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## Abstract

*This policy brief studies the evolution of United Nations peace operations and aims at analyzing the motivations that lie at the root of Turkey's involvement in peace operations, mostly organized under the leadership of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era. The brief puts forth the argument that participation in such operations has been an identity-constructing activity in the sense that Turkey has, through this particular way, tried to reinforce its eroding western identity in the 1990s.*

*This brief also discusses alternative motivations behind Turkey's involvement in peace operations, such as security-related considerations in a neo-realist vein and domestic influence of ethnic and religious pressure groups, but argues that these accounts fall short of offering convincing explanations.*

# United Nations Peace Operations and the Motivations that Lie at the Root of Turkey's Involvement

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Uğur Güngör

## Introduction

The UN's peace operations began as an international observer mission in May 1948 with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East to assist the UN

Mediator and the Truce Commission in supervising the observance of the truce in Palestine. Since then, the UN's peace operations have evolved in size, complexity, legitimacy, and effectiveness and have gone through periods of innovation, development, and expansion-at times with periods of difficulty, failure, and disillusionment. During the Cold War, the UN undertook 13 peace operations of varying scope and duration.

*With the end of the Cold War, there was a greater demand and willingness to deploy UN peace operations<sup>1</sup> than ever before. During the first decade of the 21st century, the rising demand for peacekeepers saw the UN operate at a historically unprecedented tempo, with increases in the number and size of missions as well as in the scope and complexity of their mandates.*

With the end of the Cold War, there was a greater demand and willingness to deploy UN peace operations<sup>1</sup> than ever before. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the rising demand for peacekeepers saw the UN operate at a historically unprecedented tempo, with increases in the number and size of missions as well as in the scope and complexity of their mandates. The UN Secretariat has made considerable progress in adjusting peace operations to the new circumstances.

Against this background, the Security Council has created 56 peace operations since 1988. At the time of writing of this paper,

there are 16 peace operations under way involving 125,396 peacekeepers. UN peacekeepers are currently involved in the Western Sahara, the Central African Republic, Mali, Haiti, Congo, Darfur, Syria, Cyprus, Lebanon, Sudan, South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Kosovo, Liberia, India and Pakistan and on the Golan Heights on the Israel-Syria border.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with this rising demand, Turkey's contribution to UN peace efforts has been increasing as well. Turkey's policy, since the country's inception, has always been to integrate with the community of modern nations. Therefore, it has become a vigorous supporter of the values of the western world and the ideals of the UN. To this end, it has supported peace initiatives by the UN, NATO, and other regional organizations in order to prevent or terminate regional and ethnic conflicts. Within this framework, Turkey's participation in UN military operations started in 1950, when it committed a brigade to participate in the Korean War. Between the years 1950-1953, a total of 15,000 Turks served in Korea on a rotational basis.

While, with the exception of the Korean case, Turkey generally shied away from such missions during the Cold War years, Turkey's involvement in UN-led peace operations has increased in the post-Cold War era. In the 1990s, the Turkish Armed Forces actively participated in various peace operations and various observation missions.<sup>3</sup> Since that time, UN peace operations have been a distinctive feature of Turkey's security and foreign policy. Turkish commitment to peace operations was reaffirmed in the Ministry of National Defense White Paper 2000 which states that "Turkey provides support to the Peace Operations carried out under the sanctions or control of the UN, NATO or the OSCE for world and regional peace, in the direction of the principle of Peace at home, Peace in the World."<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, Turkey has not only contributed to peace operations with observer missions and military contingents but

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has also contributed to these activities in academic and diplomatic ways. One example of this is the International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, a mechanism for discussing the challenges of peace operations, which has 21 member countries, including Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

This policy paper will first discuss the political basis and evolution of peace operations. Having explained Turkey's approach to peace operations during the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, the following section will answer the question of how one can explain Turkey's participation in such operations. This section will examine alternative sets of motivations behind Turkey's active involvement in peace operations in the 1990s under three different sub-titles, namely the 'Security-related Factors', 'Ideational Factors' and 'Domestic Factors.'



## Political Basis for Peace Operations

The UN is an institution of a particular historical structure and particular international system. It was created to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” This is reinforced in Article 1:1, which states that the purpose of the UN is “to maintain international peace and security.”

However, neither the member states nor the international community have been able to always settle their disputes peacefully or by undertaking the requisite collective action whenever peace is threatened. The UN has seldom been united or fully effective in its use of force for the prevention of aggression and it has never managed such use in the manner prescribed in its Charter, except in the cases of Korea and Kuwait. The system proved inoperable when confronted with the realities of the post-World War II era. However, the failure to implement Articles 43-48 of the Charter did not lead to a complete abandonment of efforts to develop collective uses of armed force. Still, as long as the bipolar struggle placed important constraints on an effective Security Council, the scope of collective security remained very limited indeed.

After 1945, the ambitious scheme for collective security as outlined in Chapter VII (the Enforcement Chapter) of the UN Charter was not implemented. The most obvious reason was the inability of the Permanent Members of the Security Council to reach an agreement on identifying the aggressor. Article 43 agreements, necessary to place national forces at the disposal of the UN, were never concluded, because there was ideological mistrust and many states were reluctant to deploy their forces in distant, controversial, and risky military operations. Nonetheless, the determination and imagination of people to seek new concepts and devise new methods instead of the collective security system in an effort to make order out of chaos and prescribe peaceful measures, forced the UN member states to take new measures. Because of its inability to carry out its task within a framework of collective security, the UN was compelled to seek alternative ways of securing peace, even if only on a minor scale.

In practice, the UN has developed peacekeeping as a useful instrument for the management of conflict.

Today, the most common way in which the UN helps maintain international peace and security is through peace operations. Peacekeeping was set up as an instrument

to supervise peaceful settlements or to freeze situations with the consent of all parties<sup>6</sup>. Peacekeeping came into being as an invention of the UN to fill the gap in the system provided by the Charter. It was not specifically defined in the Charter, but evolved as a non-coercive instrument of conflict control at a time when Cold War constraints prevented the Security Council from taking more forceful steps permitted by the Charter.<sup>7</sup>

Peace operations are one of the measures initiated by the UN as part of the overall process for the management of violent conflict. They are, in fact, “the predominant mechanism” used by the UN for conflict control and management<sup>8</sup>. Peace operations are not, and never were intended to be an alternative to a system of collective security. But in the absence of such a system, as outlined in Chapter VII of the Charter, peace operations were considered as a useful instrument in the management of conflict.

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The concept of a peace operation was gradually devised to undertake certain functions. As Holmes states, the kind of peacekeeping we have developed did not, of course, have its roots in Article 43; it developed when efforts by the Military Staff Committee to implement Article 43 failed<sup>9</sup>. Peace operations evolved out of necessity<sup>10</sup>. In other words, due to the lack of a clear Charter basis, these operations were ‘improvised in response to the specific requirements of individual conflicts’. Peace operations are not explicitly provided for by the UN Charter. They have developed in an ad hoc manner through the practice of the world organization. They were a product of necessity rather than design.

According to Wiseman, “Peacekeeping is not an end but a means to an end”.<sup>11</sup> It is not, in itself, a solution to violent conflict but only



a mechanism to relax tension and to prevent a situation from deteriorating and provide a measure of stability while peace talks proceed or start. In other words, it is a “mechanism to assist the ongoing peace-making process”<sup>12</sup> and is intended to be an interim step to buy time for conflict resolution and diplomacy. It is primarily a political and diplomatic activity. As Perez de Cuellar stated,

“peacekeeping operations symbolize the world community’s will to peace and represent the impartial, practical expression of that will”.<sup>13</sup>

Peacekeeping was developed progressively and pragmatically, largely due to the vision and efforts initiated by Lester G. Pearson, the Canadian Foreign Minister at the time of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) operation, and Dag Hammarskjöld, then Secretary-General of the UN. Dag Hammarskjöld was widely considered as the father of UN peacekeeping. As part of his report to the Security Council concerning the UNEF’s establishment in 1956, the first peacekeeping experience in UN history, he defined the principles of peacekeeping as follows:

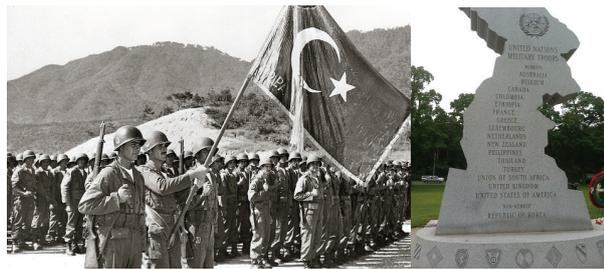
- A mission must have the authorization of the Security Council or the General Assembly;

- UN involvement in a conflict requires the consent of the parties to that conflict;
- A mission must maintain operational neutrality and so must not influence the political balance of power between warring parties;
- Peacekeepers should not use coercive force, except in self-defense; and
- Personnel for an operation must be recruited voluntarily from UN member states, excluding the Permanent Five members of the Security Council and the States which have interests in the conflict.

