

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH - RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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In my book entitled Turkey-Soviet Union Relations (1920-1964), published in Ankara in 1992, I termed Turco-Russian relations as “difficult neighbourhood”. Since then this attribute has not changed.

The Cold War was declared over with the Russian Federation agreeing to collaborate with the US in limiting and controlling nuclear weapons. The US altered its view of Russia because the threat ceased although the nuclear danger continued to exist. The US mobilised rich states and international institutions to aid Russia and sent experts and advisors to help with the reforms.

With the independence of the Eastern European states and the transformation of the Soviet Union into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Western Europe was glad to have its land borders with Russia removed. Russia, which had been breathing down their necks, had retreated. The withdrawal of Russian soldiers from East Germany was accomplished in August 1994 thanks to the strength of the German Mark.

Turkey also started to contemplate that its land border with Russia had ended with the termination of the Soviet Union. Now there was Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan between Russia and Turkey. The change in the policies of the Russian Federation in 1993 thwarted this expectation. The Russian Federation first started to aid Armenia and supported it in its aggression against Azerbaijan. Armenia joined the CIS. Russian soldiers returned to Armenian territory to protect its borders. After this, the Russian Federation incited rebellion among the minorities in Georgia. Armed conflict broke out. Georgia was put in a difficult position. It was forced to ask Russia for military aid. In return for aid, Georgia participated in the CIS and agreed to the Russian Federation's demand of positioning Russian soldiers in Georgia. Thus, Russian soldiers were given the opportunity to draw nearer to Georgia's borders with Turkey. The Russian Federation also incited internal strife in Azerbaijan. The Azeri president Ebulfez Elchibey, who displayed an attachment to Turkey and Atatürk, was overthrown after a coup d'état. Haydar Aliyev replaced Elchibey. Armenian aggression continued. Aliyev turned to the Russian Federation for help to stop the aggression. He offered to have Azerbaijan join the CIS in return. Then the issue of stationing Russian soldiers in Azerbaijan came up. Aliyev realised that Russian aid would ultimately result in his removal from power. Therefore, he did not agree to have Russian soldiers positioned in Azerbaijan. To counter Russian pressure he concluded co-operation agreements with Turkey. In return, Russia increased its aid to Armenia.

While these lines were being written in April 1996, the struggle was going on. The United States, in spite of its wish to see democracy in Azerbaijan, is irresolute against the Russian Federation's policy of reviving the Soviet Union. Apparently, the United States will not take action as long as its vital economic interests are not harmed.

The Russian Federation's official policies and covert actions in 1993 have practically ended the prospects of Turkey no longer having common land borders with Russia. Thus Russia has once again become a neighbour in the military sense along the same borders with Turkey that were defined by the 1921 Friendship and Fraternity Treaty with the then Soviet Russia.

RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA

Turkey has a de facto land border of approximately six hundred kilometres (about the distance between Rize and Sinop) with the Russian Federation as well as a sea bordering neighbour of about the same length. Turkey signed a continental shelf agreement with the Soviet Union in June 1978. The central axis of the Black Sea between the coasts of the two countries constitutes the sea border.

Turkey has a FIR (Flight Information Region) agreement with the Russian Federation. The line stipulated in the FIR agreement is the line of technical division of labour and not the border of sovereignty. However in practice the FIR line is regarded as a sort of air border.

This neighbouring status gives a quality of continuity to Turkey's relations with the Russian Federation. Turkey has to continue to live next to its big neighbour. This cannot be said to be a very secure situation. Moreover, our big neighbour devotes a significant amount of its resources to manufacturing weapons. In the past, immense military expenditure was listed as one of the factors bringing about the downfall of the Soviet Union. Approximately half Russian industry is engaged in manufacturing weapons. To reduce the production of weapons was contemplated after Mikhail Gorbachov came to power. Yet, not much has been achieved in this field. After Boris Yeltsin came to power, even the idea of reducing the production of weapons was abandoned. Furthermore, Yeltsin appointed Victor Chernomirdin, a representative of the arms industry, as prime minister. Turkey feels insecure about the Russian Federation manufacturing weapons in quantities well beyond its needs. The Russian Federation sells a portion of its arms production to our neighbours such as Iraq, Syria and Iran. This constitutes another source of insecurity for Turkey.

There is no balance of power in Turkey's relations with the Russian Federation in terms of country and population sizes.

The sizes and resources of Turkey and Russia are drastically different from each other. Turkey has an area of 779,452 square kilometres. Russia's area is 17,075,000 square kilometres. In other words, Russia is over twenty times as large as Turkey. The two countries' natural resources are very disproportionate in terms of quality and quantity. They are not even comparable. Russian resources of coal, iron, oil and natural gas are only comparable to those of other continents. The production of natural gas in Russia, for example, constitutes 32 per cent of total world production. It exports one per cent of this to Turkey. Russia is a continent in itself as far as its resources are concerned.

Turkey's population was 56,473,035 according to the 1990 census. Russia's population in the same year was 148,041,000. In other words, the Russian population is about 2.7 times as large as the Turkish population. In addition to this greater size in numbers, we must mention that Russians are better educated than Turks. These solid facts of course tilt the balance of power in favour of the Russians.

