

**COUNTERING STATE-SUPPORTED TERRORISM:
THE PKK AND
TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST**

A Master's Thesis

by

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July 2003**

To My Family

**COUNTERING STATE-SUPPORTED TERRORISM:
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**The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University**

by

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July 2003

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ABSTRACT

COUNTERING STATE-SUPPORTED TERRORISM: THE PKK AND TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST

SELVİ, İSMAİL

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This thesis analyzes the support provided to the PKK by Syria and Iran, and attempts to determine its impact on Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. Some states have adopted supporting terrorist groups as a means to further foreign policy, even to the extent of pursuing an undeclared warfare against rival countries. Similarly, Syria and Iran have supported and encouraged the PKK hoping that they could gain advantage over issues involving Turkey. In the post-Cold War era, separatist PKK terrorism grew to be the primary threat to the security and territorial integrity of Turkey. Realizing that her low-profile attitude in the region failed to deter the foreign support to the PKK by her southern neighbors, Turkey revised her traditional policies in the Middle East. Consequently, Turkey was forced to pursue more assertive policies in the region, which made her an active actor of the Middle East sub-system despite her Western identity.

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, Middle East, Syria, Iran, Israel, PKK, international terrorism, state-sponsored terrorism, state-supported terrorism.

ÖZET

DEVLET-DESTEKLİ TERÖRLE MÜCADELE: PKK VE TÜRKİYE’NİN ORTADOĞU POLİTİKASI

SELVİ, İSMAİL

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

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Bu tezde PKK’ya Suriye ve İran tarafından sağlanan devlet desteği incelenirken, bunun Türkiye’nin Ortadoğu politikasına etkisi ortaya konmaya çalışılacaktır. Bazı ülkeler için terörist grupları desteklemek, düşman devletlere karşı gizli bir savaş politikası yürütebilecek kadar dış politikalarının bir unsuru olmuştur. Aynı şekilde Suriye ve İran, Türkiye ile sorunlarında avantajlı bir konum elde etmek umuduyla PKK’yı desteklemiş ve teşvik etmişlerdir. Ayrıkçı PKK terörizmi, Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde Türkiye’nin güvenliği ve ülkesel bütünlüğü için birincil tehdit olacak kadar büyümüştür. Bölgedeki ihtiyatlı ve pasif tutumunun PKK’ya sağlanan dış desteği kesemediğini fark eden Türkiye, geleneksel Ortadoğu politikasını tekrar gözden geçirmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye bölgede daha aktif politikalar takip etmek zorunda kalmış ve Batılı kimliğine rağmen Ortadoğu alt sisteminin bir aktörü olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk dış politikası, Ortadoğu, Suriye, İran, İsrail, PKK, uluslararası terörizm, devlet-destekli terörizm.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARGK	Arteşa Rızgariya Gele Kurdistan / People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
CENTO	Central Treaty organization
DKP/SHB	Revolutionary Communist Party/Armed Popular Corporations
DSI	Defense Systems, INC.
ERNK	Eniya Rızgariya Netewayı Kurdistan / People's Liberation Front of Kurdistan
EU	European Union
ETA	Euskadi ta Askatasuna / Basque Fatherland and Liberty
GAP	Southeastern Anatolian Project
HRK	Hezen Rızgariye Kurdistan / Kurdistan Liberation Force
IRA	Irish Republican Army
KADEK	Kongreya Azad-ü Demokrasiya Kurdistan / Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress
KDP	Iraq Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDPI	Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran
KGB	Soviet Intelligence Service
m³/sec	cubic meters per second
MLSPB	Marxist Leninist Armed Propaganda Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OPC	Operation Provide Comport
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command
PKK	Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan / Kurdish Workers' Party
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
THKP/C-Acilciler	Revolutionary People's Liberation Army/Front-Urgent Action
TIKKO	Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army
TPLA	Turkish People's Liberation Army
TKP/M-L	Turkish Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WW	World War

CHAPTER I:

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and of the former Soviet Union relieved Turkey of the northern threat, but did not resolve the security problem for Ankara. Because of the PKK (the Kurdish Workers' Party), Turkey could not reduce defense expenses as other European members of the Atlantic Alliance did. The PKK had been initially called a group of bandits when it perpetrated its first attacks in 1984, but later became the primary threat to the security and territorial integrity of Turkey as of 1992. Throughout in her struggle to counter the Marxist-Leninist PKK terrorism, Turkey has severely suffered militarily, socially, and economically.¹ Besides, domestic and foreign politics of Turkey has been seriously affected by this struggle.

Had it not been for the foreign support provided by almost all of the neighboring states to Turkey, the separatist PKK could not possibly last so long to demand a Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey. Among these states, Syria and Iran demonstrated a particular example of sponsor-proxy relationship by mobilizing the PKK against Turkey hoping that they could achieve an upper hand in their issues with Ankara. Their will to exploit the PKK against Turkey and the developments in northern Iraq following the first and second Gulf crises caused the internationalization of the PKK issue.

As a result, Turkey found itself in the highly complex politics of the Middle East - a region in where the Western-oriented Turkish Republic did not want to get too much involved for many decades. For years, Ankara kept its traditional policies towards the Middle East, which supported non-interference in the affairs of the

¹ According to official Turkish sources, almost 33,000 people have died, including 4,444 civilians, 5,040 members of the Turkish security forces, and 23,473 terrorists; and more than 11,000 people were injured between the years of 1987 and 2001 (Cemal, 2003: 550).

region and a balanced attitude towards the Arab-Israeli dispute. However, Turkey's efforts to tackle the main threat to her security and territorial integrity caused by the PKK, brought about a change in the wait-and-see attitude of Ankara in the post-Cold War era. In other words, Turkey was obliged to revise her foreign policy in the Middle East and deviated from her traditional stance by acting against her traditional principles in the region.

In line with these considerations, principal inquiry of this thesis is how the sponsorship of PKK terrorism by Syria and Iran affected Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East?

In addition, in order to support and better analyze the issue, this thesis will initially attempt to provide answers to the following questions: How does the exploitation of terrorism become a factor in foreign policy and how is the relationship between state-sponsors and proxies of international terrorism formulated? How did Turkey conduct her foreign policy towards the Middle East until facing the PKK challenge? How has the PKK been supported and exploited by Syria and Iran in their policies towards Turkey?

The deviation in the traditional Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East will be clearer by answering these questions. Besides, the objective of the thesis is to clarify how the changing threat perceptions of Turkey turned her into an actor in the politics of the region.

Chapter II elaborates on why states sponsor terrorism. It starts with outlining problems on the definition of terrorism and then provides several of them accepted by various scholars and states. Subsequently, it explains how the concept of international terrorism has developed and gives a brief history of international efforts to counter terrorism. It continues with explaining of how terrorism is exploited as an

instrument of foreign policy and clarifies how it turns into an undeclared war. Further analysis is also provided on categories of state involvement in international terrorism and the strategic motives behind the cooperation of the sponsor-state and the proxy.

Before analyzing the sponsorship of PKK terrorism by Syria and Iran and elaborating its impact on Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East, a brief history of the traditional Turkish stance in the Middle East is provided in Chapter III. This chapter will continue with explaining how the northern threat forced Turkey to ally with the West in the Middle East and how Turkish policies throughout the 1950s caused the Arab resentment. The isolation of Turkey in regional and global affairs and reorientation of Turkish foreign policy in the region becomes the next topic of discussion. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the traditional principles of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East and their implementation from the mid-1960s to the end of the Cold War.

In Chapter IV, internationalization of the PKK and the importance of foreign support for this terrorist organization form the initial discussion. The chapter continues with an outline of the motives and objectives of Syria in supporting the PKK and gives an extended detail of Syrian sponsorship. Then it goes on with the details of Iranian motives and objectives in sponsoring PKK terrorism and provides a comprehensive account of the support provided to the PKK by Iran.

Chapter V portrays the impact of PKK terrorism on Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. First it assesses the changing threat perceptions of Turkey from north to south. Securitization of Turkish foreign policy and increasing role of the military in Turkish foreign policy is also analyzed. Following is discussion of the course of the security protocols accorded between Turkey and Syria, and the end of

Syrian support to the PKK in the aftermath of the October 1998 crisis. It then appraises how Turkey's changing security perceptions led her in a strategic partnership with Israel and upset the traditional balance at the expense of the Arabs.

The methodology used in this thesis depends on descriptive and analytical research of the resources. The resources that are used in the thesis include primary sources, including memoirs, interviews, intelligence reports, and confessions of PKK members published in books and newspapers. Among these, Nihat Ali Özcan's doctoral thesis² has been particularly helpful due to the uniqueness of the research, which quotes first-hand PKK sources and unpublished Turkish court reports – very difficult to acquire otherwise. Secondary sources consist of reports, documents, and articles procured from edited books, periodicals, online databases, newspapers, and newsmagazines.

² Published by ASAM as *PKK (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi): Tarihi, İdeolojisi ve Yöntemi* (PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party): It's History, Ideology and Method) (Ankara, 1999).

CHAPTER II:

State Involvement in International Terrorism

State involvement in international terrorism has become an important aspect of international relations because some states make it a significant part of their foreign policy agenda, in which some even dominate it (Wardlaw, 1989: 175). Political leaders have used terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy not only to spread confusion and chaos among their enemies, but also to weaken an adversary state which they would not ordinarily have had the strength to wage a regular war against. Accordingly, while some states have directly participated in terrorist activities by their agents, some other either hired groups to perpetrate terrorist activities on behalf of them or supported and sponsored terrorist organizations to redress a particular international grievance (Combs, 1997: 85-89). Therefore, state-supported (or state-sponsored) international terrorism is widely resorted as a form of irregular undeclared warfare to destabilize unfriendly regimes. This chapter, after analyzing definition of terrorism and appraising the concept of international terrorism, will elaborate on state involvement in international terrorism.

2.1. Definition of Terrorism

2.1.1. Definitional Problems on Terrorism

Not only states as the main actors of international relations, but also political scientists and strategists could not agree on a single and generally accepted definition of terrorism. That is mostly because terrorism is a political term appraised by the perspectives of the states from which it is viewed. Like any definition, a definition of terrorism might in some way “box us in” and exclude the kinds of acts that may be regarded as terrorism by other states for political reasons (Slater and Stohl, 1988: 3).

There is a tendency in the literature arguing that it is better and more convenient not to define terrorism. Slater and Stohl (1988: 3) note that many experts are not happy with the debate over the meaning of terrorism, and they simply comment, like the debate on pornography, “when I see it, I know it.” It is widely mentioned in the literature that one may not be able to define terrorism, but can easily recognize when one sees it. Terrorist acts can be clearly identified when children are gunned down, hostages are taken, or an aircraft is hijacked. Hence, the phenomenon that “it is easier to describe terrorism than to define” reflects the tendency for accepting certain actions for terrorism rather than getting lost in definitional quagmire.

A critical part of defining terrorism is that it should not be defined to suit one’s political beliefs. Due to the negative value that the term carries, it is often used to describe the violent actions of one’s enemies but not those of the supporters of its own cause. What constitutes terrorism depends on one’s point of view. It is argued that none of the nationalists, revolutionaries, far left or right extremists are terrorists, and no particular religion or ideology is responsible for terrorism (Goldberg, 1991). In order to reach a useful definition of the term, the actions that deserve to be called terrorism should be separated from any type of ideology, religion, and nationality. The label “terrorism” should be applied only regarding the nature and quality of the deed, not in relation to the attributes of the perpetrator.

In order to counter terrorism, a clear, universal, and to the point definition of terrorism should be adopted by the international community without getting lost in the definitional quagmire. However, since terrorism is a political phenomenon, it has not been possible to attain a consensus over its definition. One of the most important qualities of terrorism, what distinguishes it from ordinary crime, is the political

motivation of the perpetrator. In this regard, every state tend to label the adversaries' activities as terrorism, but not that of its or of its allies'. Hence, political dimension of terrorism, while being a key element of the term, becomes the main obstacle in arriving at a definition - in someway a source of dilemma itself.

2.1.2. Terrorism or A War of Liberation

The difficulty in defining terrorism is best demonstrated in the cliché, “one man's terrorist is other's freedom fighter,” which also reflects the political character of the phenomenon. The two main reasons for the absence of an international approach against terrorism are “(1) the equitation of the right of self-determination and terrorism”, and “(2) the reluctance of nations to identify terrorism as an ordinary crime” (Tamkoç, 1984: 58-59).

From the 1960s on, the wars of national liberation became a strategy of the Soviets in order to remove the West from their colonial territories so that they could expand their influence throughout the world. The wars of national liberation were waged for the ultimate ends that justified the means and suggested a necessity that recognized no law (Tamkoç, 1984: 55-56). Hence, the employment of terrorism in the name of freedom and self-determination became a mere political question. Irrespective of the nature of violence, perpetrators of terrorist acts were free of any criminal responsibility and they were called freedom fighters.

Schachter notes (1993: 244) that the fact that a person is called “freedom fighter” does not necessarily prevent him from also being a terrorist. Terrorism should be defined according to the actions, such as killing children, bombing airplanes, kidnapping journalists, but not in relation to the cause it is indented to serve - usually as a means toward liberation or an ideology.

Toman (1991: 113) tries to differentiate freedom fighter from a terrorist in line with the respect shown to the human rights and the will of the people. A freedom fighter works for the realization of fundamental human rights and self-determination and tries to mobilize the majority of the population for achieving these goals while a terrorist creates an atmosphere of terror to reach his objective even when it is contrary to the people's will.

2.1.3. Some Definitions of Terrorism

Probably the most important point in defining the term is that terrorism is a political act. Terrorism differs from criminal violence with its political motivation or goals. A widely quoted scholar Grant Wardlaw defines (1989: 16) political terrorism as:

...the use, or threat of use, of violence by an individual or a group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such action is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators.

Alex P. Schmid, a long-established scholar on terrorism, after analyzing the content of 109 different definitions of terrorism, identifies 22 elements in these definitions and calculates the frequency of their occurrence. The first three elements that have the highest rate are violence, force (83.5%); political (65%); and fear, terror emphasized (51%). Schmid, after analyzing these 22 elements, defines terrorism as “an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political

reasons, whereby - in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets.”³

Another widely quoted scholar, Yonah Alexander, defines terrorism as “the use of violence against random civilian targets in order to intimidate or to create generalized pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving political goals” (Prabha, 2000). Wilkinson (1986: 208) notes that it is important to distinguish terrorism from violence, insurgency, and guerilla warfare, and he defines terrorism as “the systematic use of murder, injury, and destruction, or threat of same, to create a climate of terror, to publicize a cause, and to intimidate a wider target into conceding to the terrorists’ aims.”⁴

Some other scholars tried to define terrorism by distinguishing its main characteristics. Hoffman identifies (1998: 43) five main features of terrorism from other types of crimes. Accordingly, terrorism must have political aims or motives; be violent or threaten violence; be designed to have extensive consequences beyond the immediate victim or target; be conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command; and be committed by a subnational group or non-state entity. Combs outlines (1997: 17) four main characteristics of terrorism that it is an act of violence; it has a political motive or goal; it is perpetrated against innocent persons; and it is staged before an audience whose reaction of fear and terror is the desired result.

Not only states, scholars, and strategists have different definitions, but also the practitioners, such as the different agencies of the United States (US), cannot

³ Alex P. Schmid and Albert J. Jongman, *Political Terrorism: A New Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data Bases, Theories and Literature*, (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1998), quoted in Adrian Guelke, *The Age of Terrorism and the International Political System*. (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1995), pp. 18-19.

⁴ Bruce Hoffman also underlines the systematic employment of terror, arguing that terrorism is “a planned, calculated, and indeed a systematic act” (Hoffman, 1998: 15).

converge on a singular definition.⁵ Up to 1989, there were as many as 60 definitions of terrorism and international terrorism made by the US government. The US Department of Defense defines terrorism as “the unlawful use of – or threatened use of – force or violence against individuals or poverty to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives” (Hoffman, 1998: 38). On the other hand, the US Department of State defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents, usually intended to influence an audience”, and defines international terrorism as “terrorism involving the citizens or territory of more than one country” (Allan, 1990: 58).

The official Turkish definition of terrorism is included in Article 1 of the April 12, 1991 dated and 3713 titled Counter-Terrorism Law of Turkey. Accordingly terrorism is defined as,

...any act involving one of the methods of terror, repression, coercion, violence, fright, dismay, suppression, and intimidation perpetrated by a member(s) of an organization, in order to change the fundamental characteristics of the Turkish Republic, and the political, legal, social, secular, and economic order, which are defined in the Constitution, to divide the cohesion of the State with its country and the nation, to endanger the existence of Turkish State and Republic, to weaken, destroy, or take over the State authority, to disrupt fundamental rights and freedoms, and to damage the internal and external security of the State, public order or public health.⁶

The official Turkish definition includes three main components of terrorism that it is a violent, politically motivated, and organized action. Unlike the definition

⁵ The US State Department, The US Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the US Department of State have different definitions of terrorism, reflecting their own priorities (Hoffman, 1998: 38).

⁶ Translated by the author, quoted in A. Selim Akyıldız, “Uluslararası Terörizm ve Terörizme Karşı Alınması Gereken Önlemler.” In Orhan Kılıç and Mehmet Çevik eds., *Türkiye’nin Güvenliği Sempozyumu* (Symposium on Turkey’s Security), (Elazığ: Fırat University, 2002), p. 26.

of the US State Department, the Turkish definition does not make a distinction between combatants and noncombatants as the targets of violence. Secondly, the political scope of the Turkish definition broadly involves many forms of possible threats against the Turkish state and some dangers against “rights and freedoms of individuals.” Thirdly, according to the Turkish definition, in order to consider a politically motivated crime as an act of terrorism, the perpetrator(s) must belong to an organized group. Besides, expression of support or membership to such an organization defined as terrorist is a crime as well. Hence, painting slogans on walls supporting a terrorist organization is deemed within the scope of terrorism, while it is seen as an act of freedom of expression in some Western states (Kirişçi, 1996a: 7-8).

As far as this study is concerned, the definition of a scholar, Grant Wardlaw, will be used in future analyzes. Wardlaw’s definition, while involving main features of terrorism, is far from any particular viewpoint that restricts the term to those actions against the state or attaches it to any ideology, religion, or nationality.⁷

2.1.4. The Target and Goals of Terrorism

An important characteristic of terrorism is that it is “a means to an end rather than an end by itself” (Prabha, 2000). “The target of terrorism is not the enemy’s armed forces, officials, or representatives, establishments etc. but the ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ of the world, and that of the enemy and also of the non-cooperating factions of the populace as well” (Kishore, 1989: 25). In other words, terrorism is a means to produce a change in government’s political position rather than destroying the military potential. It is based on a strategy to make surprise attacks on symbolic targets. That is not only because terrorism is usually the weapon of the weak, but also because it is aimed at winning quickly and cheaply (Crenshaw, 1988: 13-14).

