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WHERE TURKEY STANDS?

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The announcement of EU's enlargement program at the Luxembourg Summit on December 12-13, 1997 that excluded Turkey from the foreseeable enlargement program even though its eventual candidacy for integration has been granted has led to a kind of soul searching, and has raised many questions that need answers.

Will Turkey be excluded from the building of the 21st Century Europe? Does Turkey have to find a new place for herself in the evolving system of partnerships and alliances? What will be the effects of the eventual creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy on Turkey's overall security interests in her zones of interest in Europe and elsewhere? Will Europe's policies towards Turkey be guided by Greek hostility and ethnic nationalism in some of the European countries? What will be the effects of the putting of Turkey-EU relations to Greek calens on Turkey-US relations? Will alienation be the order of the day in the mutual images of Turkey and Western European Countries, and what will be the impact of this alienation on the nearly 4 million Turks living in various European Countries?

There are more questions to be asked because European countries are important for Turkey both as individual countries and as European Union and other European organizations.

In this article, an attempt will be made to review Turkey's foreign and security issues in the context of Turkey's overall foreign and security policy implementations.

In EU countries and the US in the wake of the Luxembourg Summit, Turkey's strategic importance is a debated subject. A frequently asked question is whether Turkey's strategic importance has diminished. A sound answer to this question can only be given only if we can determine why and for whom Turkey has had a strategic importance. The evaluation of this importance is closely related to the attributed positive or negative functions of Turkey to help in dissipating or aggravating threats and risks perceived by various countries against their security and social orders. For example, Germany at this moment does not perceive any significant external threat to its national security. Yet, in resolving such problems as refugees, migrations, anti-drug warfare, terrorism, etc., Turkey's cooperation as a strategic partner might be deemed highly useful. However, the reluctance of European countries from entering into a meaningful institutional cooperation demonstrates their reluctance also in this highly important field.

The US, on the other hand, in keeping with its superpower status considers Turkey as a strategic ally insofar as its strategic interests in the region are concerned. Yet, the anti-Turkish lobbies in the US are capable, from time to time, to cause major setbacks in Turkish-US strategic cooperation. Similarly, in Turkey, anti-American hostile attitudes of extreme right and extreme left have had their deleterious impact on the relations though their effectiveness has recently diminished.

Turkey's military cooperation with Israel that began in 1995 has created the image of a triangular military partnership in Eastern Mediterranean between US, Turkey and Israel although its scope is extremely modest. Turkey's Arab neighbors have strong suspicions about the aims of this cooperation; similar, to their sentiments when Turkey joined the North Atlantic Alliance in 1952.

The prospects for an armed conflict between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus or Aegean issues are matters of high concern both for these countries as well as for Western allies. Both EU members and US are embarrassed by Greece's unscrupulous behavior in using Greek diaspora as lobbies and its use of its position as an equal partner in NATO and EU against Turkish interests. Yet, they are hardly in a position to counterbalance this influence. Particularly in EU, the institutional voting system is used mainly by Greece to block any EU gestures towards Turkey; and the backing received by Greece from other EU members as part of membership solidarity contribute to the hardening of Greek attitude in their refusal to enter into a meaningful negotiation with Turkey in order to solve the problems between the two countries. EU's attitude, therefore, in respect to the Kardak issue and the decision to begin membership talks with the Greek administration of Cyprus disregarding existing treaties contribute not to the solution of Turkish-Greek disputes but to their exacerbation. In the Turkish public opinion, this West European attitude is interpreted as a resurrection of 19th century European diplomacy that eventually whetted Greek ambitions and led them to their tragically failed attempt to invade Turkey in 1919-22. In this respect another important disagreement that helps destroy mutual images in the role of some European countries, is the difference of approach in interpreting who is a terrorist and who is a victim of political discrimination.

Another point is in the description of Turkey's geopolitical position and various interpretations given to it. Some European writers refer to this position as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East extending to Central Asia. Contrary to historical misconception Turkey has never been a bridge. In her history she has been a central power and later a medium power defending the margins of Europe.

When the Soviet Union was dismantled, some writers argued that Turkey situated in the margins of Europe, CIS, Middle East and the Mediterranean could remain a marginal country forever. Theory says that if a country is weak multiple marginality may encourage centrifugal forces leading to eventual dismemberment. Therefore, in order to preserve their existence the countries that face up multiple-marginality, have to be strong in all respects. That strength creates a centrality function which is accompanied by radiation multi-directional influence.

While discussing the strategic significance of Turkey in the region, we must devote some attention to the NATO enlargement, Russia's reaction and energy networks.