We are evaluating the balance of power from Turkey's point of view. In the West, there is discussion over whether Russia is a country to be feared or one which is weak. Some call Russia an underdeveloped superpower. Others call Russia a distortedly developed country rather than an under- or over-developed one. In reality, Russia sends satellites into space but is incapable of harvesting its potato crop. As far as Turkey is concerned, Russia is a big military power in possession of nuclear weapons and which is underdeveloped in terms of democracy and economy.

It cannot be argued that the policies of states take shape in strict correspondence to their material power. There are powerful but non-aggressive states alongside not so powerful but aggressive states. However, it cannot be denied that there is a correlation at least in terms of expansion between the power and policies of states. In the case of Russia, it is always necessary to take into account its dedication to the idea of Greater Russia (Russia as it was before the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, 1918). In Russian policies, the aspiration for Greater Russia has displayed a constancy. There is no difference between Tsar Nicholas II's, Joseph Stalin's and Yeltsin's feelings about Greater Russia. The only difference is in its manifestation, which changes form depending on Russia's power. Yeltsin, who was presented to the world as having given up the idea of a Russian Empire, has transformed into an advocate of Greater Russia within the scope of four years. He did not hesitate to demand the recognition of Russian regions of influence at the UN General Assembly in September 1994.

The well-managed material and moral resources of power have given Russia the opportunity to pursue a global policy, whereas its dwindling resources have directed Turkey towards an increasingly regional policy. Therefore, the relations between Turkey and Russia are taking shape in the framework of relations between a regional policy and a global policy.

Since Russia is engaged in pursuing a global policy, its policy in relation to Turkey is in harmony with and constitutes a part of this overall policy. Russia does not have a particular hostility or friendship towards Turkey. Russia pursues the same policy towards Poland, Romania, Turkey and Iran during its periods of expansion. Consequently there is a striking similarity between Russian policies towards Poland and Turkey. Soviet Russia, while attacking Poland in the west in 1920 with the aim of exporting the Bolshevik revolution to the world, simultaneously made territorial demands on the representatives of the Turkish National Assembly on behalf of Armenia in the east. Armenia being expected to join the Soviet Union, the land demanded was in fact for the Soviet Union. Thus it would be able to step into Anatolia using the Armenian gateway, and expand the revolution to the south, using Turkey's influence on Turkish communities.

With the defeat of the Red Army near Warsaw in August, 1920, Soviet Russia withdrew from Poland. The strong reaction of the Turkish National Assembly forced Soviet Russia to give up its territorial demands in favour of Armenia. Soviet Russia signed the Riga Treaty with Poland on 18 March 1921, and on the same day (the date was later changed from 18 March to 16 March) it signed the 16 March Moscow Treaty with Turkey. Soviet Russia declared the former treaties, which it considered to be damaging to the rights of the Iranian nation (such as partition of Iran), null and void and signed a new treaty of friendship with the Tehran government on 26 September 1921.

On the basis of its initial treaty with Germany in 1940, the Soviet Union invaded part of Poland at the outset of World War II. To go ahead with the second treaty with Germany, the Soviet Union demanded a military base on the Turkish Straits in addition to other things. Germany, deciding the demands to be too much, attacked the Soviet Union. Upon the German defeat at Stalingrad, the Red Army proceeded to invade Poland. At that time, Joseph Stalin commented: "The situation has changed. I will install a friendly [that is, satellite] government in the countries invaded by the Red Army." This doctrine was put into practice in Poland. According to the agreement between the Allies, a mixed representative government was to have been established in Poland, but the Red Army installed a communist government in power.

The Soviet Union, Britain and the US agreed to have Turkey enter the war and to change the regime governing the Straits in the Moscow and Tehran Conferences. Turkey refused to enter the war in the absence of any guarantees and not knowing the obligations it would be expected to undertake. The most decisive factor in Turkey's decision was the failure on the part of the Soviet Union to give any guarantees. Turkey did not want to share Poland's fate. In addition, the Soviet Union's declination to withdraw its forces of occupation from Iran led Turkey to be more cautious.

It was later revealed that Turkey's fears in regard to its security were justified. The Soviet Union cancelled its 1925 Friendship and Neutrality Treaty with Turkey on 19 March 1945. The Soviet Union later demanded a realignment of Turkey's eastern borders and a military base on the Turkish Straits.

We are recalling these parallel incidents to show that Russia is pursuing a global policy, as mentioned above, and that once it gains power, it moves beyond its borders. Poland, Romania, Iran and Turkey are within the region affected by this spill over. Germany and China protect themselves against this tendency to enlarge by means of the walls they have created through their own power.

In evaluating bilateral relations between Turkey and Russia, it can be seen that Armenians, Greeks, Muslim Turks in Russia and Turks receiving money from Moscow have from time to time influenced Russian foreign policy under the Tsarist regime, the Soviet Union and the Federation as well as Turkish policy under the Ottoman Empire and the Republic.

The Armenians and Greeks, weakening the Ottoman Empire from inside, sought Russian protection as ethnic groups. Russians interfered in Ottoman internal affairs and incited strife on the pretext of protecting them.

