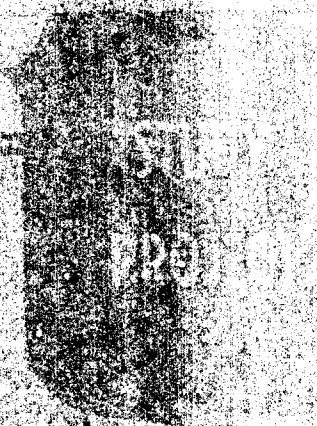


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THE ROLE OF TURKEY FOR ESTABLISHING PEACE AND STABILITY
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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INTRODUCTION

Turkey, a long-standing U.S. ally and a staunch member of NATO, has played for some time a pivotal role in the defence of Europe and the Middle East. Its value as a Western ally has hinged on its geographical location.

In the first years after World War II, Turkey was viewed as a bulwark against Soviet designs in the Middle East. Along with Iran, she provided a massive land barrier to Moscow's ambitions in the oil-rich Persian Gulf. Later, as the threat of Soviet expansionism seemed to fix on Europe, and U.S. policy shifted from containment in the Middle East (under the Marshall Plan and NATO), Turkey's main strategic role was increasingly seen in the European context: as potentially bottling up the Soviet navy in the Black Sea, tying up Warsaw Pact forces along NATO's southern flank, and serving as a staging ground for a counterthrust against the Soviet Union.¹

The Atlantic Alliance has begun to transform itself into something new as a result of the reduced Soviet threat. Just a few days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, there began a debate about the role of Turkey in NATO in lieu of its traditional role as the "Southern Flank" of NATO.² And, if its military trump card was indeed gone, what chance would Turkey have to join the European Community?³

But in a single day, Saddam Hussein changed that thinking. Suddenly, the West reawakened to the fact that Turkey, at the edge

of the Arab Middle East, has a continuing and vital strategic role. Recently, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Central Asian Turkish countries and Azerbaijan, Turkey has attracted the attention of the U.S. and other countries who have interests in the region. These developments have introduced a new dimension to the balance of power in the region. Turkey, having faced with some serious political and economic challenges of her own-internal and external-is now in position to play a unique role in the region. This paper will explore the role of Turkey and how it may play its role for establishing peace and stability in the region.

GEOPOLITICAL REVIEW

Turkey occupies one of the most strategic areas of the world. It is actually the meeting point of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, and is surrounded on three sides by different seas. The Turkish Straits, narrow sea passages, connect the Black Sea with the Aegean and the Mediterranean. Turkey is clearly a principal gateway between West and East. The European part of Turkey lies in the Balkans, whereas Anatolia, the heartland, is adjacent to the main energy source of the world, the Middle East and the Gulf area.⁴

Because of this geographical location, Turkey controls access to the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. She can control the movement of any naval forces in the Black Sea, separating the former Soviet states from the Mediterranean and the

Middle East, and controlling their access to the Middle East and its rich oil resources. Since she is the only NATO country that has a long border with the former Soviet Union, its location also grant great opportunity to Turkey to control the Caucasus. In terms of transportation systems, it links European countries to the Middle East and Asia by means of highway and railway, and the Black Sea countries to the Mediterranean through the Straits. Because of this geographical uniqueness the mainland of Anatolia has always been prominent as a center of commerce.

While geographical position has given Turkey access to many natural resources, it also has brought some problems. The disputes with Greece over freedom of passage through the Aegean Sea and access to and exploitation of the shared Aegean continental shelf are major geographic problems. Also, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which irrigate the historical Mesopotamia plain, originate in Turkey and flow into Persian Gulf. Waters of the Euphrates are used by Turkey, Syria and Iraq, and those of the Tigris are used by Turkey and Iraq. Disputes over the rightful share of these waters have occurred in the past among these neighboring countries and are likely to intensify as demand for water increases.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

The Turkish peoples first lived in Central Asia around 2000 B.C. Later, some Turkish tribes migrated from Central Asia and established many independent states and empires within a vast area

of Asia and Europe,⁵ expanding from Mongolia to Central Europe. Around the 10th century, Turks embraced the religion of Islam.⁶ The Turks came to Anatolia in 1071, fought a crucial war with the Byzantines, and settled in Asia Minor. There they established many feudal states loosely forming an empire.

Anatolia has a history of human settlement of approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years. The region has witnessed the rise of more than 20 cultures, beginning with civilizations of the Bronze Age around the 15th to 12th centuries B.C. The early Hittite Empire grew to equal ancient Egypt in strength and civilization. During the 12th century B.C., the Hittite Empire was seized by the Thracians. Then the neo-Hittite continued to rule the area until 750 B.C., when the Phrygians (750-300 B.C.) took over.⁷

The Lydians, Lycians and Carians of southwestern Anatolia also provided important contributions to the Anatolian culture and civilization (6th century B.C.). Alexander the Great brought the Hellenistic Age (334 B.C.). The Byzantine era in Anatolia began to fade with the arrival of the Turks to the region (1071 A.D.).⁸

The Seljuk Empire was the first great Turkish empire in Anatolia. After the Seljuks, Anatolia was divided into small states, but unity was again accomplished by the Ottoman Turks.⁹ The Ottoman Empire began in 1299. After the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, the Ottomans built the largest Turkish Empire, which spread from the Caucasus in the east to Vienna in the west, from the Crimea in the north to the Arabian Gulf in the southeast, and most of northern Africa and Sudan, covering an area of 8 million

square miles. Under the rule of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the Empire reached the zenith of its power. The Aegean, the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean Sea became known as "Ottoman Lakes".¹⁰

The 600 years of Ottoman reign can be attributed to its own governmental system. Such a large territory with numerous races, languages, cultures and religions could only be kept under one rule by adopting a decentralized system, tolerant of great ethnic differences. It was the general Ottoman practice to allow religious minorities great autonomy in observing the rituals of their faiths.