## Peace Operations During the Cold War

One of the main incentives behind the development of UN peacekeeping was the Cold War political climate in which it evolved. With the end of World War II, some significant changes occurred in the nature of the international system. It evolved from a 'balance of power' structure to a 'bipolar' structure. The transition from a 'balance of power' system to a bipolar system brought about systemic changes in the world order. During the Cold War, the attitude of the two superpowers had a crucial impact on the performance of the UN to maintain peace and security. The superpowers had an interest in bringing to an end proxy wars before they were themselves dragged into direct confrontation. Thus, peacekeeping tended to be limited to preserving an agreed upon truce between opposing national armed forces while alternative mechanisms were used to address a conflict's underlying issues.

The UN was excluded from playing any peace operation role within the superpowers' own "spheres of interest," not only in disputes in the western hemisphere, but also in conflicts arising within socialist states. Experience has shown that in order to set up such operations, the UN had to secure not only the consent of the main parties directly concerned, but also the support, or at least the acquiescence,



of the two superpowers. The rivalry between the two superpowers often prevented the Security Council from taking effective action to contain and control conflicts. Although there were about 150 conflicts during the Cold War years, the UN undertook only 13 peace operations, seven in the Middle East, three in Asia, one in Africa, one in Europe and one in Latin America.

However, despite those difficulties, UN peace operations were an important stabilizing factor during the Cold War. They helped to contain several potentially dangerous conflicts and insulated them from superpower rivalry. The main purpose of setting up peace operations was to keep local conflicts restricted to their limited area so that such conflicts did not escalate in such a way to engulf major superpowers<sup>14</sup>. Localizing the conflict has been an objective in all of the peace operations. The principle of non-involvement in the domestic affairs of states was regarded as sacred, in

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harmony with the prevailing security conceptualization of the time period under consideration, and this kept the number of peace operations to a minimum. External sovereignty used to be more important than internal sovereignty.

The main characteristics of peace operations during the Cold War era consisted of the following. First, force was to be used only in self-defense. Second, the force used should be proportional. Third, deployment of peace troops required the consent of the parties concerned. Fourth, major powers abstained from providing operations with troops. Fifth, troops carried only light arms. Finally, missions were mainly authorized to oversee armistices and to separate belligerent parties from each other. Peace operations of the Cold War era were free from ideational aspects and cannot be explained by any ideational perspective.

They could rather be considered as strategic initiatives undertaken with a view to helping preserve the balance of power between two rival blocks. They were missions empowered to 'manage' conflicts rather than 'resolve' them. The peace operations undertaken during the Cold War era were conflict-management activities rather than conflict-resolution activities.

Indar Jit Rikhye, who served as military adviser to two UN Secretary Generals in the 1960s, insisted that peace operations fulfilled three key roles. First, they provided a mechanism for resolving conflict without the direct intervention of the Cold War superpowers, thereby reducing the risk of cataclysmic escalation. Second, peace operations mobilized international society to make a commitment to the maintenance of peace. Third, peacekeeping provided a diplomatic key, opening the way to further negotiations for a peaceful resolution of conflicts'.<sup>15</sup> Cold War UN peacekeeping was supposed to prevent overt violence, prevent the global and regional escalation of localized conflicts, and provide the conditions of stability in which peacemaking could occur. This instrumental approach to peace operations developed alongside the proliferation of peace operations in the 1990s. New approaches have attempted to identify the 'symptoms' that peace operations ought to address, the concepts and tools that peacekeepers have at their disposal, and the most effective ways and times of utilizing them. The first task is to identify the characteristics, functions and types of different peace operations.<sup>16</sup>



UN peace operations have only been employed in a limited number of wars and crises during which a consensus developed over UN involvement. More often than not, peace operations have dealt with regional violent conflicts that have a wider potential for threatening international peace and security, in which the great powers are likely to become involved. In almost every case, peace operations have been applied to areas beyond the dominance of the super powers. Yet, what remains surprising is the number of times that the Security Council (and sometimes the General Assembly) has been able to set up peace operations in spite of the Cold War. The majority of these operations (seven out of 13) were deployed in the Middle East, a region of clear geo-strategic importance to the permanent members of the Security Council.

## The Post-Cold War Era

The demand for and the scope of peace operations have steadily increased in the post-Cold War era, with the UN authorizing or deploying a series of new missions. International politics have witnessed a remarkable revival of the UN. In order to understand the reasons for this expansion, it will be better to examine the international climate in this new era. The post-Cold War era marked the downfall of the bipolar system that had governed the understanding and conduct of international relations since the end of the Second World War. Beginning with the Gorbachev era, changes such as the success of the 1986 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) negotiations in Stockholm on the development of confidence building measures, the conclusion

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of various arms reduction agreements (the 1987 Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces, the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and the 1991 and 1993 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties), the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, the changes of regimes in Eastern Europe, the collapse of communism in the USSR, and the

emergence of the Commonwealth of Independent States, have put the UN in a totally different situation.

The threat of a US-Russian nuclear confrontation has virtually disappeared since the end of the Cold War and the number of major armed conflicts has decreased slightly. However, the specter of war, both civil and international, has not ended. Over the same period minor armed conflicts have increased. The end of the Cold War has brought many long-standing rivalries and feuds to the surface that had been suppressed before.

Many conflicts in the post-Cold War era are derived from ancient and enduring features of international politics, and originated from partitions and disputes following the end of WWI. Conflicts

have increasingly resulted from tensions between regional or intrastate parties rather than from the influence or intervention of external factors, because there are uncertainties about the legitimacy of new postcolonial states, regimes, institutions and frontiers. Many urgent crises which crowd the UN's agenda today derive from these uncertainties as well as from regional animosities and communal cleavages. In this complicated new environment, the UN has set up 56 peace operations.

It is interesting to note that Africa has been the area in which peace operations have been most utilized in the post-Cold War era. While the majority of UN peace operations during the Cold War took place in the Middle East, the Middle East has become a region in which peace operations have been least established in the post-Cold War era.

## The Reasons for Expansion and Change

The end of the Cold War increased the need for international peace operations in several distinct ways, each of which presented different problems and opportunities for the UN. The main reason for the increase in the number of peace operations and observer missions has been the increased capacity of the UN Security Council to agree on action in particular crises. The decline of East-West tensions and the agreements between the USA and Russia to put an end to numerous local and regional conflicts led to greater cooperation between the super powers. The five permanent members of the Security Council thus found themselves able to agree on numerous problems and demonstrated a greater political will to use the Security Council to seek solutions to conflicts.

*The post-Cold War capacity of the Security Council to reach agreement has survived and constituted a key reason for the increase in the number of peacekeeping operations.*

The decline in the use of the veto was a symbol of this. For instance, from 1945 to 1990, the permanent members of the Security Council cast the following number of vetoes: China, 3; France, 18; the United Kingdom, 30; the US, 69; and the Soviet Union, 114. Then, between June 1990 and May 1993 there was

not a single veto. One exception occurred in May 1993 when Russia blocked a resolution on financing the peacekeeping force in Cyprus. With this exception, the post-Cold War capacity of the Security Council to reach agreement has survived and constituted a key reason for the increase in the number of peacekeeping operations. It has begun to function more effectively and therefore opened up the possibility of working out strategies for resolving protracted social conflicts and consequently has been able to put more peacekeepers into the field.

A further reason for the expansion of peace operations has been the larger number of minor armed conflicts. During the Cold War years, the competition between the two super powers contributed to regional stability. Each super power ensured the survival of its respective allies but at the same time prevented them from embarking on military adventures. The end of this strategic



competition between the US and the Soviet Union created an environment much more amenable to minor armed conflicts breaking out between small states, most importantly, those in Cambodia, Central America, Angola and Mozambique. These minor armed conflicts transformed the global context of peace operations and significantly broadened their potential as a technique of peaceful settlement.

The next reason behind the expansion has been the settlement of conflicts. The end of the Cold War facilitated the settlement of conflicts. In many instances the collapse of the bipolar world and of the Cold War allowed for peaceful initiatives to be introduced to old conflicts caused by the spheres of influence inherent in the East-West rivalry. With the end of the Cold War, the factions were no longer propped up by outside states, and were ready to settle. The regional peace agreements in Afghanistan, Angola, Namibia, Central America and Cambodia are the examples of this approach. They created a demand for impartial international forces to assist in implementing their provisions, such as monitoring cease-fires, troop withdrawals, and elections. The UN became the instrument for concluding and overseeing these settlements.