⁷ See page 8 for Wardlaw’s definition of terrorism.

Another widely mentioned feature of terrorism is that the very purpose of the perpetrator is to affect an audience either directly or indirectly. As noted by Slater and Stohl (1988: 5-6), the goal of terrorism is usually to create “a feeling of anxiety in an individual, group, nation, etc.” Schmid outlines (1988: 48) three different objectives of terrorist acts, which are target of violence, target of terror, and target of demands or attention. The *target of violence* constitutes the random or symbolic victims of terrorism, usually sharing the same features of a class or group. Other members of that group or class, who become subject to a credible threat of violence and are put in a mood of chronic fear, comprise the *target of terror*. The overall objective of terrorism, states Schmid (1988: 48), is either to immobilize the *target of terror* or “to influence *target of demands* (e.g. governments) or *target of attention* (e.g. public opinion)”.

One other unique quality of terrorism is the use or threat of “abnormal lethal force” against the target. The more horrifying the act, the greater the psychological impact upon the target would be, emphasizes Alex Schmid. This “extranormalness” is what differentiates terrorism from other kinds of force employment (Hanle, 1989: 105). Yet, the use of abnormal force is not sufficient itself to distinguish an event as an act of terror. The aim of the perpetrator must be to terrorize the target entity by creating a state of fear that it cannot resist (Hanle, 1989: 107-108).

2.2. International Terrorism

2.2.1. Internationalization of Terrorism

Although there is not a definitional clarity on terrorism, in this age of growing interdependence and globalization, terrorism became a phenomenon that affects every aspect of international relations, and a real threat to the international order and stability. Terrorism can and does influence the foreign policy of many nations,

disrupt, and even destroy political processes that are significant to the international community. Therefore, terrorism is inherently international in character, and it is difficult to find a case of terrorism that is totally limited to domestic context. Almost every terrorist activity in some way became international; either internationally supported, targeted abroad, encouraged by global circumstances, or have international consequences. Hence, it is difficult to distinguish between the domestic and international terrorism (Kegley, 1990a: 4-5).

There is a tendency towards internationalization of terrorism, asserts Wilkinson (1988: 89) that even the predominantly indigenous terrorist organizations such as IRA in Northern Ireland and ETA in Spain, are looking across their frontiers for providing weapons and ammunitions, as well as sanctuary, bases for training, and planning. Besides, Schmid emphasizes (1988: 50) that some terrorist movements broaden the conflict into an international framework in order to put extra pressure on the opponents.

Guelke argues (1995: 39) that the international links of most terrorist organizations began to have importance at an operational level, as opposed to the casual level. Guelke adds that this was an outcome of the growing international interdependence, which provided with sufficient material not only to the US and Soviet Union, but also to some other states to connect links with many of the conflicts throughout the world.

International terrorism is becoming more and more complicated and interlinked. Terrorist groups operating in different regions of the world have been establishing links with each other. Not only have they made joint operations and attacks on behalf of each other, but they have also cooperated on training and

organizational plane.⁸ The increasing cooperation and organic links between international terrorist organizations in training, intelligence, logistics, techniques, and fund-raising have contributed to the internationalization of terrorism (Akyıldız, 2002: 27).

In addition, the developments in science and technology played a significant role in the internationalization of terrorism. First, modern societies have become increasingly vulnerable to terrorist attacks as the spectrum of the targets enlarged to include markets, airplanes, metros, energy establishments, and nuclear power stations. Secondly, the developments in the means of communication made terrorism more efficient. Thirdly, the progression in transportation made it easy for terrorists to pass from one country to another or to supply their activities. Finally, the sophistication and miniaturization of weapon technology helped terrorists procure, use, and transport them more effectively. Consequently, the international terrorism has become a kind of warfare in the modern world, which is particularly preferred in achieving revolutionary objectives (Kishore, 1989: 47-48).

2.2.2. Superpower Involvement in International Terrorism

The 1960s witnessed not only significant developments in science and technology, but also the growth of international terrorist activities. These years also coincided with the Cold War era, in which systemic factors of international relations contributed to the escalation of international terrorism. During the Cold War years, terrorism not only became a factor in foreign policy, but also an internal component of the global system. The circumstances that shaped bipolar international system also legitimized violent covert action, making terrorism a form of state behavior. Hence,

⁸ Even an international symposium was organized in May 1972 by George Habbash of the PFLP, “to discuss the establishment of what amounted to a multinational corporation of terrorism.” Andreas Baader from Baader Meinhoff gang of Germany, Fukaso Shingenbu from the United Red Army (URA) of Japan, and other representatives from the TPLA of Turkey, Liberation Front of Iran, and

“synergic conjunction of interacting global trends” has formed “structural terrorism”, which became a source of state terrorism (Kegley, Sturgeon, and Wittkopf, 1988:16).

The bipolar nature of the Cold War politics revealed the fact that a total war between the nuclear polar powers was too risky and it might escalate to a nuclear holocaust, after which no side could survive. As systemic factors excluded conventional warfare, states adopted a less risky way of pursuing their foreign policy goals, which was employing terrorism. The cost-benefit analysis caused superpowers to choose terrorist strategies rather than a direct military confrontation with the adversary and thus, both of the superpowers used terrorism as a form of warfare. Stohl (1988: 192) argues that they practiced surrogate warfare not only by selling, granting, and otherwise providing favorable means either to their partners, allies, or client states to carry out repression and terrorism, but also by providing training and advice to conduct their terrorist operations.

Hence, terrorism turned into a flexible and highly adoptable instrument of foreign policy, particularly used by the two superpowers in the Cold War era. On the other hand, the emerging Third World states became the focus of Soviet-American rivalry, as the irregular and unconventional methods were gradually used in the resistance against colonial powers. As terrorism became a popular weapon in many independence struggles, it was increasingly employed either through proxies or directly by the military and intelligence services of the superpowers. Although neither superpower accepted sponsoring terrorism, both supported groups using terrorism against the friends and allies of the rival superpower or directly against the opposite superpower (Schlagheck, 1990: 170-171).

from various South American organizations attended to the symposium (Kishore, 1989: 40-41).

Tamkoç states (1984: 49-50) that modern terrorism starts with the formation of anarchist terrorist organizations as a part of Bolshevik revolutionary movement in the Soviet Russia. It later became the principal strategy of the Soviets to establish anarchist terrorist organizations throughout the world in order to destroy their opponents using infiltration, subversion, terrorism, and insurgency.

The Soviet Union, as an anti-status quo power in the international system, did not reject that it supported revolutionary movements, but rather opposed the identification of such actions as terrorism. Yet, the Soviets assumed its assistance and control of the terrorist groups as a support for legitimate “liberation movements” who carry out their struggles for independence. The “international terrorist network” was a theory of the Western view claiming that most of the international terrorist groups are organized, funded, armed, supported, and directed by the Soviets for the purpose of undermining Western democracies. Besides, the fact that many groups using terrorism advocated Marxist-Leninist ideology, and the contact and network were facilitated by the Soviet Union or by its allies, reinforced the theory of “international terrorist network” (Schlagheck, 1990: 171-175).

On the contrary, some other scholars argue that the real terror network was directed by the US regarding the clandestine operations of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) of the US and the US support to the governments ruling with terror and torture. The US, as the status quo power, either performed clandestine operations to prevent the extension of communist regimes or supported alien and colonial regimes, which were resorting to terrorism in order to suppress the opposition.⁹

⁹ For a detailed view of the Soviet and US support for terrorism, see Donna M. Schlagheck, “The Superpowers, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism.” In Charles W. Kegley, Jr. ed., *International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, and Controls* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990), 175-177.

Both superpowers contributed to the overall level of international terrorism, although they had a significant capacity to control it. Since both had interest in exploiting and employing terrorism in different forms, they only opposed the use of terrorism by the other side.¹⁰ With the end of the Cold War, the rapprochement between the East and the West has an important impact on the decline of international terrorism stemming from ideological reasons. However, there was not a decline in the overall level or lethality of international terrorism due to the emergence of regional ethnic and nationalist rivalries - usually combined with religious antagonism. Ethnic and nationalist groups, which had been long suppressed by the Cold War politics, have since increasingly resorted to terrorism in order to pursue their nationalist and ethnic aspirations (Hoffman, 1992: 141).

2.2.3. Ethnic and National Terrorism as an International Issue

Seeing that terrorism had worked as an important tool of foreign policy during the Cold War years, some states – particularly the ex-proxies of the superpowers, kept resorting the use of terrorism in the post-Cold War era for the purpose of achieving their political objectives. As the bipolar nature of the international system had faded, contrary to the superpowers' sponsorship of ideologically-motivated terrorism, these states collaborated with nationalist and ethnic groups, which considered the systemic factors as appropriate to change the borders or dominate their rivalries.

Like any other terrorist group, ethnic terrorists attempt to influence rival groups and hostile governments, but they also aim to forge a distinct ethnic identity and to promote ethnic mobilization. Ethnic terrorists either aim to elevate the status of their communal group or to create a separate sovereign state (Byman, 1998: 150-151).

¹⁰ Sean P. O'Brien, after making a time-series analyses of conflict linkages, argues "the Soviet Union and other authoritarian regimes are more likely than the US and other democracies to resort to

Ethnic terrorists attack foreign targets in order to internationalize their cause. They know that international terror actions provoke more media and government attention than domestic attacks do, which serve as a means for international recognition – an important step in the way of establishing their own state.

International involvement usually helps the spread of ethnic terrorism. Like other terrorist groups, ethnic terrorists need state support for the provision of weapons, logistics, and most importantly for safe heavens beyond their borders. Besides, diaspora communities are usually an important source of support for ethnic terrorism. Ethnic terrorists mostly prefer exploiting kinship support in foreign countries rather than relying on foreign governments (Byman, 1998: 161).

When a terrorist group succeeds in portraying themselves as freedom fighters of a subdued nation and arouses a sense of separate identity, it is more probable that it will achieve mass support for its cause. The ethnic and nationalist terrorism has a strong international dimension since the very objective of it is to create a new country, which would certainly affect the international system. Hence, these kinds of groups often depend on the support of other nations that are interested in changing the international system (Schmid, 1988: 58-59).

2.3. The Definition of International Terrorism

2.3.1. International or Transnational Terrorism

There is not a consensus among the academics that when and how an act of terrorism becomes international. Although a variety of definitions have been proposed, no single definition of international terrorism has been agreed by the United Nations (UN) or in a commonly accepted multilateral treaty. Yet, this does not mean that international terrorism is not identifiable.

international terrorism as a foreign policy tool” (O’Brien, 1996: 333).

Particularly during the 1970s, some terrorist actions were labeled as “transnational” rather than “international”. Cozier and Mickolus argue that transnational terrorism occurs when the three elements of terrorism - perpetrator, victim/target, and location - involved more than one country. According to this view, a terrorist act becomes international when the perpetrators are directed by a sovereign state. In other words, international terrorism is used to imply terrorism by state, and revolutionary terrorism operating independently can only be transnational.¹¹ A similar view is argued by Mullins (1997: 35) that “whether or not they receive any support from governments sympathetic to their cause,” it is called transnational terrorism when terrorist groups are not directed or controlled by any government. Again, Mullins asserts that it is called international terrorism when the state has a certain degree of control over the operations of the terrorist organization.

	Direct involvement of nationals of more than one state?		
	Yes		No
Government controlled or directed?	Yes	<i>International</i>	<i>State</i>
	No	<i>Transnational</i>	<i>Domestic</i>

TABLE 1. Identification of Four Types of Terrorism in the World.¹²

On the other hand, Kishore argues (1989: 28) that the term “international” cannot be restricted to governments or governmental agencies. In his opinion, the term “transnational” does not express the severity of problem with its fullest degree,

¹¹ See Brian Cozier, testimony before US Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, on May 14, 1975, quoted in Lester A. Sobel, ed., *Political Terrorism* (New York, 1978), vol. 2 (1974-78), p.2, and Edward Mickolus, “Transnational Terrorism” in Michael Stohl, ed., *The Politics of Terrorism* (New York, 1979), p. 148. Both are quoted in Nand Kishore, *International Terrorism* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd., 1989), 27-28.

¹² Wayman C. Mullins, *A Sourcebook on Domestic and International Terrorism: An Analysis of Issues, Organizations, Tactics, and Responses* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishers, Ltd,

and “international terrorism” is proper to identify terrorist activities that transcend national frontiers. He asserts (1989: 29) that an act of terrorism can be labeled international in the following conditions; when it is directed against a foreigner or an employee of a foreign mission; when terrorists cross the national borders for their operations; and when a terrorist act involves more than one nation.

Guelke asserts (1995: 148) that as of the 1980s, the concept of transnational terrorism became less and less used as the role of the state in sponsoring sub-state terrorist actors gradually increased.¹³ He defines international terrorism simply as terrorist acts involving the citizenry or territory of more than one country (1995: 143). Another short, but broad definition is made by Jenkins (1990: 30) that international terrorism includes “terrorist activities that have clear international consequences.”

The Committee on International Terrorism of the International Law Association prepared a report in 1984, which gives a working definition of international terrorism. It states that international terrorism includes the following acts, but is not limited to “atrocities, wanton (mindless / senseless) killing, hostage taking, hijacking, extortion, or torture committed or threatened to be committed whether in peacetime or in wartime for political purposes provided that an international element is involved” (Murphy 1989: 19-20). An act of terrorism, according to the report, has an international element when the offence is committed within the authority of one country “against any foreign government or international organization, or against any national of a foreign country, or by a person who crosses

1997), 37.

an international frontier into another country from which his extradition is required” (Murphy, 1989: 20).

Schachter (1993: 243-244) argues that “the threat or use of violence in order to create extreme fear and anxiety in a target group so as to coerce it to meet political (or quasi-political) objectives of the perpetrators” can be labeled as international terrorism when “they are carried out across national lines or directed against nationals of a foreign State or instrumentalities of the State.” He adds that international terrorism also includes the terrorist acts defined in the international conventions against hijacking, aerial sabotage, sabotage at sea, hostage taking, and attacks on diplomats and other internationally protected persons. Schachter notes that (1993: 244) the motives of these terrorist acts are generally political, but they can be religious or ethnic as well.

2.3.2. International Conventions on Terrorist Acts

Since there is not a consensus on the issue of what constitutes terrorism, the attempts to reach a definition of the term for an international treaty could not succeed. As mentioned above, a major source of disagreement in defining terrorism is occasionally equating terrorism to the right of self-determination.¹⁴ In addition, one other source of divergence among the international actors is the reluctance of some states to give up their right to grant asylum to the people who commit politically motivated offences (Wardlaw, 1989: 118-119). However, when a person commits an offence that threatens the stability of other states and endangers the international system, many states agree that it is a crime under international law.

¹³ It is clear that a significant increase occurred in international terrorism during the 1980s, just by looking at the number of terrorist activities, which increased by one third, and the number of deaths stemming from terrorism doubled (Hoffman, 1992:140). On the other hand, Guelke opposes (1995:40) that rather than the number of state-directed or state-sponsored terrorism, what increased in the 1980s was the Western awareness of the role played by some countries directly or indirectly in clandestine terrorist activities.

Hence, international conventions on terrorism are particularly restricted to the issues of piracy, hijacking, or offences against internationally protected persons.

In order to counter terrorism, a number of international conventions have been ratified, particularly in the field of aviation. “The Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts on Board Aircraft”, signed in 1963 by 138 states, deals with crimes on board and is limited to the unlawful seizure of aircraft. The convention states that the country of registry of the aircraft has jurisdiction regardless of where the aircraft might be (Wardlaw, 1989: 115).

“The Hague Convention for the Suppression of the Unlawful Seizure of the Aircraft”, which was signed by 142 states in 1970, is the first international convention to deal specifically with hijacking. The convention declared that hijackers would be “subject to extradition either to the country of registry of the aircraft, the country where the aircraft, with hijacker on board, landed, or the country whose citizens charter a plane without chartering the crew” (Wardlaw, 1989: 115-116). If the extradition is failed, the detaining country should then try the offender.

“The Montreal Convention of 1971 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civilian Aviation”, signed by 143 states, focused on the acts of violence in, attacks on, and sabotage of aircraft and air navigation facilities. The Montreal Convention, like the Hague Convention, granted worldwide jurisdiction over the offender in addition to prosecution and extradition provisions (Wardlaw, 1989: 116).

“The Convention on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons including Diplomatic Agents” was accepted on December 14, 1973 in New York (Toman, 1991: 121). In November 1977, the

¹⁴ See page 7 for a detailed discussion of the issue.

United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that condemned air piracy and urged all states to increase aviation security and to agree to prosecute or to extradite hijackers. However, the UN General Assembly modified the resolution after the objections of Arab and Third World states that anti-hijacking measures should be “without prejudice to the sovereignty or territorial integrity of any state” (Goldberg: 1991).

“The International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages” was adopted on December 17, 1979 by 54 states in New York, and “The Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material” was adopted on March 3, 1980 in Vienna. Besides, on March 10, 1988 both “The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Maritime Navigation” and “The Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf” was signed in Rome (Toman, 1991: 121).

2.3.3. Efforts Within the United Nations Against Terrorism

The concern over terrorism at the UN was intensified following the murder of Israeli athletes at 1972 Munich Olympic Games. Although UN Secretary General Waldheim proposed a UN agenda to include measures to combat terrorism, the Arab and the Third World states objected that the debate on terrorism required the consideration of the causes, racism, and colonialism, which they thought to be the essence of the problem (Goldberg: 1991). Throughout the discussions at the UN, insistence of the Arab and the Third World states together with the Communist Bloc countries on the causes of terrorism made it possible neither to take an immediate action against terrorism, nor to make a condemnation of it. Hence, the politicization of the problem of terrorism made the UN efforts ineffective for a solution on the issue.

In December 1972, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, which decided to establish an “Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism” consisting of thirty-five members. Based on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, the UN General Assembly accepted Resolution 34/145 of December 17, 1979 which “condemned the act of terrorism and urged all states, unilaterally and in cooperation with other states as well as with relevant United Nations organs to contribute to the progressive elimination of the causes underlying the terrorism” (Verma, 1996: 344-345). In addition, the resolution declared that every state had the duty to refrain from “organizing, instigating, assisting, or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another state, or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts” (Verma, 1996: 345).

The UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 40/61 on December 9, 1985 that loosely defined terrorism as acts “which endanger or take innocent human lives, jeopardize fundamental freedoms, and seriously impair the dignity of human beings,” and condemned “all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed, including those which jeopardize friendly relations among States and their security” as criminal (Murphy, 1989: 8). Besides, the same resolution also “recognize[d] the inalienable right to struggle for self-determination and national independence in accordance with the UN Charter” (Schachter, 1993: 244). Schachter argues that condemnation of international terrorism as a criminal act imposes obligations on the member states to take appropriate measures in order to prevent the acts of international terrorism. These obligations include duties of refraining from “aiding, supporting or acquiescing terrorist activities” (Schachter, 1993: 245). Hence, a state’s failure to apprehend persons who have carried out such acts in other countries or aided and assisted such acts is a violation of its international

obligations. Therefore, all states must either extradite or try and punish perpetrators of terrorist acts, which in Schachter's opinion, is an obligation of customary international law (1993: 245).

