

TURKEY AND PAKISTAN: BRIDGING THE GROWING DIVERGENCE

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For over half century, Turkey and Pakistan remained close friends. Their multi-dimensional relationship showed the same spirit of brotherhood as prevailed during centuries-old ties between Indian Muslims and the Ottoman Empire/Republic of Turkey until 1947. Ideologically, they were poles apart - Turkey pursuing secularism while Pakistan was following Islamism. But the difference of ideology, with its reflection on respective external outlook, never hampered the course of friendly ties. Not anymore. In the last few years, the perceptions and interests of Turkey and Pakistan have started to diverge on a number of important issues.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Afghanistan, Kashmir, Israel, nuclear proliferation and, most recently, democracy are five areas where the perceptions and interests of Turkey and Pakistan diverge. While in the case of Israel and nuclear proliferation, the two countries seem to understand each other's compulsions, it is on Afghanistan, Kashmir and democracy that the growing divergence has started to push them towards opposite directions.

Afghanistan

By far the most important area of divergence in relations between Turkey and Pakistan is Afghanistan. Since secular Turkey has economic and political stakes in Central Asia, it does not like the growing influence in Afghanistan of the Taliban, which threatens to cause a spillover of Islamic extremism into the Central Asian region. It shares the concern of Central Asian states and Russia on the matter. Ankara's inclination towards anti-Taliban forces is clear from the fact that the Afghani-Uzbek leader, Rashid Dostum, after being ditched by General Abdul Malik from his own faction, Jumbish-e-Milli, in June 1997, took refuge in Istanbul. His Tadjik partner in the northern alliance against Taliban, Commander Ahmad Shah Masood, visited Ankara in April 1998. Turkey recognises the government of Burhanuddin Rabbani as the only legitimate representative of Afghanistan. Ankara wants a broad-based settlement in Afghanistan, which should include all ethnic factions. As Turkey's Foreign Minister, Smail Cem, observed during his visit to Islamabad in April 1998: "We want all sides to get together and form a transitional government consisting of all ethnic groups in order to create conditions which are conducive for a broad-based settlement of the issue." For that purpose, during the visit, he proposed to the government of Pakistan the idea of holding an all-Afghan parties conference in Istanbul under the UN framework. This has not yet taken place and the warring sides continue to fight in Afghanistan.¹

Pakistan's perceptions regarding Afghanistan are altogether different from Turkey's. Islamabad recognises the Taliban government in Kabul as the only legitimate authority. Although Pakistan officially calls for the inclusion in the Afghan government of other faction leaders, its role in creating and sustaining Taliban rule in Afghanistan cannot be

underestimated. Pakistan's backing for the Taliban has caused more harm to the country than concrete benefit. In terms of Pakistan's economic future, perhaps the greatest loss for its backing of Taliban is that the Turkmen-Pakistan gas pipeline project has been put on hold.²

Encouraged by the military establishment, the government of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, which had signed an agreement on the project with Turkmenistan in 1997, was banking on stability in Afghanistan resulting from the Taliban's hold over Afghanistan, including the territory through which the pipeline had to pass. First, Afghanistan failed to gain stability. Second, the Turkmen authorities maintained serious reservations regarding the Taliban. Eventually, the key Western financier of the project, Unocal, withdrew from the project in 1998. As far as the Turkmen-Pakistan pipeline project was concerned, Turkey did not see Pakistan as a rival because the aim of this venture and other potential pipeline projects bringing oil from the Central Asian-Caspian sea region to Pakistan's port of Gawadar was to ship it to South East Asian and Far Eastern regions. On the other hand, the Baku-Ceyhan gas pipeline project and Transcaucasus Caspian Sea oil pipeline projects, as agreed in Istanbul in September 1999, are destined to export oil and gas primarily to West European countries.