After World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed and a new, modern Turkey was established in 1923. Throughout this historical progress, the Turks not only influenced the people who lived under their rule, but they themselves were affected by the Anotolian civilizations as well. Today one can see the imprint of all these civilizations, from Hittites, Lydians to Ottomans in Anatolia and the neighbors of Turkey, who have also been influenced by the Turkish culture partly or completely. As a result of this historical phenomenon, Turkey and its neighbors, in many fields, have the same culture, same attitudes, and same customs. The foods eaten, and music listened to by Turks are familiar to the people of neighboring countries. However, today's Turkey has some problems with its neighbors because of this historical integration. While many Turkish people live beyond Turkey's borders, some neighboring ethnic groups are represented in Turkey. In addition to this

ethnic diversity there are border disputes between Turkey and some of its neighbors which have sometimes caused serious regional tensions.

RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

The basic principle that guides the foreign policy of the Turkish Republic is embodied in the motto of Ataturk: "Peace at Home, Peace in the World."¹¹ It is within this principle that her foreign relations are conducted, relations that are based on the principles of mutual friendship, respect for territorial integrity, non-interference in domestic affairs and the balancing of mutual interests. Turkey maintains that disagreements should always be resolved by means of negotiations. But these peaceful aspirations do not mean that Turkey is indifferent to foreign efforts to intervene in her internal affairs.

Another basic principle of the Turkish foreign policy is living up to contractual and treaty obligations and respecting her other official commitments. While Turkey strives hard to abide by this principle, she also expects other countries to act accordingly.

Following the Turkish War of Liberation (1919-1922), Turkey adopted a secular state system. She also undertook radical changes in the social structure. By adoption of Western systems she became a modern, secular state believing that her future lies with Europe. She is a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Council of Europe (COE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation

and Development (OECD) and the European Common Market, with which Turkey has an associate member relationship.¹²

Turkey has been interested in the European integration process from the very beginning. She applied to the EUROPEAN community (EC) for membership in 1959. The Ankara agreement, signed in 1963, aimed at making Turkey full member, was modelled after the Treaty of Rome. She made its formal bid for full integration in 1987, a move nationally endorsed and which is a result of Turkey's movement towards Europe. She has also made known her intention to join as a full member of the West European Union. The EC commission made its recommendation on Turkey's application in 1989. The commission has endorsed Turkey's desire to integrate with Europe and confirmed her eligibility for full membership. However, the commission has set no date for the commencement of membership talks with Turkey. During the Dublin Summit of the EC Council in 1990, the commission confirmed Turkey's eligibility for full membership, and a broad agreement was reached on the need to expand cooperation with Turkey.¹³

The problem is that Turkey's application will not be considered before 1993 at the earliest.¹⁴ There are some difficulties with Turkey's integration with the EC based on human rights, social, cultural and religious biases.¹⁵ Turkey, which is based on secular principles, is the only Muslim country that wants to integrate with the European Community. All the governmental structures are of Western origin, and mentally Turkey is a European country. Historically she is also very respectful of human rights.

If this were not so, she would not have accepted the Jews who escaped from the Inquisition in Spain, 500 years ago. Also it would not have opened its borders to 519,031 Iraqi Kurdish people in 1988, 1990 and 1991.¹⁶ By comparison, acceptance into Europe of 14,000 Albanian refugees was thought to be a big problem, especially for Italy. And in 1988, France, which styles herself as a defender of human rights, accepted only 170 Kurdish refugees in her own country. The other European countries do no better. Today Turkey has absorbed hundreds of thousands of refugees expelled from other countries, such as Spain, Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Bulgaria. Considering the Kurdish problem as a reason to deny membership to Turkey is unfair, because there are similar problems with the Basques in Spain, the Corsicans in France and the Irish in Britain.¹⁷

According to Detlev Samland, a member of the Turkish Council of The European Community, the real reasons for a delay in granting Turkey full membership are rapid population growth, and the fact that Turkey produces products which would compete with those of some other European countries. In addition, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Scandinavian countries are considered to be ahead of Turkey in the queue to be accepted into the EC. Finally, Turkey's economic and geopolitic importance to Europe may have diminished because of the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and dissolution of the Soviet Union.¹⁸

The population of Turkey will be over 80 million in 2020. If Turkey continues to grow 2.2% per year, and the EC countries 0.3%,

Turkey's labor force will increase by 4,067,350 in the year 2000 and 9,626,493 in the year 2010; while the EC's total labor force will increase by 4,050,000 in the year 2000, and 8,640,000 in the year 2010.¹⁹ If we consider the unemployed people in Turkey and new changes in Eastern European countries, this means the EC will face a serious surplus labor force after the year 2000.

On the other hand, Turkey has new opportunities because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Central Asian Turkish Republics and Azerbaijan offer Turkey an opportunity to become a regional superpower.²⁰ Georgia and Armenia are attracting Turkey's attention to the Caucasus. Turkey has recognized all the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan as independent states. She already has good relationships with them. High level government officials of these countries have visited Turkey since gaining independence. A bilateral cooperation and friendship agreement that covered political, economic, agricultural, cultural, tourism, trade, and communication fields, was signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan on 23 January 1992.²¹ Another agreement signed between Turkey and Turkmenistan, for cooperation in transport and communications, and promotion of natural gas exchanges, was put into effect on 24 January 1992.²² This agreement anticipates broad areas of economic, cultural, industrial, and trade cooperation. Turkey will help Turkmenistan develop its communications and transport systems.