In addition, the UN General Assembly Resolution 42/159 adopted on December 7, 1987 and the UN General Assembly Resolution 44/29 adopted on January 31, 1990, are considered by Toman (1991: 115) as the demonstration of the development of a policy against terrorist acts. These resolutions underline the necessity for a definition of terrorism, the necessity to distinguish terrorism from national liberation struggles, and the need for an international conference.

There have been also some regional attempts of adopting international treaties against terrorism. In 1971, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted "The Convention to Prevent and Punish the Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion That Are of International Significance". This convention particularly dealt with the murder of public figures and kidnapping ransom regardless of their motivation. However, the Convention had ratification problems in some of the OAS members (Wardlaw, 1989: 113-114).

Another regional anti-terrorist Convention is the Council of Europe's 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. This convention excluded many offences of the protection afforded by political exception clause. Article 1 and Article 2 of the convention outlines the offences, which are regarded as non-political, and Article 7 states that refusal to extradite the offender requires the prosecution of him by the detaining state. Again, the convention is flawed by the ratification problems and it has no enforcement provisions over the signatories (Wardlaw, 1989: 114-115).

2.4. State Involvement in International Terrorism

2.4.1. Terrorism as a Factor in Foreign Policy

The terms “state support” and “state sponsorship” are almost as difficult to define as terrorism.¹⁵ There is a major disagreement on what constitutes state sponsorship, or state support of international terrorism, and what kind of strategic, domestic, or foreign policy goals are pursued by such sponsorship. What is clear that some states are involved in planning, financing, and committing of many acts of international terrorism (Wardlaw, 1988: 237).

Recognizing the success of terrorism, states began to employ tactics that involved terrorism in pursuing their foreign policy goals. What makes terrorism an outstanding instrument of foreign policy is the inability of the victim states to retaliate by using conventional means (Kegley, Sturgeon, and Wittkopf, 1988: 25). States may prefer to utilize terrorism when they regard themselves powerless to pursue other policy instruments and their cost-benefit analysis proves the use of terrorism as a better option (Stohl, 1988: 161). Hanle claims (1989: 184) that some states are sponsoring terrorism since “(1) it is safe, (2) it is cheap, and (3) the current international structure enhances and encourages the employment of terrorism for political purposes.” Albin notes (1989: 230) that while promoting many significant foreign policy objectives, terrorist strategies do not cause heavy costs and permit the

state to use conventional diplomatic and political channels simultaneously. State-directed or state-supported terrorism, argues Albin (1989: 232), “has brought the greatest benefits at the lowest cost when kept low-key and discriminate, and when subordinated to a larger political strategy combining conventional diplomatic, political, and military methods.”

Jenkins states (1990: 38) that state sponsorship of terrorism also reduces the constraints on the terrorist groups that they can perpetrate large scale and more lethal operations without worrying so much about the support of the local population. Given that state-sponsored terrorism does not concern about the risk of alienating popular support or arousing public reaction, the sponsor and its proxy can pursue more specific foreign policy goals by putting a certain degree of pressure on the opponent through acts of violence (Hoffman, 1998: 189). Indeed, destabilization or weakness of the enemy, rather than its total destruction, may be a sufficient objective for the sponsoring state. Besides, the targets of the states that sponsor terrorism are not only physical, but may also be moral, such as the sociopolitical cohesion of the enemy (Hanle, 1989: 189).

Thanks to their effective and extensive capabilities in pursuing terrorist strategies, states can be more successful in employing terrorism than those sub-state actors resorting to terrorism (Albin, 1989: 231). Stohl argues that “the use of terror tactics is common in international relations and the state has been and remains a more likely employer of terrorism than insurgents” (Kegley, Sturgeon, and Wittkopf, 1988: 15).

¹⁵ Schmid argues that it would be more appropriate to call “regime-sponsored” terrorism rather than “state-directed” or “state-sponsored” terrorism since the supporter of terrorism is usually a small political elite or a single leader, but not the majority of a state’s population. See, Alex P. Schmid. *Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature* (Amsterdam and New Brunswick, 1983), quoted in Cecilia Albin. “The Politics of Terrorism: A Contemporary Survey.” In Barry Rubin ed., *The Politics of Terrorism: Terror as a State and Revolutionary Strategy*.

A school of thought argues that state-sponsored terrorism is the main cause of the growth of international terrorism since the 1960s. Accordingly, international terrorism is realized by the simultaneous existence of two factors: actors mobilized and motivated to resort terrorism for their political goals, and governments willing to support them for their own foreign policy objectives. This theory rests on the argument that many terrorist groups could not survive in the absence of encouragement, financial and material support, and political backing provided by governments abroad (Kegley, 1990b: 108).

Likewise, the very existence of terror-employing regimes is argued by Wilkinson (1986: 212-213) as the cause for escalation and encouragement of international terrorism. Seeing that it is low-cost, low-risk and easy to deny responsibility of, these states are ready to use international terrorism as a form of covert warfare in order to undermine rival countries. Besides, through exporting revolutionary ideologies, as well as establishing proxy movements and regimes devoted to violence for revolutionary ends, they try to increase the number of terrorist groups and sponsor-states. As a result, new sanctuaries, training areas, sources of weapons, financial and diplomatic support would be provided for international terrorism.

2.4.2. International Terrorism as Undeclared Warfare

Terrorism is widely mentioned as a tactic used in political conflicts and even sometimes assumed as a “different type of warfare”. To paraphrase Clausewitz, if warfare is the continuation of politics by other means, terrorism is the extension of warfare in another way (Kegley, Sturgeon, and Wittkopf, 1988: 28). Hanle argues (1989: 192-193) that despite the absence of their absolute control over the surrogates,

(Washington, D.C.: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 188.

given the employment of force between political entities - that is the terrorists as the military instrument of one political entity, and the target state as the other - regimes that sponsor terrorism are performing a form of warfare.

Wilkinson argues (1986: 212) that international terrorism is employed by some terrorist states as “a weapon to undermine rival states in a form of undeclared covert warfare.” Stohl claims that some states may use terrorism as a part of their military strategy and outlines (1988: 196) the objectives that states might pursue while employing surrogates (either state or non-state actors) for engaging in warfare with other nations. These objectives may include: “to provoke international incidents; to create alarm in adversary; to destroy morale; to cause the diversion of an enemy’s resources into security budgets; to affect specific forms of sabotage; to provoke repressive and reactive strategies and revolutionary overthrow of targeted states.”

Terrorism has become the weapon of some weak states that cannot compete with the rest of the world economically, politically, and militarily. These countries realized that employment of terrorist strategies is an effective way of making political changes in the international system, or challenging their rivals. These types of terrorist states are being encouraged by the fact that the evidence proving the links between the actions of terrorist group and its sponsor state is not always easy to demonstrate. In addition, state-supported terrorism has seriously improved the power and potential of terrorists and complicated efforts to combat terrorism by increasing the risk that retaliation may escalate to open warfare (Albin, 1989: 232).

2.4.3. Categories of State Involvement in International Terrorism

Schachter puts (1993: 246) terrorist groups into three different categories in relation to the consequences that terrorist group - sponsor relationship would cause under international law. First category comprises the terrorist groups that are

performing under the direction or control of a government, which provides them with sanctuary or bases on its territory. As a second group, Schachter regards those who receive substantial support – but not under direct control of - from the regime in whose country the group is located. The support may include provision of arms, logistical assistance, technical advice, and training. The third category includes groups operating more independently, and only having occasional or irregular links with a particular government.

Stohl identifies (1988: 168-169) three broad forms of state terrorist behavior in international system. First is the use of *terrorist coercive diplomacy* by the state in order to create unacceptable costs for the opponent to erode its motivation without employing violent tactics. Stohl (1988: 177) assumes that the threat of violence used in coercive diplomacy as a form of state terrorism is more economical than the direct employment of military force in a possible crisis.

A second type of state terrorism as categorized by Stohl is *covert state terrorism*. It is seen in two different forms, which are the (2.a) *clandestine state terrorism*, and (2.b) *state-sponsored terrorism*. While state agents directly participate in acts of terrorism in the former, the latter implies the covert behaviors that exploit private groups to perform terrorist actions on behalf of the sponsor. There is not a broad knowledge of the instances of covert state terrorism other than official and unofficial leaks and investigative reports since it is performed by the intelligence services of states.

The third broad form of state terrorism is *surrogate terrorism*, which has also two sub-categories; (3.a) *state-supported terrorism* and (3.b) *state acquiescence*. State-supported form of surrogate terrorism involves the assistance to another state or organization in order to increase its capability to carry out terrorist actions. State

acquiescence occurs when terrorist groups are not openly supported but their actions are either quietly approved or not explicitly condemned by the interested state. Although surrogate terrorism provides less control and presents few benefits in advance, it is a better option as a form of state terrorism to raise the cost of adversary since direct participation in terrorism is extremely dangerous having the risk of failure or being discovered (Stohl, 1988: 182-183).

Hanle claims (1989:165) that state-sponsored terrorism is a form of external state terrorism, in which surrogate terrorists have a clandestine link with the sponsor state. State-sponsored terrorism involves the employment of lethal force, but not by the state's own military instrument, across national borders for the purpose of weakening or destroying enemy's political cohesion.

Combs is another scholar, who defines external state terrorism as a form of international terrorism. It is used as an instrument of foreign policy in waging an irregular and covert war against another state. Combs divides external state terrorism into two categories; *clandestine state terrorism*, in which there is a direct but covert state agents' participation in terrorism; and *state-sponsored terrorism*, implying terrorism by state or private groups employed on behalf of the state. Combs identifies *surrogate terrorism* as a particular form of sponsorship, which involves state assistance to terrorist groups in order to improve its capabilities for terrorism (Combs, 1997: 85-87).

	State Participation	Perpetrator	State Control
Clandestine State Terrorism	<i>direct</i>	<i>state agents</i>	<i>absolute</i>
State-Sponsored Terrorism	<i>direct / indirect</i>	<i>private groups</i>	<i>high</i>
State-Supported Terrorism / Surrogate Terrorism	<i>indirect</i>	<i>private groups</i>	<i>low</i>

TABLE 2. State Involvement in International Terrorism¹⁶

To sum up different types of state involvement in international terrorism, three different main categories may be summarized out of literature. First is the clandestine state terrorism, which is usually called for the direct engagement of state agents in terrorist actions, and hence provides the state with absolute control over the conduct of terrorism. Second is called as state-sponsored terrorism, which is used to identify direct or indirect involvement of state in terrorism through private groups that undertake terrorist actions on behalf of the state. It also presents a significant degree of control to the state over the employment of terrorism. And finally, state-supported terrorism, or surrogate terrorism, is used to imply indirect state assistance to terrorist groups in order to increase their capabilities. In this case, although the state does not have control over the terrorist groups, there exists a degree of convergence on the political objectives of the perpetrator and its supporter.

2.4.4. Twelve Types of State Involvement in Terrorism

Defense Systems, INC. (DSI), a consulting firm in the US, has identified twelve types of state involvement in international terrorism. The first two types of state involvement are regarded as “state sponsorship”, in which the state actively contributes planning, direction, and control of terrorist organizations. These are, according to the DSI list, *state terrorism* and *direct support*. *State terrorism* includes the use of state intelligence agents in employing terrorist acts in foreign countries. *Directs support* has two elements, which are planning and guidance. Planning includes direct state involvement in setting of objectives and assets to be used either in a long-term campaign of terror or in a short-term plan for a single, immediate

¹⁶ The table is prepared as a summary by the author out of the literature.

terror action. Guidance is a more general support provided by the state, including information on how programs of operations can be developed (Murphy, 1989: 32,34). Murphy underlines (1989: 36) that state involvement, when takes the form of state sponsorship, may comprise waging of a covert and undeclared form of warfare against the rival state.

The other ten types of state involvement identified by the DSI are considered within the general category of “state support,” which is defined more broadly than “state sponsorship.” These are *Intelligence Support* (provision of information without control over the operations of terrorist groups); *Training* (it has two categories; *specialized terrorist training* - training in intelligence gathering, infiltration, surveillance, and the use of sophisticated communication equipments, explosives, and weapons; and *basic training* - training with light weapons including physical training, marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, and small unit tactics); *Diplomatic Assets* (provision of passports, documents, and other forms of cover including the use of diplomatic facilities); provision of *High Technology* (including nuclear, biological, chemical, and exotic types of terrorism where state involvement is essential); provision of *Weapons and Explosives* with *Logistics* support; provision of *Transportation*; permitting *Use of Territory* (particularly for planning, training, and avoiding extradition – diplomatic facilities excluded), *Financial Support* (directly or indirectly), *Tacit Support* (means foreknowledge and failure to act - not taking steps against terrorists when their attacks launched from its own territory or failing to warn the target state that it will be attacked, and refuse to cooperate with foreign intelligence), *Rhetorical Support* (includes specific statements or speeches by government members that approves terrorism or supports terrorist propaganda facilities) (Murphy, 1989: 32-34).

TABLE 3. State Involvement in Terrorism According to Defense Systems, Inc.¹⁷

<u>A. State Support</u> (Private Groups)		<u>B. State-Sponsorship</u>	
1. Intelligence Support	a. Basic	1. <u>State Terrorism</u> (State Agents)	2. <u>Direct Support</u> (Private Groups)
2. Training Support	b. Specialized		
3. Diplomatic Support		a. <u>Guidance</u>	b. <u>Planning</u>
4. High Technology			i. Short Term
5. Weapons, Explosives, Logistics			ii. Long Term
6. Transportation			
7. Use of Territory			
8. Financial Support			
9. Tacit Support			
10. Rhetorical Support			

2.4.5. Strategic Cooperation of Sponsor and Proxy in Terrorism

When a government decides that supporting a particular movement or group would serve its strategic and political interests, it may adopt the policy of indirectly sponsoring that group. Indirect state-sponsorship of terrorism (or state-supported terrorism)¹⁸, via surrogates or client groups, as outlined by Wilkinson (1988: 93), can take place in order to achieve one or more of the following objectives: “to redress an international grievances, to export revolution, to hunt down and eradicate exiled dissidents or to intimidate them into silence, to weaken an adversary state, and as an auxiliary weapon in a wider war of intervention in international war.”

¹⁷ The table is prepared by the author.

¹⁸ No consensus exists in the literature about what is state-sponsored terrorism, or what state-supported terrorism means. It is seen that indirect state-sponsorship of terrorism is used interchangeably with state-supported terrorism, or surrogate terrorism. Besides, there are not clear-cut differences in actual cases. A terrorist group can be both supported and sponsored by the same state at different times. Rather than using fixed terms for the same implications, the author tried to use them as they appeared in their original text.

Four conditions need to be fulfilled before a client and sponsor relationship can be effective. First, the interests and objectives of the parties must be consistent with each other. Second, the sponsor must be able to apply a degree of influence, and control over the proxy by the help of dependence or interdependence. Third, the surrogate must not feel like a puppet and retain its self-respect or believe that benefits of the relationship outweigh the costs. Fourth, the surrogate must be able to succeed its mission without the intervention of the sponsor (Wardlaw, 1988: 253).

Indirect state-sponsorship of terrorism is perpetrated by terrorist groups, which are keen on running their operations autonomously. An interesting kind of alliance is established between the proxy and the sponsor, which provides a degree of independence to the group on the one hand, and contributes to the interests of the sponsor on the other to grant the continuation of the assistance. In order to influence other potential sponsor states, the terrorist groups will probably intensify their resort to violence in order to show that they are a working group. These terrorist groups try to maintain a number of sponsors, which would help them simultaneously. They tend to establish safe heavens and operational bases in several different countries in an effort not to be dependent solely on one resource because that sponsor state may fail to support due to coercion or pressure to cease its assistance (Wilkinson, 1988: 93-94).

The more a particular group is depended on a sponsor state for finance, arms, logistics, intelligence, etc., the more its strategic goals and targets will be determined by the sponsor. However, it must be noted that sponsor states cannot always exert the control they desire over the groups, and there may be a significant divergence between the objectives of the group and the sponsor. Wardlaw states (1988: 252) that the relationship between the group and the sponsor is a dynamic and uncertain process, strength of a particular period may not exist at another era.

An important deficiency of indirect state-sponsorship is that it carries potential dangers for the sponsor states. Since sponsor states do not have the full control of the terrorists, their operations may sometimes be politically harmful for the sponsor state. State-sponsorship of terrorism may be a costly and unreliable weapon that might backfire badly. Wardlaw underlines (1988: 253) that “to engage in international terrorism is like to play a fire that is difficult to control.” Usually the indirect state-sponsors of terrorism try to remain covert, or at worse deny their involvement.

Some states may choose direct sponsoring of terrorism by using their own agents or private groups under their full control rather than dealing with the problems and uncertainties of indirect sponsorship. Diplomatic cover and facilities provide a good opportunity for direct state-sponsorship of terrorism in order to mask either their assassination squads or secret agents. Sometimes the terrorists may pretend to be students, businessman, or tourists in the territory of the target state particularly when no diplomatic mission exists (Wilkinson, 1988: 95). Besides, terrorist states may exploit immigrant communities abroad of the same national origin as an instrument when their other means are inadequate.

All in all, terrorism has become a significant instrument in foreign policy of some states, since it is low cost, low risk, and high yield in political and financial terms (Combs, 1997: 96). As the international context has changed, ideological groups substituted with ethnic ones in terrorist strategies of sponsor states. From the beginning of the Cold War years, the Middle East region has become the focus of international terrorism, both harboring every kind of terrorist groups and sponsor states. Although refrained from the politics of the Middle East, Turkey, having one foot in the region, could not stay out of the developing process of terrorism. Since the

1970s, Turkey became the target of first ideological terrorism with Marxist-Leninist groups, then nationalistic terrorism of ASALA, and radical religious groups all harbored and sponsored by her neighbors. Starting with Marxists-Leninist ideology and then shifting its gravity to ethnicity in relation to the changing international structure, the separatist terrorist organization PKK became a vital tool of foreign policy against Turkey at the hands of its main sponsors in the region, Syria and Iran.

CHAPTER III:

Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East

Turkish foreign policy had developed some principles towards the Middle East, which was mostly implemented from the mid-1960s to the end of Cold War. These principles were established upon the bitter experiences of Turkey throughout the 1950s in the Middle East and regarded as a return to the Kemalist foundations of Turkish foreign policy. In an effort to justify these principles, they were also called as Kemalist principles of Turkish foreign policy. This chapter shall deal with the evolution and implementation of these principles with a short history of Turkey's Middle East adventure up to the end of Cold War.