At first sight, NATO's enlargement to cover Central and Eastern Europe may appear to be a positive development that would enhance the security and solidarity of the European community of nations as the organization acquires greater capacity to defend common interests and stability in the continent. However, a detailed analysis might demonstrate that such enlargement may at the same time upset the balances somehow established during the post-cold war period and contribute to the loosening of solidarity in the alliance

and to a proliferation of categories of nations benefiting from one or overlapping security guarantees. Furthermore, a new enigma has arisen because WEU which gives the appearance of an hybrid organization between NATO and EU reflects not the strengths but weaknesses of both organizations; although on paper the Brussels Treaty appears to be a more committing document than the Washington Treaty. The anomaly for Turkey is that once they become members of NATO and soon of EU, the former Warsaw Pact members of Central and Eastern Europe will have the right to become full-fledged members of both NATO and WEU and Turkey while a member of a NATO will be a security provider as an associate of WEU without benefiting from whatever security guarantee that Brussel's Treaty would provide for its members. This development has the potential of exacerbating European aloofness to Turkey's own security requirements while tying Turkey as a contributor to European security without letting her to take part in the actual decision-making process. This will lead to a lessening of Turkey's role and place in the future European architecture.

Another division that is being created through NATO enlargement is the rejection of Russia from taking a real role in European security system and the disadvantages that the ensuing psychology of rejection of the Russian people will have for flank countries of NATO namely Norway and Turkey. Since 1949, Russia has perceived NATO as an alliance set up against herself and the distrust against this organization is firmly rooted among the Russian public. The enlargement of NATO towards Russia's western frontiers leads Russia to increase its forces particularly in the flanks and to increase its pressure in such areas as the Southern Caucasus and the Baltic region. Turkish public opinion is highly concerned that its partners may give concessions in CFE talks yielding to Russian demands for increased force levels in flank areas.

The damaging effects of NATO enlargement on Turkey's security interests may partially be alleviated through Turkey's full participation, as an equal partner in the decision-making mechanism of WEU and the common security policy formulations of EU and by effectively taking part in the European security architecture. Yet, these developments and the fact that the Turkish government has ratified the NATO enlargement protocol, does not remove the unfavorable effects of NATO enlargements on Turkey's security interests. The Turkish Parliament as an exceptional measure has accompanied the ratification of the first enlargement with a rider asking the Turkish Government. That the second enlargement should include Romania and Bulgaria, and Turkey should become integrated in the European security system.

However, it appears that the lessening of West European concern in Turkey's security interests and the lack of disposition to avail itself of Turkey's strategic assets Turkey needs to establish new strategic balances in its region in an effort to reduce its defense burden, although, such an effort may involve a certain degree of de-coupling between Turkey's and West European security perceptions and interests. In this context, we could mention the military cooperation with Israel, confidence building measures with Bulgaria, attempts to create a multi-national intervention force for the Balkans are highly positive developments, security dialogue with Georgia and Azerbeycan, neutralizing Syria and better control in Northern Iraq. New steps must follow such as the proposal of the present Turkish government to establish «a neighborhood forum» and a possible security dialogue with Russia.

The geographic location of Turkey in the midst of turbulent and clash-prone regions of the Balkans, the Caucuses, Middle East, and Eastern Mediterranean compels Turkey to be highly attentive to the developments and any conflict in these areas may have serious repercussions in Turkey for ethnic, economic or sheer security reasons. The conflicts in these regions are also of serious concern for countries of Western Europe and the United States. It is therefore highly recommendable that there should be an effective cooperation either within the existing institutional mechanisms or a dialogue be organized among the most concerned parties with a view to establishing a cooperation and harmonize varying approaches, if we want to contribute to regional peace in this part of the world.

Another requirement for Turkey in the face of regional problems is to prepare and maintain a highly efficient military structure that should be capable of prevailing over occurrences threatening the security and integrity of Turkey.

The variety and high concentration of conventional arms and the presence of rogue states possessing or capable of possessing mass destruction weapons and delivery vehicles prescribe a high mobility, superior technology and constant preparedness for the Turkish armed forces. The introduction of Russian-made tanks and possible introduction of missiles to Cyprus and the challenge posed by Greece in the Aegean basin reinforces this requirement. All these considerations necessitate the maintenance of a strong and modern defense structure including a certain amount power projection capability and a defense doctrine that would address multiple character of the perceived threats; while at the same time maintaining a structure also addressing Petersberg tasks.