Islamabad's support for the Taliban regime in Kabul has also resulted in what is called the Talibanisation of Pakistani society. It has strengthened the influence of extremist Islamic forces in the country's polity, the repercussions of which are being felt beyond the country's frontier, particularly across the Line of Control (LOC) that separates Pakistan-administered Kashmir from Indian-administered Kashmir.

Kashmir

Kashmir is another issue where at least the perceptions of Turkey have started to diverge from those of Pakistan. Turkey has traditionally supported Pakistan's official standpoint on Kashmir, which says that a free and fair plebiscite in Kashmir under the supervision of the UN should take place, as was specified in the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir. Ankara still supports the UN option for a Kashmir settlement, but over the last few years, it has started to stress the importance of India-Pakistan bilateral talks in settling the issue.

In February 1999, the so-called Lahore process started between Pakistan and India, when Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Lahore soon after Prime Minister Sharif invited him. The two leaders met and signed the Lahore Declaration, which called for the settlement of unresolved issues, including Kashmir, through bilateral means. The Lahore process was reversed in June 1999 when the Kashmiri Mujahideen and, allegedly, Pakistani troops captured the Kargil Hills across the LOC in Indian-administered Kashmir. Indian and Pakistani troops posted along the LOC started exchanging heavy fire and the situation became so tense that there emerged the possibility of a major war between the two countries, which was avoided when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif dashed to Washington on 4 July 1999. Sharif met President Bill Clinton and the two leaders issued a joint statement on the necessity of "taking concrete steps for the restoration of the status quo at LOC in Kashmir." The Turkish Foreign Ministry stated that the "Lahore process provides the most appropriate ground for resolution of the dispute between India and Pakistan."³ The military government of General Pervez Musharraf has reversed the Lahore process by reverting to the traditional UN-supervised mode of Kashmir settlement and refusing to discuss with the Indian leader any aspect of India-Pakistan relations until Kashmir tops the agenda of talks. General Musharraf has stated his intention of meeting the Indian leader "anywhere, anytime", but the process of bilateral talks between India and Pakistan as it had resumed in

March 1997 included a whole gamut of areas covering mutual relations, from trade to cultural co-operation. Kashmir was only one issue on the agenda. The difference of perception between the leaders of Pakistan and Turkey over Kashmir became clearer during Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's visit to India in March-April 2000. During the visit, Mr Ecevit shared Indian concerns on the issue of 'international terrorism' by pointing out that Turkey had itself been faced with this menace for a long time. Mr Ecevit was sharply criticised in the Pakistani media for making these remarks.⁴ The only 'terrorism' that India faces is allegedly in the form of the Mujahideen crossing the LOC and taking part in the Kashmiri uprising against Indian forces. Pakistan officially maintains that it provides only "moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiri freedom fighters" and that the government of Pakistan does not control Mujahideen organisations based in Pakistan and operating in the "Indian-held Kashmir".

Israel and Nuclear Proliferation

Turkey's growing ties with Israel and its stand on the nuclear issue are two more areas where the approaches of two countries differ. However, over the years, these differences have not negatively affected the friendly nature of their mutual ties. Pakistan does not recognise Israel and yet, unlike Iran and some Arab states, it has never expressed any cause of concern against the Turkish-Israeli connection. In other words, it understands Turkey's compulsions and recognises its interest in fostering ties with Tel Aviv. As regards the nuclear issue, even if Turkey has officially expressed its concern about Pakistan's nuclear pursuits, it understands the country's peculiar security requirements and the circumstances that have forced Islamabad to engage in a nuclear arms race with India. This is clear from the cautious statement Turkey issued in response to Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998, which admitted that the tests were "carried out in response to India's nuclear tests," while urging Pakistan and India to exercise restraint "from now on".⁵