3.1. Historical Setting of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East

3.1.1. The General Framework

The term "Middle East" was first seen in the literature after the Second World War. It was used in the British sources when their headquarters in Egypt was named as "Middle East Command." Until the Second World War, the region had been defined as the "Near East". In the 19th century, the diplomatic, military, and financial issues about the Ottoman Empire were called the "Near East Question" (Sander, 1998: 212).

However, there has not been so far reached a consensus on which states should be included in the "Middle East" area. The widest definition of the region includes an area from Morocco in the west to Afghanistan and Pakistan - even to India for some in the east and from Turkey in the north to Ethiopia in the south. When narrowing the region vis-à-vis the political factors, it would be better to include Egypt in the west, Pakistan in the east, Turkey in the north, and Saudi Arabia in the south (Kürkçüoğlu,

1972: 1-2).¹⁹ Whether defined as widely or not, Turkey is a part of the region geographically, culturally, and politically. Besides, Turkey is not only a Middle Eastern state, but also a European and an Asian one. However, since the establishment period of the Turkish Republic, she aspired to be an equal member of the Western European state system and in every platform she emphasizes her European identity.

Although Turkey has devoted itself to the Western systems and institutions, her diplomacy and security is directly affected by the developments of the region (Karaosmanoğlu, 1987: 83). Nevertheless, despite her geographical and historical ties with the region, Turkey has not emerged as a major actor in the Middle Eastern affairs. This is because of the non-interventionist and low-profile policies that Turkey pursued from the mid-1960s to the end of the Cold War. Turkey has especially avoided policies that would present her as projecting power beyond its borders and playing for leadership in the region. The origins of these policies are rooted both in the Kemalist foundations of Turkish foreign policy and the bitter experiences of the foreign office throughout the 1950s. Moreover, some mutual perceptions of the Turks and the Arabs, which have been shaped by history and colored by mutual resentment, have an important impact over the bilateral relations.

3.1.2. Mutual Perceptions of the Turks and the Arabs

The Turks and the Arabs had lived together for almost a thousand years. The religious and cultural ties that evolved in history strengthened their close relations. However, these ties started to fray with the dissolution of the Ottomans and the rise

¹⁹ Israel is the only non-Muslim state of the region. While Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan can be separately grouped as non-Arab Muslim states, Turkey is unique in her character that it is the only secular and democratic Muslim state of the region. Although most of its population is Muslim, the Turkish state officially has no religion.

of nationalism among both the Turks and the Arabs.²⁰ The new Turkish Republic aspired to be an equal member of the Western state system and gradually identified itself in the Western security institutions. On the contrary, the Arab states sought their places in the anti-imperialist camp where the anti-Western feelings were mostly gravated.

Fuller notes (1993: 49-50) some important differences between Turkey and the Arab states, which also help to explain their places in different camps. First, Turkey has always been in the ruling group throughout the history, but the Arabs were being ruled for almost a thousand years. Subsequently, an outstanding factor shaping their stance was different threat perceptions of the Turks and the Arabs. Although the Turks had fought against the Western powers in the Liberation War (1919-1922), the new Turkish Republic was not threatened by the Western Europe. Atatürk was against the imperialist powers of the West, but not the Westernization itself.²¹ The main threat to Turkish security was directed from the Soviet Union, especially after the Second World War. In contrast, the Arab states had to win their independence from the Western mandate powers and they were not subject to the Soviet threat. Besides, Israel was the main threat to the Arab states, but not for Turkey. While Turkey linked its ties with the Western security system against the Soviet Union, the leading Arab states were supported by the Soviets against the West in general, and Israel in particular. Since the Arabian and the Western interests always clashed with

²⁰ For the rise of nationalism in the Middle East see for example, Oya Akgönenç Mughisuddin *Turkey and the Middle East: Systemic and Subsystemic Determinants of Policy 1960-1975*. (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 1993), 63-76.

²¹ Atatürk viewed Europe as the center of the civilization and established friendly relations with the Western states as soon as the disputes with these states were settled by the year 1930. Since some issues could not be settled in Lausanne, they were postponed to be settled in bilateral negotiations between the parties. Accordingly, Mosul Question with the British was settled in 1926; an agreement was reached with the French regarding the Ottoman debts in 1928; the exchange of the populations with Greece could be resolved in 1930. From then on, Turkey normalized her relations with the West. See Haluk Ülman and Oral Sander. "Türk Dış Politikasına Yön Veren Etkenler (1923-1968) II," *Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* 27 (1): 2-4.

each other, the Arab states assumed Turkey's ties with the West as serving directly against their benefits. Finally, during the Cold War years, although the Arab states had been natural allies of each other in the region, Turkey did not have any but the northern tier states - Iran and Pakistan.

Arab nationalism has some ill-defined claims against Turkey, which has caused deterioration of the relations. Aptülaha Akşin, the first Turkish ambassador to Syria, outlines (1991: 203-209) these claims as the following. First, nationalistic circles in the Arab communities believe that the Turkish authority over the Arab people, which lasted nearly a thousand years, is the main cause of their underdevelopment. Secondly, they think that the Turks did not let them participate in the administration of the Ottoman state and the emerging Arab states were left to the hands of inexperienced leaders. A third factor in cooling the relations is the exploitation of Arabian nationalism by the mandate powers of the British and the French. They had non-negligible efforts, which included establishment of special committees for this purpose, in making anti-Turkish propaganda among the Arabs.²² Fourth is the Arabian irredentism, especially shown by Syria, which had claims not only over Hatay but also over the region up to the Taurus Mountains. Last but not least is the secular reforms of Atatürk, and the abrogation of the Caliphate. Turkey's implementation of secularism, established on Western values and institutions, was regarded by most of the Arab states and Iran as totally renouncing Islam. Besides, the change of Arabian script with the Latin alphabet had an emotional impact over the Arab world.

²² The Armenian population, who were deported by the Ottomans from the sensitive Turkish-Russian border to the Arab states during the WW I, were leading the anti-Turkish propaganda, particularly in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. They were also supported and encouraged by the Arab governments for their geo-political interests (Akgönenç, 1993: 73).

On the other hand, it is not quite easy to argue that Turkey had good feelings about the Arab states. According to Turkish point of view, the following factors have an effect in cooling the relations (Fuller, 1993: 50-51). First, there still exists resentment against the Arabs in the minds of the Turkish people since they could not forget the Arab rebellion, which sided with the British against the Ottomans during the First World War.²³ Secondly, the new secular Turkish Republic cut her links with the Islamic heritage of the Ottomans, particularly with the Arab world. A third factor is the general support of the Arab states either for Syria, or for Iraq in their disputes with Turkey.²⁴ Finally, an important source of tension was the Soviet influence over the Arab states, which took the Cold War confrontation to the Middle East. Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern states have been mostly shaped under the bipolar politics of the Cold War.

3.1.3. Main Features of Atatürk's Foreign Policy

The principles of Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic, have served as a guideline for the foreign policy orientation of Turkey, ever since it was established on October 29, 1923. Besides, the way that Atatürk had pursued the foreign policy has been accepted as valid and true for the future governments of Turkey. Continuity and consensus have been main tenets of decision-making in Turkish foreign policy, which is deemed as vital to be beyond party politics (Çelik, 1999: xiv). Therefore, in order to evaluate Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle

²³ Sherif Hussein, having the title of the Emir of Mecca, revolted against the Ottoman Empire with the support of the British and its allies in June 1916 (Kürkçüoğlu, 1987: 10). Accordingly, Turkey's immediate recognition of Saudi Arabia in 1926 was a response to previous Hejaz King Sherif Hussein's cooperation with the British (Soysal, 1991: 47).

²⁴ For example, Syria has enjoyed a wide range of Arabian support against Turkey, particularly on the issues of the waters of the Euphrates River, and the Hatay dispute. It is interesting that Saudi Arabia even denied visa applications of the Turkish people for the pilgrimage, whose birthplace was recorded as Hatay in their passports. See Graham E. Fuller and et al. *Turkey's New Geopolitics: From the Balkan's to Western China*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 54-55.

East, one should also grasp the critical role and legacy of Atatürk in Turkish foreign policy.

Ever since its establishment, the core objectives of the Turkish Republic have been to preserve sovereignty and territorial integrity without any help of the outside powers and to make Turkey a full-fledged member of the Western world (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997). The importance of sovereignty and territorial integrity is stressed in the following words of Atatürk: “In the formulation of our foreign policy we give particular attention to the safety and security of our country and to our capacity to protect the rights of the citizenry against any aggression” (Tamkoç, 1976: 299). At a time when there was not much hope for peaceful settlement of the disputes, Atatürk underlined that Turkey would not hesitate to use arms against would be aggressors to protect her territorial sovereignty and political independence. Karpat affirms (1996: 1) that since the establishment of the Republic, Turkish foreign policy has “revolved around the two main axes” of maintaining nation’s independence in the face of Soviet irredentism and preserving Turkey’s “modernist, secularist, nationalist regime.”

Although Turkey had fought her Liberation War against the imperialist invasion of the West, Atatürk was not against the Westernization process. He believed that modernization meant Westernization and started an intensive campaign of internal reforms immediately after the Turkish victory in September 1922. Following the abolition of the Sultanate on November 1, 1922, Atatürk and his friends established the Republic on October 29, 1923. However, the most important and radical reforms of Atatürk were the establishment of a secularist state structure of Western type and abolition of the Caliphate on March 3, 1924, which marked the end of the Turkish role as the leader of the Islamic community in the world. He

established the Civil Code and also the Penal and Commercial laws to be based on the European models in 1926. The change of Arabian script with the Latin alphabet in 1928 meant a pivotal breakaway from the Orient. The Kemalist thought was based on the mutually reinforcing values and norms that the new republic should be independent, modern, secular, Europe-oriented, Turkish, and established almost on the territory of Anatolia (Robins, 1991: 4).

“Peace at home, peace in the world” is one of the most quoted saying of Atatürk - either by the politicians, bureaucrats, or the academics as well, in which he defined the basis of Turkish foreign policy. It has been main objective of the Turkish foreign policy to establish and maintain friendly relations with all states, particularly with her neighbors, for the purpose of promoting international cooperation in all fields and contributing to regional and global peace. Atatürk underlined in his *State of the Nation* speech on November 1, 1928, that “it is quite natural and therefore simple to explain the fact that a country which is in the midst of fundamental reforms and development should sincerely desire peace and tranquility both at home and in the world” (Tamkoç, 1976: 299). Akgönenç states that (1993: 16) since Turkey had no desire in getting involved in international disputes, both Atatürk and his successor İnönü were concentrated on maintaining foreign and domestic *status quo*.

Dr. Tevfik Rüştü Aras, who directed the Turkish foreign ministry during most of the Kemalist Era (1925 to 1938), clarifies that the peace was not a means but an end for Turkey. He underlined further that no issue could be settled by wars and the breach of international peace was not in favor of Turkey even when it would occur at far regions of the world (Akşin, 1991: 199). Turkey searched peaceful solutions for

its problems through negotiations or by the League of Nations.²⁵ With the 1936 Montreux Convention, Turkey succeeded in making adjustments in her favor by changing the Lausanne Treaty regarding the regime of the Turkish straits. It was unique that Turkey was the only state that could make changes by means of legal methods in a post-World War I multi-national treaty (Akgönenç, 1993: 20)

Pragmatism constitutes another important aspect of the Kemalist policies and no kind of adventurism has been permitted. Atatürk strongly opposed to those who pursued the policies of Pan-Islamism or Pan-Turkism. He established Turkish nationalism on the defined borders of the new republic to rule out any kind of racism or religious differences. In his *Nutuk* (Oratory), he underlines that history shows that neither the policies of Pan-Islamism nor Pan-Turkism could have ever been implemented or succeeded in the world. He further states that the only policy to be successful can be the nation state policy within the borders (Akşin, 1991: 42). As a result of the realism in Kemalism, Turkey did not pursue expansionist policies while having serious constraints in her resources, rather defined Westernization as the ultimate goal of the country (Akgönenç, 1993: 19).

As Turkey devoted herself to be an equal member of the Western community of states, she broke the ties with the Arab Middle East. One of the main principles of Turkish foreign policy – non-involvement in regional affairs, was set within this concern. Although bilateral relations were established, the main principle was

²⁵ Turkey accepted the decision of the League of Nations even when it was not in her favor as in the case of the Mosul dispute with the British. Although Mosul was included in the National Pact of the 1920 (Misak-ı Milli), Turkey ceded the region to Iraq upon the final decision of the League of Nations in 1926. During the negotiations, the British cultivated a Kurdish rebellion in Turkey. It was a fact that due to her internal weaknesses, Turkey could not dare to fight against the British at the time. See İsmail Soysal. “Seventy Years of Turkish-Arab Relations and an Analysis of Turkish-Iraqi Relations (1920-1990)” *Studies on Turkish Arab Relations*, 1991(6), 27-29. Besides, Akgönenç argues (1993: 78-79) that Turkey secured full consent of the British for the adjustments on the regime of the Turkish Straits and the settlement of Hatay dispute after normalization of the relations with Britain following the cession of Turkish rights in Mosul to the British mandate in Iraq. Then, the British ceased providing support for the Kurdish aspirations to establish an independent Kurdish state on Turkish,

“leaving the Arabs alone” (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997). Since the time of Atatürk, Turkey’s relations with the Arab states were assigned a secondary status compared to her relations with the West. Given the colonial status of some Arab states, Turkey’s relations with them became an extension of the relations with their mandate rulers, the British and the French. Ferenc A. Vali underlines that “even if Turkey had wished, she could not have pursued a particular foreign policy towards these colonial or semi-colonial countries.”²⁶ As Turkey’s relations developed with the West, she gradually became more indifferent to the Arab independence struggles (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 6-7). Atatürk’s reforms that sought the modernization of the country cut the links with the East and required “an attitude of indifference to the Arabs” (Akgönenç, 1993: 75).

However, Atatürk’s foreign policy was not totally indifferent to the Middle East when Turkey’s vital interests in the region were on the agenda. Once France decided to declare the independence of Syria, Turkey rejected inclusion of the “Sandjak of Hatay”²⁷ within Syrian territory. In accordance with the 1921 Ankara Agreement with France, the Sandjak had a special administration regime in which the rights of the Turkish inhabitants should be protected. After negotiations between Turkey and France, the parties decided to take the issue to the Council of the League of Nations. The Council decided the Sandjak to be a “distinct entity” and both France and Turkey accepted the decision. The first parliament of the Sandjak renamed itself as Hatay and decided to rejoin to Turkey in 1939 (Soysal, 1991: 29-37). The events that led to the annexation of Hatay were developed in consent of France and Turkey but at the cost of Syria, which could not shape the process. The annexation of Hatay

Iranian, and Iraqi territories.

²⁶ Ferenc A. Vali. *Bridge Across the Bosphorus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey* (Baltimore and London. The John Hopkins Press, 1971), 274. Quoted in Ramazan Gözen. 1995. “Patterns in Turkish Foreign Policy Behavior towards the Middle East,” *Foreign Policy* (Ankara) XIX (1-2): 71.

by Turkey in harmony with France caused an emotional effect over the Arabs in general, and Syria in particular. Consequently, it led a setback in Turkey's relations with the Arab states, which at the time continued their independence struggle against the Western mandate powers (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 7).

Akşin asserts (1991: 123-125) that one other important aspect of the Kemalist foreign policy was staying out of military alliances. Since any alliance would cause suspicion and insecurity of others, it would naturally provoke counter-alliances. Therefore, being a part of alliances would be against the main thrust of Turkish foreign policy, whose aim was to have peaceful relations with all countries. Until 1932, Atatürk even did not want Turkey to be a member of the League of Nations, which was under British and French domination and when the Soviet Union was not a member yet.

The Sadabad Pact, officially called the Non-Aggression Treaty, was signed between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan in July 1937. As understood from its name, it was not a defense or military pact but only a non-intervention treaty. The pact called the parties for non-interference in each other's internal affairs, respect to inviolability of the frontiers, non-aggression, good neighborliness relations, consultation on international disputes, and respect for the League of Nations Charter and world peace (Soysal, 1991: 44-45). Yet, as Turkish Foreign Minister Dr. Aras emphasized in July 1937, the Pact did not foresee any mutual aid or military responsibility for the parties, but it provided a serious psychological contribution on securing the peace in the region (Akşin, 1991: 198-199). Besides, Kürkçüoğlu underlines (1987: 13) that the Pact was not an alliance, but demonstrated the determination of the regional states to oppose any would be Italian aggression in the

²⁷ It was named Alexandretta while being under French mandate.

area.²⁸ As the World War II drew on, each state of the pact followed its own course and the pact was forgotten. Although Iran had attempts after the war to revitalize the pact with some adjustments, no action was taken. It lost its *raison d'être* with the establishment of Baghdad Pact in 1955.

3.2. Pro-Western Stance in Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East

3.2.1. End of Indifference in Turkish Foreign Policy

In the aftermath of the Second World War, systemic changes at the global level led major adjustments in Turkish foreign policy. The world politics were polarized between the US, which emerged from the World War II as a major power, on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. It was soon understood by many countries that it was not possible to have cordial relations with both the US and the Soviet Union. While the world divided into two camps with the increasing East-West rivalry, Turkey's place was easily identified when the Soviets came with proposals, which desired control over the straits and included claims over the provinces of Kars and Ardahan, unacceptable to Turkey. Hence, in order to protect her territorial integrity, Turkey sought to ally herself with the US (Çelik, 1999: 35).

Between the two world wars, Turkey maintained her non-aligned status. She pursued policies to establish friendly relations with all countries and searched for the ways of cultivating friendship with old enemies. Turkish neutrality continued during the Second World War by successful maneuvers between the clashes of interests of the major powers. Turkey signed the Treaty of Mutual Assistance with Great Britain

²⁸ Akşin underlines that the Sadabad Pact was only a negotiation pact between the friendly countries of the region at the time. He adds that the only exception to Turkey's non-alignment policy was the Balkan Pact, which aimed to protect the status quo in the Balkans. However, Akşin asserts that Atatürk was so uneasy about the Balkan Pact even after its signature. For the alliance policy of Atatürk see, Aptülâhat Akşin. *Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi* (Foreign Policy Principles of Atatürk and His Diplomacy). (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 125.

and the France in 1939 and the Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression with Germany in 1941. Pragmatism continued to be a feature of Turkish foreign policy during the wartime and it did not leave any room for adventurism. Turkey, which could not yet heal the wounds of its Liberation War, was a weak and tired country to pursue policies providing other than peace and her survival.

Turkey's neutrality, supported by active diplomacy, continued during the wartime until the decision taken in the Yalta Conference in February 1945 that the states which did not declare war on the Axis until March 1, 1945 would not be invited to the United Nations Conference. Therefore, Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan on February 23, 1945 (Çelik, 1999: 31-32).