While defense preparedness is one of the most significant requirements of Turkey, diplomacy to alleviate the defense burden is of no less important. In this context we will attempt to review some of the political challenges facing Turkey in its regional and global relations.

Turkey-EU Relations

The factors characterizing Turkey-EU relations may be defined as reciprocal economic and security interests as well as social and security problems.

Despite economic recessions and growing political problems, the basic aim of the 1963 Ankara Agreement and the procedure outlined in the 1973 Supplementary Protocols has been achieved and a Customs Union has been established between EU and Turkey as from the beginning of 1966. However, most other features of the Ankara Agreement and the Supplementary Protocols have either been partially implemented or simply ignored by EU. Since 1981, EU has suspended the financial protocols and disregarded without any compensatory system, the social provisions of the Agreement. While Turkey considered the Customs Union, in keeping with the wording of the Ankara Agreement as the final phase of the relations before the accession took place, the decisions of the EU Council (Madrid, December 1995, Luxembourg, December 1997) imply that Customs Union would be either the final status of the relations or accession will be delayed to a distant future. Subsequent, declarations have somewhat modified this attitude by mentioning in half-mouth Turkey`s candidacy, their very little substantive change.

In any event, whatever the current intentions are it would be normal to expect that the economic relations between EU countries and Turkey will increase in keeping with the growth of the Turkish economy, leading to an economic interdependence and serious steps will be taken for harmonization of standards and legislation paving the way for economic integration. During this process, Turkey may not expect financial support from EU.

On security issues, it was earlier pointed out that Turkey's strategic importance for Western Europe had diminished and there were few points of consensus on regional security issues. It is unfortunate that because of the existing institutional structure, EU countries willingly or not find themselves alongside Greece in that country's disputes with Turkey justifying this attitude as "membership solidarity" or simply surrendering to blackmail.

So long as EU is able to benefit from the economic advantages provided by the Customs Union, the member countries have no incentive to stand against Greek pressures. In other words, by submitting to Greek demands on Turkey they lose nothing but for resisting to such demands involve paying a price.

In the face of this trend, an improvement cannot be expected neither in EU-Turkey nor in Turkish-Greek political relations. Conscious of the EU's willing or reluctant support, Greece feels its position strengthened in her disputes with Turkey and this reduces its willingness to find compromises. While Turkish-Greek problems and Cyprus are considered by EU as a major impediment for the development of Turkey-EU relations, EU's behavior in respect to Turkish-Greek disputes and Cyprus paradoxically become additional causes for the continuation and aggravation of the disputes.

With respect to social problems, it is clear that Germany did not want to see one more Turk in that country. This obsession seems to have been the major promoter of German policy regarding Turkey's membership in the EU under the Kohl government. It is clear that in the foreseeable future the German economy and once euro is adopted as the common currency, all over the EU the recessive economies will prevail making little impact for the reduction of the current high unemployment levels in EU particularly in Germany. It's well understood in Turkey that the free circulation of manpower provisions of the Ankara Agreement and the Supplementary Protocols cannot be implemented in the near future. But, since this is a contractual right of Turkey borne out by Ankara Agreement, it should only be rescinded by mutual agreement and certainly not by fiat. There is a social question that needs to be resolved in a manner compatible with the existing agreements; namely, the status of the members of the Turkish community in EU countries, particularly in Germany where their numbers exceed 2 million. Until the advent of the present SPD-Green Government Germany refused to recognize for these Turkish citizens most of whom have been living in that country for several decades the status of minority or give them double citizenship or accept the bulk of them to German citizenship or recognize them to the European Union citizenship rights. The present leaders of Germany have promised to accept double-citizenship but the «proof of the pudding is in its eating»

Under the light of the above considerations, the reluctance of EU to include Turkey among the list of candidates and create a special category with conditions the fulfilment of which are not only dependent on Turkey, such as the solution of Greek and Cyprus problems, may be explained by both objective and subjective objections to Turkey's EU membership. EU's politically and economically motivated objections do not, however, constitute a waiver for their legally binding obligations resulting from Ankara Agreement and subsequent decisions of the Association Council. In the light of the above, while there is no obligation on the part of Turkey to fulfil or even negotiate the political conditions stipulated in the Luxembourg declaration, the community and Turkey are under the obligation and have mutual concrete interest in pursuing their existing agreements and deepening their integration process. This would entail the following:

- The Customs Union must be developed in a manner that would eventually cover all goods and services;
- A solution must be found to resolve the problem of free circulation provision unilaterally suspended by EU, probably by ensuring EU citizenship rights to Turkish citizens who have settled down in EU countries;
- The harmonization of the legislation must proceed;
- Other chapters of the Ankara Agreement, Supplementary Protocol, and the decisions of the Association Council must be continued;
- The arbitration system for resolution of disputes foreseen in article 25 of the Ankara Agreement must be made operable through a decision of the Association Council.