The fourth reason has been the breaking up of states. As the super power support that suppressed internal divisions withdrew, the number of states falling victim to domestic violence, often ethnic-based, has increased. Many of the divisions within states have become more serious. In extreme cases, this has led to the breakup of states. In the decline and collapse of two large communist federal states - the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the total number of such states has more than tripled. The breaking up of these large multinational states and empires has almost always caused severe dislocations, including the emergence or re-emergence of ethnic, religious, regional, and other animosities. The newly emerging regimes and frontiers were called into question. These crises forced the UN to contemplate new responses and calls for action under UN auspices.

A further reason has been a widespread mood of optimism. The UN's contribution to the settlement of numerous regional conflicts in the Transition Period including the Iran-Iraq War, the South African presence in Namibia, and the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, raised expectations for quick solutions. The peoples of the world felt the UN could have a much more central role in international security and peace operations and could tackle these problems. As a result of this expectation, in the post-Cold War era, the UN found itself overburdened by many new tasks and a very wide range of urgent problems.

Another major reason has been an ongoing process of globalization. In a modern world, the process of globalization, leading to the unprecedented movement of goods, people, ideas, challenges and threats, makes countries much more interdependent. Developed states have created unparalleled prosperity within their own borders. Those states have realized that in order to continue improving world living conditions they need security and stability. Therefore, developed countries are naturally extremely concerned about maintaining a stable and secure world by preventing conflicts or by at least containing them as quickly as possible.



Last but not least, another factor that had a key role in the expansion of peace operations has been the importance given to multilateralism in international relations. States contemplating whether to intervene in a violent conflict situation often have come to that point in a multilateral, especially UN, context. The reason why states want to use the UN is that the multilateral approach helps neutralize domestic political opposition, increase the opportunities to acquire useful allies, reassure the international community that operations have limited and legitimate goals, and reduce the risk of large scale force being used by adversaries or rival powers. The major powers are, therefore, more willing to see a response emerge from within a UN framework.

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## Features of the New Peace Operations

As pointed out above, the changing nature of peacekeeping derived from a permissive political context in which the five permanent members of the UN Security Council cooperated in the maintenance of international peace and security. There have been dramatic changes

in the nature as well as in the volume of UN activities in the field of peace and security. In addition to the increase in the application of peace operations, the types of missions which have been mandated have also altered. The objectives of peace operations have in fact, changed considerably, from helping in the maintenance of cease-fires during the Cold War peace operations of the 1990s, to increasing involvement in peace-building missions.

While most peace operations established during the Cold War had mainly traditional peacekeeping tasks of a military character (such as the supervision of cease-fires or the control of demilitarized buffer zones), many new peace operations have been multi-dimensional and combined traditional peacekeeping tasks with various activities of a humanitarian and state building

nature. We can draw similarities between conflict-management and peacekeeping on the one hand since conflict management measures are applied in later phases when a conflict is manifest, but before violence has occurred as is the case in peacekeeping. On the other hand, conflict-resolution and peace enforcement are similar because conflict resolution could be applied in the de-escalation phase after a violent conflict has occurred. As peacekeeping was designed to localize conflicts and tensions and prevent them from escalating to a great power confrontation, conflict-management focuses on the limitation, mitigation, and/or containment of a conflict without necessarily solving it.

On the other hand, peacemaking or peace enforcement operations in the post-Cold War era have increasingly been involved in internal conflicts within independent and sovereign states, as is the case in conflict-resolutions. They thus share the same purposes with conflict-resolution:

*UN peace operations during the Cold War operated under the understanding that peacekeeping forces and military observer missions would be designed with an eye to the politics of territorial restraint and juridical sovereignty.*

- Organizing and supervising free and fair elections (Namibia, Mozambique);
- Monitoring arms flows and demobilizing troops (Central America);
- Supervising government functions, rehabilitation of refugees and disarmament (Cambodia);
- Monitoring human rights obligations (El Salvador, Cambodia);
- Assisting in the delivery of humanitarian relief (former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Mozambique).

UN peace operations during the Cold War operated under the understanding that peacekeeping forces and military observer missions would be designed with an eye to the politics of territorial restraint and juridical sovereignty. UN peace operations of the time were not concerned with issues of human security, the protection of human rights or the goal of humanitarian intervention, thus reflecting the general insistence

of the newly emerging states that state sovereignty be duly protected. This approach was approved by an April 1999 report by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), which is titled “Multidisciplinary Peacekeeping: Lessons from Recent Experience”. The report pointed out that “mandates should be conceptualized flexibly and could include elements of peace-building and emergency reconstruction of war-torn economies”.

The peace operations undertaken during the Cold War era were conflict management activities whereas the operations undertaken during the post-Cold War era could be better classified as conflict-resolution activities. Unlike those of the Cold War era, peace operations during the post-Cold War era have gradually become western security initiatives in the sense that they are intended to contribute to western security through helping transform the conflict-laden areas in line with the West’s liberal-democratic norms<sup>17</sup>. Just as the enlargement of the European Union and NATO to Central and Eastern European countries has helped stabilize these regions and has improved European security, growing peace operations in the Balkans and other geographies served similar functions.

## Turkey’s Approach to Peace Operations

While Turkey shied away from peace operations during the Cold War, Turkey’s involvement in UN-led peace operations has increased in the post-Cold War era. The following section aims at analyzing the motivations that lie at the root of Turkey’s involvement in peace operations, mostly organized under the leadership of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era.



Having mentioned the cases involving the deployment of Turkish troops abroad, I will examine alternative sets of motivations behind Turkey’s active involvement in peace operations in the 1990s. Ideational, security-related and domestic factors will be compared and contrasted in light of Turkey’s experiences in various peace operations.

Since 1923, Turkey has consistently pursued a foreign policy aimed at international peace based on the principle formulated by the founder of the Turkish Republic, Atatürk: 'Peace at home, peace in the world'. This is considered the keystone of Turkish foreign and security policy. Modernization, primarily understood and practiced as material westernization, was largely a state-imposed project during the last century of the Ottoman Empire and the first decades of the Turkish Republic. The West was perceived as the only source of civilization, and thus it was to the West that Turkey sought to belong. Turkish foreign policy was put into the service of this national goal of becoming a part of Europe.

Ataturk's main aim was to preserve the security that had been won, and in the interim term, to restore relations with the former entente powers. In this way, Turkey could take its place among the respected community of western nations and avoid the risk of wars, which it had suffered between 1912 and 1922. The aim of the modernizing elite was to be integrated within the European states system, and be a part of European identity in social terms. The Kemalist project was fundamentally a modernization project. In this modernizing process, the ultimate model was Europe. Throughout the Turkish Republic's nation-building process, Westernization/ Europeanization has become a legitimizing factor for all other reforms.

*Turkey first participated in a UN military operation in Korea in 1950, where, between the years 1950-1953, a total of 15,000 Turks served on a rotational basis.*

## During the Cold War

Even though Turkey's participation in peace operations has increased in the post-Cold War era, Turkey did not contribute to such missions during the Cold War years. This was despite the fact that seven<sup>18</sup> out of thirteen peace operations were deployed in the Middle East as mentioned above. Turkey first participated in a UN military operation in Korea in 1950, where, between the years 1950-1953, a total of 15,000 Turks served on a rotational basis. This was the only case concerning the deployment of Turkish troops abroad as part of a peace operation in its broadest sense.

In order to understand Turkey's reluctance in this regard, it would be useful to underline the following points. First, international systemic change from a 'balance of power' to a 'bipolar' system and the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union with the onset of the Cold War dramatically curtailed the maneuvering capability of small and medium sized countries, leaving very little room for these countries to maneuver. This is essentially because the two superpowers dominated the politics within the bloc they each led. Kirişçi argues that it is not surprising to find that Turkish foreign policy did not seem to go 'beyond the parameters set by the politics of the Cold War'.<sup>19</sup> Turkey did not remain completely isolated from these developments but also did not contribute actively to the United Nations peace operations established during the Cold War. In the bipolar international system, Turkish security policy was restricted to a few basic questions: how to defend the country against the Soviet threat, how to protect Turkish interests concerning



Greece and Cyprus, how to maintain and strengthen ties with the West and NATO, and how to repel terrorism supported by neighbors like Syria, Iraq, and Iran. These fundamental questions restricted Turkey from deploying its troops outside the country. Turkish security concerns were focused on the perceived threat from the Soviet Union. Thus, Turkey sought to protect its national security by forging close

military and political ties with the United States and Western Europe through its membership in NATO.<sup>20</sup>

As the Cold War geopolitical imagination was centered on two alternative models of political-economic organization, the East and the West, Turkey located itself in the West by virtue of its pro-western orientation and membership in European institutions. In this context, membership in NATO was viewed by Turkish policy makers as not only ending anxieties caused by the Soviet Union's post-war demands (on Turkey's eastern provinces and for control of the Bosphorus straits) but also bringing Turkey into the European security system as a 'fully recognized European state.' The roles Turkey played in European institutions served as occasions for Turkish policy makers to articulate and define Turkey's western and/or European identity while at the same time maintaining its security needs and interests.