With the end of the Second World War, Soviet demands on Turkey began to be clarified. In March 1945, Soviet government declared that it did not want to renew the Turkish-Soviet Friendship Pact of 1925. Turkish leaders were not surprised by this move since they had already been suspicious over the Soviet intentions that it would forge Turkey to a *fait accompli*, which would place her under the Soviet sphere of influence in the post-war future. After the San Francisco Conference, the Turkish Ambassador to Moscow, Selim Sarper, was acknowledged on June 7, 1945 that Turkey had to pay a price if she wanted to maintain the Soviet friendship. The price was that first Turkey had to accept the rectification of her eastern frontier that involved cession of Kars and Ardahan provinces to Soviet Armenia. Second, Soviets demanded a revision of the Montreux Convention of the Straits to grant them some bases on the straits for their joint defense with Turkey, who was asserted to be weak to defend them alone (Deringil, 1989: 179-180).

Soviet demands were unacceptable not only for Turkey but also for the US and the British. By then, Turkey's role as "Western-sponsored barrier to 'Soviet

Intentions' in the Middle East'' had been a vital element of the American and British calculations in the region (Deringil, 1989: 187). Accordingly, anti-Sovietism became basic feature of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East and she aimed to establish an anti-Soviet defense pact comprising of the regional states, in cooperation with the US and Britain (Aykan, 1999b: 3). In the post-Second World War period, Turkey once again stood against the Russian objectives in reaching the south, as it has always been in the history.

3.2.2. Alignment with the West in the Middle East

Turkey has pursued an active line of policy in the Middle East during the 1950s in order to demonstrate its strategic importance to her Western allies. In doing so, Turkey hoped to achieve more military and financial support from the US, as well as more security during the upcoming East-West rivalry (Dikerdem, 1990: 109). Hence, Turkish policymakers' concentration of their efforts to restrain the Soviet influence in the newly independent states of the region and the Middle East became center of gravity in Turkish foreign policy. In this era, every step taken by Turkey was to strengthen her pro-Western attitude. Therefore, Turkey was seen as an instrument of the West and was isolated from the Arab states (Çelik, 1999: 140-141). Accordingly, any incident that caused the Arab-Western confrontation soured Turkey's relations in the region as well. Indeed, Turkish policies in the Middle East had been an extension of its pro-Western policies since the time of Atatürk. Although Turkey's general policies had unilaterally shaped her foreign policy in the Middle East up to the 1950s, since then they mutually affected each other to assure Turkey's place in the West.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, most of the Arab states, particularly Egypt, were persisting in their independence struggles against the British. After the

World War II, the United Kingdom and Egypt could not agree on the continuation of the British military presence in the Suez Canal. While Egypt completely wanted to abolish the 1936 Treaty, the British sought in a way to continue her military presence in the region. In October 1951, the British came with the proposal of the Middle East Command, in which the USA, France, and Turkey were included. The British wanted the Turkish participation due to her Muslim character and hence to portray the project as not to be totally a Western one. However, Egypt refused to participate in any kind of alliance while the British military presence remained on its soil (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 33-36). Egypt also rejected to participate in the Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) - the modified form of the Middle East Command, which would justify continuation of the British military existence on its territory. During the negotiations between Britain and Egypt, Turkey's attitude on the side of the British provoked Cairo (Soysal, 1991: 51).

On the other hand, Turkey sought to achieve Western support after the increase of tension with the Soviets in 1945.²⁹ Although the main objective of Turkey at the time was to become a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Ankara did not oppose the British security initiatives in the Mediterranean, particularly for the support of this country in her NATO bid. However, Turkey clearly emphasized that she could accept an active role in Middle East only after the approval of its membership to NATO. After Turkey (with Greece) was accepted as

²⁹ The US started to help Turkey (and Greece) as a part of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 when an agreement for American aids was signed between the two states in July 1947. Turkey was also included in economic aids within the framework of the Marshall plan starting in 1948. Besides, Turkey entered the OEEC (Organization of European Economic Co-operation) (present OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) in 1948, and joined the Council of Europe in 1949.

the new member of NATO ³⁰ in September 1951 in Ottawa, she agreed to participate in the Middle East Command, just a month later in October 1951 (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 43-47). However, Turkey's cooperation with the British in the Middle East was deemed by the Arabs as a step to continue British dominance in the region and to undermine their independence struggles.

Turkey's pro-Western attitude with the purpose of demonstrating its loyalty to her allies gradually worsened the relations with the Arab states. Not possible to satisfy both sides, Turkey decided to give the priority to the West in their clashing interests with the Middle Eastern states (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997). Turkish decision to participate in the Middle East Command and her policies in line with the West caused a setback in Turkey's relations with Egypt. While Turkey gradually strengthened its ties with the West, the military takeover in Egypt by General Nagib and Lieutenant Colonel Nasser in July 1952 strengthened the anti-Western trend in this country. Egypt's increasing nationalism mixed with the anti-Western feelings soon achieved the sympathy of the entire Arab world (Dikerdem, 1990: 60-62).

In October 1954, Egypt and the UK agreed on the future of the British military presence in the Suez Canal. Accordingly, the British accepted to withdraw from Egypt and the 1936 Treaty was ended. In return, Britain received the right to reuse her bases in case of an attack on Egypt, the Arab League states, or Turkey. Egypt did not want to include Turkey in the agreement considering her membership to NATO that an attack on any NATO country might have necessitated deployment of British troops to the Canal. Hence, the insistence of Britain to include Turkey in the agreement once again caused Egypt resentment against the Turks. Although

³⁰ However, it would be a poor judgment to link Turkey's NATO membership with only security concerns. Being a part of liberal Western democracies was a major part of the identity of the new republic. For example, Turkey was the only Asian state that did not attend the first Asia Political Conference held in New Delhi in January 1949 (Ülman and Sander, 1972: 5-6).

conclusion of an agreement between the British and Egypt increased the prospects of Arab participation in a Middle East defense system, Egypt was not so satisfied with the agreement since it did not assure a complete independence (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 56-59).

3.2.3. Turkey's Recognition of Israel

An important feature of Turkey's relations with the Arab states has been Turkey's stance towards the Arab-Israel conflicts and Ankara's relations with Tel Aviv. When the British decided to end its mandate over the Palestinian region, the Arabs became face to face with the emergence of a Jewish state among them. Since they did not have the political and military support of the Soviet Union at the time, they sought Turkish support as a strong Muslim state in the region. Akşin (1991: 212-213) states that while he was Ambassador to Syria, the Syrian Prime Minister Jamil Mardam came to the Turkish embassy and wanted the Turkish support over the issue. Besides, Syrian President Shukri al-Kuwatli repeated Syrian wish for this support. The Palestinian issue had a vital significance for the Arabs and they were ready to forget the Hatay dispute given Turkish support over the new issue. The Turkish vote against the partition of the Palestine at the UN voting on November 30, 1947 was welcomed by all of the Arab states, which had few supporters in the world at the time.³¹

However, after the recognition of Israel by the UN General Assembly, Turkey changed its attitude and accepted the reality. Contrary to the Arab states, Turkey voted with the West in favor of establishment of the UN Reconciliation Commission in 1948. Besides, Turkey participated in the commission along with the USA and

³¹ Turkey was one of the few states that supported the Arabs at the UN voting when they had no close ties with the Socialist Bloc. An important concern for Turkey was the Soviet support for the establishment of the Jewish state on those days. Hence, Turkey feared that a Jewish state in the region would probably be of a pro-Soviet and socialist character (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 22).

France, whose creation was objected by the Arabs. This marked the beginning of Turkey's equidistant policies between the Arab states and Israel. However, Turkey's neutral attitude in the commission was far from support expectations of the Arabs and her position in line with the West caused Arab resentment (Soysal, 1991: 49-50).

Turkish approach towards Israel gradually changed as it was understood not to be a Soviet surrogate in the region. Turkey's *de facto* recognition of Israel on March 28, 1949, as the first Muslim state to do this, was a significant blow to her relations with the Arab world. Turkey sent a chargé d'affaires to Tel Aviv in January 1950 and promoted him to the level of minister plenipotentiary with the *de jure* recognition of Israel on March 9, 1950 (Soysal, 1991: 49). As Turkey established closer ties with the West and normalized relations with Israel³² due to the Soviet menace, the nationalistic Arab states led by Nasser's Egypt were getting closer to the Soviet Bloc because of the Israeli threat and the Western support to her (Kürkçüoğlu, 1987: 14-15). Turkey recognized Israel in order to achieve the US support in both political and military issues. Bearing in mind that the Jewish community had a strong effect over the financial institutions in the US, Turkish leaders sought to get Jewish sympathy for the continuation of the American aids (Akşin, 1991: 213). However, the US, as the main supporter of Israel, became gradually unpopular as it replaced the British in the region. While Turkey's relations developed with Israel and the US, she achieved Arab resentment and became isolated in the region.

3.2.4. The Baghdad Pact

After the increasing Soviet influence in the Middle East, it became more important to include the region in the Western defense system than continuing the British military presence. Therefore, the US, having a better record in the region, took the lead in the creation of a defense pact in the region. In 1953, the US

³² During the 1950s, Turkey signed several agreements with Israel, which were Trade Agreement in 1950, Air-Transportation Agreement in 1951, and Tourism Agreement in 1955.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had developed the Northern Tier Doctrine in order to fill the gap between NATO and SEATO for the overall containment of the Soviet Union. In his visit to the states of the region, he noted that neither Israel nor the Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and Jordan were approving the establishment of such a pact against the Soviet Union. On the other hand, while Pakistan and Iraq supported the idea, Turkey, as the only NATO member in the region, accepted her central role in filling the gap in the Middle Eastern defense line. During the 1950s, almost every policy of Turkey in the region was shaped as an extension of her pro-Western alignment (Gürkan, 1996/97: 36-37).

Turkey and Iraq signed the Mutual Cooperation Treaty in Baghdad on February 23, 1955, which was then called the Baghdad Pact. In the same year, first Britain and then Pakistan and Iran became members. The US did not formally become a member but supported the Pact from outside (Gürkan, 1996/97: 37). Egypt strictly opposed such a pact with the British and Turkey due to their relations with Israel and labeled Iraqi membership as disloyalty to the Arab cause. Syria followed Egyptian opposition with similar declarations. Other members of the Arab world, particularly Lebanon and Jordan, could not dare to enter the Pact due to Egypt's pressure.³³

According to the Article 5 of the Turkish-Iraqi Mutual Cooperation Treaty, only the states that are recognized by the members could have entered the Pact. This meant that Israel could not be a member of the Pact. Israel defined the Pact as of an anti-Israeli character and asserted that it would increase Arabian hostility against her. Accordingly, the Pact indirectly strengthened the Arab-Israeli animosity in the region (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 67).

The Baghdad Pact was one of the main factors that worsened Turkey's relations with Egypt and other Arab states, and caused Turkey's isolation in the region. Besides, Iraq was also isolated in the region as the only Arab member of the Pact. Turkey had miscalculated that many Arab states would follow Iraq and join to the

³³ The confrontation of Turkey and Egypt went on during the Bandung Conference of the Third World states in April 1955, where the Non-Aligned movement had started. As Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Zorlu underlined, Turkey went to the Conference with the last minute decision after the intensive demands of her allies. In the conference, Turkey advocated the policies of the Western front and opposed remaining non-aligned. The main discussions occurred between Turkey and Iraq on the one hand, and Baghdad Pact's opponent, Egypt on the other hand. Although Lebanon and Jordan did not join to the Pact, they supported Turkey and Iraq throughout the Conference (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 76-78).

Pact. However, geopolitically the Arab states were not directly posed to the Soviet threat and they enjoyed “the luxury of non-alignment or neutrality in a bipolar world” (Akgönenç, 1993: 81). In addition, it was impossible for the Arab states to participate in the same alliance with the British, against which they struggled for independence (Akşin, 1991: 216). The Arab states were not interested in standing against the Soviet Union since the main threat for them was not directed from the north but from the Western-supported Israel, which emerged among them. As a result, the main objective of unifying the Middle Eastern states against the Soviet threat ended with fragmentation of the region and emergence of Soviet proxies.

3.2.5. Crisis Management of Pro-Western Turkey

In July 1956, a crisis started in the region when Egypt decided to nationalize the Suez Canal. When the crisis could not be settled through negotiations, first Israel, then Britain and France attacked Egypt in October 1956. Upon these developments, the Baghdad Pact states assembled in Tehran with the exception of the British and made a declaration. Accordingly, they accused Israel for attacking Egypt and called Britain, and France to withdraw their forces from Egypt and respect her territorial integrity. Turkey decided to withdraw its Ambassador from Israel and downgraded her diplomatic representation to chargé d'affaires. However, Turkey assured Israel that this move was not against her but to save the prestige of the Baghdad Pact. Besides, Ankara affirmed that she wanted to maintain friendly relations with Israel. Throughout the crisis, Turkey supported the Western positions regarding the regime of the Suez Canal and opposed Egypt's unilateral decision. Although she accused the military attacks and withdrew her Ambassador from Tel Aviv, Turkey's general stance during the crisis -in line with the West, negatively affected her relations with the Arabs (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 96-101).

Another disagreement between Turkey and the radical Arab states came when the US commenced the Eisenhower Doctrine in March 1957 in order to support the Middle Eastern states against the increasing Soviet influence with the Canal Crisis. While Turkey strongly approved the US initiative, the states of Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia also showed their support. Unsurprisingly, Egypt and Syria rejected such an American project aimed to control the region (Arı, 2001: 418).

In 1957, due to the increasing Soviet arms and influence in Syria, Ankara became anxious and concentrated her troops near the Syrian border. Syria also became suspicious of the Turkish military maneuvers near its border at a time when the Turkish press stated about Turkish military intervention into Syria in case of a pro-Soviet takeover of the government. While Turkey assumed Syria as a Soviet client and base for the build up of the Soviet arms in the region, Syria thought Turkey to be “gendarme of American imperialism” in the Middle East (Muslih, 1996: 117). The crisis between the two states soon turned into a kind of East-West conflict and became a crisis between their sponsors, the US and the Soviet Union. Turkey’s management of the crisis brought about undesirable results for her. The increasing tension caused Syria to develop closer ties with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, direct Turkish confrontation with an Arab state contributed her isolation in the region and increased anti-Western feelings (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 120-122).

In July 1958, the military takeover that ended the pro-Western monarchy in Iraq also initiated a series of crises in the Middle East. In order to prevent similar anti-Western takeovers in Lebanon and Jordan, the US sent marines to Lebanon, and Britain sent troops to Jordan in support of these governments. Throughout the crises, Turkey let the US use its İncirlik airbase during the intervention to Lebanon. Ankara claimed that the coup in Iraq was supported from outside of the country. Turkish

opposition was so strong that she was accused by the Soviet Union of planning a military intervention to Iraq. It was asserted that a possible Turkish intervention was prevented by the US (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 131-132). During these crises, Turkey intervened not only in a struggle between the Arab states, but also in the internal affairs of Iraq. The loss of Iraq as the only pro-Western government of the Arab world caused Turkey's complete isolation in the region. Consequently, the Baghdad Pact dissolved due to the absence of Baghdad and turned into the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in August 1959.³⁴

In 1958, Egypt and Syria formed the United Arab Republic, which brought the most radical Arab states together. Although it eliminated the danger of a communist take-over in Syria, Turkey was not happy with the new state and perceived it as a threat to her national security. In addition to Nasser's support for the subversive elements in the Middle East, both Jordan and Lebanon were under Egyptian siege (Akgönenç, 1993: 61). In September 1961, Syria decided to break away from the United Arab Republic. Turkey was happy to see the dissolution in the two anti-Western states and became one of the first countries that recognized the new administration in Syria. This early reaction of Turkey increased the tension with Egypt and led her to cut the diplomatic relations with Ankara (Soysal, 1998/99: 107).

During the 1950s, Israel has sought ways to reinforce her ties with the non-Arab states of the region. As a part of her "periphery strategy," she focused on developing relations with Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia (Makovsky, 1996: 150). Israel and Turkey started cooperation in various fields. Muslih cites (1996: 117) the Israeli

³⁴ According to İhsan Gürkan (1996/97: 32), a retired general from Turkish Army, the Baghdad Pact had several shortcomings when compared to NATO. He outlines them as the following; it was inspired from outside; it did not have *casus feoderis* provisions of a defense pact to oblige all members to act when necessary; it had no allied force or command structure like NATO; and although supporting the Pact, the US did not join as a full-fledged member.

author Samuel Segev, who mentions a “Trident” program as top-secret intelligence cooperation between Turkey, Israel, and Iran to be a part of the “peripheral alliance.”

In the 1950s, one other disappointment for the Arab states was Turkey’s failure to support the Algerian independence struggle against France. Turkey voted against Algerian independence in the UN General Assembly in 1955. Dikerdem states that (1990: 104) Turkey did whatever possible to upset the Arabs and voted against Algerian independence proposals even when France abstained from voting. He adds that Turkey sought to achieve French support for the currently starting Cyprus dispute. Again in 1957, Turkey abstained from voting for an Asia-African proposal for Algerian self-determination. Unfortunately, Turkey could not yet understand the role that the Third World states in general, and the Arabs in particular, would play in the UN General Assembly. However, Soysal notes that (1991: 61) Turkey wanted to avoid a contradiction in her attitude at the UN while opposing to the application of the self-determination principle, which Greece the Greek Cypriots advocated for Cyprus. Hence, Turkey’s lack of support for Algeria was related with her stance in opposition to the self-determination principle.

3.3. Basic Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East

3.3.1. The Setting for the Change in Turkish Foreign Policy

Some fundamental developments in the early 1960s, both in domestic and international context, forged Turkey to pursue a multilateral path in foreign policy and ended her entire pro-Western stance. The first of these changes occurred in May 1960, when a military intervention had ended the pro-Western Democratic Party government in Turkey. The new Turkish leaders, though remaining loyal to Turkey's Western alliance, searched for new sources for the financial support. The military intervention caused fundamental changes in Turkey's domestic and foreign policies in a way to open dialogue with the Arab states (Akgönenç, 1993: v).

The 1961 constitution provided the public life in Turkey with many democratic rights. Karaosmanoğlu notes (1996: 12) that "the extreme Marxists, Third-Worldists, and Islamists" had the opportunity for their growing activism to influence the public opinion and the foreign policy against Israel. In this era interestingly, all the political parties from the extreme left to the extreme right only agreed on the foreign policy decision of developing relations with the Arab world.

With the Détente period starting after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, it was seen that the blocks were getting less tight and their structures were dissolving. The reduction of the East-West tension in the bipolar world politics also helped Turkey to pursue a more independent policy. Besides, the way that the Cuban Missile Crisis settled in 1962 caused a serious setback in Turkey's relations with the US. Ankara was upset with the unilateral American decision to withdraw the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in return for the Soviet Union not deploying missiles in Cuba. The fact that the decision was made without Turkey's consent caused the Turks to feel that they were no more than a pawn in Cold War politics. Turkish policy makers thought

that the US would renounce its assurances when American interests were at stake and only guarantee Turkey's security when it was to their advantage. Besides, Turkey became subject to a nuclear bargain due to a crisis that was of no direct concern to her. Hence, Ankara decided to reassess its commitments to the US and diversify the foreign policy (Çelik, 1999: 47).