If EU and Turkey can demonstrate adequate maturity to defend their mutual interests, the adoption of an incremental development pattern in their relations may be the best choice. But, to follow such a policy, EU must rid itself from almost capricious policies encouraged by a few of its members and hardly responsible politicians. EU must refrain from sitting on the high ground and resolving problems in the relations by fiat, and finally membership solidarity must not force EU to block the development of its relations with this country.

Turkey-US Relations

The United States occupies a very important place in Turkey's foreign and security policies. The latter was more conspicuous during the cold war period. In the post-Soviet era, US involvement in the region where Turkey is situated has changed its character and the new US approaches are no less important for Turkey's foreign and security policies. It would be advisable for the purposes of this article to search the objectives of US policy in the Middle East, the Balkans, Greece-Cyprus, Caucuses and Central Asia--regions of vital interest to Turkey.

During the cold war days, US policy objectives in the Middle East consisted of insuring free flow of oil, assuring the security of Israel, and counteracting the Soviet influence. Immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, US believed that Russia could be a partner in the Middle East issues; however, this optimism was short lived and the reassessment of Russian policies has brought Russian and US interests at logger heads in dealing with Iraq and Iran.

Turkey's interests coincides with that of assuring free flow of oil and helping peace and security in the Middle East. However, most Turks see prolonged US hostility towards Iraq as somewhat exaggerated and hope for continued improvement in the relations.

In the Balkans region, US and Turkish policies have come closer particularly after the European Union has chosen to keep Turkey out of the Union for the foreseeable future. Both Turkey and US have now an interest in counterbalancing EU (particularly German) and Russian influence and possible hegemony in the area. US has been the major player in the Dayton Process and Turkey has been a continuous contributor to UN peacekeeping efforts. Aga'n thanks to the efforts of US a solution will eventually be found to the Kosovo crisis, if at all. US is trying to develop and maintain close relations with each of the Balkan states and are promoting economic cooperation through SECI. Similarly, Turkey has been providing economic assistance to several Balkan countries and supporting various schemes for inter Balkan cooperation.

In respect to Greece and Cyprus, there are serious differences between Greece and the United States on regional policies. For example, while United States clearly supports Turkish-Israeli cooperation, Greece opposes it; the United States officially supports the proposed Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project and Greece opposes it. The US supports Turkey's EU membership, Greece vetoes it. US are against the deployment of S-300 missiles in Cyprus, Greece is for it; US consider PKK as a terrorist organization, Greece provides public and material support to it. The list goes on. However, all these differences are not adequate for the US to take a firm stand, thanks to the power and influence of the Greek lobby in Washington.

In the regions of Caucuses and Central Asia, Turkish and US policies have certain similar characteristics. The security and real independence of these former Soviet republics have been a major objective of the policies of the two countries. Unless economic independence can be secured, it would be difficult for these countries to advance towards fully democratic regimes. For this reason, both Turkey and US support alternate routes for the transit of gas and oil of these regions. Turkey and US support peace and stability in the Southern Caucuses, while US policy is somewhat tilted towards Armenia in the Karabag dispute, Turkish policy is tilted towards Azarbaijan for the same reasons.

Hopefully, in the face of hardening attitude in the leadership of Armenia, US Congress will find it increasingly difficult to maintain the embargo on Azerbaijan. Both Turkey and US support Georgia economically and hope that this country's reliance on Russian troops for internal security will diminish. The plan signed between Georgia and US on defence and military cooperation on March 24, 1998 may be a good step in the right direction.

The Balkans

With an intertwined ethnical structure where hatred and hostility often create explosive situations, the Balkans region is a source of concern and opportunity for Turkey. Geographically herself a Balkan country (more than 11 million of Turkey`s population live on the Balkans peninsula) Turkey, shares the destiny of the peninsula also through

bonds of history and presence of substantial Turkish national minorities and akin nations. Balkans constitute Turkey's main transit route to Central and Western Europe where nearly 4 million Turks live and more than half of Turkey's foreign trade is conducted. Since the Ottoman era, the transit route for social and administrative reforms has been the Balkans. Balkans area is economically highly important for Turkish exports and investments. Today, this country meets most of its gas requirements from Russia through the Balkans.