Kyrgyzistan has sought help to develop its natural resources. A job council was established between the two countries, and the Eximbank would act as mediator between them. A cooperation

agreement between Turkey, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan related to economic and commercial issues was put into effect on 22 February 1992.²³ All these countries have established full diplomatic representation with one another.

Turkey has taken steps to develop economic relations with the former Soviet Republics. Turkish businessmen have established commercial ties in the Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, especially in the field of construction. In 1991, total trade between Turkey and former Soviet Republics increased by \$4 billion.²⁴ Another important initiative that Turkey has undertaken is "The Black Sea Cooperation Region".²⁵ By this project Turkey wants to promote economic cooperation with the countries which have coastlines on the Black Sea (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia and Ukraine). All these countries have given positive responses to this project, and under the leadership of Turkey the agreement was signed in Istanbul on February 3, 1992.²⁶

After the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the Turkish-Bulgarian relationship has improved. Following new elections in Bulgaria in 1990, Turks in Bulgaria have been able to organize their own political party and have won 23 of the 400 seats in the Bulgarian Parliament.²⁷

Turkey recognized all the new Yugoslavian states at the same time.²⁸ It has already established relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Serbia.²⁹ In the military field, a technical and scientific co-operation agreement was signed between Turkey and Romania.³⁰

Although there are some potential problems with Middle East countries, Turkey's approach is optimistic. She attaches great importance to cultivating close, friendly relations and cooperation with all Arab and Islamic countries. The cultural and human affinity between Turkey and these countries creates a favorable climate for the development of cooperation. Conflicts and military confrontations in the Middle East prevent the restoration of peace and order, which are conducive to economic development. The growth of cooperation in this region, which has vast energy resources and great agricultural potential, will help ease political tensions and will also promote global peace and stability.

Because of the Gulf War Turkey's economic and diplomatic relations with Iraq have been severed, even though over the last ten years Iraq has accounted for as much as 18 percent of total Turkish imports and 13 percent of total Turkish exports.³¹ Also, problems related with the Kurds have been continuing, and the use of water (Euphrates and Tigris) poses potential problem between the two countries.

In the case of Iran, two issues prevail. The first is the explicit Iranian support of religious fundamentalists in Turkey. This issue is very sensitive for Turkey. It is anathema to Ataturkism,³² which mandates a complete separation of religion from political life. Iranian involvement is therefore viewed with alarm and disdain.³³ The second issue with Iran is the Kurdish problem.

Syria is another country with which Turkey's current relations are poor. Syria has been supporting the PKK (Kurdish Worker Party)

activities against Turkey. She wants to add Hatay Province to her territory. Also the use of the water of the Euphrates River is a potential problem between the two countries. After the destruction of the Iraqi armed forces, the Syrian army, with its long range missiles, poses the greatest threat to the stability of the region.

Turkey has faced some problems with Greece stemming from access to the Aegean Sea, the unresolved Cyprus problem, and the Turkish minority who lives in Greece. In the 1980s, Turkish-Greek relations were characterized by a lack of dialogue, the result of Greece's hostile policy vis-a-vis Turkey. The dangers inherent in such a policy became most evident in March 1987, during the Aegean continental shelf crisis. In the aftermath of this crisis the Davos meeting was held in January 1988. Negotiations on these issues have been continuing between the two countries. Turkey believes that the dialogue process, which requires patience, determination and good will, is to the benefit of the two countries and should be maintained irrespective of changes of governments.³⁴ Another problem is Cyprus. Nelson Ledsky, special coordinator on Cyprus at the U.S. State Department, says that there are two communities on the island,³⁵ and they are different from each other. Turkey believes that a just and lasting solution in Cyprus can be possible only if the two communities consider each other politically equal and agree on the creation of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal state.³⁶

RELATIONS WITH NATO AND THE UNITED STATES

Turkey has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization since 1952, and it has done its best in defending Europe and in preventing Soviet expansionism into the Middle East. But, after the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and changes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the function of NATO has changed. Turkey's role in NATO has also changed. Turkey is no longer a bulwark against the former Soviet Union, but it will continue to be the southeastern flank of the alliance, a means of establishing control and stability in the region. Also, she will maintain its place in the "multinational forces structure" based on the NATO organization. She will take her place in the Southern flank of the Rapid Reaction Corps with Italy and Greece.³⁷ During the Davos Summit on February 1, 1992, Turkish Prime Minister Demirel expressed that;

"...Turkey would continue to pay an active and constructive role in the success of all common efforts directed to this end, particularly these to be deployed in forums such as NATO, the Council of Europe and CSCE process which have important tasks shaping the new order."³⁸

Turkey has good relations with the United States. From the strategic perspective, Turkey has consistently ranked among the top five recipients of United States military aid. Additionally, there was an agreement between Turkey and the United States, the Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), which was signed in 1969, and gave the United States access to some bases, intelligence, and communication facilities in Turkey.³⁹ Early in 1980, the U.S. and Turkey initialed a new Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA).

The DECA calls for the U.S. to help Turkey's defense and make effective contributions to modernization efforts of the Turkish armed forces. It envisages cooperation in the field of defense industry and also calls on the U.S. to extend support to Turkey's economic development efforts and her export drive. It also permits the U.S. to make use of certain Turkish armed forces' defence installation. In the annex later signed in 1987, which called for the extension of the DECA, the balance of mutual obligations was underlined once again, and the U.S. administration made a firm pledge to do its best in this respect.⁴⁰

The U.S. secured access to some facilities and permission to modernize them to compensate for the relative neglect of the 1970s, and for the loss of intelligence facilities in Iran. By means of these facilities the U.S. has gained ability to control and to monitor the Soviet States and the Middle East. Also, these bases played important role in Gulf crisis. We can say that the Gulf crisis proved the importance of these bases as well as Turkey's willingness to maintain these bases.