NATO membership became a central component in Turkish foreign and security policy in the Cold War era and solidified Turkey's western orientation by establishing a long-lasting institutional and functional link with the West.<sup>21</sup> Huntington states that, 'Mustafa Kemal's country is of course the classical torn country which since the 1920s has been trying to modernize, to westernize, and to become part of the West.'<sup>22</sup> Once Turkey joined NATO, Turkey's foreign policy quickly slipped to the backwaters of international politics. Turkish foreign and security policies were basically conducted in parallel with NATO's strategies. NATO provided the national security guarantee and Turkey contributed to the policy of credible deterrence with its pivotal status on NATO's southeastern flank. Hence, not much room was left for the Turkish political elites to worry about national security. Therefore, it would not be an overestimation to argue that Turkey's attitude towards peace operations during the Cold War era was determined by its membership in NATO.

Membership in NATO had other particular effects on Turkey. Turkey had to streamline its peacekeeping policy with that of the alliance in general and the United States in particular. Given that the US/NATO was lukewarm to the idea of setting up peace operations for troubled conflicts, lest such contingencies might lead to dangerous confrontations between the US and the Soviet Union, Turkey also hesitated to develop a strong interest in such operations. During the Cold War, the UN established three peace operations in Asia.<sup>23</sup> Turkey did not contribute to any of these operations. Additionally, the security guarantee offered by NATO membership mainly satisfied Turkey's security interests. Hence, there was no need to construct a linkage between security and the internal affairs of states and to develop special capabilities for peace operations.

Second, the most important goal for Turkey during the Cold War was to ensure her own territorial integrity and security.

*The most important goal for Turkey during the Cold War was to ensure her own territorial integrity and security. Instead of projecting power and contributing to peace operations, Turkey focused strictly on protecting borders and maintaining internal order.*

Instead of projecting power and contributing to peace operations, Turkey focused strictly on protecting borders and maintaining internal order. Turkey focused its energy on internal development and sought to avoid foreign tensions that could divert it from that goal. This was in full harmony with the prevailing security understanding of the time period under consideration according to which the main threat was external and stemmed from the Soviet Union's goal of extending its territorial influence.

Third, most of the regions in which peace operations were established were not a priority area in Turkish security calculations. During the Cold War period, as retired general Sadi Ergüvenç noted, the Middle East was not a priority area in Turkish security calculations.<sup>24</sup> As Philip Robins suggests, the main features of Turkey's foreign and security policy in the Middle East were a strict adherence to the principles of non-interference and non-involvement in the domestic politics and interstate conflicts of all countries in the region, and to the development of bilateral political and commercial relations with as many states in the region as possible.<sup>25</sup>

Another important reason for Turkey's lack of participation at the time in peace operations in the Middle East was that Turkey was not invited to participate. This itself was mainly because Turkey's western orientation, which led Turkey to adopt political, social, cultural, and economic ideas from the West, had a significant impact on Turco-Arab relations. In its Middle Eastern relations, the Arabs looked upon Turkey as a servant of the West in the region. Turkey feared that the Soviet Union was enlarging its influence over Middle Eastern countries, and Turkey could soon be contained by pro-Soviet and hostile Arab states. Therefore, the Soviet threat indirectly influenced Turkey's further distancing from the Middle East. Consequently, Turkey established its security policy within the framework of alignment with the West by staying out of the regional conflicts of its Middle Eastern neighbors.

During the Cold War, the UN established only one peace operation in Latin America: the Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic (DOMREP). In the Dominican Republic in 1965 it was decided to set up a small peace keeping body (DOMREP) because of the ideological and class struggle between the left wing forces and the US. The

leftists were trying to regain control of the government, which had been seized by a right wing military junta.

Turkey did not contribute to this peace operation. Firstly, the Dominican Republic was not a priority area for Turkey, DOMREP was in the US's sphere of influence, and it was set up as a face-saving operation. Second, it was a minor peace operation. There were only three people who contributed to this operation-the military adviser to the Representative of the Secretary-General and a staff of two military observers.

The UN established its eighth peacekeeping operation of the Cold War in Cyprus. The United Kingdom applied to the UN Security Council on 15 February 1964 upon the continuation of communal conflicts in Cyprus. The UN established UNFICYP (United Nations Force in Cyprus) with the consent of the 'Government of Cyprus' in 1964, noting that the situation was likely to threaten international peace and security. The Secretary-General in consultation with the governments of Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom decided on the composition and size of the UNFICYP. Since Turkey was among the parties to the conflict in Cyprus, it did not contribute to this peace operation.

*With the advent of the post-Cold War era, Turkey's involvement in peace operations increased. Since 1988, the Turkish Armed Forces have joined actively in various peace operations with different observation functions as well as with military contingents.*

Another peace operation in the Cold War period was the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC). The UN established this operation initially to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian forces, to assist the Government in maintaining law and order and to provide technical assistance. The function of ONUC was subsequently modified to include maintaining the territorial integrity and political independence of the Congo. Turkey also did not contribute to this operation for several reasons. First of all, the Congo was located geographically in an area not considered a priority in Turkish security calculations. Secondly, to the Third World, Turkey was a member of the western bloc and in their eyes Turkey served western interests. Therefore, Turkey was not invited to participate in this operation.

Fourth, it can be argued that throughout the Cold War period Turkey lived with a “Korean Syndrome,” similar in a sense to the negative impact seen among US soldiers following the US experience in the Vietnam War. Last but not least, Turkey’s regional environment displayed far more stability than it has done in the post-Cold War era. Turkey was not exposed to spillover risks since these conflicts did not involve Turkic and other Muslim peoples with whom Turkey had historic ties.

## The Post-Cold War Era

With the advent of the post-Cold War era, Turkey’s involvement in peace operations increased. Since 1988, the Turkish Armed Forces have joined actively in various peace operations with different observation functions as well as with military contingents.

In the Balkans, with a view to finding a solution for the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, Turkey primarily assigned a regiment-level task force to the UN Protection Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNPROFOR), which was organized between 04 August 1993 and 20 December 1995 in order to first create safe zones and then protect them. Turkey’s more active peacekeeping policy has not been limited to UN-led peace operations. It also participated in such UN-authorized NATO operations as the Implementation/Stabilization Force (IFOR/SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Once NATO charged the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement (14 December 1995), first IFOR, and then SFOR was formed and an operation was conducted in the region. Turkey raised its regiment assigned to UNPROFOR to brigade level through reinforcements and assigned it to IFOR as of 20 December 1995. Following the completion of the IFOR operation on 20 December 1996 and assignment of the SFOR operation, this brigade was assigned to the Stabilization Force. The SFOR mission was handed over to the ongoing EU Force-led ALTHEA Operation on 2 December 2004.

In parallel with the UNPROFOR and IFOR Operations, the Shape Guard Operation was executed by the Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED) in the Adriatic Sea to support the arms embargo and economic sanctions on the former Yugoslavia. The Turkish navy contributed to the Sharp

Guard Operation between 13 July 1992 and 02 October 1996, and the air force joined NATO's Operation *Deny Flight* in Bosnia and Operation *Allied Force* in Kosovo with one F-16 squadron deployed in Italy. Following the conflict in Albania, the UN formed a multinational force in 1997 under Italy's leadership, handing authority over to the OSCE. Turkey contributed to this force with amphibious ships and frigates from 16 April to 01 August 1997. Turkey also contributed to the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (1999), the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) (2001-2002) and various operations in Macedonia--Essential Harvest, Amber Fox, Allied Harmony, Concordia and Proxima (2001- 2005).