With its pluses and minuses, the Ottoman heritage constitutes a strong tie between Turkey and different Balkan countries. About 15% of the population of Bulgaria consist of ethnic Turkish people. There are approximately 70.000 Turks in Macedonia and about the same number in Kosova. In western Thrace, there are about 130.000 Turks. These people have long suffered from various types of persecution and continuous discrimination. In addition to these Turkish speaking people, in Kosova, Bosnia, and Bulgaria, there are large numbers of Muslims who consider themselves close to Turkey because of the fact that during the 19th. And 20th centuries there have been large migrations of these people to Turkey.

Although economic instability in most of the Balkan countries seriously hampers the development of trade relations and Turkish investments, already in Rumania, there are several thousands of small and medium Turkish investments and in Bulgaria members of the Turkish community and expatriates in Turkey have established many business links between Turkey and Bulgaria. Turkish President recently described Turkey's relations with Bulgaria as «exemplary». Turkey has provided economic assistance to several Balkans countries and continues to do so.

The prospects for most of the Balkan countries joining eventually the European Union will no doubt be a significant factor contributing to the democratization and peace in the region. However, outside Greece, which is already a member of EU, the accession prospects have been offered only to Bulgaria and Rumania. Former Yugoslav republics and Albania are not yet given any green light for future membership. For countries like Rumania and Bulgaria to adapt themselves to the conditions of adhesion to EU is indeed a very long-term task.

In view of this delayed prospects Europe's role and influence in the Balkans region will suffer from serious constraints. In an effort to play a certain role for peace and security in the Balkans, the EU has started the Rayemaund Process and has appointed a Greek diplomat as coordinator of this project. This, directly or indirectly, supports Greece in her quest for a leadership role on behalf of the EU in the Balkans. On its part, the United States is promoting an economic cooperation model through the SECI (Southeast European Cooperation Initiative) within the framework of OSCE. Four Balkan countries, namely Turkey, Rumania, Bulgaria and Greece are members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Furthermore, the Balkans ministerial conference series is continuing to be a helpful dialogue forum.

A serious question which is source of concern for the Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans is the future of the Turks and akin people living in the Balkans in the face of increasing nationalist trends and xenophobia. .

The task of bringing peace and stability to the Balkans lies in the lessening of ethnic tensions. This requires in the first place, a moderation the sense of nationalism. In practice as and when, democratic regimes, respecting human rights are established the Southeast European countries are admitted in European multi-lateral organizations and agreements, One would expect that by joining these organizations these countries will not pay mere lip service to the European norms, but adopt them as part of their social culture.

The second point is that the Turkish and Muslim minorities must be accepted as inalienable part of the Balkans and forcing them to emigration through discrimination and persecution would in no way serve peace and stability.

Thirdly, Balkan countries should accept that modern Turkey is neither an extension of the Ottoman Empire nor a new conqueror of Islam. But, it goes without saying that human rights are no longer a purely domestic affair and every nation under UN Charter, Paris Declaration and under the European convention of human rights has the right to promote human rights anywhere. The use of this right by Turkey can in no way be interpreted as an expression of aggressive intentions

Fourth, Turkey's approach towards the Balkan countries must be based on the requirements on the *Realpolitik* and Turkey must show care and attention to the sentiments of Balkan nations.

Fifth, for people who are in genuine distress or for reasons of family union, a program of immigration policy must be pursued by Turkey.

The Mediterranean

While Turkey as one of the most important Mediterranean powers has a special place in security, stability, and economic programs elaborated by various international organizations she has to develop her own bilateral or multilateral programs, that would better preserve her own interests. In the MEDA Program, which puts Turkey in the same category as the Arab countries in the Mediterranean, Turkey's position, is reduced to the position of a country under punishment thanks to decisions of the European Parliament and the European Council. While MEDA Program provides economic assistance and consider free trade agreement with the Mediterranean countries including some that are hot beds of terrorism, all economic programs foreseen for Turkey in compensation for Turkey's losses for establishing Customs Union with EU and under the MEDA program have been suspended arbitrarily.

While under the Customs Union arrangement, Turkey will provide the same trade preferences as EU to Mediterranean countries as part of the Customs Union, only Israel has agreed to sign a free trade agreement with Turkey.

EU's approach on where to place Turkey is also ambiguous. The aim of MEDA Program is to maintain a security dialogue that would lead a stability pact in the Mediterranean. In this respect, Turkey, which is a member of NATO, OSCE, and an associate member of

WEU, has a different status than non-EU member countries.