After Turkey's 1974 Cyprus operations, the U.S. applied an arms embargo on Turkey from 1974 until 1978. This weakened the relations between two countries for some time.

Another subject that affects Turkish-American relations is the Armenian issue. This issue is raised almost every year, especially during U.S. election periods, in order to gain the vote of Americans of Armenian origin. The Armenian issue is exploited by some politicians in the name of gaining political support domestically. The same lobby has been seen in Turkish-Greek disputes. An example of their efforts is the 1989 resolution submitted to the U.S. Congress by Senator Robert Dole, which

proposed to make April 24 a "day of remembrance" in the U.S. for the so-called Armenian genocide. This resolution was defeated but subsequently (in April, 1990), President George Bush's statement voicing sympathy for the Armenians and attributing the massacre to the Ottoman Empire once again jeopardized relations with Turkey.⁴¹ The rejection of this resolution which was bound to cast a shadow on relations between two countries, was described by Turkey as a pleasing development.⁴²

Despite these difficulties, Turkey and the United States will seek to maintain good relations to protect their respective interests. Both countries are aware of their importance to one another. Occasional difficult periods stemming from these concerns will not reduce the importance of maintaining positive U.S.-Turkish relations. The recent visit of Turkey's Prime Minister to the United States, and Turkey's bridge role in providing help to the former Soviet States, are examples of the results of good relations.

TURKEY AND THE GULF CRISIS

A few days after the invasion of Kuwait, Turkey joined the international blockade of Iraq, cutting the Iraqi pipeline to the Mediterranean that carried more than half of Iraqi exports, approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil a day. The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement, which gives the U.S. access to military bases in Turkey, was extended by Turkey until December 1991. At the same time, the Turkish Army increased its strength

near the Iraqi border to upward of 100,000 men, which forced Iraq to deploy substantial troops to the north and raised the prospect of a two-front war. Also, Turkey permitted the use of NATO air bases which are within striking range of military targets in northern and central Iraq.⁴³

Though Turkey contributed these facilities to the anti-Iraq coalition, this anti-Iraq embargo has cost economically hard-pressed Turkey dearly. Turkey's financial losses from the war were at least \$7 billion in 1991 in trade,⁴⁴ fees for transit of Iraqi oil through the Turkish pipeline, foreign investment, tourism revenues, fees from transit trade, suspension on repayment of Iraqi debts, suspension of construction contracts and increasing oil prices.⁴⁵ These losses will continue during the application of United Nations's sanctions on Iraq.

To compensate for these losses and to reward Turkey's quick response to the crisis, President Bush, along with the EC, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, sought to put together a multibillion-dollar assistance package for the so-called frontline states.

Turkey has also spent \$393 million in aid to displaced Iraqis. According to a recent survey conducted for the Ministry of Interior of Turkey, three separate waves of migration from Iraq to Turkey took place in 1988, 1990 and 1991. The total number of Iraqis seeking shelter in Turkey was 519,031, of whom 493,336 later left Turkey. At present there remain 25,675 Iraqis being taken care of by Turkey.⁴⁶

Following the Halabjah massacre in March 1988, 51,512 Iraqi

Kurds took shelter in Turkey. After the occupation of Kuwait, 2 August 1990, 62,922 persons of various nationalities who were working in Iraq fled to Turkey fearing the war. The greatest flood of Iraqis came after the end of the Gulf War. With this third wave, 460,000 people comprising Kurds, Turcomens, Arabs, Nestorians and Chaldeans entered Turkey in April 1991.⁴⁷ This last massive migration caused great damage in Turkey; damage to personal property, damage to public property, damage to the environment, and damage due to loss of labor force. By herself, Turkey extended twice the amount of aid sent by the U.S. and 99 times that of France. The aid received from foreign countries was mostly in the form of blankets and foodstuffs.⁴⁸

Turkey extended \$32.9 million in material aid for the first wave in 1988, \$7.4 million for the second wave, and \$257.54 million for the third. The total material aid extended by Turkey amounted to \$298.2 million. With the damage in Turkey inflicted by the northern Iraqis, the cost to Turkey rises to an estimated \$398.2 million.⁴⁹

Turkey has shown great respect for human rights and humanitarian interest in the suffering of the northern Iraqis. As it is expressed by Sadreddin Aga Khan, the U.N. Secretary-General's Human Rights Representative: "...If Turkey had not opened its border and rushed to the aid of the Iraqis, most of them would be dead today."⁵⁰

MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES AND DOMESTIC STABILITY

The three most important Middle Eastern issues which Turkey has faced are the Kurdish question, the potential water problem and the spread of radical Islam.

The region where Turkey, Iran and Iraq meet has been called the Kurdish Area, and it is said that the Zagros Mountains which lie along the Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi borders is their traditional homeland.⁵¹ There are no exact population figures on the Kurds. It is believed that there are about 8-10 million in Turkey, 4 million in Iran, 2.5 million in Iraq, 500,000 in Syria, and 50,000 in Russia.⁵²

On three occasions since World War II the Kurds have caused major disruptions in the region, one of which threatened world stability. These are the failed effort to establish the Mahabad Republic after World War II, the Kurds' participation in the Shah's conspiracy to topple the Ba'thist regime in 1975,⁵³ and finally the attempted uprising after the Gulf Crisis.