In the Middle East, Turkey showed great concern for the prevention of local conflicts, which could escalate to a confrontation into which Turkey would inevitably be drawn. Turkey was concerned about local sources of regional instability, such as the dangers of religious and nationalist radicalization, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Therefore, Turkey had a great interest in peace and stability in the region. Within this framework, Turkey contributed to the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (1988-1991), which was formed to supervise the compliance of both sides with the cease-fire agreement and to monitor the withdrawal of troops; the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (1991-2003) to deter border violations and report hostile acts observed in the demilitarized area on Iraq-Kuwait border; and Operation *Provide Comfort/ Northern Watch* after the Gulf War of 1990-1991 (1991-2003). Turkey was also included in the international observer mission, Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) (1997-2008), established for the purpose of monitoring and reporting the evacuation of the city of EI-Halil (Hebron) on the West Bank by Israeli forces and its transfer to the Palestine National Administration.



In the Caucasus, Turkey assigned personnel to the UN Observer Mission in Georgia from 1994 to 2009. Turkey also contributed with personnel support to the Border Monitoring Operation in Georgia which was established due to the flow of refugees

resulting from the Russian Federation's operation in Chechnya on the Georgia-Chechnya border from February 2000 to December 2004. The mission was expanded by changing its tasks and responsibilities in 2004. In this framework, Turkey assigned personnel to the mission that was organized by the OSCE to monitor the developments in Georgia during the period between June 2006 and 2009.

In addition to these initiatives and efforts for the promotion of peace and security and stability in its environment, Turkey also participated between 02 January 1993 and 22 February 1994 with one mechanized company in the humanitarian assistance and peace support operation called UNITAF, aimed at stopping the enmity in Somalia and ensuring a safe zone. A Turkish lieutenant general assumed the command of the peacekeeping force, which was generated following the reorganization of UNITAF as UNOSOM II, between 04 May 1993 and 18 January 1994. Turkey contributed to the former UNTAET and later on the UNMISSET (United Nations Mission in Support East Timor) (2000-2004), the EUPOL Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (KINSHASA) (2006-2007), the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (July- Nov. 2006), the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) (2005-2011), the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) (2006- 2011), and Operation Unified Protector (OUP) (March-October 2011).

Turkey also sent troops to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (2002-2014), assuming command of ISAF II in 2002-2003 and of ISAF VII in 2005. ISAF Headquarters were supported by 100 Turkish personnel of the Third Corps Command (in Istanbul) during the period between 04 August 2008 and 04 February 2009. The 3rd Corps Command supported ISAF HQ for a one year period and the Commander of the 3rd Corps Command assumed Command of the Chief of Staff of ISAF HQ. Turkey took over the leadership of the Kabul Regional Command, one of the six regional commands of ISAF, on 1 November 2009. This mission is extended for one-year periods, and Turkey assumed the leadership until 31 December 2014.

Turkey currently participates in EU Operation ALTHEA (Bosnia-Herzegovina) (2004-), the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) (1999-), the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (1999-), the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) (2015-), the UN

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (2012-), the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) (2006-), the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) (2013-), the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) and Operation Ocean Shield (2014-).

In addition to these peace operations and observer missions, Turkey actively initiated and/or was involved in the formation of a number of bilateral and multilateral political, economic, military and social projects such as the Black Sea Maritime Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) in April 2001, the South East European Co-operation Process (SEECF) in February 2000, the Multinational Peace Force South East Europe (MPFSEE), the Southeastern European Brigade (SEEBRIG), in September 1999 and the Southeast European Cooperation Initiative in 1996. Turkey also provided personnel support to the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) Mission between 2004 and 2011, which was established in 2004 in accordance with UNSCR 1546 and the NATO Istanbul Summit "Iraq Declaration". The mission came to an end in December 2011.

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## The International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations

In the mid-1990s, the International Community engaged in different types of peace operations in various regional conflicts around the world. The daunting challenges faced by peacekeepers in Somalia, Rwanda, Srebrenica, and elsewhere needed to be analyzed and reflected upon in a more inclusive manner than what was the norm at the time. As a response to this lack of an international, effective and inclusive mechanism to discuss the challenges of peace operations in a systematic, result-oriented, frank yet friendly way, the Challenges Forum platform was launched in 1996.

The Challenges Forum organizes several different types of forums and seminars each year:

The main event, the *Challenges Annual Forum* serves as a launching platform for forward-looking research, concepts, and policy initiatives and involves the participation of up to some 250 leading officials, practitioners and academics from different professional, organizational, geographical and thematic categories in the field of peace operations and peace building.

The *Challenges Forum International Seminar in New York*, co-hosted by several partners' countries, is normally held in conjunction with the meeting of the United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34) in February each year. This seminar launches Challenges Forum results and findings, while engaging with the International Community on upcoming research and issues.

Third, *Challenges Forum Workshops* are held on a regular basis and aim to bring together Challenges partners to deliberate on specific issues and projects.

In 2003, Turkey through SAM and in cooperation with the Turkish General Staff Partnership for Peace Training Centre, the General Directorate of National Police and Bilkent University, hosted a Challenges seminar on 'Challenges of Change: The Nature of Peace Operations in the 21st Century and the Continuing Need for Reform'. In 2006, Turkey enabled the inclusion of Challenges research findings in the report of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Turkey actively participates in the *Challenges Annual Forum*, the *Challenges Forum International Seminar in New York*, and *Challenges Forum Workshops*. Recently, on 26-28 January 2015, Turkey participated in the Challenges Forum in which the "Designing Mandates and Capabilities for Future Peace Operations Report"<sup>26</sup> was handed over to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. The presentation was followed by a high-level seminar to discuss the report findings, and the implementation of the recommendations identified in the report. The report contains the findings of a two-year global effort aimed at increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and long-term impact of contemporary and future peace operations.

Turkey, with the vast experience gained from past peace operations, is therefore in a position to make substantive contributions to

the discussion on the need for continuing reform and the future course of peace operations.

## Motivations Behind Turkey's Participation in Peace Operations

Having explained the cases involving the deployment of Turkish troops abroad, this section will analyze different sets of motivations behind Turkey's participation in peace operations. Turkey's approach to peace operations has been, to a significant degree, informed by the ideational concern of being recognized as a member of the western international community. Participation in such operations has been an identity-constructing activity in the sense that Turkey has tried to reinforce its eroding western identity through participating in peace operations.

Despite this ideational motivation, alternative explanations can also be offered as to why Turkey has been increasingly involved in peace operations. Theoretically speaking, security related considerations in a neo-realist vein may offer a rival account. Another explanation might prioritize the efforts of pressure groups and domestic factors inside the country as the main motivating factor. Still others argue that while these motivations remain valid to a certain extent, the main motivation for Turkish contributions to UN peacekeeping in the 2000s has been political and related to Turkey's self-image as a global player.<sup>27</sup>

## Security-related Factors

This traditional explanation is based on the assumption that Turkey's participation in peace operations has been a function of its security needs. When the systemic changes following the dissolution of the Soviet Union increased Turkey's vulnerability to regional security concerns, Ankara increasingly saw involvement in peace operations, as well as developing its peace keeping capabilities, as an effective security strategy.

From this point of view, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the transformation of the political and strategic landscape of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the eruption of violent ethno-national conflicts in the Balkans and the Caucasus affected

Turkey negatively. Turkey found itself at the very center of the areas in crisis, where ultra-nationalist, aggressive and irredentist tendencies were vibrant. Unlike the Cold War era, Turkey geopolitically has become a unique country bordering several regions very different from each other.<sup>28</sup>

In parallel to such tectonic changes in Turkey's neighborhood, not only have traditional threats to Turkey's security increased but also Turkey has become increasingly exposed to the side effects of intra-state conflicts in all of these regions. Not only have hard-security concerns remained relevant but also soft-security issues have increasingly occupied Turkey's security agenda. Ethnic nationalism, religious fundamentalism, ethnic

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or religious terrorism, social and economic instabilities, illicit trafficking of arms and drugs, refugees and illegal migration have become issues of concern. The proliferation of WMD, south of Turkey, has turned out to be another vital security concern.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the emergence of a power vacuum in northern Iraq following the first Gulf War increased Turkey's exposure to terrorist attacks by the PKK (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan or Kurdistan Workers' Party).