Democracy and Secularism

Until October 1999, one consistent theme in Turkish-Pakistan relations, and pre-Partition ties between Indian Muslims and the Turks under the Ottomans and Atatürk, was that they remained unaffected by political, ideological or leadership changes in the two countries. Both countries experienced military coups, but their relations were not clouded by such events. Nonetheless, Mr Ecevit's decision to bypass Pakistan during his South Asian sojourn may also have been motivated by his desire not to endorse the military rule of General Musharraf. However, more important than Mr Ecevit's exclusive visit to India is the statement he issued in New Delhi against 'international terrorism'; which, in fact, signifies another shift in Turkey's approach vis-à-vis Pakistan. Although since independence, the two countries have chosen two different ideological destinies, secularism versus Islam, their leaders had tried hard not to let these domestic realities affect their mutually conducive relations. This may no more be the case. The message implicit in Mr Ecevit's statement in India against 'international terrorism' was that Turkey shared India's concerns regarding the spillover of Islamic extremism in Indian-administered Kashmir. The Turkish leadership is not alone in expressing such concern. In July 2000, the presidents of China, Russia and three Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan and Tadjikistan -the so-called Shanghai Five- met in Dushanbe and established an anti-terrorist centre in the Kirghiz capital Bishkek to fight "cross-border incursions by Islamic extremists."⁶

Whether it is Pakistan's relationship with Turkey, its ties with Central Asian states or, even, its relations with its time-tested ally, China, it is the extremist Islamic content of Pakistani polity

and its external reflections in particular, which are emerging as a major impediment in the country's regional and international relationships, including those with Turkey.

The interests and perceptions of Turkey and Pakistan on external issues of mutual concern will continue to diverge as long as each reacts differently to the peculiar regional and global realities, demands and pressures, of the post-Cold War period. For instance, concerning Afghanistan, the interests and perceptions of Turkey will continue to differ from those of Pakistan as long as Pakistan continues to support the Taliban regime in Afghanistan rather than working for the establishment in Kabul of a broad-based government consisting of all Afghan factions. On the issue of terrorism, Turkey shares the worldview championed particularly by the United States -that any form of violence, whether or not it is linked to any community's quest for the just right to self-determination, is condemnable. Thus, if Islamabad continues to practice a pro-active Kashmir policy - which it has since the start of the popular uprising in Indian-administered Kashmir in 1989- there is a danger that it may lose Turkey's traditional backing on the Kashmir issue. Prime Minister Ecevit's statement in Delhi against 'international terrorism' may be the beginning of a possible shift in the Turkish stance on Kashmir. In short, the possibility of a further divergence between the two countries over Afghanistan and Kashmir cannot be ruled out.

AREAS OF CONVERGENCE

Trade, business, investment, defence production, tourism, educational and cultural co-operation are all areas where the perceptions and interests of Turkey and Pakistan converge. However, over the years, the two countries have failed to exploit the tremendous potential for mutual co-operation existing in all of these areas. The only sphere where they can claim to have made real progress is private Turkish investment in Pakistan. Despite the creation of a Joint Business Council and a Joint Marketing Company, Pakistani and Turkish businessmen have not been forthcoming in starting joint business and investment ventures in regional markets. Turkey's capital and Pakistan's skilled manpower make an excellent combination for joint business and investment ventures in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. Trade, business and private investment can be mentioned as three priority areas of convergence in Turkey's ties with Pakistan.

Trade and Business

As far as trade is concerned, the perception of officials in each country is that its current volume is too small. For instance, Foreign Minister Cem, during his April 1998 visit to Islamabad, remarked, "The total trade volume of the two countries with the rest of the world is some \$100 billion. Unfortunately, the annual trade volume between them is just \$150 million, which is very small as compared to their total world trade figure and the very close political ties that the two countries enjoy."⁷

One reason for the low level of mutual trade is the existence of parallel economies in the two countries. Both countries trade in products such as cotton, rice, leather and textiles. That their target markets are the same, however, does not mean they should not look for other layers of co-operation in trade and commerce. Among other goods, Pakistan imports wheat from Turkey, and Turkey imports rice and textiles from Pakistan. For its part, Pakistan can import Turkish dairy products and refrigerators, washing machines, electronic goods, automobiles and other durable items, which are said to be qualitatively better and far cheaper than Western, Japanese or South Korean products. Turkey can import dried fruit and handicrafts

from Pakistan, in addition to rice, cotton and textiles. The economists from Pakistan and Turkey can identify more of such products that the trading communities of the two countries can find profitable to export.