The Mahabad Republic was established by Mullah Mustafa Barzani in northwestern Iran in January 1946,⁵⁴ with the support of the Soviet Union. But the Mahabad Republic collapsed in the same year, and Mullah Mustafa with several hundred tribesmen escaped to the Soviet Union. Barzani was chief of the Barzani tribe living in northern Iraq, and had been sent into exile in Iran by the Iraqi government in 1945. In 1958, upon the overthrow of King Faysal in a coup, he and his followers returned to Iraq. But in 1963, the Ba'thists overthrew Abdul Karim Kassem and massacred many

communists. Since Barzani was an ally of the former government, they moved to a mountainous area of northern Iraq. The Barzanis continued to live in this area until 1968 when the Ba'thists took power a second time: the new president was Ahmad Hassan Baqr, but the real leader was Saddam Hussein. Under Baqr, the Iraqi army resumed its vendetta against the Barzanis. When the army was not successful Saddam Hussein invited the Kurds to parley. In 1970, the northern region of Iraq was declared an autonomous zone. But the autonomy agreement did not survive because of the activities of the Shah of Iran. The Shah prevailed upon Mullah Mustafa to repudiate the autonomy agreement. He promised Barzani cash and weapons from the United States, which then-President Nixon pledged to supply through the Central Intelligence Agency,⁵⁵ by means of Israel. Despite the aid of the United States and the Shah, the Barzanis lost the struggle against the Iraqi government. In 1975, the Barzanis fled to Iran again, and there they remained until the coming of Khomeini. Shortly after this migration Mullah Mustafa died in Walter Reed Hospital in the United States.⁵⁶

The Barzanis, under the leadership of Massoud Barzani, son of Mullah Mustafa, were used against Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. Khomeini subsidized them to undertake guerrilla raids into northern Iraq.⁵⁷ But since Khomeini did not turn over the Iraqi territory occupied by Barzani's forces to the Iraqi Kurds, Massoud Barzani formed an association with Hafez Al Assad,⁵⁸ President of Syria.

Another Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, is a city-bred, university-educated man. While Barzani represents a strong,

traditional, tribal current, Talabani embodies the more modern, ideological trend. Instead of functioning at the tribal level, Talabani consistently has worked through political organizations, such as the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). He began his career in politics opposing Mullah Mustafa, although he was Barzani's chief lieutenant. Since he opposed the tribal chief mentality that Mullah Mustafa represented, Barzani drove him out of the KDP, and in 1974, he formed his own party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).⁵⁹ Talabani's area lay further south, around Suleymaniye in the mountains separating Iraq from Iran, whereas Barzani's territory lay along Iraq's northern border with Turkey. In 1983, when some parts of his territory were occupied by Iran, Talabani attacked the Iranian forces to regain the occupied territory. Saddam Hussein offered again the old autonomy agreement, on condition that Talabani would agree to aid Iraq. Having accepted this offer Talabani became Saddam's "governor" in northern Iraq, with the responsibility of guarding these area. They worked together on an autonomy arrangement for all of the Iraqi Kurds. But this agreement also was not implemented because of the tribal structure of the Kurds. Many tribal chiefs were against this agreement.⁶⁰

After Desert Storm, Talabani finally allied himself with Massoud Barzani against the Iraqi government. Now they are continuing their struggle against Saddam Hussein.

As for the Iranian Kurds their leader was Abdur Rahman Qassemlu, who fled to the East bloc and was an economist under

Dubchek in Czechoslovakia.⁶¹ Under his leadership, on the first day of the anti-Shah uprising, the Iranian Kurds joined the revolt of the clerics (mullahs). But later the clerics wanted to disarm them. The Iranian Kurds resisted and began an anti-Khomeini revolt in their region. Khomeini sent the Revolutionary Guards, along with Massoud Barzani, to put down the revolt. After this event Qassemlu returned to Europe, where he was killed later by Iranian agents.

As can be seen, the Kurds who live in Iran and Iraq have never established their unity, let alone established an independent state. They were used by Iran against Iraq, and some times were used by Iraq against Iran. Moreover, they have fought among themselves to promote their own tribe's interests. During World War I, they were provoked and backed by England against the Ottoman Empire, and during Desert Storm they were used by the United States against Iraq. So, throughout their history the Kurds have never been an independent state, and they have lived divided under the administration of the powerful states of the region.

As for the Turkish Kurdish people, they are very different from Iraqi and Iranian Kurds in terms of their living conditions, rights, social facilities and participation in the administration of Turkey. Since World War I from time to time some groups of these people have been provoked to rebel against Turkey, and now they are facing the danger of being provoked again by the countries which don't want a powerful country like Turkey near the oil-rich Middle East area.

According to Westermann;

"During the negotiations conducted before the League of Nations in 1923-1926 regarding the sovereignty over the Mosul district, and since that time, the Turks have refused to acknowledge the Kurds as a population element alien to themselves, preferring to regard them as an assimilated people."⁶²

Under the provisions of the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923 (article 37-45) the only recognized non-Muslim minorities are Armenians, Jews and Greeks. The Kurdish people were not recognized as a minority in Turkey; they were regarded as Turkish citizens.

There has always been a sense of ambivalence the part of The Kurdish population towards the modern Turkish State. In the early years of the republic this took the form of a dervish-based uprising to protest against the abolition of the Caliphate and the crackdown on all manifestation of a Kurdish identity. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the Turkish State forged a more extensive accommodation with the traditional leadership in the rural Kurdish areas, by giving them more systematic access to formal political power through, for instance, membership of Turkish political parties.⁶³

Today, under Turkish law everyone who is tied to the Republic of Turkey by citizenship is a Turk regardless of his origin, just as someone who lives in the United States, regardless of origin, can say "I am an American".