It is in such a context that the Balkans became the first area where Turkey played an influential peacekeeping diplomacy role. Following the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, regional stability was seriously undermined. Violent ethno-nationalist conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo increased the possibility that a major conflict could spill over into Turkey. To prevent the escalation of conflicts in the Balkans, Turkey embarked on an activist diplomacy.<sup>30</sup> Turkey advocated strong measures against Serbia and Serbian militias. The Turkish government had been very active in raising the issue in a variety of forums ranging from the Islamic Conference Organization to the Conference on Security and Cooperation. At these forums the Turkish government expressed

its readiness to contribute troops to any peacekeeping force that would be established. This was the first time since 1950 that Turkey declared its willingness to join an international force.<sup>31</sup>

From this perspective, Turkey's participation in peace operations in the Balkans and the Caucasus can also be seen as a strategic action aimed at helping bolster Turkey's regional standings vis-à-vis other regional actors, namely Greece in the Balkans and Russia in the Caucasus. The rise of the new Turkic republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus and the eruption of ethnic and secessionist conflicts in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Chechnya not only endangered regional security but also provided Turkey with another important opportunity to expand its regional influence through an activist foreign policy.

Even though Turkey's security has come under serious challenges from regional developments, these cannot convincingly explain the country's participation in peace operations. Put somewhat differently, such regional security threats were not so compelling a factor for Turkey to seek its security through peace operations. Neither the crises in the Balkans nor the Caucasus seriously threatened Turkey's

vital security interests. Turkey's own conventional military capabilities would likely deter possible aggressors. Moreover, how the neo-realist logic would explain Turkey's active involvement in the American-led peace operations in Somalia and Afghanistan, where Turkey did not have clear security interests, remains a puzzle.

*Turkey's concern to be recognized as Western was met by its membership in NATO and close cooperation with the West against the common Soviet threat. In addition, Turkey's security identity and interests were in accordance with those of the Western international community.*

## Domestic Factors and Ethnic Lobbies

Another argument accounting for Turkey's involvement in peace operations suggests that ethnic conflicts in Turkey's region generated extensive concern in Turkey due to the presence of

large numbers of Turks who had migrated from neighboring areas, particularly the Balkans, to Turkey over the years. It is certain that the impact of ethnic lobbies on Ankara's decisions to send troops to international peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and the Caucasus was noteworthy. Everyday events in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East were rapidly noted in the Turkish security debate and played a role in public opinion, for they involved parties with strong cultural, ethnic or religious ties to Turkey.

However, it is difficult to prove such an impact. There has been no academic study so far. Moreover, how could one explain the presence of Turkish troops in Somalia, Afghanistan, Lebanon and distant places from this perspective? Moreover, the impact of public opinion on the foreign policy-making process has traditionally been very limited in Turkey. The combatting against PKK-led separatist terrorism, furthermore, strongly influenced expectations about where the armed forces were needed most.

Therefore, the Turkish people probably would have rejected the sending of Turkish troops abroad, viewing it as a distraction from their most urgent security concerns and a source of greater economic burden.

## The Ideational Alternatives

Given the unconvincing nature of the explanations above, this article argues that Turkey's involvement in peace operations during the post-Cold War era can better be explained by the dynamics of Turkey's relations with the West. Turkey's contribution to Western security interests had in the past constituted the most important link tying Turkey to the West, and therefore making it easy for Turkey to be recognized as Western. Turkey's concern to be recognized as Western was met by its membership in NATO and close cooperation with the West against the common Soviet threat. In addition, Turkey's security identity and interests were in accordance with those of the Western international community. While the West itself defined its security identity/interest in opposition to the Soviet Union and prioritized the preservation of the Western style of living as the most important security goal, Turkey did not find it difficult to get socialized into this understanding.<sup>32</sup> Since peacekeeping was understood as a regulator

of international tension, matters of domestic stability were not a priority for Western peacekeeping perspectives. Thus, peace operations during the Cold War era were too modestly conceived to display an identity-constructing aspect.

This situation has completely changed in the post-Cold War era. When the West started to see peace operations through a new perspective, Turkey's interest in such operations also developed. Turkey could not remain outside this revitalized peacekeeping project, especially since the credentials of its Western identity have come under strong challenges following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

While NATO has gradually lost its European and Western character following the transformation of the Alliance from being a Western collective defense organization into a semi military-semi political collective security organization, the EU increasingly emphasized the liberal-democratic transformation of state-society relations as the most important criterion for membership.<sup>33</sup> The strategic horizons of the EU have also

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*Sending peacekeeping units abroad would at the same time imply that security is understood as effective governance at home.*

fixated on the European continent. In the absence of conventional security threats to many EU members the particular geography in which Turkey finds itself has increased anxieties among Europeans as to whether it would be a good idea to offer Turkey credible prospect of membership. Rather than an asset, Turkey's political geography could become a burden on Europe.

Turkey's democratic deficit, emanating from the ongoing struggle with PKK-led ethnic separatist terrorism, further decreased the prospects of Turkey's recognition as Western/European over the course of the 1990s. The EU's unwillingness to offer Turkey membership status in the decision-making apparatus of the emerging European Security and Defense Policy initiative has additionally put a brake on Turkey's aspirations to be considered as European.

In such a negative atmosphere, participation in peace operations appears to have offered Turkey a window of opportunity to help register its diminishing Western/European identity. Appearing to contribute to Western security interests was hoped to re-establish the most important link tying Turkey to the West, that is, security.

The more useful Turkey became for Western security, the more Western it would be recognized by the West. Given that many locations to which Turkey sent peacekeeping units did not directly affect Turkey's security in the traditional neo-realist sense, participation in peacekeeping operations might have been seen as a policy instrument to help bolster Turkey's Western/European identity. The important point here is that Turkey's development of peacekeeping capabilities would not only enhance Turkey's bargaining power vis-à-vis the EU, in the sense that the EU would benefit from Turkey's military capabilities in an instrumental manner, but also suggests that Turkey is transforming its security identity into that of the EU around the principles of crisis management and human security.<sup>34</sup>

Sending peacekeeping units abroad would at the same time imply that security is understood as effective governance at home. For example, Turkey's participation in ISAF and signing on to the security logic in the post-9/11 era might have contributed to the EU's decision to start the accession talks with Turkey on 3 October 2005. Similarly, Turkey's eagerness to join the EU-led peacekeeping force in the Congo should be seen as a strategic action on the part of Ankara that this would help bolster Turkey's European identity. Turkey does not have any strategic interest in Congo. Participation would suggest that Turkey helps the West project its constitutive values onto problem areas. Participation would also accelerate the process of Turkey's adoption of the following ideas: the strategy of forward defense, the realization that armies are deployed not only to prevent weak/failed/rogue states from doing bad things outside their borders but to urge them to do good things inside their borders.

Participation in peace operations would help Turkey give the signal that it was a responsible member of the Western international community. The decision to help initiate the BLACKSEAFOR and the Southeast European Brigade should be interpreted in this vein. These initiatives have nothing to do with Turkey's efforts to increase its security against regional threats. All these initiatives were undertaken with the prime motivation of helping

the members understand that Turkey was a net security producer in the region and always a part of the solution, rather than the problem.<sup>35</sup>

A similar logic can also be noticed in Turkey's relations with the US. The post-Cold War era had initially shaken the fundamentals of the Turkish-American alliance-type relationship. The absence of the common Soviet threat in the north, the growing policy differences in the Middle Eastern region – particularly over Iraq, Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the gradual weakening of NATO as the prime channel linking Turkey to the US, the gradual transformation of the Alliance from being a pure Western/European collective defense organization into a global semipolitical/semi-military security organization, and bilateralization outpacing the multilateral character of relations, have all combined to shake Turkish-American relations.<sup>36</sup>

The 1990s saw the alliance-type relations of the Cold War years first evolving into 'strategic partnership'-type relations and lately to 'cooperation on some issues'-type relations. This process has further continued in the post 9/11 era, despite initial expectations that

*Turkish elites have increasingly considered participation in peace operations as an effective strategy to help re-establish Turkey's Western and pro-American identity.*

Turkey's Muslim/democratic identity would elevate its status in Washington. Now Turkey appears to have come to the conclusion that the US is a global superpower having vital interests across the globe, rather than only being the leader of the Western international community. Another conclusion Ankara appears to have drawn from the latest US approach towards the global war on terror is that Washington views international law and organizations, including NATO, from an instrumental perspective.

Under such conditions, Turkish elites have increasingly considered participation in peace operations as an effective strategy to help re-establish Turkey's Western and pro-American identity. That is why Turkey led the peacekeeping force in Somalia, sent substantial numbers of military troops to Bosnia, Kosovo and Lebanon and joined and led the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

By assuming the command of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Turkey was able to demonstrate the solidarity of the Turkish–American strategic partnership and its own resolve to combat terrorism. Turkey’s participation in ISAF was also a well thought out strategic calculation on Ankara’s part to help mend fences with the Americans following the deterioration of bilateral relations in the wake of the latest Iraq War. ISAF and the Resolute Support Mission (since January 2015) experience is also revealing for another reason. It demonstrates that in the post-9/11 world Turkey has signed on to the logic that international security and internal affairs of states are closely related to each other. It shows that Ankara accepts the post-Westphalian belief in the importance of spreading democracy, public accountability and security reform. Foreign support for Turkey’s leading role in ISAF also implies Western acknowledgement that it can successfully deal with the security challenges of the post-9/11 era only in close collaboration with the Muslim world. Turkey, as a secular and Western-oriented state with an overwhelming Muslim population, contributes to the legitimacy of the Western-led international peace operations in the eyes of Muslim communities all around the globe.