The Armenians and their aspirations also influenced relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union. Armenians were an obstacle in the formation of the 1921 Friendship and Fraternity Treaty. In fact, former Russian-Armenian co-operation was renewed. Russian protection of Armenians took the form of the Soviet Union's policy of winning over the Armenians. The goals underlying this policy are to

use the Armenians, and to benefit from the Armenian links of friendship in the West. This is why the commissar of foreign affairs, Georgi Chicherin, insisted that land be given to the Armenians from Anatolia during the negotiations on the 1921 Treaty. The old demands came to the surface once more after World War II. In the face of Turkish resistance, they started to put forward their demands under other cover. ASALA (an Armenian terrorist group) dreamt that it could influence Turkish policy by murdering Turkish diplomats. Now, they are using the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). There is close co-operation between the Armenians in Russia and abroad. The Armenians in the US collaborate with the Greek lobby. Moscow either put the brakes on or lets loose Armenian activities depending on its relations with Turkey. Therefore, Moscow has at times agreed with and at others rejected Turkish actions against Armenian activities. In Turkey, this attitude has established the opinion that the Soviet Union was behind these Armenian activities. The Armenian attacks against the Azeris remind us of this historical relationship.

Muslim Turks living in Russia sought Turkey's help in the period when they struggled to free themselves of the Russian yoke. When Turkey extended a helping hand, the Russians tried to prevent this and accused Turkey of having ulterior motives. The same complaints and accusations that were voiced during the October Revolution are being repeated today, in 1993-1995. Russia has turned down Turkey's proposals to replace competition by co-operation. As long as the Russian Federation keeps up this policy, difficulties will remain.

Though bilateral, Turkey's relations with Russia take place in the context of global politics. Bilateral relations purged of global policy making are rare, and these are relations more of a technical character. Political bilateral relations are generally three dimensional. Those countries opposed to Russia or those countries with which Turkey has entered into alliance (in the face of increasing Russian power to make up for Turkey's dearth of power, which began with the weakening of the Ottoman Empire) have played a certain role in Turco-Russian bilateral relations, in accordance with their weight in world politics. Until now, this role has been played by Germany, Britain and the US at various times. Therefore, it is better to look at bilateral relations as three dimensional ones, Turco-Russian-British, Turco-Russian-German, Turco-Russian-US.

In examining Turkey's political relations with Russia it is important to make a careful distinction between official and covert Russian policies. Russia's official policy is expressed by its government, and more often by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Russia's covert policy was formerly administered by the Communist Party and the KGB. Now, FSK has replaced these. Official and covert policies can sometimes be the same and sometimes very different. Therefore, while the government preached friendship, and particularly the friendship founded by Lenin and Atatürk, the Communist Party could have been engaged in destructive activities. We witnessed various instances of this dual policy during our War of Independence and World War II. A coup d'état against Atatürk was staged at the outset of the War of Independence. Recently, when the then Turkish prime minister, Tansu Çiller, visited Moscow, Russian authorities talked about friendship and said she resembled Atatürk. Soon afterwards, the FSK stepped up its covert activities against the security of Turkey in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Russia makes official shows of friendship towards Turkey for the sake of propaganda. In reality, it continues to pursue the covert policy of trying to turn Turkey into a satellite, keep it under control or at least to influence it.

Early in the War of Independence, on 13 September 1919, Chicherin issued a long declaration calling on Turkish workers and peasants to take the fate of their country into their own hands. At a closed session of the Turkish National Assembly on 24 April 1920, Atatürk said Russia initially conditioned its aid on Turkey becoming Bolshevik, but did not insist when Turkey rejected this. But this step back was a temporary one. After the 1921 Friendship and Fraternity Treaty, Soviet Russia continued to interfere in Turkey's internal affairs and to engage in activities to spread communism. For this reason some Soviet ambassadors, eg. B. Medivani, were asked to leave Ankara. Medivani was said to have been involved in a conspiracy to overthrow the Ankara government.

The policy of turning Turkey into a satellite state reappeared after World War II. On 19 March 1945, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Union's foreign minister, informed Ambassador Selim Sarper that they had cancelled the 1925 Friendship and Fraternity Treaty. He first dwelt on the changes that

took place after World War II and brought up the example of Poland and said that Poland had changed the 1921 Treaty and made a new one and that they became friends once again. The implication was one of Turkey becoming a satellite like Poland. Following this, demands for a realignment of the border in east Anatolia and establishment of a Russian military base on the Straits came up. At the time, the Turkish minister of foreign affairs, Hasan Saka, commented that if these demands were approved Turkey would be annexed to Russia. The president İsmet İnönü, interpreted the 8 August 1946 Soviet memorandum on the Straits in a similar manner. İnönü said: "We were to defend the Straits together. In other words, Russian forces were to position themselves on the Straits. Then, under the pretext of requirements of joint defence, they would be free to demand anything of us. Their status in Turkey will be the same as their status in those countries of Eastern Europe under their control."

Turkey was not alone in this appraisal. The foreign affairs and military departments of western countries made similar assessments in 1946. The Truman Doctrine is a product of these judgments.