All Turkish citizens are equal before the law. There is no discrimination between citizens based on religion, language or race. The Turkish Parliament represents the Turkish people as a whole. People from eastern Turkey are fully represented in the Turkish Parliament and the government. There are many senior government officials of Kurdish origin who have served in the past,

and who are serving currently in the government, such as the prime minister, several deputy prime ministers, ministers and military generals. This reality was expressed by Jalal Talabani, Iraqi Kurdish leader, like this: "The Kurds who live in Turkey have rights as much as Turks; even, in some fields they have much more social, economical and commercial opportunities than Turks have. They are able to be deputy, minister, even president."⁶⁴

On the other hand, there are certain problems in the south eastern region in terms of economic and social structure, education, health, communication and transportation facilities. These disorders stem from mainly the rough geographic characteristics of the region. The roughness of the region has hindered development. The construction of roads, linkage of electric power lines, establishment of communication lines and any other activities that depend on the geography of the region are difficult and take more time, and cost much more money. Furthermore, bad weather conditions affect not only these activities, but also economic and social developments. So private enterprise has been slow to invest in this region, and all the economic projects in the region have been launched by the state so far. Turkey has been spending much more money there than the amount of taxes she receives from the region.

The main source of local disorder is the terrorist attacks of the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party), an illegal terrorist organization. In these terrorist attacks, many soldiers and civilians have been killed including children and women. Most of those who have been

killed in these attacks are themselves Kurds. The losses of the PKK and those of the security forces since 1985 were explained by Turkish General Chief of Staff as follows:

"...excluding figures for the two operations carried out recently, security forces killed 1,341 PKK terrorist from 1984 to early 1992. They also captured 476 terrorist, 89 of whom were wounded. Some 175 PKK terrorists gave themselves up to security forces. Apart from citizens who were killed, 849 security force members were martyred during that time."⁶⁵

According to the Turkish Daily News, since 1984, terrorist activities in Turkey carried out by radical pro-marxist Kurds has claimed more than 3500 lives.⁶⁶ By applying hit-and-run tactics on villages and hamlets, and by frightening the people, the PKK is trying to force these defenseless people to support their organization. Their aim is to spoil the stability and territorial integrity of Turkey.

The PKK has received support from beyond Turkey's borders. Syria, Iran and Iraq allow PKK members to escape back across their borders after raids in Turkey. The PKK operates from bases in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, and they also have camps in northern Iraq.⁶⁷ The leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, lives in Damascus, Syria.⁶⁸ In western Europe as well, the PKK has front organizations to provide the political, moral and financial support for its survival. Turkey wants to halt PKK activities, and is pressing her allies to recognize the PKK as a terrorist organization.⁶⁹

Human rights advocates express doubts about the measures taken by the Turkish Government against terrorist activities in

southeastern Anatolia, and claim that these measures pose a threat to the effective exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the region.⁷⁰ Nothing could be further from the truth. Terrorism is an unjustifiable act which violates the most fundamental of human rights, the right to life. The measures being taken by the Government have only one purpose: to protect the lives of people against terrorist attacks. Democratic societies threatened by terrorism have the right to take effective measures to counter these wanton acts of violence in the interest of their citizens and for the prevention of crime. For that reason, Turkey has been applying some stringent measures against these terrorist actions. Last year Turkey undertook operations three times beyond her borders. The Turkish General Staff Chief has stated that PKK militarists will be attacked wherever they are, even beyond the Turkish borders,⁷¹ just as Israel and the United States did when their citizens suffered.

To solve this problem Turkey has been constructing a great project called "Southeastern Anatolia Project" (GAP: Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi), a combination of 13 major projects including the construction of 21 dams and 17 hydroelectric power plants on the Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Firat) Rivers. The project includes 6 provinces of the region, some 73,863 square kilometers of land, which corresponds to 9.5% of the total area of Turkey. In terms of area alone it covers an expanse 1.7 times larger than the land area of the Netherlands and 2.4 times larger than that of Belgium. Upon completion of the project over 1.7 million hectares of land will be

irrigated and 25,000 GWh of hydroelectric energy will be generated annually.⁷²

Such a vast area of irrigation and abundance of energy could create important business and development opportunities in other sectors of the economy through backward and forward linkages. By introducing modern agricultural technology in the irrigated areas, the existing agricultural production capability of the region should be increased. The increase in agricultural production should start a chain reaction in other sectors of the regional economy and bring about dramatic changes in the economic and social life of the region. Thus, unemployment could be eradicated, income levels could rise, urban centers could be developed and economical growth and social stability could be ensured in the region.

According to "the Economist" since the project is scheduled for completion by the year 2005 it would be too late for solving the Kurdish problem.⁷³ It is true that Turkey will face some problems until completion of this project, but the Turkish Government has already taken some important steps addressing them. First of all, the "Kurdish reality" has been accepted in Turkey. Last year the Turkish Parliament adapted new legislation lifting some existing restrictions on the use of the local dialects (Law No. 2932). Kurdish newspapers have been allowed to publish recently. Today, the Kurdish reality is discussed openly in the media and in the Parliament. There is now a political party which speaks on behalf of Kurdish people. The Government is planning further radical reforms for the region.

As long as the Kurds are exploited by foreign powers, unfortunately this problem will continue for some time. But it must be known that Turkey will never allow the formation of another state on its territory. After completion of the GAP project, for which \$20 billion will be spent,⁷⁴ and which will grant great opportunities to develop the region, it is unthinkable that Turkey would give up this area. Moreover, this region is one of Turkey's areas with great potential petroleum resources.

While this project provides the region with many facilities to solve domestic problems, it could also be a source of conflict among Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. When this project is completed, a great amount of Tigris' and Euphrates' water will be used by Turkey for irrigation purposes. So, Syria and Iraq will get less water than they get now.⁷⁵ Turkey will continue to allow the flow of at least 500 cubic meters of water per second to Syria and Iraq⁷⁶ (52% of Euphrates water). Syria wants average flows to return to between 600 and 700 cubic meters of water per second (60-70%). Iraq also fears that it will suffer the consequences of reduced flows.⁷⁷

The reaction of the Syrians and Iraqis to the diversion of the Euphrates was intensely negative for three reasons. The first was the damage which the shut-off itself was supposed to have done. More serious was second, namely the prospect of future problems due to the further expected shut-offs and ultimately to changes in the volume and nature of the water flow. The third and arguably the most profound was the effect which control over water was likely to have over the power relationship within and among the three states.⁷⁸

Since the sources of both rivers are in Turkey, she can take

advantage of using these waters to establish stability both domestically and regionally. A trilateral technical committee has been working on the subject.

