to pursue a more active role in the regions

⁷⁷ Murat Yetkin, *Ateş Hatında Aktif Politika-Balkanlar, Kafkaslar ve Orta Doğu Üçgeninde Türkiye*, İstanbul, Alan, 1992, p. 240.

⁷⁸ Graham Fuller, *Turkey Faces East: New Orientations toward the Middle East and the Old Soviet Union*, Santa Monica, CA, Rand, 1997, p.66 cited in Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* Vol.1, No.1, Spring 2002, p. 147.

⁷⁹ I.P. Khosla, "Turkey: The Search for a Role" in *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.XXV, No.3, June 2001, on <http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/sa/sa-june01khi01.html>. However, Turkey's non-involvement did not preclude involvement necessarily not in the Soviet bloc but definitely in the Middle East.

surrounding its borders – the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East.⁸⁰ As the mastermind of this strategy, Özal played a central role both in its formulation and implementation. At the core of this approach was the belief that Turkey could continue to be an important ally of the West only by expanding its regional role and influence.⁸¹ As the minutes reveal, the pronounced activism on the part of Turkey through the end of the 20th century, as well as Özal and Demirel's personal efforts as part of this approach, is evident in the Bosnian case. Accordingly, this called into consideration the following: to take into account its Balkan heritage, to stand against aggression, to keep the Balkan land/air routes open as they were the major access routes to Europe in terms of trade. It also had to do with the objective of not severing diplomatic relations with Serbia throughout the whole ordeal, although the two states had their differences. Thus, although western-oriented attitude was at work in Turkey's foreign policy identity throughout the war, the non-interventionist attitude observed so far towards immediate sub-regions - in the same identity – pointed out a change towards a revitalized activism in Turkish foreign policy making.

Fourth, in view of the constructivist proposition that agents interpret a certain reality will shape their views of responsibility, the war in Bosnia manifests that all political parties had their own views concerning the issue which shaped their attitudes concerning responsibility, i.e, whether to participate in a possible intervention or not. The coalition government of TPP–SDPP repeatedly announced that Turkey could send troops to the UNPROFOR, even before the skirmishes turned into full-scale fighting and engaged in serious political and diplomatic efforts in international platforms but never supported the idea of unilateral intervention. Occasionally, the government described the reality in Bosnia as outright massacre and not “war”, but still refrained from the rhetoric of a religious conflict and labeled it a humanitarian one. This was observed, for instance, in the government's appeal to both Western and Islamic organizations regarding the issue. Although being a coalition government of one leftist and one rightist party, the government's reading of the reality in Bosnia did not indicate any essential divide in itself, which impacted on the formulation of a balanced and cautious foreign policy that saw intervention necessary not on the basis of religious identity but a humanitarian responsibility.

On the other hand, MP mostly criticized the appeals made by the government to international organizations by arguing they were futile and held that Turkey could do more in diplomatic terms. Like the government, MP was also against unilateral intervention, yet if the matter was brought for discussion,

⁸⁰ Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.26, No.3, Spring 1997, p. 45.

⁸¹ Ibid.

MP stated they would agree to grant authority to send troops to Bosnia. As a party with a center-right identity, MP's position regarding the war resembled that of TPP –except that they considered government's efforts insufficient- and despite being an opposition party, it was quite active with respect to Bosnia, which was in line with the new direction introduced by their previous leader Özal in foreign policy making. However, whether this behavior was opposition for the sake of opposition was a different matter.

As a leftist opposition party, DLP also never supported a unilateral intervention in Bosnia, but accused the government of not having a well-defined Balkan policy. However, unlike the other leftist political actors' rhetoric on the war, Ecevit once remarked that the war had turned into a Crusade against Muslims.

As a party with more pronounced religious motives, WP, for its part, argued that this war was a religious war *per se*, a result of an idea infused in the Western societies which argued Muslims had to be wiped out from Europe, and harshly criticized the government's dismissal of arguments suggesting a polarization between religions. It also accused the government of not acting as Bosnia's representative in international platforms and of pursuing a policy of equidistance towards all former Yugoslav republics.