Despite various bilateral and regional efforts to achieve a direct maritime shipping link between Turkey and Pakistan, the handicap of transportation remains virtually intact. Air transport is costly and limited. An encouraging development in this context is the recent growth in trade among member-states of the Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO) through the ECO Shipping Company. If Pakistan and Turkey find it hard to increase bilateral sea-borne trade, the ECO Shipping Company is the best alternative to expand mutual trade.

Lastly and more importantly, private business in Turkey needs to set its priorities right. Presently, it maintains a Euro-centric outlook. It is true that, politically, the East has the least to offer Turkey. It is full of grave problems - poverty, ethnic strife, uncertainty, rivalry, war and Sheikdoms. But, at the same time, a mass of humanity lives in the East, giving it a huge consumer population. The expanding business sector in Turkey has to take cognisance of this reality. It must rethink its obsession with Europe and re-orient its products to Eastern markets. For private business interests in Turkey, there exist tremendous opportunities to introduce their products in big consumer markets such as that of Pakistan with a population of over 140 million. Currently, Japan, China, South Korea and Western countries monopolise such markets. In Pakistan, where the present military government is trying to prevent the smuggling of foreign goods, Turkish companies like Arçelik can market their durable goods such as washing machines, television sets, vacuum cleaners, etc. One sees no reason why a Pakistani consumer will prefer any durable product other than Turkish if it is qualitatively equal or even superior to a similar product from Japan or South Korea.⁸

Private Investment

Since the start of the 1990s, Turkish private businesses have also invested in Pakistan. Three of Turkey's leading construction companies, Bayındır, STFA and Tekser, are engaged in building the country's infrastructure and communication network, including the construction of major roads, a motorway, harbour and canal projects. The total volume of private Turkish investment in Pakistan currently stands at around \$1.5 billion.⁹

The highlight of private Turkish investment in the 1990s and to the present is Bayındır's \$430 million Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway Project, a four-lane, 154 km-long super highway that will be completed in 2002. The Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway Project has faced difficulties ever since the first government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif awarded the contract to Bayındır in March 1993. These difficulties are due to Pakistan's consistent political and economic instability and, consequently Turkish company's inability to meet its financial commitments and construction deadlines.¹⁰

Bayındır's case is an exception. But, as far as two other Turkish private construction companies are concerned, they have not faced any big hurdle in completing their projects. The second biggest private Turkish investment is by the STFA (Sezai Türker-Fevzi Akkaya) construction company, with a total capital commitment of \$597 million. By 1998, it had completed five projects, including the \$138 million Jinnah Naval Complex, the \$100 million Lahore Bypass Project, the \$42 million Indus Highway Project, the \$6 million Ormara Water Supply Project and the \$5 million Ormara Submarine Rebuild Project. By then, it had completed 80 per cent of the work on the second phase of the \$45 million Indus Highway.

The STFA has already completed five projects, including the \$121 million Jinnah Naval Complex, the \$106 million Lahore Bypass Project, the \$43 million Indus Highway Project, the \$6 million Ormara Water Supply Project and the \$5 million Ormara Submarine Rebuild Project. The company is expecting to start work on two other projects, including the \$590 million Karachi Lightweight Mass Transit Project (to be built by a consortium of construction companies, with STFA having a share of \$110 million) and the \$75 million Pehur High Level Canal Tunnels Projects. For its part, Tekser, the third largest private Turkish company in Pakistan, had in 1998 resumed work on its only project, the Chashma Right Bank Canal Project, which was inaugurated by Turkish state minister Abdulhaluk Çay during his visit to Pakistan in April 2000.¹¹ Private Turkish investors in Pakistan can further diversify their endeavours by investing in sectors other than construction, such as those of energy and agro-industries.