Most of the Middle East countries are faced with water problems. Whereas Turkey does not produce oil in any significant quantity, she alone in the region is blessed with an abundance of good quality water.

The Jordan River basin presents a special problem for Syria, Jordan and Israel. It is estimated that by the year 2000 Israel's and Jordan's water requirements will exceed the supply by 30%. The River Jordan is already being exploited to its maximum capacity. If Syria were to dam the River Yarmouk at the Syrian-Jordanian frontier, Jordan and Israel would both be seriously affected.⁷⁹

Due to competition between Arab and Israeli settlers for water, and also due to pollution through use of agro-chemicals, the water situation in historical Palestine is becoming difficult. Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf region have another problem, the salination of water. At present, desalination of sea water costs around \$5 per cubic meter.⁸⁰ Some analysts have suggested that a war could break out in this region after the year 2000 because of water scarcity.⁸¹

In this situation, Turkey can pump pure water to these countries by means of a "peace pipeline". The pipeline project, on which pre-feasibility studies have been prepared by the Brown and Root Company of the U.S.,⁸² involves the exploitation of two of Turkey's rivers, the Seyhan and Ceyhan, both of which flow into the

Mediterranean Sea between Mersin and Iskenderun. Each day the two rivers carry approximately 39.17 million cubic meters of unpolluted, good quality water. Turkey intends to use 23.4 million cubic meters for her planned needs. Of the remaining 16.1 cubic meters of water, Turkey is ready to divert around 6 million cubic meters a day to the Arab countries.⁸³ The basic idea is to provide drinking water at a price which is a fraction of the cost of desalination.

The project includes two different pipelines. The first and largest, known as the "Western Pipeline", would run south through Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. It ends in Mecca. This pipeline would carry 3.5 million cubic meters of water per day, which it is estimated will be consumed as follows: 300,000 cu m by Turkey; 1,100,000 cu m by Syria; 600,000 cu m by Jordan and 1,500,000 cu m by Saudi Arabia. If a peace treaty is concluded between Israel and the Arabs, Israel and the West Bank will be able to take advantage of this project as well. The second and smaller "Gulf Pipeline" would run to Kuwait and then down the west side of the Gulf to Oman. This pipeline would carry 2.3 millions cubic meters of water per day which will be consumed: 600,000 cu m by Kuwait, 200,000 cu m by Bahrain, 100,000 cu m by Qatar, 600,000 cu m by United Arab Emirates and 200,000 cu m by Oman.⁸⁴ Turkey has been seeking financial resources and technical advice for this project⁸⁵ which will cost \$21 billion.

The decision-makers in the Arab countries have expressed reservations over this project. They say, first, the project will

increase the dependency of Arab States upon Turkey. Second, there have been precedents set, first by Syria, then Turkey and Saudi Arabia, in cutting oil pipelines; they believe that the flow of water could be cut or threatened to be cut for political purposes. Third, the lines would be vulnerable to sabotage or attack by Israel.⁸⁶

Since Turkey has offered to construct this project with all the countries which will use it, and since she will share in the economic gain, it is unlikely that she would cut the flow of water for political purposes, unless environmental conditions and/or an international organization's decisions require her to do so. The cutting of the Iraqi oil pipeline has hurt Turkey economically. As for the Israeli threat, Israel already has enough points of conflict with her Arab neighbors, and is unlikely to create a further serious threat to peace by antagonizing Turkey. On the other hand, if Israel chooses to participate in the project, the potential problem will be solved easily. As with the GAP project, Turkey has an important role to play with this project.

As for Islamic fundamentalism, there is a belief that Turkey has lately been suffering from a severe case of islamic fundamentalism. This is not the case. The balance between secular and religious areas, having been tilted sharply toward the secular by Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s, has now moved part of the way back. But compared with what has been happening in Algeria, Jordan and Egypt, not to mention Iran, the revival of religious feeling in Turkey is predictable, fairly unpugnacious and politically

undangerous.⁸⁷

The religious party, the Welfare Party, in alliance with two smaller right-wing groups, won 17% of the vote on 20 October 1991. These same parties won 15.2% of the vote in 1973, 14.9% in 1977, and 10.9% in 1987.⁸⁸ They did not participate in the 1983 election, and some decrease of their vote in the 1987 election is explained by the effects of the military intervention. Generally, the Religious Party alone has 8-10% of the vote in Turkey.

Turkey strives to be a secular country and has made great progress in this area. She has organized all public institutions in accordance with a secular state system. The great majority of people believe in and have accepted this as the best way for modern Turkey. The results of the elections have shown this reality. So religious fundamentalism has little popular support in Turkey. The president of the Constitutional Court, Yekta Gungor Ozden, stated that;

"Freedom and sovereignty included in the principles of secularism can not be abandoned. Turkish State would not go under the control of a religion or a sect. The great masses of people adhering to contemporary, Ataturkist principles were the biggest security in defending secularism."⁸⁹

THE ROLE OF TURKEY IN THE REGION

Due to its highly important strategic location, Turkey is a regional focal point in many areas. She will remain important to global security as long as there is world dependency upon Middle East oil, and as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict exists. As explained by President Bush, "...the Gulf Crisis was the crucible

of the new world order"; and as stated in the preface of the National Security Strategy of the U.S., in "A New World Order", the Middle East has vast strategic significance.⁹⁰ Since Turkey stands in or near this crucible, she always will play a profound role in the region.