After failing to turn Turkey into a satellite state early in the War of Independence, the Soviet Union tried to put it under its control. The most distinct means of this was the 17 December 1929 Protocol which extended the validity of the 1925 Friendship and Neutrality Treaty. Under Article 2 of this Protocol, Turkey and the Soviet Union proclaimed that they had no secret agreements with their land and sea neighbours, and they promised not to enter into negotiations for political agreements with neighbouring states without prior mutual consultation and approval. The article imposed obligations on both sides. In practice, as was to be expected, the Soviet Union attempted to use this article to exercise control over Turkey. Based on this article, the Soviet Union tried to prevent the signing of the Balkan Pact. There was a 24-hour crisis between Ankara and Moscow. The crisis ended with the addition to the Pact of a reserve clause in favour of Russia. The real cause of the crisis was the Russian desire to restrain Turkey's initiative. When the foreign minister, Şükrü Saraçoğlu, visited Moscow in September 1939, he was presented with a secret draft protocol concerning the Straits. If this draft had been approved, each time warships of countries without a coast on the Black Sea wanted to pass through the Straits, the Soviet and Turkish governments would consult each other and take a decision together. In other words, it would be necessary to get the Soviet Union's permission each time. The secret protocol draft was re-presented to Turkey in a different dressing in March 1945. Molotov proposed to Sarper that the Montreux Treaty be changed and that the Straits be jointly defended. Turkey, it was professed, would be unable to defend the Straits against a powerful state. At about the same date Russia gave the same line of reasoning to Poland. It claimed Poland was too weak to defend its country by itself.

The Soviet Union, after failing to turn Turkey into a satellite and bring her under its control, tried at least to influence it. This influence took the forms of accusing Turkey of pursuing an aggressive policy, threatening to use force against Turkey or taking the reverse approach offers of economic aid. The Soviet radio broadcasts and press and its affiliates in Turkey tried to assist in achieving this influence. For example, when Turkey wanted to join NATO, in a memorandum it presented on 3 November 1951, the Soviet Union described NATO as a tool of the aggressive policies of imperialist states. It argued that by joining NATO, Turkey would be acquiescing to having its country used for these aggressive policies and for which it would come to bear responsibility. When the 1957 Syrian crisis broke out, the Soviet foreign minister, Andrei Gromiko, held a press conference in Moscow, 20 September, where he accused Turkey of massing its army on the Syrian border, and threatened that a Middle Eastern regional war could erupt into another world war. In an interview with an American newspaper on 9 October, the first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, said: "In the event of a war, we are closer to Turkey, not you. Once the guns are fired, missiles will fly and it will be too late to think."

After its threats yielded no result, the Soviet Union tried to draw Turkey under its influence with pledges of economic aid. These are the years when Turkey was in great need of economic aid. The Soviet Union reluctantly accepted Turkey keeping its place in the Western bloc and tried at least to increase the economic relations between the two countries. Thus a mutual political understanding developed. Turkey was to remain a part of the Western bloc in terms of security matters while cultural and economic bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey were to be developed. The initial instances of economic aid were ostentatious and more political in character. After the natural gas agreement, 1984, economic relations turned into trade relations. Turkey, now

held the position of a loan-giving country. To put it in other words, the economic aid offer lost its influence. The Republic of Turkey is no longer the Turkey of the 1920s or 1945, nor is the Russian Federation the Soviet Union.

Atatürk pursued a realistic and decisive line against the covert policy of Russia. Atatürk sent a second delegation, headed by Tevfik Rüşdü Aras, to accompany the delegation visiting Moscow for the second round of negotiations on the 1921 Treaty. This second delegation studied Bolshevism in its home. In those days, Turkey was at a crossroads, but there was insufficient healthy information on what Bolshevism was. In its report, the delegation pointed out that Bolshevism did not conform to national Turkish values. I asked Tevfik Rüşdü Aras about the report when we met in Ankara. He confirmed its content. But he said the report was submitted verbally. As the other members of the delegation were too old when I was preparing the book *Difficult Neighbourhood* it was not possible to interview them for additional information. Upon receiving the report, Atatürk decided to obstruct attempts to spread Bolshevism in Turkey. The communist party in Turkey was closed down and the activities of communist agents were prohibited. During the War of Independence, Atatürk's attitude towards Russia was geared to the aid he could secure from there. He obtained all the aid he could. After winning the War of Independence, Atatürk put a distance between Moscow and Ankara, and worked to increase relations with London. Thus, while freeing Turkey from the yoke of the West with the War of Independence, he also prevented it being yoked by Russia and becoming a satellite state. He ordered preparations to be made for the establishment of the Balkan and Sadabad Pacts. He followed a determined policy on abiding by principles like independence, and non-interference in other's internal affairs in Turkey's relations with the Soviet Union. He said Turkey will try to remain friends with the Soviet Union, but we will not be lured into its trap.

During the work sessions in the Lausanne Conference, İnönü arrived at the conclusion that Russia will not give Turkey any help, save for propaganda purposes. He did not expect help from the Soviet Union during the disagreement on the Mosul issue. He tried to gradually get closer to the Western states without causing a crisis of confidence in Turkey's relations with Russia. In order to compensate for the dearth of power, he entered into an alliance with Britain and France in 1939. In 1947 he concluded a military aid agreement with the US.