Turkey certainly takes part in OSCE and NATO dialogue with the Mediterranean countries being aware that their contribution to the problems of the region is highly limited.

Under these circumstances, Turkey has to develop special relations with each other Mediterranean countries basing herself on historical and cultural ties and mutual interests in an effort to contributing to mutual economic advantages and preserving peace and stability.

In Eastern Mediterranean a multi-lateral cooperation is highly desirable for the creation of the suitable atmosphere for developing economic relations and contributing to peace and security cooperation. However, the most important obstacles in this direction are Greek-Turkish disputes; position of Syria and Israel's dispute with Palestine and Syria.

Tourism is an area of non-political cooperation possibility for Eastern Mediterranean countries. The agreement concluded a few years ago between Egypt, Israel and Turkey is highly significant. Another agreement which could presage a multi-lateral cooperation in the future is the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement, on condition that major conflict sources in the region are reduced.

The Middle East

The definition of the Middle East as area varies from one country to another. In the current American literature, Middle East covers a very wide region extending from Atlas mountains in the West to Central Asia. For our country, the Middle East is an area including Mashrek countries, Iran, and Afghanistan. For the purposes of the Turkish foreign policy the most important countries may be considered as Syria, Iraq, and Iran which are adjacent to Turkey. The problems inherited from the past sometimes transform themselves into vital security issues. A significant difficulty in resolving the problems is that parties to disputes firmly believing in the righteousness of their positions has a lack of incentive for compromises. In the absence of a common threat or a major common interest, compromises through mutual concessions become highly rare among the Arabs and non-Arabs in the Middle East. In the questions of Palestine, Syria-Israeli dispute, in the Gulf, and in Turkish-Greek relations, the biggest handicap is the fear of "giving concession". The second obstacle is the psychological inability of individual governments to perceive the reality and develop suitable policies. Turkey suffers from the inability of understanding of most of their neighbours regarding the nature and aims of modern Turkey. Although Turkey is the strongest military and economic power in the Middle East, its policies are for self preservation and advancement, not one of expansionism. Yet, neighbouring countries unduly fear from Turkey's potential and attribute to it, intentions which do not exist.

What surprises Turkey's Middle Eastern neighbours is how Turkey, which came out of the Ottoman Empire weaker than many other Arab parts of the Empire could in over half a century, could reach a high level of industry and economy. The democracy, secularism,

and market economy which constitute the basis of success of the Turkish model are hard to adopt by neighbouring Arab countries. Particularly, oriental type of dictatorships which run the adjacent Middle East countries are disturbed by democracy in Turkey and they are the particular countries that feel hostility to the Turkish model. The fundamentalist regimes are, on the other hand, disturbed by secularism of an Islamic nation. As a consequence, nonexistent or small problems are blown up turning them into major political issues. There is little effort to search for reality and we are now faced with an anti-Turkish Arab attitude based more on sentiments than reason. Since overcoming the sentiments is not a short term task, we must learn how to live in peace and hope time and good gestures on the part of Turkey will alleviate the sentiments.

Outside the possibility of use of weapons of mass destruction, Turkey does not face a serious military threat from Middle East. Low intensity challenges such as terrorism are disturbing but do not constitute a major military danger.

It does not seem likely that Turkey may develop extensive economic relations with Mashrek countries. The oil rich countries prefer to purchase luxury goods and weapons from the West and poor countries can afford little to buy Turkish goods.

An important country in Turkey's Middle East policies is Iran. Geographically larger than Turkey, Iran has a similar number of population a large section of which are Turkish language speakers which should be a factor for bringing the two nations together. Turkey and Iran have fought many wars in the past for regional hegemony and the stalemate has provided for them an unsurpassed period of peace since 1732. Yet, this entire period of peace has hardly led to a comfortable and close economic and political relations.

In the intervening years since the beginning of 19th century Turkey has turned its face and attention to Western Europe, while Iran focused its attention on the Gulf region. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, many Western writers have dwelled upon a Turkish-Iranian rivalry and competition in the Caucuses and Central Asia. Iranian behaviour may better be explained as a reactive policy both to the developments in the Caucuses region and increasing Turkish links with Central Asian republics. Regarding the Caucuses, a strong and wealthy Azerbaijan based on oil economy might eventually fuel ethnic Azeri nationalism in Iran. For the time being, the religious regime in Iran based on Shiite sect to which both Azeris and Persians belong, reduces the sentiments of ethnicity. If ethnic nationalism is supported in the region there is no country that would be immune to the danger of separatism.