The urgent need for undertaking such crucial bilateral measures aside, Pakistan and Turkey should also continue to strive to build a community of common regional interests, as this will positively affect their own mutual ties. The ECO, currently headed by Secretary-General Önder Özar, is the best forum for this purpose. Other organisations, such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Developing Eight (D-8), can also be used for the purpose, even if they have thus far proved to be ineffective institutions of regional co-operation.

AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

The foremost challenge before the leaders of Pakistan and Turkey now is how to prevent the negative trends in relationship between the two countries - trends caused by a growing divergence of mutual perceptions and interests particularly over Afghanistan and Kashmir. As for co-operation in mutually beneficial areas such as trade, business, investment and defence production, a wide array of agreed frameworks and institutional arrangements - including the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and Defence Consultative Group (DCG) - are available for the purpose. What is needed is a sustained effort, supported by the necessary political will, to make the best use of the measures and processes en vogue. Once this happens, the existing areas of divergence may gradually converge due to the emergence of a commonality of interests built essentially around co-operative pursuits, particularly in the economic field.

Pakistan's foreign policy requires fundamental rethinking, and re-prioritisation of goals. It is true that New Delhi is engaged in gross violation of human rights in Indian-administered Kashmir. It has deployed nearly 700,000 troops to quell the armed Kashmiri liberation struggle. Should India's use of force in Kashmir be equated with Islamabad's oversight or alleged support of Pakistan-based extremist Islamic forces engaged in cross-border violence in Indian-administered Kashmir? Or, should Pakistan discourage such forces from using its territory for the purpose? Resort to the second choice would go a long way in improving Pakistan's constantly eroding image in the comity of nations, including traditional friends like Turkey. At the same time, it would help the international community realise that the cause of the continued strife in Indian-administered Kashmir is not the alleged militant support from Pakistan-administered Kashmir's side of the LOC; it is New Delhi's militant course denying the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. The most reasonable way to settle the Kashmir issue may be the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir. But, an essential requirement for this to happen is that both India and Pakistan should be willing to negotiate the matter through bilateral means. Be it Turkey or the United States or, for that matter, the international community, all external

players wish India and Pakistan to bilaterally negotiate on Kashmir, an issue now widely recognised as a nuclear flash-point. Amity in India and Pakistan's relationship is essential for improving Islamabad's ties with not only the United States but also the country's traditional regional partners such as Iran and Turkey. At a time when inter-state relations are dominated by economics, Turkey will explore every avenue of external relationship, including ties with India. During his recent visit to India, Mr Ecevit stressed a wish to boost the annual trade volume between Turkey and India to "\$2 billion within two years." Against Pakistan's average of \$150 million, India's trade volume with Turkey in 1998 was \$360 million. Thus, whether Islamabad likes it or not, Turkey will move to strengthen its economic and political ties with India.

As for the nuclear issue, Turkey has shown considerable understanding of Pakistan's nuclear predicament. The issue of nuclear proliferation in South Asia cannot be dissociated from issues of global nuclear arms control because India's nuclear quest is globally oriented. Pakistan's nuclear ambitions, on the contrary, are India-specific. Since Turkey is officially committed to nuclear non-proliferation, it cannot openly endorse Pakistan's nuclear perceptions even if these are rational from the latter's point of view.

Insofar as Israel is concerned, there are three reasons why Pakistan should recognise the Jewish entity. First, when the Palestinians are negotiating with Tel Aviv and various Arab and North African Muslim states have reached an accommodating relationship with Israel, there is no reason why Pakistan should not follow the same course. Second, Turkey has emerged as Israel's closest defence partner in the Middle East. Resort to such a realistic course has no doubt clouded Ankara's ties with its eastern neighbours, particularly Iran, Syria and Iraq. But, in this way, Turkey has also increased its diplomatic leverage in the Western world, particularly with the United States. Third, by not recognising Israel, Pakistan has let India reap the benefits of its multifaceted partnership with Israel - a partnership which has assumed a strategic dimension with the establishment in July 2000 of a Joint Commission on the Prevention of Terrorism between the two countries.¹² It is Pakistan's ruling élite's perceived fear of Islamic extremists that forbids them from taking the bold step of recognising Israel. The Jewish lobby in the United States could have been a great asset for Islamabad on the Kashmir issue had it recognised Israel soon after the Palestinians started negotiating with the Israelis at the start of the 1990s. It is only since then that Ankara has consolidated its relationship with Israel.