Aras appeared to be in favour of following a policy which is more open to the opinions of and co-operation with the Soviet Union. He continuously tried to make agreements with the Soviet Union. İnönü put the brakes on him.

The general orientation of Turkish foreign policy did not change after the Democrat Party took power in 1950. Co-operation with the West continued. Efforts were made to further improve this co-operation. Turkey joined the Council of Europe in 1949, sent soldiers to fight in Korea in 1950 and joined NATO in 1952.

After the declaration of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, Turco-Russian-British relations were replaced by Turco-Russian-US relations.

The Cyprus problem brought a halt to relations with the West resulting in closer relations with the Soviet Union. This drawing closer, too, was stalled after 1978. Turkey took the direction of a multi-lateral foreign policy without breaking away from the West.

The Soviet Union disintegrated at the end of 1991.

TURKEY-CIS RELATIONS

The Soviet Union made a great effort to spread the October Revolution around the world, but was not successful. Then it directed its efforts at keeping the Revolution alive in Russia. Therefore, it stayed within its own borders and on the defensive. After gathering power, it began to pursue a global policy once again. The Soviet Union emerged victorious from World War II and expanded its country and sphere of influence. In the 1960s the Soviet Union began to compete with Western states in political, military and economic fields. It was beaten in this competition in the 1980s. It was not able to step ahead of the West and faced internal decay. The economic and political

reforms undertaken to improve the Soviet Union were not completed and in the meanwhile Moscow lost control of the state of affairs. The Soviet Union, believed to have united in one culture and one citizenship, entered a process of disintegration. The republics constituting the Soviet Union began to demand independence. In November 1990, during the rule of Gorbachov, a plan for a loose federation called the Union of Sovereign States was prepared to prevent disintegration. This draft was not considered satisfactory by the republics demanding their full independence. In a plebiscite held in Ukraine on 1 December 1991, independence was accepted. President Kravchuk declared Ukraine was not going to join the Union.

This statement caused deep concern in Moscow. Yeltsin immediately invited the presidents of Ukraine and Belarus to a meeting. Yeltsin intended to establish a European Union-style community with the participation of the three Slavic republics. Yeltsin met the two presidents in Minsk. It was revealed that Ukraine did not desire a comprehensive union. On 8 December 1991, the three presidents agreed on a community based on independence and equality. They called this community the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). According to Yeltsin this community would improve towards full union, whereas Kravchuk held that this process would end in disunion. This fundamental disagreement still goes on today. The community was left open to the participation of other republics.

In the process of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in 1990, like the other republics, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kirghizstan and Kazakhstan declared their sovereignty one after the other. Five Muslim states declared their independence in 1991. The majority joined the CIS. This community was not a union but a means facilitating co-operation between member states in desired fields. The existing borders were to remain as they were.

The first issue to be pointed out concerning Turkey's relations with the CIS is the fact that Turkey never adopted a policy towards the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Turkey respected the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union to the very end of the Union.

Turkey regulated its relations with the states that replaced the Soviet Union after its disintegration according to changing circumstances.

Relations with the Russian Federation were taken up in negotiations made by the then prime minister, Süleyman Demirel, in Moscow on 25-26 May 1992. Agreement was reached on having good neighbourly relations with the Russian Federation on the territory under its sovereignty. These relations were to be built on the basis of the good neighbourly relations with the former Soviet Union, and the required adjustments were to be made. The principles of good neighbourly relations, dating from 1972, were put in the form of a treaty, and new principles of international co-operation, such as the 1990 Paris Charter for a New Europe, were added on to these. Bilateral relations were given a liberal quality free of the control of either state. It was stressed that the two states have the same attitude towards relations with the CIS. Thus, a new era of co-operation was believed to have started.

However, this approach remained on paper as official policy. The Russian Federation continued to implement its covert policy in the opposite direction. Russia did not look favourably upon Turkey establishing and improving relations with the Muslim Turkic republics. Turkey tried to continue consultation and co-operation with Russia on issues concerning it such as in the case of the recognition of Azerbaijan as an independent state. For some reason, the Russian Federation does not want to understand that Turkey can be of help in its relations with its Muslim Turkish minority and the breakaway Muslim Turkic republics during talks between the president of Turkey and heads of Muslim Turkic republics. The Russian Federation accuses Turkey of pursuing a policy of reviving Panturkism among Muslim Turks.

The Russian Federation is trying to continue its monopoly over the transport of even those natural resources yet to be discovered in the Muslim Turkic republics. It sees in Turkey a rival in this field. The Russian Federation insists that the oil of the Muslim Turkic republics be transported through the Turkish Straits. The geographical nature of the Straits and their capacity is familiar to all. This

policy, pursued insistently by Russia in spite of the natural obstacles, will lead to new problems in its relations with Turkey.

What have been the other effects on Turco-Russian relations of the emergence of the CIS after the disintegration of the Soviet Union?

To answer this question it is first necessary to underline a general drawback. The developments in Russia and its neighbouring states have not been concluded yet. The executive and legislative apparatus, the reformists and communists are still challenging one another in the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation is expected to transform into an authoritarian presidency regime.