Eurasia

I think it may be proper, at this time, to define an area of new and increasing interest for Turkish foreign Policy as «Eurasia». For this purpose, Ukraine, Moldova, Russian Federation, Caucuses and Central Asian states may be considered as Eurasian States. Turkey has significant economic and political interest in this entire region and in the welfare and independence of all nations living in this wide region.

Three political ideologies which had their reflection on Foreign Policy had existed at the terminal period of the Ottoman Empire with residual influence in modern Turkey. These

ideologies can be described as Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism and modernism. Throughout the republican era, Turkey has stuck with European oriented modernism; even though the first ideologies or their combinations continued to exist in the Turkish political life as under current tendencies.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union, was rejoiced by Turkish-speaking Republics in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus. The first country they turned for emergency aid, economic and political support was naturally Turkey. Their leaders have considered Turkey as akin and friend and they still do so. Turkey in return, has provided all the assistance and the support it could muster to meet their urgent needs and to introduce these NIS's into the global system. Turkey helped them join UN, OSCE and establish partnership with NATO. She provided economic assistance and trained students and bureaucrats and still does so. Yet, it is clear that this Turkish interest can in no way be interpreted as a revival of Pan-Turkism. For the simple reason that it is a utopia under the existing conditions, in which geographic dissimilarity is coupled by diverging economic and social systems as well as the different national identities attained in each country in modern times.

Furthermore, it would not be realistic to expect these countries, most of whose frontiers are still guarded by Russian troops and their economies are tied Russia to be considered independent in full sense of the word, nor can they be expected to develop their democracy and human rights performances adequately until they attain their independence.

In the economic field, Turkey has significant investments in Central Asian countries like in other CIS countries. Turkey offers interesting possibilities for establishing an alternate route for the supply of Central Asian gas and oil to global markets. The development of this alternative will gain increasing importance in the next decades.

Thanks to the exchange of students and culture, a better understanding is developing among the Central Asian countries and Turkey.

On the other hand, from the points of view history, economy and ethnical variety, the Southern Caucasus region constitute a focus for neighboring countries and even for major powers outside.

The countries of the region are composed of ethnical groups who do not know how to get above their historical enmity and harmonize their economic and social interests.

The policies of the neighboring countries in pursuit their economic and political interests in the region are divergent. In discussing Iran's policy in the Caucasus, it was pointed out that these policies were more inclined towards Armenian rather than Azerbaijan; Russia's policy towards Southern Causes is motivated by the pursuit of the Near Abroad policy which interpret Russian interests as Soviet interests in as much as they express a desire to maintain an economic and political hegemony in the region.

Furthermore, in response to the enlargement of NATO towards Eastern Europe, and the interpretation of Turkish activism in Eurasia, even though a false one, may be considered as some of the factors that lead the Russians to keep the Southern Caucasus within their

military defense perimeter.

Russia is also perturbed by the possibility that full independence might encourage separatist tendencies among the non-Russian federated Republics, like Chechnia.

Russia is sometimes accused by leaders of Southern Caucasus Republics of intruding in domestic affairs of their countries and encouraging interstate conflicts, directly or through intrigues.

The third actor in the region is Turkey. Turkey's national interests in the Southern Caucasus requires that this area should function as an effective bridge between Turkey and Russian Federation and Central Asia; and also as a buffer zone between Russian Turkish armed forces. Prerequisite for this function is peace and stability in the entire region good relations with all the countries of the region. The existence, however, of a major conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has forced Turkey to take sides. The logic of this policy is based on the fact that the first place that Armenia has no right to keep occupied parts of Azerbaijan and to change frontiers by force. Secondly, Azerbaijan and Turkey are akin nations and they cannot stand aloof to each other's problems. Thirdly, Turkey needs an improvement in the peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to establish diplomatic relations and direct economic and transport links with Armenia.

The existence of Russian troops in Georgia and Armenia, even at symbolic levels, deprives the Southern Caucasus from playing a buffer zone. This situation is disturbing for Georgia that does not need anymore Russian troops for its internal and/or external security. US and Turkey have committed themselves to support Georgia to train its armed forces and Turkey has also done so for Azerbaijan.

The recent elections in Armenia where a nationalist from Karabagh region has been elected to power, will no doubt have a negative effect on the prospects of a settlement in the crisis between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The continuation of the no peace situation in the Southern Caucasus will in the first place hurt, the economies of the countries concerned and make them subject to outside interference and intrigues.