However, it should be emphasized that while arguing for intervention, political parties were also concerned with possible risks which could face Turkish troops as well as small prospect of success. As if to confirm Jackson's remark that "it is becoming that a world in which statesmen have international and humanitarian responsibilities as well as national responsibilities" and "[p]olitical virtue in such circumstances involves the willingness not only to recognize that these diverging responsibilities exist but also to make decisions in which due regard is paid to all of them",⁸² political parties were ahead of their western counterparts at the time when calling for a possible multilateral intervention, which showed that they were cognizant of its implications.

In light of the above, it is argued that the identities of the parties and how they viewed reality in Bosnia shaped their relevant responsibility considerations supportive of urgent multilateral intervention –except for WP which occasionally repeated its support for unilateral intervention and cutting off ties with the West. Despite the long war and rather rapid changes of governments due to instability in Turkey's domestic politics during those years, the Parliament, as the most populous of the foreign policy actors in Turkey, could converge on vital matters and how to act accordingly.

⁸² Robert H. Jackson, "The Political Theory of International Society", Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, Cambridge, MPG Books Ltd, 2002, p. 123.

Concluding Remarks

This study sought to examine the debates in the Turkish Parliament during the war in Bosnia by construing Ankara's relevant foreign policies between 1992 and 1995 through key tenets of constructivism. It has argued that although the incumbent governments were coalition governments formed by the representatives of two opposite mainstream political trends in Turkey, Ankara's foreign policy towards Bosnia, even during the most challenging of times of the war, was ahead of those of the west, particularly in respect of calling for urgent multilateral intervention, active diplomacy and, more importantly, in respect of their distinction of who the aggressor and the victim were right from the beginning of the war.

While Ankara took into account its Balkan heritage and stance against aggression as the main pillars in policy formulations, it also tried not to sever relations with Serbia, cognizant of the significance of Balkan land/air routes since they were the main access routes of trade for Turkey. The detailed empirical data of the study revealed how the foreign policy pillars subsequently came into existence and demonstrated under what conditions the state as a key actor, intersubjectivities and identity, responsibilities were at work in the foreign policy making process. The intersubjectivities between the Turkish state (in our case the Parliament), and the parties to the conflict had their impact on the characterization of the war by the Turkish political parties, which defined their positions: not just observing, but participating and calling upon the international community to follow suit. As Turkey's identity underwent changes with the end of the Cold War, Ankara acted both in line with the traditional western-oriented way of acting in foreign policy making and also pursued an active foreign policy introduced by Özal, which was committed to follow a more active foreign policy in its vicinity, including the Balkans. In doing so, however, it was particularly careful not to be regarded as trying to revive neo-Ottomanism. Activism in foreign policy was paramount for all countries in the aftermath of the Soviet dissolution. Turkey's revitalized activism was not an exception, but it was for its renewed interest in its immediate, historical neighbors. On the other hand, the way the political parties interpreted the reality in Bosnia paved the way for frequent pronouncement of multilateral intervention: right from the beginning, there was talk of "how to intervene", and not "whether or not to intervene" at the Parliament (unlike the case in the West), which suffices to argue for an existence of a shared conceptualization of responsibility among the parties. Thinking in retrospect, although the Balkans were not viewed as a hard security area for Turkey, Ankara engaged in vigorous efforts to devise a formula to halt the conflict in Bosnia, which came into existence as the Action Plan as early as in August 1992, to give one example.

It remains to be said that the view of the war in Bosnia, was one test for Turkish political parties' responses, through the kernels of constructivism, and detailed empirical data is a tenable one for obtaining a broader comprehension of how diversities were brought to pass eventually in the form of consensus. However, given that the war came at a quite confusing and chaotic time to study international politics, it is left open whether or not another conceptual framework, or others, can provide a better means in elucidating the subject of enquiry. Perhaps the underlying question here would not be whether or not one - or more – lens(es) provide(s) the answer, but whether the accounts of the war in Bosnia would be those of the same world or different worlds in the perceptions of its narrators.⁸³ In the final analysis, it is my conviction that this study was one attempt to evaluate both the empirical state of affairs at the time and the theoretical implications upon which they subsequently had impacted, for the purpose of canvassing our own mind about what was uppermost in the Turkish political parties' perceptions of the 'world' in Bosnia at the time and, hopefully, provoking rethinking on the subject.

⁸³ For a relevant argument, see Steve Smith, "The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory", Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, Cambridge, MPG Books Ltd, 2002, p. 30 – 32.

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