It has been widely cited in the literature that the crisis of Cyprus (1961-1968) has caused a change in foreign policy orientation of Turkey. Some clear-cut indications of this change are; normalizations of the relations with the Soviet Bloc, better understanding for the policies of the Non-Aligned states, more cooperation with the Afro-Asian states in general, and the Arab states in particular, more sympathy and support for the independence struggles of the ex-colonial states³⁵, and a wide range of differences with NATO members on a number of issues (Tamkoç, 1976: 282).

When the inter-communal fights broke out between the Turkish and Greek people in Cyprus in the late 1963s, Turkey called the other guarantor states, the United Kingdom and Greece, to intervene together in the island. When other guarantors opposed to act, Turkey talked about a unilateral intervention by using her rights stemming from the 1960 Guarantee Treaty in order to protect the Turkish people on the island. However, Turkey was shocked by the US President Johnson's letter, which warned that if a Soviet attack occurred after Turkey's unilateral intervention, Washington and other NATO members might not come to support Turkey. President Johnson's threatening letter, although prevented the intervention for the time, worsened the bilateral relations with the US and caused Turkish leaders to pursue a more independent course in foreign policy (Aykan, 1993: 93-94). Turkey

³⁵ For example, Turkey voted for the first time in favor of Algerian independence with the Afro-Asian states at the United Nations in 1960 (Aykan, 1993: 94).

put an end to its pro-American policies and turned down American wishes when her own interests were at stake.

The December 1965 voting in the UN General Assembly regarding the Cyprus issue, in which Turkey was completely isolated, caused a radical change in Turkey's policy-making in the Middle East. In the 1960s, almost all Arab states were members of the Non-Aligned movement. Greek Cypriot leader Makarios portrayed the issue to the Arab states as the independence struggle of a small state against a major power. Even some Arab states, particularly Egypt, provided arms, ammunition, and military training to the Greek Cypriots (Akgönenç, 1993: 82-83). In the 1965 voting, the Arab states voted against Turkey, or at best some abstained from voting.³⁶ Turkey was seriously disappointed when she could not achieve the support of her Western allies in an issue that she believed herself to be completely right. After then, Turkey reoriented her foreign policy to develop relations not only with the Arab states but also with the Balkan neighbors, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries (Karaosmanoğlu, 1983: 158).

When the Cyprus crisis became a national issue by the 1965, a debate started in Turkey to question the close ties with the Western allies. The anti-American propaganda and the reassessment of the use of Turkish bases coincided with the Cyprus issue. Even a second war of independence had been spoken within some circles in Turkey. Tamkoç states (1976: 286) that Turkey understood her ties with the West were based on "complementary interests rather than on identical interests."

³⁶ In the voting of the UN Resolution in December 1965, which disclaimed Turkey's rights on Cyprus stemming from international treaties, 47 states voted against Turkey and 54 states abstained voting. Only 4 states voted in favor of Turkey, which are the US, Iran, Pakistan, and Albania. Although the NATO members abstained voting in a conflict between the two NATO members, the US voted in favor of Turkey for the purpose of recovering the relations, which soured after the 1964 Johnson letter (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 138).

Besides, the stand taken by the allies revealed the fact that they considered Turkey as an occasional ally but not a real member of their community.

3.3.2. Adoption of the New Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy

The new principles of the Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East were presented for the first time by a senior official of the Turkish Foreign Ministry, Hamit Batu, in the March 1965 issue of the Bulletin of the Turkish Foreign Ministry (Aykan, 1993: 94-95). In this article, it was stated that the new Turkish foreign policy was shaped upon the lessons of the 1950's wrong policies. The new policy was to contribute to the peace and security in the Middle East by diminishing the tension with the Arab states, which appeared in the 1950s. Hence, Turkey intended to refrain from interfering in the affairs between the Arab states. She decided to reconsider her commitments to the Western alliance in order not to harm its relations with her neighbors and the states of the region. By remaining out of political and military pacts in the Middle East, Turkey hoped to achieve respect of the Arab states and their support on the Cyprus issue. Besides, the new policy would contribute to regional security, and was justified by Atatürk's motto, "Peace at home, peace in the world."³⁷

These basic principles, which had been shaped not only by the historical experience but also by the co-effect of political, military, and economic concerns of Turkey, guided the Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East since the mid-1960s. These principles were later outlined by Ayhan Kemal (1974: 100-107) and quoted by many scholars in Turkey. Taşhan elaborated on these principles and summarized (1987: 6-7) them as follows; non-interference in domestic affairs of the Arab states; non-interference in intra-Arab relations; equality among states of the

³⁷ The so-called new Turkish foreign policy of the 1960s was later defined as "the traditional Kemalist policy" in order to justify it (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997).

region and development of bilateral relations; political support to the Arab states for Palestine and maintaining diplomatic ties with Israel; not allowing Turkey's Western relations adversely affect her relations in the Middle East and vice versa. Taşhan notes (1985: 7) that implementation of some of these principles goes back to the early 1920s - to the time of Atatürk.

3.3.2.1. Non-Interference in the Affairs of the Arab World

Turkey adopted a kind of wait-and-see attitude in her policies towards the Middle East rather than giving quick responses and directly involving in the affairs of the region. This low-profile policy of non-involvement in regional affairs was shaped by the bitter experiences of the 1950s. Karaosmanoğlu remarks (1996: 14) that historical experience showed the Turkish policymakers that “the diplomatic return of any involvement in the Middle East would be poor, carrying the high risk of becoming mired in the swamp of intrigue that characterized regional relationship.”

Turkey became a hesitant actor of the Middle East politics, which was non-interventionist, uninterested in the affairs of the region, and concerned not to appear to be projecting power beyond its borders. (Robins, 1996: 179-180) Turkish leaders pursued the principles of non-interference both in the domestic affairs of the Middle Eastern states and in the internal conflicts between the states of the region for the rest of the Cold War. They tried to be more neutral in order to change Turkey's image, deemed by the Arab states as the instrument of the Western sponsored policies (Çelik, 1999: 141).

The tension increased in the Middle East when an internal war occurred in Jordan between the Palestine guerillas and the Jordan government in 1970. The guerillas were using the Jordan territory, where the Palestine refugees inhabited, as a base in their attacks against Israel. Therefore, the relations of Jordan became tense

with Israel. The issue soon turned into a problem of the Arab world and Syria intervened in Jordan to support the guerillas. Arab leaders assembled in Egypt and called the parties to end the conflict. Despite the Syrian support, Jordan controlled the guerillas.

During the crisis, Turkey did not repeat the mistake of the 1957 Lebanon crisis, in which her interference on behalf of Lebanon caused a Turkish-Syria conflict. Turkey refrained from interfering and declared the problem to be an internal issue of Jordan. Regional character of the issue also deterred Turkey not to support Jordan but let her only sent food and medicine to this country. Furthermore, when the US intervention in Jordan became likely to happen, Turkey declared that her bases would not be used against any Arab state and did not let the American 6th Fleet use her ports during the crisis (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 173-182).

3.3.2.2. Separating Western Relations from the Middle East

Another feature of the new policy was not to allow Turkey's Western relations to affect her relations adversely with the Middle Eastern states and vice versa. This principle required less cooperation with the US and a balanced attitude between the West and the Arab states. The new Turkish foreign policy in the region discontinued to be a function of her pro-Western alignment. Hence, Turkey became reluctant to contribute to the American interventionism to prevent the Soviet influence in the Middle East, which was not a part of NATO defense planning or directly related to Turkish security. As a result, Turkish-American bilateral defense relations remained within the NATO framework (Karaosmanoğlu, 1987: 80). Turkey emphasized the out of area issue and did not want the region to be included in NATO contingencies.

Robins notes that (1991: 27) Ankara showed particular interest to distance her interests from that of her NATO allies in the region.³⁸

Turkey, contrary to the US position, provided political support to the Arab cause where possible. In distancing her policies with that of the Americans in the Middle East, Turkey tried to demonstrate that she was not a surrogate of Washington. During the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, American diplomatic ties were cut with most of the Arab states. The US proposal to maintain relations with these states via Turkey was declined by Ankara. Furthermore, Turkey also opposed the US demand for protecting American interests in Iraq via Ankara, thinking its negative impact to the relations with the Arab states.

Turkey abstained from any kind of policy that is likely to create tension with the Arab states. In January 1968, the US Foreign Ministry declared the creation of a Gulf Security Pact to include Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Immediately after this declaration, Turkish Foreign Ministry declared that Turkey has no information about such a pact-planning in the region. In fact, Turkey was cautious not to experience a second type of Baghdad Pact (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972:159). Turkey signed a new Defense Cooperation Agreement with the US in July 1969. The new agreement was based on equal partnership between the parties and restated the sovereignty of Turkey.

The decrease of the tension with the Soviet Union and the socialist states indirectly helped to develop Turkey's relations in the Middle East. It is known that ever since the 1950s, the Soviet Union had developed close ties with the Arab states, particularly with Nasser's Egypt, Syria, and later with Iraq. Kürkçüoğlu notes (1972:

³⁸ Turkey then frequently declared that her bases would not be used for non-NATO purposes. Turkish bases had a kind of deterrence of its own in relations with the US. It reminded the 1964 Johnson letter through which the US opposed the use of American weapons by Turkey for non-NATO purposes.

13) that normalization of the relations with the Soviet Union after the mid-1960s had naturally helped Turkey to develop its relations with the Arab states.

Since the mid-1960s, although Turkey was still willing to join European integration process³⁹, Ankara became more cautious in differentiating its relations with the Third World and even with the Soviet Bloc from her ties with the Western allies. This orientation was then called as “multi-faceted foreign policy” (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997). Turkey’s relations with the Soviet Union began to improve in an increasing momentum by the year 1963. First, a Turkish parliamentary delegate in 1963 and Turkish Foreign Minister Erkin in 1964 visited the Soviet Union. Their counterparts paid these visits back to Turkey in 1965. Then the exchange of visits continued at the level of premiers in 1965 and 1966. For the first time in mutual relations, visits occurred at the level of presidents by the Turkish President Sunay in 1969 and by the Soviet President Podgorny in 1972.

However, the easing of the tension did not totally abort Turkey’s suspicion over the Soviet irredentism. Turkish diplomats were more reserved than their European colleagues during the negotiations of the European Security Conference regarding the mutual force reduction. Turkish leaders feared that a reduction of the forces in Central Europe would cause the Soviet redeployment of troops on Turkish borders, which was a great concern for Turkey. Besides, the Turkish leaders believed that Turkey’s place was within Europe and they did not try to pull Turkey out of the Atlantic Pact (Tamkoç, 1976: 288-290).

In the late 1970s, Turkey’s strategic importance was once again underlined when a second Cold War started in the region with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Islamic Revolution. After the closure of American

³⁹ Turkey became associate member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 with the Ankara Agreement.

military installations in Iran, Turkey's role in the defense of the region against Soviet threat was re-appreciated by the Reagan administration. Besides, Turkey became more eager for security consultations in the Middle East although she still refused to make formal commitments outside NATO framework (Criss, and Bilgin, 1997). In 1979, even though Turkey was not happy with the Iranian revolution, she opposed the American requests to break off diplomatic relations with Iran and did not permit the use of İncirlik base in the rescue operation of American hostages from Tehran (Sever, 1998/99: 156).

In the early 1980s, the US established the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) to defend any assault of outside powers within the so-called Carter Doctrine. Although shared similar concerns with the US about the security of the Gulf, Turkey did not undertake any military commitment outside the NATO framework when asked to participate in the project by the US (Sever, 1998/99: 155). On March 29, 1980, Turkey and the US signed an "Agreement for Cooperation on Defense and Economy", in whose article 5, paragraph 4, it was underlined that "the extent of the defense cooperation envisaged in this Agreement shall be limited to obligations arising out of the North Atlantic Treaty" (Karaosmanoğlu, 1983: 160).

The Lebanon Crisis of 1982-1984 has brought a new challenge to Turkish decision makers about the use of bases on Turkish soil. Turkey still did not forget the bitter experiences of the 1958 Lebanon Crisis that created serious problems with the Arab states. When the use of bases came to the agenda, Turkey, cautious not to be

involved in American intervention in the region, granted the permission in December 1983 only for the “humanitarian purposes.”⁴⁰

3.3.2.3. Balance Between Israel and the Arabs

Another aspect of the new Turkish foreign policy was both providing political support for the Arab cause and maintaining relations with Israel. This policy necessitated a kind of balanced attitude in relations between Israel and the Arab states. Turkish policy makers also had to balance between the military cooperation with the US on the one hand and the political and economic relations with the Arab states on the other. During the time of the crises, Turkey opted to distance herself from American policy making towards Israel, which was less likely to create vital problems with the US (Hubel, 1987: 109). Besides, contrary to the Arab expectations, Ankara did not totally sever its diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv in order to prevent possible reactions in the US Congress against Turkey’s security interests.

Turkey’s balanced policies had significant political and military effects over the affairs of the region. During the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, although refrained from condemning Israel as “aggressor,” Turkey advocated Israel’s withdrawal to pre-1967 borders.⁴¹ Subsequently, Turkey failed to support the Palestinian independence in the 1969 Rabat Conference. In the Conference, Turkey supported the Palestinian people

⁴⁰ Turkish Foreign Minister mentioned the use of bases only after the talks with Saudi Arabia. This shows Turkey’s caution not to cause Arab resentment on the issue. However, Turkey’s concerns were not only due to the Middle Eastern considerations. The permission was granted to recover the bilateral relations with the US just a month after the independence declaration of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (November 15, 1983). Besides, while the negotiations were continuing with this country about the co-production of the F-16 fighters, Turkey wanted to demonstrate to the US Congress that she was still a sincere ally of the US. See Helmut Hubel, “Turkey and the Crisis in the Middle East.” In Seyfi Taşhan and Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu eds., *Middle East, Turkey and the Atlantic Alliance*, (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 1987), 112.

⁴¹ Following the 1967 War, Turkey supported the UN Resolution 242, which required Israeli withdrawal from the areas occupied during the war and reserved the right of all regional states to live within secure boundaries (Gürkan, 1993b: 104). Turkey based her main attitude on the UN Resolution 242, which she always referred to in the following years.

only at humanitarian grounds and based its attitude in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 242, which does not mention the Palestinian by name (Aykan, 1993: 95-96).

Turkey did not permit the US to use its bases for non-NATO purposes in both of the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973. During the 1967 War, the US request to use the bases for refueling and supply activities was turned down by Ankara. Turkish Foreign Minister Çağlayangil declared that, “the military bases in Turkey were not going to be used against the Arabs by means of a *fait-accompli*” (Kürkçüoğlu, 1987: 18). Turkish Red Crescent also sent aid materials to Syria and other Arab states just after the war ended. This attitude of Turkey was welcomed by the Arab states and she was excluded from the short-lived oil embargo in the aftermath of the 1967 War.

Turkish support to the Arabs against Israel in the 1967 War showed its effect in the Third Non-Aligned Summit Conference in Zambia in 1970. When Greek Cypriot leader Makarios proposed an anti-Turkish decision alike the one in 1964, not only the moderate states as Morocco, Jordan, and Kuwait but also the radicals like the United Arab Emirates, Algiers, and Syria opposed the proposal and supported Turkey. This support showed the success of Turkey’s rapprochement policy with the Arab states (Kürkçüoğlu, 1972: 11-12).

Again throughout the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, Turkey objected the US to use her bases for refueling and reconnaissance facilities during its airlift of supplies to Israel. However, Turkish leaders had an indirect support to the Arabs by tolerating Soviet flights over Turkey. These pro-Arab Turkish policies were totally contrasting with that of the 1950s, remembering that Ankara let the US use the Turkish bases for sending American troops to Lebanon during the crisis of 1958. Besides, as noted by

Kemal (1974: 101), Turkey offered Syria port facilities on her southern coasts for transportation of material sent by third countries.

It is seen that the balance was rather tilted towards the Arabs since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. In 1974, Turkey supported the UN resolutions providing the Palestinian people with the right of national independence and sovereignty, even though they did not refer to UN Resolution 242. Throughout 1974, Turkey voted in favor of all resolutions at the UN General Assembly that invite the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in its discussions (Aykan, 1993: 97). In November 1975, Turkey voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution describing Zionism as a form of racism (Aykan, 1993: 107).

Turkey recognized the PLO as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in all liberated Palestinian territory,” in line with the resolution of the Arab Summit held in Rabat in October 1974 (Kürkçüoğlu, 1987: 19). Although many Western states speak of “the Palestinian Authority,” the “PLO,” and “the chairman Arafat,” Turkey speaks of “Palestine” and “President Arafat” (Makovsky, 1996: 155).

On the other hand, contrary to the Arab expectations, Turkey has never completely severed its relations with Israel and continued at least a low-profile diplomatic representation in times of crisis. Furthermore, Turkey and Israel developed close relations that included intelligence exchange on the issues of terrorism and Arabian subversive acts ever since the regime change in Iraq in 1958. As of the early 1970s, it has been known by Turkey that radical factions of the PLO were in liaison with the anti-Turkish terrorist organizations including Armenian ASALA and Marxist groups in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. Despite the Turkish diplomatic recognition of the PLO and Ankara’s commitment to

the establishment of a Palestinian state, Turkey's relations with the PLO have been seriously affected due to these ties. Although the PLO disclaimed any kind of support for them, Israeli intelligence was easily provided for Turkey on the issue. Besides, the collapse of the central authority in Lebanon was a source of anxiety for both Turkey and Israel during the 1970s (Fuller, 1993: 55-58).

However, by the late 1970s, Turkey adopted more even-handed, and careful policies that maximized its relations with both sides. The fact that Egypt, as one of the most radical Arab states, recognized Israel in 1979 made it easier for Turkey to balance its relations between the Arabs and Israel. Turkey was released of the discomfort of being the only Muslim state having diplomatic relations with Israel. Although still concerned about the PLO support to the anti-Turkish terrorist organizations, Turkey permitted the PLO to open an office in Ankara in 1979.⁴² Yet, it was not an easy task for Ankara to balance the relations between Israel and the Arabs. An important test to the relations occurred when Israel declared Jerusalem as its capital with the city's undividable territorial integrity in July 1980. The decision was not acceptable not only for the Arab states but also for Turkey. Again, contrary to the Arab requests to break off all its relations, Turkey only downgraded its diplomatic representation to the secondary secretary level and kept it in Tel Aviv. Besides, in February 1982, Turkey abstained voting on the UN Resolution ES 9/1, which condemned Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights and declared Israel not to be a peace-loving state (Aykan, 1993: 100-102).