Because of her long and deep historical relations and geographical integration with her neighbors, Turkey faces important responsibilities and opportunities in the region. There are some border and ethnic conflicts and disputes. Both Iraq and Iran have geopolitical ambitions which will survive their present regimes. Iran is seen as the exporter of unwanted religious fundamentalism. Syria and Iraq grumble that Turkey threatens their water supplies.⁹¹ At the same time Turkey will be more involved with the Kurdish problem as long as this ethnic group is provoked by abroad.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union, developments in Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, and the Gulf Crisis have forced Turkey to face unpredictable events among the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia. While Turkey's attention focuses on these developments, the U.S., Japan, and the European countries have a greater appreciation of Turkey's activities in these events.

Turkey is seen as a model for the Central Asian Turkic republics. The continual mention of Turkey as a model abroad is due to two facts: the Turkic republics who declared independence are in search of foreign support, and a chance to maintain democracy in their countries. In both, Turkey's location and accumulation of experience are a source of inspiration to other

countries.

The Turkish model comprises three main elements for the newly independent republics. The first is a pluralist democratic system. After 70 odd years of totalitarian communism, this is a system longed for by all the former Soviet Republics. The second is a free market economy. This is the system in demand in Central Asia after the unsuccessful implementation of centralization and etatism. The third is a modern constitutional order, the main elements of which are secularism and various reforms (from the alphabet to women's rights) which had been conceived by Ataturk.

Some western countries including the U.S. have supported this view in an effort to keep these regions from coming under the influence of Iran. They praise the success of Turkey in maintaining democracy, secularism and a liberal economy, and advise the Central Asian republics to follow the model set by Turkey.⁹² This issue was expressed by President George Bush like this: "Turkey is a model for the countries in the region, and especially to those newly independent republics of Central Asia."⁹³

Turkey can become a diplomatic link between the West and the Central Asian countries, and can establish economical, cultural, political and technological co-operation with them. As previously mentioned Turkey has taken important steps on this subject. The whole of Turkistan offers Turkey a chance to become a regional superpower. But Turkey continues to believe that her future lies with Europe. As expressed by Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel;

"Turkey does not have Pan-Turkist aspirations. Turkey's effort for setting up new relations is not an alternative to its relations with the West. Turkey sees itself as a complementary part of Europe and at the same time is aware of the importance of improving its relations with the U.S."⁹⁴

In addition, Turkey has been promoting "Black Sea Economic Cooperation" with the Black Sea countries. This project is important for two reasons: The first is concerned with the aim foreseen by the project which is to improve relations in all fields with these countries, thus making the Black Sea a true region of peace and prosperity. The second is directly concerned with Turkey, since this project has reached the present stage through the initiatives and efforts of Turkey, a great achievement. At the same time, this development shows that Turkey has more significance than just acquiring an ordinary position in the new world order. This fact was expressed by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger:

"Turkey is a European, Mediterranean, Black Sea and Middle Eastern country. We can easily identify ourselves with the peoples living in these regions. Today, new states are emerging in an area extending from the Balkans to the Caspian Sea and beyond. One fact should be viewed as a historic chance: Turkey is located in the center of this location with its democratic, secular and market oriented economy. Turkey which has deeply-rooted historical, cultural and moral ties with many of these countries which are going through a transition period, may play an important role in their adoption of a market economy and pluralist democracy."⁹⁵

Meanwhile, Turkey will pursue all alternatives and opportunities that stem from its contributions to the Gulf Campaign and her

bilateral agreements (DECA) with the U.S., while she is waiting for her acceptance into the European Community. Turkey will take advantage of her Middle East postwar position by promoting good relations with her neighbors.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Turkey's geographic location and historic relationships give her certain leadership responsibilities for establishing peace and stability in the region. It also gives Turkey significant opportunities for developing her economic relations, and assuming the role of a regional superpower. As long as her Western partners appreciate her importance, she would like to share those responsibilities and opportunities with them. She will never change her direction from being a European country even if Europe rejects her membership in the EC. Meanwhile she will take advantage of the recent world changes and the developments in light of her national interests.

The Gulf Crisis is a stark reminder that NATO's new reality may require just such a member, an "Eastern Flank", against instability in the oil fields. Turkey's cutting the flow of Iraqi oil was one sign of this important new role. In the next decade, the Gulf will stay the most important region of the world for the U.S., Europe, and Japan. With some 65% of the world's proven oil reserves and 70% of excess production capacity⁹⁶ --and with the U.S.' increasing dependency on imported oil-- the region's strategic value will continue to grow.

Concerning the future use of water, Turkey will increase her role in the region, while at the same time water projects help Turkey solve domestic problems and promote economic development. In addition, the presence of key NATO bases in Turkey play an important role in promoting peace and stability in the region. Turkey will play its own role stemming from her geographical location and historical integration and responsibilities in this region.

The newly independent Central Asian Turkic countries and Azerbaijan, and "The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Agreement," give Turkey great opportunities to expand her economic ties.

In light of the new political picture in the world, Turkey must recognize its increasing value and importance. She has been widely acclaimed and cited as a model abroad, and she is an initiator of activities in the region. Why should Turkey not also play the superpower of the region between Europe and the Middle East and Asia? She has a chance to take advantage of all these developments and to be a superpower of the region. Most of these factors are favorable and will benefit Turkey if she pursues them bravely and wisely.

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⁹⁴"Black Sea Cooperation", Cumhuriyet, 5 February 1992. Excerpts from the Turkish Press, NewSpot, Turkish Digest, (13 February 1992), 2.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Dr. Michael Collins Dunn, "Turkey: the New NATO's Eastern Flank", Armed

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