## Political Rationale

Some argue that political rationales appear to offer the best explanation for Turkey’s contributions to UN peace operations, especially the Turkish government’s new foreign policy initiatives and its goal to establish Turkey as an emerging power in world politics. Şatana argues that the rationales behind Turkey’s provision of UN peace operations changed significantly from the 1990s to the 2000s.<sup>37</sup> While its UN peacekeeping contributions could be explained by ideational and security related explanations in the 1990s, Turkey’s more recent rising contributions are a consequence of its political aspirations to become a regional and global player. Bolstered by its growing economy and social transformation, Turkish foreign policy sought to improve the country’s standing in international society. The government saw UN peace operations as one instrument to help attain that goal.

While Turkey’s contributions were mainly focused on the Balkans due to ethnic and historical ties with the Bosnian Muslims especially, troops were also sent to African missions (e.g., Somalia and the DRC) mainly because of Turkey’s aspirations to show

that it could be an important player in the post-Cold War security environments.<sup>38</sup> As Hart and Jones argue, emerging powers often make large contributions on issues central to the UN's mandate such as peacekeeping.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

This policy paper argues that Turkey's participation in peace operations, particularly during the post-Cold War era, could be to a significant degree explained by the ideational concern of being recognized as a Western country. Such an ideational concern has come to the fore as the Western aspects of Turkey's international / security identity have been exposed to serious challenges in the 1990s. While the prospects of Turkey's

accession to the EU have remained low and the European character of NATO has gradually eroded, Turkey has increasingly turned to peace operations as an important instrument to help re-establish its tarnished Western identity. Turkey simply wants to be seen as aiding the leading Western powers in their efforts to project the constitutive norms of the West onto non-Western areas through peace operations. Such a stance has also been in conformity with the changing meaning of security in the post-Cold War years.

Even though security-related factors and ethnic lobbies inside the country might have motivated Turkish decision-makers to actively take part in peace operations, their impacts are limited. Turkey did not have to join such operations in order to deal with the emerging security threats in its environment. Its own military capabilities would have proved to be too much of a deterrent in this regard. Moreover, Turkey did not have clear-cut security interests in such regions as Somalia and Afghanistan. To be sure, there were security benefits. Participation in peace

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operations in the Balkans and the Caucasus has helped Turkey preserve regional peace and stability, reduce tensions and contain conflicts, encourage the propagation of democracy and the rule of law, prevent conflicts from spilling over into its territory, create a peaceful and stable environment around it, and improve relations with the countries in these regions. But such advantages do not appear sufficient to explain Turkey's new-found activism.

Gauging the impact of ethnic lobbies and other domestic interests on Turkey's approach to peace operations is a daunting task due to problems of measurement. It is known that a significant portion of Turkey's population have come to Turkey from the Balkans and the Caucasus and they have still family connections with their relatives there. These people helped organize public meetings against the inhuman treatment meted out to their relatives in these

areas, and they wanted the Turkish government to take a more active role by urging the international community to immediately stop the bloodshed. There is little, if any, evidence to suggest, however, that decision-makers sent Turkish troops abroad due to the lobbying activities of these circles.

*The skills and experiences acquired by Turkish peacekeepers abroad have contributed to the overall modernization of the Turkish army. A significant portion of the military staff has undertaken specialized training about peace operations.*

That said, participation in peace operations has had significant impacts on Turkey. First, wearing a blue helmet has promoted Turkey's reputation as a concerned, responsible regional power. Turkey's image as a security producer country has been enhanced, and it has alleviated foreign fears of Turkish interest in regional hegemony. Turkey's image in Washington and the European capitals has also improved through Turkey's active involvement in peace operations. Leaders on both sides of the Atlantic now see Turkey as a regional power contributing to peace and stability. Turkey has become an island of stability in the midst of regional instabilities. In this sense Turkey's concern with being recognized as Western and as a security producer country has been enhanced by participation in peace operations.

It would be difficult to prove that Turkey's transformation of its security understanding in a peacekeeping friendly manner, on the

one hand, and active Turkish participation in peace operations, on the other, have increased the prospects of Turkey's accession to the European Union and prompted EU leaders to officially start accession talks with Turkey. However, it would also be wrong to underestimate such an impact. Now, an increasing number of Westerners underline Turkey's contribution to Western security and try to justify their arguments by pointing to Turkey's participation in peace operations across the world.

Second, participation in peace operations has also contributed to modernization of the Turkish military in line with internationally changing security understandings during the post-Cold War era. The Turkish General Staff has now a particular branch responsible for participation in peace operations. The skills and experiences acquired by Turkish peacekeepers abroad have contributed to the overall modernization of the Turkish army. A significant portion of the military staff has undertaken specialized training about peace operations. Because of the short deployment cycles in the various peace operations, experienced personnel have regularly returned to their units with greater skills and experience, which they help disseminate to their colleagues. Turkish military personnel have also gained the experience of cooperation and of working closely with the armed forces of allied countries.

*Major powers and middle-sized powers approach peace operations somehow from different angles. In the latter's case, ideational concerns are much more visible.*

Third, Turkey's national security and defense policy has also been affected by participation in peace operations. Turkey now holds that defense starts outside territorial borders and what happen in other countries does closely impact Turkey's security interests. It is without doubt that Turkey's experiences in peace operations abroad have helped transform Turkey's security understanding in this way.

Turkey also positively responded to European requests that Turkish troops be deployed in the Congo as part of the EU mission there. Turkey participated in the UN peace operation in southern Lebanon to oversee a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah forces, and was strongly considered among the countries that could possibly supply troops. From a Western

point of view, Turkey's participation would certainly increase the legitimacy of such a multinational force in the Muslim world. This is quite important given that the Arab communities in the Middle East do in fact view such a deployment through suspicious eyes. They consider that such a force would first and foremost serve Israel by helping create a buffer zone between Israel and Lebanon and eventually disarming Hezbollah fighters.

Irrespective of the regional political considerations behind the composition of such a force, the Lebanon example quite clearly demonstrates that participation in peace operations serves Turkey's two prime interests. While, on the one hand, it helps legitimize Turkey's security producer image as well as its Western identity, on the other hand, it adds up to Turkey's bargaining power with the West. Turkey's cooperation in this particular area helps reinforce its indispensability for the regional and Western security interests. If not directly increasing the prospects of Turkey's eventual accession to the EU, Turkey's participation in peace operations particularly in the Middle East makes the EU think twice as to the appropriateness of keeping Turkey at arm's length forever.

Participating in peace operations has improved Turkey's international status and legitimacy and probably has similar effects for other middle-sized countries. Turkey's participation burnished its reputation as an activist working in support of collective international goals, contributing to the nation's soft power, in other words, its ability to influence through perceptions and tacit leadership. None of the contingencies in which Turkish troops served as part of multinational peace operations directly concerned Turkey's security. This point is important because it shows that major powers and middle-sized powers approach peace operations somehow from different angles. In the latter's case, ideational concerns are much more visible.

The meaning that Turkey has attached to participation in peace operations differs from that understood by the EU and the US. For the emerging European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), peace operations would be important and much-needed assets. While peace operations have become the basic justification for the existence of European armed services and have become an instrument for their expenditures, they have been of relatively minor importance for the US and Russia.

Although the major powers like the US, Russia and China have retained their focus on war-fighting and have war-making armies, European countries without existential security threats have embraced policing duties and have police-like armies. They define national security in terms of combating terrorism, disrupting drug trade, and participating in peace operations to provide stability to troubled regions.

As a committed peacekeeper, Canada views peace operations from a different perspective. The first and foremost Canadian national interest, both during and after the Cold War, was to support the Western allies, especially the US and NATO members. Canada contributed a substantial number of troops to the peacekeeping force in Cyprus for almost three decades (1964-1993) in order to prevent two NATO allies (Greece and Turkey) from going to war over Cyprus and splitting the alliance.

Similarly, Canada's participation in the UN's first peacekeeping force during the Suez crisis in 1956, was done to help the UK and France out of a predicament from which they could not withdraw their forces without great embarrassment. Canada's large contributions to the UN's successive missions in Haiti are also explained in part by a desire to assist the US in the continental backyard.