Turkey's foreign policy is essentially based on realism and Pakistan's must be too. A foreign policy based on realism is not guided by the whims of passion, but it is based on a rational recognition of the existing national, regional and international realities. Pakistanis need to change their basic perceptions about modern Turkey. Turkey is no more a bastion of Islam, as the Muslims of the Subcontinent during the Ottoman period commonly perceived it to be. Times have changed. In most of the world, religion and politics are not considered inseparable. For over three-quarters of a century, the Turks have been marching on a secular path. Now Turkey is a forward-looking nation with strong nationalistic aspirations. Although a section of Turkish society suffers from an identity crisis, especially when traditional values clash with Western norms, the fact remains that Turkey is the only Muslim country that has proved that Islam and secularism can go together. Obviously, the challenges facing the Turkish polity in this respect are far from over. However, the important thing to understand is that Turkey has achieved considerable success in the last decade in meeting the requirements of modernity.

The European Union (EU) is Pakistan's biggest export market and a major source of financial aid. Because of that, Turkey's entry in the EU as a full member would benefit Pakistan's economy considerably. Even now, Ankara participates actively in EU affairs. Turkey became an associate member of the EEC in 1963 and has been in customs union with the EU since January 1996. Turkey's EU connection must be the motivation for Islamabad to make a concerted effort to remove snags in its ties with Ankara. In addition, given Turkey's deep engagement in Central Asia, Islamabad should try to co-ordinate closely with Ankara, bilaterally as well as through the ECO framework, to make its long-cherished Central Asian dream come true.

As for Mr Ecevit's visit to India, it was the first visit of a Turkish prime minister to India in over 20 years. The last Turkish prime minister to visit Pakistan was Mr Erbakan. During his visit in 1996, Mr Erbakan extended an official invitation to his Pakistan counterpart, Benazir Bhutto. However, neither she nor her successor, Mr Sharif, could pay an official visit and the invitation remains pending. Thus, technically speaking, it was not the Turkish prime minister's turn to visit Pakistan. But, as history is a witness, the nature of Turkish-Pakistani relations has been such that the exchange of visits of the heads of government or state between the two countries has not depended on such details of diplomatic protocol. Had Pakistan been under civilian rule, any Turkish prime minister visiting India might have visited it simultaneously to remove any misgivings among the Pakistani people.

When General Musharraf took power and then publicly expressed his personal appreciation for Atatürk and the ideology of Kemalism, the enlightened writers in the Pakistani media hoped he would live up to his words. They still expect him to be the first leader to realise Jinnah's ideal of a secular, liberal and forward-looking Pakistan, as Turkey today is. In their editorials and columns, they frequently impress upon the General the urgency of introducing Kemalist reforms and express their disappointment for the military government's lack of any concrete initiative towards this end thus far. Others urge him to restore democracy, just as former Turkish President General Kenan Evren did.¹³ In short, whether it is a question of restoring democracy, introducing secularism or reviving the economy, Turkey remains a role model for enlightened Pakistanis.

Nations who know how to adjust and live according to the spirit of the times never fail. Turkey will not, if it does not falter on the course towards modernity. But Pakistan may, if the forces of bigotry are not overpowered. Pakistan direly needs to revive the Sufi creed of Islam, which was shattered by General Zia ul-Haq's 11 years of Islamic experiment in the country. Until the 1970s, Islamism in Pakistan had a pacifist nature, just like the Ottoman or Turkish version of Islam. The militant-Arab style of Islam surfaced in the country only during the Zia period, particularly due to Pakistan's active engagement in the Afghan-Arab jihad against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Now, a decade after the Soviet demise and US disengagement from Afghanistan, the jihad for power has widened its regional confines, resulting in serious implications for Pakistan.