The Baltic states, which gave the first signs of breaking away from the Soviet Union, have attained their independence. The Ukraine is also holding fast to its independence. Leonid Kuchma, who won the elections for presidency at the end of 1994, is closer to Russia in terms of economic co-operation without relinquishing independence. He shares the former president's views on issues of sharing the Black Sea fleet and the future of Crimea. The difference of opinion on whether the Minsk agreement will lead to union or disunion continues between Kiev and Moscow. The future of the Minsk agreement appears to depend largely on political developments in the Ukraine.

The Russian Federation is putting pressure on Georgia and Azerbaijan for the unification of the CIS. The Central Asian Turkic republics, which do not react to the unification efforts of the Russian Federation, do not give their full support either. At the end of 1994, these republics appear to have embraced their independence.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has not completely ended Turkey's security concerns. At the beginning of 1992, we imagined we no longer had a land border with Russia. But Russian soldiers reappeared on our Armenian borders in 1993, and on our Georgian borders in 1994. The Russian Federation continues to put pressure to re-establish itself on Azerbaijan's borders as well.

Since Eastern Europe freed itself of Russian control, Bulgaria appears to have escaped full Russian influence. However the Russian Federation does not want the central European states to integrate with NATO and the European Union. It started to openly oppose this partnership at the end of 1994. The Russian Federation claims that it, being a big state, should have regions of influence.

The Russian Federation is a big military power. This power is based on its nuclear weapons and arms production. Nearly half of its industry is engaged in arms production. In the Gorbachov era, it was announced that arms production would be reduced. No such reduction has been observed. The intention to make a reduction was abandoned during the Yeltsin era. Furthermore, arms exports increased. According to the international press, Russia sold \$1bn-worth of weapons to Iran in 1994. This situation is an indirect threat against Turkey's security. However, as a result of Russia's covert policy, these weapons could also have been sold not directly by Russia, but through the use of intermediary states. In the Cyprus conflict, Russia supplied weapons to the Greek Cypriots with Czechoslovakia as the intermediary. In his memoirs, Yeltsin admits that weapons were sold to the Irish Republican Army. Why would a state with such policies refrain from selling weapons to terrorist organisations in Turkey? The weapons in Iran were supposed to have been transferred to Syria. It was not possible to investigate the whereabouts of these weapons now.

The desire displayed by the Russian Federation to adopt a free market economy resulted in a relative improvement in Turco-Russian economic relations. Russian natural gas exports to Turkey increased while Turkey's exports to Russia and contracting activities there increased. A type of exchange called suitcase-trading also emerged. It is difficult to give an exact estimate of the volume of this type of trade, but it is said to be about \$6bn-8bn. Moreover, in summer 1994, I came across Russian tourists in Antalya for the first time. In summer 1994 the number of Russian tourists visiting Turkey was one million.

The most striking result of the downfall of the Soviet Union was the collapse of the Iron Curtain. Turkey was thus able to enter into direct cultural and economic relations with the Muslim Turkic

republics. These relations are improving daily, though at a slower pace than was anticipated. If this development is not obstructed, it will be beneficial both for Turkey and for the Muslim Turkic republics. Central Asia is a more friendly environment than the Middle East for Turkey and a big region in terms of its potential.

The Russian Federation is trying to prevent Turkey's relations with the Muslim Turkic republics. In the past it used to do this covertly. In 1994 it began to do it openly. Will Russia succeed in breaking Turkey's relations with the Turkic republics?

There were similar events in the period between 1917 and 1920. The Bolsheviks had declared they were going to recognise the right to self-determination of the Muslim Turks. Muslim Turks declared their independence such as in the case of Azerbaijan. When the revolutions the Bolsheviks had expected to take place all over the world did not happen, they adopted the policy of keeping the revolution intact in Russia. In the context of this policy, the right to self-determination was left on paper. Local Bolshevik parties were brought to power all over the country. These parties were subservient to the central administration in Moscow.

There were similar developments in 1991-1995. Muslim Turks declared their independence. The Soviet Union turned into the CIS. The Russian Federation now tries to integrate the CIS into a Union through military and economic links.

The Joint Security Treaty concluded between Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and three Central Asian republics in May 1992 has not yielded the expected result yet. The Muslim Turkic republics are reluctant to participate in the defence of Christian Armenia against Muslim Azeris. The idea of a Eurasian Union, brought up by the president of Kazakhstan in early 1991, did not receive much support either.

The former and current circumstances are not totally similar. The Muslim Turks lived in a kind of feudal era before. Their political organisation was scattered and their economic means insufficient. The Ottoman State, which could have helped them, was defeated in World War I and in a state of disintegration. Istanbul and West Anatolia were under enemy occupation.

The Muslim Turks entered the new era in a more educated and developed state. They were aware of the value of their economic means, especially of natural resources like oil and natural gas. The Muslim Turks did not endeavour to destroy the Soviet Union. In the face of its downfall, they put their own house in order. While searching for ways forward, they realised that the union with Russia was not the sole alternative. They started to appreciate the value of their independence. The Republic of Turkey is not like the Ottoman State. An economic and political accumulation has taken place over these seventy years, though less than desired. Using this accumulation, Turkey is now trying to be of help to the Turkic Republics.