Relations with Israel were gradually normalized and diplomatic representation was upgraded to *chargé d'affaires* in 1986 and to full ambassadorial status in 1991. On the other hand, Turkey is the first country that recognized the state of Palestine in

⁴² Turkey's balanced attitude was seen in the rank of the PLO representative, which was permitted to be *chargé d'affaires* as the same rank with the Israeli representative in Ankara (Aykan, 1993: 100).

November 1988, just six hours after the Ninetieth Palestine National Council declaration of its foundation. Yet, Turkey informed Israel that her recognition of the Palestinian state does not impair Turkey's commitment to the right of all regional states - indicating Israel, to live in peace and security. In December 1991, Turkey abstained in the UN General Assembly voting that repealed its 1975 resolution labeling Zionism as a form of racism (Aykan, 1993: 106-107).

3.3.2.4. Organization of Islamic Conference

Although it challenged her secular state structure, Turkey participated in the meetings of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in order to achieve support for the Cyprus case and to develop bilateral relations with oil-rich Arab states. However, Turkey always put a reserve on the final records of the OIC, when contrasted with her secular constitution or the UN resolutions that Turkey supported and voted for. Turkey sent only its foreign minister to the First Summit of the Heads of States held in Rabat in September 1969. In April 1974, Turkey opposed a Syrian resolution to sever diplomatic relations with Israel in the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore, Pakistan. However, Turkey supported a similar resolution in July 1975 at the Sixth Conference of Foreign Ministers of Muslim States. Besides, Turkey applied and was accepted as a full member of the OIC at the Seventh Foreign Ministers Conference held in İstanbul in May 1976. The radical change in Turkey's position is due to Turkey's disappointment for the attitude of the US Congress towards the Cyprus problem and the unexpected financial, political and military support of Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia for Turkey during and after the 1974 Cyprus intervention (Akgönenç, 1993: v-vi). The level of Turkish participation was increased to Premiership at the Third Summit in Taif in 1981. Finally, Turkish representation was upgraded to the level of Presidency at the Fourth Summit held in the Casablanca in

1984. Besides, Turkey's particular attention to economic aspect of the Conference is visible since she was chosen as the president of the Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation (COMCEC) of the OIC in Casablanca Summit (Gözen, 1995: 75).

In addition, by participating in the meetings of the OIC, Turkey wanted to demonstrate to the oil-rich Islamic states of the Gulf that her secular regime was not a threat to them but a mutual sympathy of culture existed (Robins, 1991: 42). However, although the Islamic Conference showed some sympathy to the Turkish Cypriots, Turkey could not achieve the expected support on the issue.⁴³ The Islamic Conference was a loose organization and the Arab states were all members of the Non-Aligned group, in which they had close ties with Greece and Greek Cypriots. Contrary to Turkish recognition of the Palestinian state, the independence of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has never been recognized by the Arab states since November 1983.

3.3.2.5. Bilateral Relations and Economy

One other concern for Turkey was to develop bilateral relations with all states of the region. Rather than repeating the mistakes of forming pacts of any kind, Turkey concentrated on strengthening its bilateral ties with all states of the region. Turkey developed economic cooperation with some Arab states during the mid-1970s. Some bilateral projects with Iraq, Libya, Kuwait, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia were developed for cooperation in industrial and technical issues, commerce and tourism (Akgönenç, 1993: 86-87).

⁴³ The PLO had always supported the Greek Cypriot position that the Turkish troops had no right to intervene in Cyprus. Even, it did not approve the resolutions of the Seventh Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in İstanbul in May 1976, where for the first time since 1969, the representatives of the Turkish Muslim community of Cyprus were invited to participate in the future meetings of the Islamic Conference (Aykan, 1993: 98, 109).

Although the economic factors did not have any significant effect in Turkey's relations with the Arab world during the 1960s, Turkey became economically vulnerable to the developments in the region when the oil prices doubled after the 1973 oil crises. Furthermore, some factors obliged Turkey to improve economic relations with the Arab world, which were the absence of American economic aid, the textile quotas of Europe, a sharp reduction in Turkish workers' migration to Europe as of 1974, and the American arms embargo on Turkey from 1975 to 1978. Turkey hoped that the OIC would provide the base for increasing economic interaction between the oil-rich Middle Eastern states and industrializing, labor-rich Turkey. While Turkish workers and exports were sent to Saudi Arabia, Libya, and other Arab states, Turkey expected to get cheaper oil and financial support from these countries (Hubel, 1987: 101).

Thanks to her neutral stance during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Turkey was not included in the oil embargo of the Arab states. Besides, she reached an agreement with Iraq in 1973 to build the first pipelines to carry Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean over Turkey, which meant cheaper oil for Turkey (Gözen, 1995:78). As a result, while Turkey's exports to Europe decreased from 64% to 49%, its exports to the Middle East states almost doubled from 23% in 1979 to 44% in 1981 (Sander, 1998: 228). However, it was obvious that Turkey could not trade and do business with the Middle Eastern states at the same time while remaining distant from the politics and social trends of the region, unlike Japan did (Robins, 1991: 115).

During the war between Iran and Iraq, Ankara developed economic relations with both of these countries. Ankara pursued a neutral stance and maintained cooperation with both of the two belligerents not to harm economic relations with them. Turkey also considered possible damages of any involvement to her Middle

Eastern relations. Besides, Turkey believed that unconditional victory of one side would destroy whatever political balance existed in the Middle East (Taşhan, 1985: 15).

All in all, Turkey's Western identity and security concerns led her to unify with Western state systems. Hence, she avoided involving in Middle Eastern affairs or took part only in Western sponsored projects to undermine Soviet influence in the region. While her alliance with the West in the region caused alienation of the Arab states against her, she could not even achieve Western support in her vital issue of Cyprus. In order to avoid isolation in international affairs and to gain support of the Arab states for Cyprus and her economic crisis, Turkey followed a multi-faceted track in her foreign policy and established some principles in the Middle East. Accordingly, from the mid-1960s to the end of the Cold War, Turkey avoided involving in regional affairs and intra-Arab relations, pursued a balanced attitude towards the Arabs and Israel, avoided taking part in Western sponsored security projects in the region, and tried to follow bilateral and equal relations with all states of the region. However, as to be analyzed in the following chapters, the separatist PKK terrorism brought non-negligible challenges to these long-established principles of Kemalist foreign policy.

CHAPTER IV:

State Support to the PKK by Syria and Iran

This chapter will try to explain the relationship between the PKK and its main sponsors in the Middle East, Syria and Iran. The clandestine support provided to the PKK, and the motive behind this support will be outlined as a clear example of state-supported international terrorism. The clandestine relations, the covert and overt support to the PKK and the motives behind the Syrian and Iranian sponsorships, which made the PKK a tool in their policies against Turkey, will be clarified as much as the literature permits.

4.1. Internationalization of the PKK Terrorist Organization

Syria and Iran are the two countries that mostly contributed to the internationalization of the PKK terrorism. Since the establishment period of the organization, Syria and Iran have cooperated in their policies regarding the PKK. While decisions on supporting the PKK were taken together, they separately implemented the policy of using the PKK as a tool in their calculations regarding Turkey (Özcan, 1999a: 252). Throughout this cooperation, Syria was the active part that stayed at the front in supporting the PKK, whereas Iran's sponsorship remained covert.

This cooperation can be clearly seen in the following words of Öcalan; "The Iranian President Ali Ekber Hashimi Rafsancani and Syrian President Hafez Assad are two friends of mine. My organization has friendly relations with Iran and Syria." (Tekin, 1999: 66). Besides, after the capture of Öcalan by Turkish military forces on February 16, 1999, he confessed during his trial in Turkish courts that, "countries like Germany, Greece, Iran, and Syria gave full support to carve out an independent Kurdish state out of Turkish territory" (Akalin, 1999: 191).

For a better evaluation of the sponsorship by Syria and Iran of the PKK terrorist organization, one should first grasp the importance of foreign shelter for the PKK. As a part of its “Long-Term Public Warfare” strategy, the PKK decided to implement guerilla warfare. Although they had weapons and theoretical knowledge on guerilla warfare, they did not have tactical know-how or experienced trainers. Hence, until having the support of the PLO groups, they could not succeed in guerilla warfare. Öcalan’s relations in Syria helped the PKK to develop the training for insurgency (Özcan, 1999a: 78-79).

Implementing the Maoist “long-termed public warfare”, PKK terrorists had a three-phase strategy, including “strategic defense”, “strategic balance”, and “strategic offense” stages (Imset, 1992: 34). In the first phase of “strategic defense”, when they are in the weakest condition, it is crucial for the guerillas to remain alive. In this phase, the guerillas must avoid engagements with regular armed forces when they do not have proper conditions. For this reason, PKK terrorists needed “safe heavens” (base of operations) in and out of the country, where terrorists could cover themselves, build up forces, heal wounds, and provide food, weapons, and ammunition (Özcan, 1999a: 86). In order to serve as a shelter for the guerillas, the geographical features and location of these bases are of crucial importance, particularly for being out of political and military reach of the state authority (Özcan, 1999a: 221).

These “operational bases” were called as “yellow regions”, which planned to be turned into safe “red regions” as they linked each other in time by means of increased armed struggle. The aim is to create more “operational bases” in the untouched “white regions” and to enlarge “red regions”, in where simultaneously regular forces could be built up (Özcan, 1999a: 75-78). Therefore, while searching to find

appropriate places to be “strategic bases” inside the country, the PKK had already chosen Syria, Iraq, and Iran as the “safe heavens” outside the Turkish borders. If the guerillas could achieve the public support, equal to what meant water for the fish, then it was the proper time to proceed into the “strategic balance” period (Özcan, 1999a: 86). In order to achieve success in guerilla warfare, foreign support becomes crucial, particularly that of the neighboring countries. Whereas the political and economic help of the foreign states are welcomed, the vital support to the guerillas is the provision of bases and shelters beyond the borders.⁴⁴

However, the fact that its existence is mostly dependent on foreign support became an important deficiency for the PKK. From the very onset of its establishment, the PKK has been bound up with foreign support and shelter, first and foremost provided by the neighbors of Turkey. The military power of the PKK was directly related with the shelter provided by Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Hence, the geography and intensity of PKK activities were decided upon the political conflicts of its sponsors with Turkey, but not regarding the military necessities of the PKK.⁴⁵ Therefore, the PKK could not progress into the “strategic balance” phase and remained as a tool in the hands of its sponsors, Syria and Iran. Besides, the ultimate objectives of the PKK were different than its sponsors. Interestingly, the so-called Kurdish state – the ultimate goal of the PKK, was also including regions from Iran and Syria. What the PKK miscalculated was that Iran and Syria carefully controlled the organization and did not let it to exceed the guerilla stage (Özcan, and Gün, 2002: 11-13).

⁴⁴ Güngüz AKTAN, *Radikal*, September 30, 1998, quoted in Hasan Cemal, *Kürtler* (The Kurds), (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2003), p. 438.

4.2. State Support to the PKK by Syria

4.2.1. Terrorism in Syrian Foreign Policy

Supporting terrorist groups operating against Turkey had always been an option in the political spectrum of Syria. As a proxy of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, Syria not only supported terrorism against Turkey and Israel, but also became a home for various Marxist groups from all around the world. As the international system changed with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Syria became one of the most affected states by the global developments in the Middle East. Due to the end of credits and military support from the Soviet Union, Syrian economy and military were caught in a setback – difficult to afford two-front mobilization between Israel and Turkey⁴⁶. However, in order to continue her leadership aspirations in the Arab world, Assad regime needed to be strong against Israel and Turkey. Yet, Syrian politics were experienced enough in adapting to the new conditions. While concentrating their conventional forces against its primary threat - Israel, Syria simply decided on using terrorism as a tool at hand against Turkey by means of the PKK.⁴⁷

Syrian have been directly involved in planning or executing international terrorist attacks and continued to provide safe haven and support for several groups that engage in such attacks. Other than the PKK, several radical terrorist groups have maintained training camps or other facilities on Syrian territory or in areas of Lebanon's Bekaa Valley under Syrian control, namely HAMAS, the PFLP-GC, and

⁴⁵ For example, PKK's increasing activities in 1991 in Ağrı and Kars – next to Iran and Azerbaijan were directly related with the developments in the region. The independence of Azerbaijan, and the possibility of Baku-Ceyhan oil-pipeline were among the source of anxieties for Iran. On the part of Syrian calculations, the intensity of PKK attacks were related with the tension about the Euphrates' waters and the PKK started activities in Hatay region in 1995.

⁴⁶ Syria was acknowledged by Russia that it could no more provide weapons, ammunition, and military equipment unless Syria paid in cash. Hence, let alone buying new weapons, Syria could have hardly provided spare part requirements for the armaments at hand (Alaçam, 1994/95: 5).

the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Although Damascus has stated its commitment to the peace process with Israel, it has not prevented anti-Israeli attacks by Hizballah and Palestinian projectionist groups in southern Lebanon and helped in re-supply of these groups.⁴⁸ The failure of Syria on political and military fields avoids her from directly facing other states through diplomatic means on the issues it deems as problematic. Hence, Syria resorts to the use of terrorism as an instrument in its foreign policy, and even when it accepts negotiations, it holds terrorism close at hand as an instrument of power in bargaining with the adversary (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 11).

4.2.2. Terrorism Directed Against Turkey by Syria

When the Palestinian guerillas settled in Lebanon in the early 1970s, Syria established links with the Marxist Palestinian groups. Thanks to the Syrian and Soviet support, Lebanon became a training center for Marxist “revolutionary armies” and “freedom fighters” from all over the world. The region turned into a safe heaven for Marxist terrorist groups, where they supported each other in terms of military training, provision of camps, weapons, and ammunition. By the early 1970s, Marxist-Leninist Kurdish movements and left-wing Turkish terrorist groups began to use the same area (Özcan, 1999a: 12).

Besides the huge support given to the separatist PKK terrorist organization, ever since the early 1970s, Syria had already been providing assistance and shelter for other terrorist groups operating against Turkey, namely ASALA, THKP/C-Acilciler, Revolutionary Left, TIKKO, MLSPB, TKP/M-L, DKP/SHB. Syria also supported Marxist groups operating in various places of the globe, such as Japan’s

⁴⁷ In a statement made in 1991, Öcalan argued that Syria supported the PKK to keep the balance against Turkish-Israeli axis (Buzoğlu, 1997: 118).

⁴⁸ Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1997, prepared by the US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism in April 1998, available at <http://www.ciaonet.org/>

Red Army, French Direct Action, El Zulfikar of Pakistan, Abu Nidal, and various militants in Lebanon. The control of these groups was exercised by Ali Duba, the Head of Military Intelligence in Damascus, and by Rifad Assad in Paris.⁴⁹

The fact that Syria is governed by a totalitarian regime that depends on a small Alawite minority necessitates foreign enmities to distract and route the society to that area for the survival of the regime. Syria's hostile policies against the West in general, and Turkey in particular, serve to this end as a part of the strategic calculations of the Assad regime. Therefore, the Kurdish population of Syria, which has been suppressed by the Syrian regime for years, has been exploited and diverted against Turkey.⁵⁰ Syrian policies against its own Kurdish population can be analyzed in two periods. In the first period, particularly from the establishment of the anti-Arab Kurdish nationalism in the 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s, the ruling governments harshly suppressed the Kurds deemed as a possible threat for the Syrian regime. In the second period starting in the early 1980s, Syria began to exploit its Kurdish population by diverting it as a threat against Turkey (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 30).

As a part of its strategic calculations, Syria mobilized its own ethnic Kurdish population against Turkey by means of compelling young people to join the PKK. According to Turkish sources, around 11,000 Syrian Kurds had joined the PKK between 1986 and 1998, and a significant number of them had been killed in clashes against Turkish forces.⁵¹ Some 30% of the PKK terrorists were reportedly of Syrian origin. In addition, the PKK had thousands of "militia" among the Kurds living in

⁴⁹ Tercüman, March 10, 1990.

⁵⁰ The Kurdish population of Syria is mostly underdeveloped in terms of socio-economic and cultural conditions and has a feudal structure (EP Politika, 25 July – 1 August 1993: 16). According to different sources, the Kurds of Syria is estimated to be 8% to 12% of the Syrian population amounting to 12 million (Özcan, 1999a: 239). Olson (1996: 85) notes that Kurdish population of Syria is estimated to be about 1 million, and he quotes (1996: 111) Kurdish sources, which gives their number

northern Syria, to boost its actual guerilla force in a potential Turkish-Syrian crisis.⁵² Moreover, a substantial number of the PKK terrorists killed by Turkish forces are reported to be Syrian citizens of Armenian origin (Criss, 1995: 32).

In a press statement in Düsseldorf made after the trial of 19 PKK terrorists, Cemil Assad, brother of Hafez Assad, stated, “Syria supports all the nations in the Middle East fighting for their independence. The same as President Hafez Assad, I also support the PKK that fights for its independence. The Kurdish people should be provided with their right of self-determination” (Buzoğlu, 1997: 117).

4.2.3. The Causes and Objectives of Syria in Supporting Terrorism Against Turkey

4.2.3.1. The Hatay Issue

It can hardly be stated that Syria and Turkey ever had friendly relations with each other. The Hatay issue has been one of the main sources of conflict between Turkey and Syria. Syrian political elite could have never reconciled themselves to the annexation of Hatay by Turkey since 1939. After then, Syria has always raised the issue of Hatay in negotiations with Turkey.

From the Syrian viewpoint, three factors help to understand why Syria keeps the issue alive. First is related with Syrian patriotism that the loss of Hatay has challenged the national pride in the country. Syria considered that their territorial integrity became a part of French calculations in the big game among European powers. Secondly, Syria claims that about 4 million Syrians live in Turkey, with a significant share of Alawite community among them. This has an emotional effect over the Alawite-dominated regime in Syria. Thirdly, Zaki al-Arsuzi, an important contributor of the Ba’th party theory in Syria, is one of those thousands of refugees

as 1.4 million (12%) in 1990, see also *Kurdish Times* 4 (1992): 21.

⁵¹ Turkish Daily News, September 3, 1998.

who came from Hatay to Damascus. Arsuzi commanded the Arab movement that protested Turkey's annexation of Hatay. As a member of the Alawite community from Hatay, Arsuzi contributed to the emotional and symbolic significance of Hatay issue in Syria (Muslih, 1996: 115-116). Arsuzi also administered the Association for the Liberation of Hatay, which is established by the Syrian regime (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 26).

By encouraging the Arab nationality, Syria keeps the issue alive on its high agenda. In the textbooks thought in Syrian schools, not only Hatay, but also other Turkish cities of Adana, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Kahramanmaraş are argued to be a part of Syria remaining under temporary Turkish occupation. As stated by Ali Mustafa, the Consul of Syria in İstanbul, Syria has never recognized the referendum performed by Turkey and France in Hatay and she does not recognize the Hatay part of the Turkish-Syrian border (Kocaoğlu, 1995c: 95). Hence, by means of PKK terrorist organization, Syria hoped to exploit ethnic and religious differences of Hatay and divert the attention of world public to the region.