Until and unless the radical shift in Pakistan's Islamic identity from pacifism to extremism is checked and reversed, and all of its militant ramifications are removed, Pakistan will continue to experience problems in its regional and international relationships, including ties with Turkey. It is up to the leaders and people of Pakistan to take the great leap towards modernity and Islamic pacifism. For its part, Turkey must remain deeply engaged with Pakistan in multi-dimensional ways, both bilaterally and through the existing arrangements for regional co-operation. By doing so, Ankara will offer a helping hand to enlightened circles in Pakistan's

state, society, politics and media who wish their country to follow the same national course as the Turks have pursued since 1923.

1 The Nation, Islamabad, 3 April 1998.
2 In 1995, Turkmen President Niyazov signed an agreement with Unocal and its partner, the Saudi Delta Company, in New York to build a gas pipeline through Afghanistan. The pipeline project envisaged transporting gas from the Daulteabad Field in south-eastern Turkmenistan to a terminus in Central Pakistan. The 870-890-mile long gas pipeline with its capacity to transport up to 20 billion cubic meters of gas per year was meant not only to supplement Pakistan's indigenous natural gas supply but also to "open up the possibility of eventually transporting Turkmenistan gas into the Indian market." Following the Economic Co-operation Organisation meeting in Ashgabat in May 1997, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Unocal-Delta signed an agreement to build the gas pipeline and to complete the consortium and financing of the project by the end of 1997. This deadline was extended for another year. However, due to the unstable political conditions in Afghanistan and the refusal of the Taliban government in Kabul to endorse the terms of the pipeline project, Unocal announced in August 1998 that it was pulling out of this venture. Since then, the project has remained in a state of limbo. The situation will remain the same until peace returns to Afghanistan. Only the establishment of a broad-based government in Kabul is the solution. For more details, see The News, Islamabad, 21 May 2000.
3 See Statement, Directorate General Information, Foreign Ministry, Ankara, 11 June and 8 July 1999.
4 See, for instance, Masud Akhtar Sheikh, 'When a Friend Betrays', The News, 7 April 2000; and Rahimullah Yusufzai, 'A Friendless Pakistan?', The News, 8 May 2000.
5 Statement, Directorate General Information, Foreign Ministry, Ankara, 13, 27 & 29 May 1998.
6 The News, 7 July 2000.
7 The Nation, 3 April 1998.
8 The Nation, 28 March & 3 April 1998; The News, 13 April & 30 June 2000.
9 Turkish Daily News, 23 March 1998.
10 Dawn, Karachi, 8 April 2000; The News, 13 April 2000.
11 In addition, the visiting Turkish minister and JMC co-chairman also announced the planned negotiations between the NHA and Turkish private investors on the Karachi Northern Bypass project. The News, 13 April 2000. For information about STFA and Tekser construction projects in Pakistan, see The Nation, 13 May 1997 and
12 The News, 6 March 1998.
13 Columnist Kamran Shafi, while urging General Musharraf to put the country in order and restore civilian rule, wrote: "Kenan Evren kicked the country into shape and then just went away to live in a little house by the sea." The Nation, 3 July 2000. "Atatürk's was a soldier's effort to provide a collective 'lift' to a defeated nation using multiple elements, including historical amnesia," wrote Nasim Zehra, while mentioning how public expectation from General Musharraf to follow in the footsteps of the Turkish Founding Father was eroding. The News, 26 May 2000. Other leading columnists such as Ayaz Amir (Dawn) have repeatedly urged the General to following the Turkish way. See also the editorial of The Friday Times, 21-26 May 2000.