In view of developments in communication technology the Russian Federation has lost the chance to break cultural relations between Turkey and the Muslim Turkic republics. It can only create difficulties in economic relations by taking advantage of the existing infrastructure. However, in time, it will be difficult for it to oppose dictates of economy.

RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE MUSLIM TURKIC REPUBLICS

The collapse of the Soviet Union made it possible for the Muslim Turkic states to take their place in world political and economic scene as independent states.

Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have a total area of 3,449,800 square kilometres. The total population of these five countries in 1992 was 50.5 million. Eleven per cent of this population is Russian. The average per capita income of the five countries in 1991 was over \$1500. The five countries are rich in terms of oil, natural gas and uranium resources. The utilisation of these resources will enhance the prosperity of the peoples of these countries and create an important market for the world.

Turkish public opinion has generally been in favour of extending a helping hand to the Muslim Turkic republics freed from the yoke of the Soviet Union. The supplied aid has mainly been in the form of food and medicine, providing opportunities of education, making small and medium-scale investments. Arms, for example, have not been sent. Turkey wants the Muslim Turkic republics to be able to stand on their own feet and to establish democratic governments. All alleged goals beyond this are fabrications. In reality, the Muslim Turkic republics have not been willing to get rid of the yoke of Soviet Union only to replace it with the yoke of Turkey. They have not hesitated to state this attitude openly to Ankara.

Turkey established the Turkish International Co-operation Agency (TİKA) in early 1992 to improve its relations with the Turkic republics. The goal of the agency is to help the Muslim Turkic republics in the transition to democracy, economic reforms, improving transportation and communication, expanding TV broadcasts, restructuring and privatising public enterprises, establishing small and medium size enterprises and implementing their educational programs.

The agency provides training, education and advisory services in a broad range of subjects to achieve the above mentioned goals. The services are multilateral or bilateral. These have begun to yield beneficial results.

Turkey is trying to bring together the Muslim Turkic republics which were kept at arm's length by the Soviet Union. In October 1992, it invited the Azeri president, Ebulfez Elchibey, Kazakh president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kirghiz president, Askar Akayev, Uzbek president, Islam Karimov and Turkmeni president, Safarmurad Niyazov to Ankara for celebrations on the anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. On 30 October 1992, after the celebrations, the six presidents held their first summit meeting. In the meetings, developing the multilateral relations between the Turkic republics in cultural and economic fields was discussed. The Turkish president, Turgut Özal, explained the objective of the planned co-operation as follows: "This co-operation of ours is beneficial for our peoples and region. Therefore, it is a contribution to regional and global peace and stability. No one should have undue worries or qualms. Let no one misunderstand us... . Our policy, our co-operation is not detrimental to anyone, and will not be so in the future either. We are only concerned about the welfare of our peoples and region. We believe that the closer we get to that goal the more will we have served regional and world peace. In our opinion this is a mission in the name of humanity and as such should be applauded."

After the summit meeting the 31 October 1992, Ankara Declaration was signed. In the introduction to the Declaration the special links between the six countries, based on common history, language and culture were pointed out. It is stated that a spirit of fraternity, solidarity and co-operation dominates these relations, and the principles guiding international relations are reaffirmed. In the declaration an agreement is stated to have been reached on the formation of work groups on implementation of transportation and communication projects, the improvement of commercial and economic co-operation, the development of industry, energy, agriculture, service sectors and mines, oil and enterprises, the creation of opportunities for mutual technical assistance and professional training.

The Ankara Declaration is the expression of an intention to co-operate. Signatory states have not put themselves under clear cut obligations.

The Ankara Summit was held under the shadow of the Russian Federation. The economic relations envisaged by Turkey as a Turkic common market were given the character of a loose co-operation by means of the amendments made in the text.

The Russian Federation made a great effort to prevent a second summit meeting from taking place. Previously it used to express its opposition to these meetings behind closed doors, however in 1994 this was openly expressed by the Foreign Ministry spokesman, Demurin. He said they did not want a grouping based on principles of nationalism. In spite of these warnings the six Turkic republics held a meeting in Istanbul in September. They discussed common cultural, economic and political issues. The Istanbul Declaration issued on 19 October dwelt on the matter of common language. It was decided to prepare a comparative dictionary of various Turkish dialects. In the economic field the

transportation of the Turkic republics' oil and natural gas to world markets was discussed. The work being carried out by concerned countries to have this transported via Turkey was welcomed. In the political field, the wish was expressed for respect of UN and CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) principles. It was pointed out that the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict must be resolved peacefully in accordance with the resolutions of the UN Security Council. Views were exchanged on Cyprus. Thus political matters were included in the framework of co-operation between the six presidents.

The Istanbul summit has revealed the emergence of a closeness between the six presidents who have begun to know each other better in spite of efforts to the contrary. They have come to discuss all issues openly. The time will come for this affinity to turn into solidarity.

The participation of Central Asia in world politics as independent states has led to the emergence of various views on the future of the region.