Azerbaijan with its rich oil resources is destined to become a rich country. Integration and close cooperation among the states will no doubt help their welfare. Southern Caucasus represents a significant venue for the transit of Central Asian and Caspian gas and oil. The lack of peace in the region will damage its prospects also in this respect. A great responsibility fall in the shoulders of the Armenian leadership. One wishes to think optimistically the election of a nationalist to the presidency in Armenia may even be a good chance for the future in the sense that the initiators of the peace process in the Middle East, Begin and Sadat were nationalists.

Russian Federation

For many centuries Russia has been the most powerful neighbor of Turkey. In their history, both nations have established multi-national empires. The Turkish Empire having

been dissolved at end of the First World War, had spawned a Turkish nation based on the unity of language and religion. Although during the same period Russian Empire had also undergone a dissolution, Russian domination was continued and even extended in the form of the Soviet Union.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union also spawned many independent countries leaving many questions behind such as identity, minorities and even viability. Russian Federation itself, composed of several republics and autonomous regions is also in search of identity. The Federation, is in difficulty in finding a common ideology, or myth or providing adequate prosperity for keeping together the Federation composed diverging nationalities and religions.

It is no surprise that one of the topics most discussed in Russia today is how to keep Russia as a whole and to combine Russian nationalism with democracy and open market economy.

Russian Federation must develop a national identity. A multi-ethnic Federation can hardly develop an identity belonging to one of its members. Russian empire, or the Soviet Union could not be a melting-pot of different ethnicities, like US, France or Turkey. The chances of the present Russian Federation in this respect are also very slim, because Russia itself cannot provide economic and social means to encourage such an integration. The Chechen refusal to be a member of Federation is an extreme example. A debate on the solidity and durability of the Russian Federation on the basis of Russian nationalism even if democratic may well be debatable. The current economic weakness in the Federation makes the current leadership of Russia extremely touchy about Russian identity and on the definition of Russian interests; most of the times they choose to equate the Russian Federation interests with the interests of the Former Soviet Union and behave accordingly.

This touchiness_ casts a shadow on the otherwise excellent relations (particularly in the economic field) between Turkey and Russia. Russians are very worried lest Moslems in Russian Federation be attracted by Turkey and that Turkey may encourage separatism in the Russian Federation. This introduces a major paradox into Turkish-Russian relations.

In the economic field too Turkey and Russia have overlapping and contradicting interests. Turkey is a major customer of Russian energy supplies particularly in the forms of natural gas and electricity. There are active projects to increase these supplies. In return, Russia has become a major recipient of Turkish export of goods, construction services and direct investments.

The contradiction starts with the Russian desire to have gas and oil supplies from Caspian and Central Asian to pass through Russian Black Sea ports to reach international markets, while Turkey proposes as the safest way pipe links to pass through Turkey to the Mediterranean. Even though the commercial interests of the oil companies participating in the consortia will decide which course will be preferable, US government has given support to Caspian-Mediterranean pipeline project. The Black Sea route is shorter, but, are two major problems on the concentration of the entire oil traffic on the Black Sea. One is that the Black Sea is already highly polluted has become a nearly dead-sea thanks

to high pollution coming from rivers and coastal industries in Ukraine and Russia; and particularly through Danube from Central Europe. Major tanker traffic in the highly windy Black Sea, coupled with the risk of a tanker accident with a major oil spillage is an almost fatal risk for Black Sea environment.

The danger is worse in the Bosphorus, which is a narrow passage way in the city of Istanbul. A tanker accident carries the risk of destroying an important part of the city and particularly some of its cultural heritage. If such an accident happens Turkey might have to close the Bosphorus to tanker traffic over a certain tonnage, or highly restrict the passage to ensure safety. Turkish warnings in this respect are not well received by the Russians who insist on the literal wording of the Montreux Convention of 1937 regulating the free passage of ships through the Turkish Straits, and concluded when shipping volume was incomparably low and 100.000 ton tankers did not exist.

All this makes Turkish-Russian relations highly complex and it seems the two countries will have learn how to live and cooperate in the absence of easy solutions to their problems.

Conclusion

What I tried to show above is that Turkey faces multiple problems in different directions. I did not dwell on Turkish-Greek relations and Cyprus which is subject of another panel; I did not tackle the relations with Syria because after the recent debacle over the Ocalan question, the ice may be broken with Syria and there is no reason why Turkey should not develop a friendly and cooperative relations with Syria like it did with Bulgaria, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Israel.

Turkey`s economy and permits her to follow a multi-directional political, economic and cultural policy and her military power factor is adequate to deal with any threats to her security.

Turkey considers herself to be a European country, and will continue to be involved in European affairs as much as it does in its own neighborhood.