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Whether the motive is idealistic or pragmatic, Canada seeks a place and some recognition in the wider world. Canada seeks to find a special role that great powers like the US have difficulty filling. These powers did not participate in peace operations during the Cold War because they were deemed unable to act impartially, given their global involvement, ideological struggles, and intelligence activities. A middle power country like Canada was seen as a better choice for the peacekeeper role.

Are Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, and Nepal altruistic or mercenarial because they have provided over forty percent of all UN military and civilian police contributions since the end of 2004? Why do they participate with soldiers without first-world professional training, without a first-world professional officer corps, and typically without proper equipment and training to carry out the mission effectively? These countries may view peace operations from a financial perspective. Given their economic realities they are highly likely to be motivated by financial gains to participate in UN peace operations. They usually profit financially from UN service depending on the arrangements made with UN Headquarters.<sup>40</sup>

From a national perspective, participation in UN peace operations tends to elevate the profile and prestige of a country. For a military institution like Argentina's, still laden with the baggage of years of military dictatorship, and the fiasco of the *Falklands/Malvinas* defeat, involvement in UN peace operations offers the opportunity to recover some of the prestige and self-respect lost after many years of negative image in the world and in their own country.

In contrast to these approaches, Turkey has placed great ideational importance on its participation in peace operations. They have been important for the re-construction of Turkey's Western identity as well as the maintenance of Turkey's number one security interest, being a part of the West. Participation in peace operations is an integral and important part of Turkish security and defense policy.

Through its involvement, Turkey makes a contribution towards peace while at the same time demonstrates its solidarity with the international community. Taking these kinds of roles in the future may result in Turkey's more active involvement in world affairs. It may boost its influence not only in regions where Turkish personnel serve, but also on the UN Security Council and among other voting members of the UN, as well. By contributing to peace operations and academic activities such as the Challenges Forum of Peace Operations, Turkey aims to rise to a more favorable position in the international hierarchy of states.

## End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Peace Operation is a more general term which is used for the general scope of activities such as peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace support, peace-making, peace building, etc. It refers to activities covering the full range of operations carried out under a strong political diplomatic lead (conflict prevention, peace-making, and peace-building) and operations conducted under a military lead (peacekeeping and peace enforcement). It signifies mainly the operations undertaken in the post-Cold War era. Peace operations are briefly defined as operations, which are carried out by multinational forces for peacekeeping, and peace enforcement. Conflict prevention, peace-making, peace-building, peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations are included in these operations.
- <sup>2</sup> For detail information, see <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml> [last visited 12 June 2015].
- <sup>3</sup> See, [http://www.tsk.tr/6\\_uluslararasi\\_iliskiler/turkiyeninbarisides-teklemeharekatinakatkilari.html](http://www.tsk.tr/6_uluslararasi_iliskiler/turkiyeninbarisides-teklemeharekatinakatkilari.html) [last visited 14 June 2015].
- <sup>4</sup> Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Defense, *White Paper* 2000.
- <sup>5</sup> Argentina, Armenia, Australia, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.
- <sup>6</sup> Nopens, P. 1995. *Peace Operations as an Instrument of Conflict Prevention*. (Defensie Studiecentrum, 46) p. 23.
- <sup>7</sup> Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*. New York: United Nations, 1992, p. 89.
- <sup>8</sup> Brian Urquhart, "The UN and International Security After the Cold War", in Adam Roberts and Benedict Kingsburry (eds.), *United Nations, Divided World: The UN's Roles in International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 92.
- <sup>9</sup> The Military Staff Committee (MSC) is comprised of the chiefs of staff of the five Permanent Members, who will advise the Council on military matters. As the Cold War tensions emerged, the MSC never really ever functioned.
- <sup>10</sup> John W. Holmes, "The Political and Philosophical Aspects of UN Security Forces", in Per Frydenberg (ed.), *Peace-keeping: Experience and Evaluation*, Oslo, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1964, p. 85.

- <sup>11</sup> Henry Wiseman, *Peacekeeping: Appraisals and Proposals*. New York, Pergamon Press, 1983, p.210.
- <sup>12</sup> Gareth Evans, *Cooperating For Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*, Australia, Australian Print Group, 1993, p. 100.
- <sup>13</sup> Javier Perez de Cuellar (served as the fifth United Nations Secretary-General, from 1 January 1982 until 31 December 1991) said this when accepting the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the UN peacekeepers in 1988.
- <sup>14</sup> Oliver Richmond, Oliver, “A Genealogy of Pecaemaking: The Creation and Re-Creation of Order”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 2001), pp. 317-348.
- <sup>15</sup> Indar J. Rikhye, *The Theory and Practice of Peacekeeping*, London, Hurst, 1984, pp. 221, 234 and 245.
- <sup>16</sup> Alex J. Bellamy, “The ‘Next Stage’ in Peace Operations Theory?”, *International Peacekeeping* Vol. 11, No.1 (2004), pp. 17-38.
- <sup>17</sup> Annika, Bjorkdahl, “Promoting Norms through Peacekeeping: UNPREDEP and Conflict Prevention”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.13, No.2 (2006), pp.214-228; Oliver Richmond and Tom Woodhouse, “Cosmopolitan Pecaeking and the Globalization of Security”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2005), pp. 139-156.
- <sup>18</sup> UN peacekeepers were involved in the: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Israel-Syria Sector, the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I and II) in Sinai Peninsula, the United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL), the United Nations Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM), United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).
- <sup>19</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, “The end of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour”, *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 3-4 (1994), pp. 1-43.
- <sup>20</sup> Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey: The Changing European Security Environment and the Gulf Crisis”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.46, No.1 (1992), pp. 9-21.
- <sup>21</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, “The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (2000), pp. 199-216.
- <sup>22</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of*

*World Order*. London, Touchstone Books, 1998.

- <sup>23</sup> UN peacekeepers were involved in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), the United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea (UNSF), the United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM) in Asia.
- <sup>24</sup> Sadi Ergüvenç, “Turkish Security and the Middle East”, *Foreign Policy*, Vol.19, No.3-4 (1995), pp. 1-10.
- <sup>25</sup> Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, pp.65-67, 1991.
- <sup>26</sup> The report can be reached at [http://www.challengesforum.org/PageFiles/6930/DesigningMandates\\_06FEB.pdf](http://www.challengesforum.org/PageFiles/6930/DesigningMandates_06FEB.pdf), [last visited 20 June 2015].
- <sup>27</sup> Nil Şatana, “Turkey”, in Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions*, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 355-375.
- <sup>28</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, “Post-Cold War Turkish Security and the Middle East”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1997).
- <sup>29</sup> Mustafa Kibaroglu, “Turkey’s Threat Perception From The East: A Roadblock in its March Toward The West?”, in Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu and Seyfi Taşhan (eds.) *Turkey’s Security Perception and the European Union: Compatibilities and Incompatibilities*, Kluwer Publisher, The Hague, 2004.
- <sup>30</sup> Şaban Çalış, “Turkey’s Balkan Policy in the Early 1990s”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 2001), pp. 135-146.
- <sup>31</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, 1994. “The End of the Cold War and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour”, *Foreign Policy*, Vol.18, No.3-4 (1994), pp. 1- 43.
- <sup>32</sup> Gülnur Aybet and Meltem Müftüler Baç, “Transformations in Security and Identity After the Cold War: Turkey’s Problematic Relationship with Europe”, *International Journal* (Autumn 2000), pp. 567-582.
- <sup>33</sup> Paul Cornish, “NATO: the Practice and Politics of Transformation”, *International Affairs*, Vol.80, No.1 (January 2004), pp. 63- 74.
- <sup>34</sup> Tarık Oğuzlu, “The Changing Turkish Approach towards the European Union after 9/11”, *International Journal*, Vol.61, No.1 (Winter 2005-2006), pp. 83-104.

- <sup>35</sup> Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, “The Evolution of the National Security Culture and the Military in Turkey”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No.1 (2000), pp. 199- 216.
- <sup>36</sup> Philip Gordon and Ömer Taşpınar, “Turkey on the Brink”, *Washington Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.3 (Summer 2006), pp. 57-70.
- <sup>37</sup> Şatana, “Turkey”, p.368 and 375.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 358.
- <sup>39</sup> Andrew F. Hart and Bruce D. Jones, “How do Rising Powers Rise?”, *Survival*, Vol.52, No.6 (2010), p. 75.
- <sup>40</sup> For discussion see Kabilan Krishnasamy, “Pakistan’s Peacekeeping Experiences,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Autumn 2002), pp. 111-113.