The Russian Federation considers itself a major Eurasian state and opposes the break away of Central Asia. It is concerned that its influence in the region will diminish if Central Asia integrates with the world at large. It expresses this concern as a matter of the future of Russian minority in the region. It makes efforts to justify its activities in the region as attempts to resolve this problem.

Central Asia is the homeland of Muslim Turks. Russia is afraid that the developments in this region will spread to other Turks/Muslims such as the Tatars, Chechens, Dagestanis and Crimeans in Russia. Therefore it is struggling to prevent Turkey's activities in the Central Asian region at all costs, unlike its attitude towards states like Pakistan, China and Iran. The Russian Federation also sees Turkey as a vanguard force of the West. It anticipates that Western countries will follow Turkey's steps into Central Asia.

Among the states that will enter into Central Asia, the advantages of Turkey are given the greatest attention. The participation of Central Asia in world politics has given Turkey the opportunity to change from a periphery state into a regional centre. Russia, Turkey and the Western states are assessing this opportunity. Russia has found itself face to face with a Turkey once again growing in geopolitical significance. Its military doctrine takes the potential threat from the south into account. Turkey is no longer an excluded state but one whose co-operation is sought. Turkey has become an intermediary state between the West and Central Asia. The initial effects of this situation can be observed in the EU's view of Turkey.

The world press deals with the advantages of Turkey's attempts to enter into Central Asia as well as the drawbacks of its competition with Russia and Iran. The concern here is the possibility that such a competition might initiate co-operation between Russia and Iran. Also considered is the possibility that Turkey's orientation to Central Asia might weaken its relations with the West. It is also mentioned that this orientation might lead to the danger of a revival of pan-Turanist trends in Turkey. Under such circumstances, drawbacks inevitably arise alongside benefits. Considerations must be made based on a comparative analysis of benefits and drawbacks and a calculation of proceeds and costs.

Turkey has some special advantages with regard to entering Central Asia. First of all, Turkey is akin to the Muslim Turkic republics. A commonly shared language and culture constitutes the basis of these relations. The development and consolidation of these relations is natural and inevitable. To further consolidate the links of common language, Turkey is working to spread a common alphabet, Turkish education and TV broadcasts. The future acceptance of Turkish as one of the official languages of the UN, as the language of 120 million people will be to the benefit of all the Turkic republics.

Turkey's political, social and economic regime is based on a secular, democratic and liberal model. This model cannot be claimed to be the sole, uncontested option. Another alternative being dealt with is the Chinese model. In time the attractiveness of the Turkish model can be expected to increase.

Turkey has played a very active role in the Muslim Turkic republics opening up to the world, becoming UN members and participating in other international organisations. It is impossible for the Muslim Turkic republics not to value this. The participation of the Muslim Turkic republics in the UN and other organisations has served to consolidate their independence.

Turkey's economic aid to the Muslim Turkic republics is not so great in terms of dollars. However, Turkey is providing this aid not as financial aid but as assistance towards their economic construction and education. The results of type of assistance appear gradually but serve to revive the economies of these republics. It has already begun to yield fruit.

All these efforts will create a Turkic world in the future. The Turkic republics will contribute to world peace and security as a community.

CONCLUSION

For the above mentioned reasons, Russia occupies a special and continuous place in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey seeks ways of achieving a balance according to developments in Russia's policies. After the downfall of the Soviet Union, the views of the US and Western states towards Russia changed. Therefore, the value they place on Turkey's efforts to achieve a balance has changed too. The Russian Federation is striving to revive the Soviet Union. The West is not opposing this policy.

Will Russia try to re-establish its influence over its former satellite states in central Europe? The answer to this question is not clear enough yet. For the time being Russia has opposed the participation of the East European states in NATO and the EU. Its opposition has been half accepted. In former Yugoslavia, the West has entered into co-operation with Russia.

Russia's ambition to re-establish its control over the Muslim Turkic republics is obvious. It is taking advantage of its former military and economic links to this end. It has not yet succeeded in establishing a political link or union. Turkey is continuously warning the West against this preparation.

If Russia succeeds in continuing its old policy without disturbing the West, Turkey will have to re-evaluate its policies. In the reappearance of a dearth of power, Turkey will seek for new alliances to counterbalance this situation.

Turkey is pursuing a policy of defence against Russia. Turkey has no territorial demands on Russia. When Russia made territorial demands, Turkey entered into countering alliances to defend itself. When Russia relinquished this demand, stability was established on the Turco-Russian border.

Excessive Russian production of arms and the indirect threat this constitutes on Turkey's security has not ended yet. Turkey will continue to be vigilant and keep watch on the arms routes passing through the Straits and its air zone. It will try to prevent any harm coming to Turkey from Russia's covert policies in this field.

Turkey's defence policy will be oriented towards protecting its rights and interests as well as security. Turkey should continue to adopt resolute policies such as in the implementation of the Straits Regulations.

Turkey has always been careful to develop friendly relations with Russia, and will continue to do so. If Russia displays a similar care, mutually beneficial co-operation can be realised. The responsibility for this issue lies on Russia's shoulders. As far as we can see it is difficult for Russia to fulfil this responsibility as long as it does not relinquish the ambition of becoming a military power and adopt a civil structure. A sort of Cold Peace will continue to characterise the relationship.