4.2.3.2. The Water Dispute

The other major source of conflict between Syria and Turkey is the water problem. Syria's hostile policies against Turkey regarding the use of the Euphrates' water resources started with the construction of the Keban Dam, built up between 1964 and 1974. Upon the rejections of Syria, and Iraq, the credit for the Keban Dam could be provided from the World Bank after ensuring that it was not an irrigation but a hydroelectric project and assuring that Syria would receive at least 450 cubic meters per second (m^3/sec) of water from the Euphrates (Bölükbaşı, 1993: 13). When Turkey started the construction of the Karakaya Dam in 1976, Ankara suddenly

⁵² Turkish Probe, October 18, 1998.

found itself in an environment of terror and anarchy, whose links reached to the Bekaa Valley (Kocaoğlu, 1995c: 323). Again to receive World Bank credits for the Karakaya Dam, Turkey guaranteed the World Bank to let at least 500 m³/sec of water from the Euphrates to Syria (Bölükbaşı, 1993: 13).

Syrian concerns about the waters of the Euphrates River got intensified with the start of Turkey's Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP) in 1983.⁵³ Turkey's new irrigation policies in order to better exploit from water resources for agriculture and hydroelectricity have been deemed by Syria as the manipulation of water resources, in which water became a political weapon. On the other hand, Syria resorted sponsoring terrorism against Turkey in general, and supported the PKK in particular, in order to compel Ankara to be more forthcoming about the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Together with Iraq, Syria demanded Turkey to sign a water agreement on the principle of "a just and joint sharing of waters" (Tür, 1999: 114).

As much as it has been important for the Turkish economy, water is a vital source for Syria's program of economic recovery, initiated in the 1980s in order to be stronger against Israel. Hence, water became crucial for its electrical power generation, industrial programs and agricultural production. Turkey's GAP increased Syrian suspicions that Turkey had no good intentions towards Syria, and she "is playing the water card at a time when Syria is launching a program of economic reform and revitalization, and when it is engaged in delicate negotiations with Israel" (Muslih, 1996: 124).

⁵³ GAP is a multi-purpose project including the giant Atatürk Dam, and the Karakaya Dam with other 20 small dams and 19 hydraulic power plants on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers with two ten-mile long, eight-yards wide concrete irrigation tunnels. GAP is both a hydroelectric and an irrigation project, which planned to generate 26 billion kW of energy per year and to bring 1.7 million hectares of land under irrigation, see *GAP Component*, available online at the web site of Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration, <http://www.gap.gov.tr/English/Frames/fr1.html/>

Syria asserts that when GAP will be totally completed, the flow of water from Turkey to Syria will decrease from 30 billion m³ to 16 billion m³ and the quality of water will be negatively affected due to the use of fertilizers, agricultural chemicals, and increasing salinity (Şekerci, 1998/99: 238) Syria's hostile policies and political pressures on international platforms caused the failure of the World Bank credits for GAP and prevented Japan's funding of the irrigation project totaling 365 million dollars in 1992 (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 29). Kamran İnan, who was the State Minister of Turkey responsible for GAP in 1992, asserts that Hafez Assad threatened Japan by means of projecting 40 members of the Japan Red Army terror organization to make attacks in Japan in case of Japan's funding of the GAP irrigation projects (Şehirli, 2000: 413).

During the official talks between Turkey and Syria in 1986, Turkish delegation agreed to provide a sufficient amount of water not less than 500 m³/sec from the Euphrates to Syria throughout the accumulation of waters at the Karakaya and Atatürk Dams. In return, Syrian delegation agreed "not [to] permit actions aimed at [other country]" (Bölükbaşı, 1993: 19-20). In the following year, Turkey and Syria signed a Protocol for Economic Cooperation during Turkish Prime Minister Özal's visit to Damascus, in which Turkey guaranteed 500 m³/sec of water from the Euphrates to Syria during the fill-up of the Atatürk Dam and until a final accord signed concerning the allocation of the Euphrates' water resources. Together with the well-known 1987 water deal, the two states also signed a Security Protocol, in which the parties assured to prevent activities threatening other's security and to extradite criminals responsible for insurgency (Tür, 1999: 109-110). Actually, conclusion of such an agreement between the two states with the nature of "security for water" itself reveals that Syria exploited terrorism as a bargaining tool against Turkey.

Although denying their support for the PKK, Syrian officials notified that if Turkey keeps playing water card against Syria, they would not hesitate to apply any kind of pressure within their reach (Muslih, 1996: 128). PKK's bloody activities in Turkey had a sharp increase in the year 1990, when Turkey finished the construction of the Atatürk Dam, the 9th biggest one at that time in the world, and made it ready for filling. In the same year, Cemil Assad declared, "the support to the PKK in every aspect would continue" (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 46) Whenever Turkey brought the security issue on the agenda of the two countries, Syria answered with the need of assurances on waters of the Euphrates and Tigris on behalf of downstream riparian states. In February 1994, Turkish foreign ministry officials stated that as long as Syria supported PKK activities against Turkey, no kind of agreement concerning water would be signed with Syria (Tür, 1999: 120). In April 1994, after refusing Turkey's proposal for cooperation against the PKK and denying Syrian links with this terrorist organization, Hafez Assad expressed his displeasure about Turkey's policies on the Euphrates and noted that "any further delay in the signing of an agreement on the use of waters between Syria, Iraq, and Turkey is to the profit of no one" (Kirişçi, 1994/95: 56).

4.2.4. Syrian Support to the PKK Terrorist Organization

4.2.4.1. Establishment Period of the PKK

Syrian assistance to the PKK came at the most critical times for the terrorist organization. One of these vital periods in the history of the PKK is the crossing of Abdullah Öcalan, the founder and head of the organization⁵⁴, to Syria on June 7, 1979. Öcalan passed to Syria as soon as the martial law began to be implemented in Turkey and decided to publicize the establishment of the PKK after securing himself

in Syria (Özcan, 1999a: 44). Thanks to Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Öcalan established his first connections⁵⁵ in Syria and Lebanon (Özcan, 1999a: 227). Besides, the Syrian Kurdish Socialist Party helped Öcalan with getting him in touch with Syrian officials (Imset, 1992: 171). At this stage, Talabani, Anthony Primakov, and Syrian administration together established Öcalan's relations with the radical PLO leaders, George Habbash, Nayif Havatme, and Ahmet Cibril and provided training camps for PKK terrorists⁵⁶.

Öcalan later went to Lebanon where he established the first camp of the PKK for the political and military training in the Bekaa Valley, controlled by Syria. Öcalan ordered the "Central Committee" to send fifty militants immediately to Syria for training. Before the Central Committee could send these fifty militants, Öcalan increased the number to 250 with a new order (Özcan, 1999a: 244). Leaving Turkey in October and December of 1979, many PKK terrorists were trained in the camps of the PFLP-GC led by Ahmet Cibril under Syrian control (Özdağ, 1999: 34).

It is asserted by Özcan (1999a: 48-49) that Syrian and Bulgarian intelligence services, operating as proxies of the Soviet Union during the Cold War, may have contributed to the establishment of the PKK. The fact that the PKK had relations with the Marxist Palestinian groups as soon as it passed to Syria verifies this view. The Soviet Union and its proxy - Syria, known to be supporting all kind of international terrorism, were at the top of the list benefiting from destabilization of a

⁵⁴ Öcalan and his friends established the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan - PKK) in a meeting held in Lice, Diyarbakır on November 26-27, 1978. In the same meeting, they founded "the Central Committee" and prepared the party program (Özcan, 1999a: 42).

⁵⁵ In fact, Öcalan's relations with Syria go back to 1977, when he obtained arms by means of smugglers from Syria. Ethem code-named Sait Akçan, who was also a member of Syrian Intelligence Service, provided weapons by means of his relatives on the Turkish side of the border (Özcan, 1999a: 243). During his trial in Turkish courts, Öcalan confessed that Ethem Akcan helped him in passing to Syria and they stayed in a house in Kobani until providing identity cards from Palestinian Organization to pass Lebanon (Özkan, 2000: 68).

NATO country (Imset, 1992:54). Besides, intensive security measures were implemented in Syria against the armed activities of anti-Baathist Muslim Brotherhood Organization in the early 1980s. Concerning the severe controls of Syria, it was impossible for Öcalan to move freely in Syria and Lebanon without any assistance (Özcan, 1999a: 244). It was also confirmed by the ex-PKK members that PKK leaders and Soviet agents had been meeting occasionally in the Soviet Cultural Center in Damascus. Besides, Soviet officials had frequently intervened in the early 1980s on behalf of the PKK to prevent Damascus prohibiting PKK's use of Syrian territory (Imset, 1992: 174).

In Lebanon, the PKK established links with the Marxist Palestinian groups supported by Syria. In the early 1980s, PKK terrorists were trained in Sayda, Sur, Nebatiye, Selahaddin Eyyubi, Haspiye, Pamar, and Beirut by their Marxist trainers (Özcan, 1999a: 246). In accordance with PKK's coordination with Ahmet Cibril's PFLP-GC, an agreement of "cooperation and joint actions" was reached with the PFLP of George Habbash. In line with these agreements, many terrorists of the PKK were trained for putting bombs in cars and other vehicles in a camp led by Ahmet Cibril's son Cihad Cibril (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 50-51). PKK terrorists were also trained in the camps of other Palestinian groups, Ebu-Nidal, and Havatme. The common points of the Palestinian groups mentioned above were their Marxist ideology and support provided by Syria, Bulgaria, and the East Germany as the proxies of the Soviet Union (Özcan, 1999a: 89).

In addition, the PKK had established relations with the Armenian terrorist group ASALA. ASALA had already been supported by the PFLP-GC in terms of training. The links of ASALA with the Marxist Palestinian groups also helped the

⁵⁶ Anthony Primakov was the responsible of the KGB (Soviet Intelligence Service) activities in the region at the time and then the Russian Prime Minister, when Öcalan went to Russia in October 1998

PKK in the region. ASALA and the PKK made mutual press statements in the center of the PFLP in Sayda, Lebanon on April 7, 1980 and in the building of “The Voice of Arab Revolution” in Beirut in September 1981. They together implemented attacks against Turkish Consulate in Strasburg on November 10, 1980 and against a Turkish commercial airplane on November 11, 1981 in Rome (Özcan, 1999a: 51). Interestingly, with the start of PKK attacks against Turkey ever since the year 1984, the activities of ASALA had suddenly ended. As of the year 1984, the support given to ASALA by Syria, then switched for PKK activities against Turkey (Kocaoğlu, 1995b: 96).

After completing their training in Syria, the first groups of PKK terrorists passed into Turkey through Syrian border for reconnaissance and propaganda activities in the regions of Sason, Adiyaman, and Tunceli as of April 1980. However, they could not succeed and many of them were killed or arrested due to intensive security measures of the Turkish army in the aftermath of the September 12, 1980 military intervention (Özdağ, 1999: 34). The aftermath of the September 1980 military intervention is called as “Withdrawal Period” in the history of the terrorist organization PKK. As a part of the “Withdrawal Plan”, except for the ones going to Europe, almost 150 PKK terrorists assembled in the Bekaa Valley following their journey from the Turkish-Syrian border with the guidance of Syrian intelligence service. Soon their number reached 200 with the recruitment of sympathizers within Turkish workers in Libya and Europe. These terrorists were first settled in the camps of the Palestinian guerillas and then moved to the Halve camp, which was totally assigned for the use of PKK in 1981 (Aydın, 1992: 58-63).

after leaving Syria (Özcan, and Gün, 2002: 8-9).

Yet, the PKK not only found every kind of support to save itself from diminishing at the very first stage, but also it could hold conferences and congresses in Syria or Lebanese territory under Syrian control. The 1st Congress of the PKK, which took crucial importance in structuring its bloody history, was arranged in July 1981 in the Syrian controlled Bekaa Valley. In this congress, the Marxist-Leninist terrorist organization decided to implement the strategy of a long-term, Vietcong-style guerilla warfare in the Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey (Imset, 1992: 32).

These events helped the PKK to keep its structures and develop its capabilities in the shelters provided by the Syrian regime at a time when the structures of other terrorist groups in Turkey were destroyed by the security forces in the aftermath of the September 12, 1980 military intervention. In the absence of Syrian assistance, it was impossible of the newly established PKK terrorist organization - with less than a hundred militants and having no political ties and economic sources at the time - to find shelter, develop its structures, complete its military and political training, and make its first bloody attacks, four years later in 1984 (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 37-38). Hence, provision of camps, training, technical and logistical support, and funding by Syria in the very establishment phase of the PKK structures have vital importance for the organization. The PKK could have fade many times until it established its own operational systems of survival, had it not been for the Syrian support and encouragement in the early 1980s.

4.2.4.2. Syrian Support as a Salvation

When the Israeli Army launched attacks against the Palestinian military camps in the Southern Lebanon in June 1982, the cooperation between the PKK and Syrian regime was revealed once more. After the engagements between the Israeli Army

and the Palestinian groups, Israel invaded southern Lebanon and arrested 4500 militants. At the time, Israel noted that 11 PKK terrorists were killed and 13 were arrested with some other Turkish citizens belonging to Marxist groups, who had fought against the Israeli Army with the Palestinian militants. In this first guerilla experience of the PKK, Israeli forces captured very important information about the organization from the arrested PKK terrorists. These arrested PKK terrorists were later sent to Greece and then to Iran with planes (Özcan, 1999a: 89). However, unprofessional PKK terrorists got the chance of improving their combat experience in armed clashes along with the Palestinian militants against Israeli armed forces (Imset, 1992: 172).

At the time, while many Palestinians were sent to Tunisia, Öcalan was permitted to stay in Syria with the radical Palestinian leaders, Habbash, Havatme, and Cibril (Özcan, 1999a: 89). Besides, other than the 20 terrorists left in the Halve Camp in the Bekaa Valley, all of the PKK terrorists left Lebanon for Syria, where they were settled to houses in Damascus, Aleppo, and Qamishli, and continued their political education (Aydın, 1992: 71). Meanwhile, Syria opened Saika and Zebadani camps for the use of PKK terrorists, in which Syrian officers provided them with professional guerilla training. Abdullah Öcalan, together with leading PKK terrorists, was residing in the Saika Camp, the one personally administered by Rifad Assad – brother of Hafez Assad. As their friendship developed, Rifad Assad and Öcalan had frequently come together (Imset, 1992: 172-173).

The PKK decided to initiate its long-term popular warfare and armed political struggle in its 2nd Congress held in August 1982 in Syrian territory. Upon the decisions of the Congress, propaganda units infiltrated in Turkey for the purpose of making reconnaissance and preparations for further activities. In this Congress, the

PKK also decided to move its militants from Syria to northern Iraq, which was chosen as the base of operations due to the easy reach of the region in crossing Turkey (Imset, 1992: 33-35).

Starting in November 1981, Hafez Assad personally made a number of talks with Massoud Barzani, leader of the Iraq Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), to persuade him to accept deployment of PKK terrorists in his camps in northern Iraq. Although refusing initially - calculating a severe reaction from Turkey, Barzani could not stand much against Assad's insistence (Özdağ, 1999: 35). In fact, the Syrian-Iranian alliance helped to settle the issue on behalf of the PKK. Barzani's dependency on Iranian territory and support caused him to accept PKK terrorists in his camps in northern Iraq and Iran near Turkish borders (Özcan, 1999a: 253). Under the auspices of Syria and Iran, Öcalan and Barzani signed "The Basis of KDP-PKK Cooperation" agreement in 1983 (Özdağ, 1999: 37).

In order to reach northern Iraq, the PKK terrorists were carried with Soviet and Syrian military trucks from the Bekaa Valley to the Turkish and Iraqi borders. Syrian officials also provided them with plastic boats to cross over the Tigris River (Imset, 1992: 175). However, PKK terrorists had difficulties in passing through the Syrian-Iraqi border due to the conflict between Syria and Iraq.⁵⁷ In October 1982, 8 PKK terrorists were killed in armed engagements with Iraqi forces while passing Hezil Stream near the Syrian-Iraqi border. At this point, Syria-Iran cooperation once again helped to overcome the problem. Many PKK terrorists first went to Iran by planes and then passed to northern Iraq (Özdağ, 1999: 35). After all, PKK terrorists started

⁵⁷ Syria supported non-Arab Iran during its war with Arab Iraq. The anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist policies of Syria and Iran made them natural allies in the region (Muslih, 1996: 119). Syria cut the oil-pipeline, which transmitted Iraqi oil through Syrian territory to Banyas and Tripoli, Lebanon and closed the Iraqi border in July 1982 (Bölükbaşı, 1993: 15). Syria believed that the uprising of the Muslim Brothers Organization in Hama in 1982 was supported by Iraq (Buzoğlu, 1997: 115).

to settle to the region and to infiltrate in Turkey through Iraqi border in the late 1982s and early 1983s.

Upon the decisions taken in the 2nd Congress, Öcalan ordered the groups, which had been making reconnaissance and preparations, to start armed attacks in the so-called Botan area, including the cities of Hakkari, Van, and Siirt of Turkey in June 1984. The Marxist-Leninist PKK terrorists implemented their first bloody attacks on August 15, 1984 in Eruh, and Şemdinli. Then, PKK terrorists distributed the leaflets that declared the establishment of the HRK (Kurdistan Liberation Force). The timing of these first attacks was proper regarding the regional developments that Turkey had just launched her massive GAP project and a war began in the region between Iran and Iraq (Özcan, 1999a: 94-95).

Again the 3rd Congress of the PKK was held in the capital of Syria, Damascus, on October 25-30, 1986. In this Congress, the PKK replaced the HRK by its new military wing - the ARGK (People's Liberation Army of Kurdistan), and decided to start compulsory enlisting for the Kurds in Turkey. Accordingly, while the ARGK was assigned military struggle in the so-called Botan region, the ERNK (People's Liberation Front of Kurdistan), established in 1985, was designated to perform political activities (Şehirli, 2000: 300-302).

Among the 50 terrorist camps in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, which were under Syrian control, the biggest one was the Halve Camp, then Mahsun Korkmaz Academy in 1986, of the PKK terrorist organization. The Syrian soldiers in Lebanon amounting to 40,000 were ordered not to intervene in the PKK camp, which was clearly identified with a checkpoint near the road signs. According to an interview with a PKK member named Hunar in the Dutch paper *Volskrant* published on April 16, 1992, Hunar revealed that their camp was under direct control of the Syrian

officials, and they were provided with special identity cards approved by the Syrian officials. Hunar added that Abu Bakr, the one in charge of the ARGK at the time, was operating his actions in the Bar Elias region of Lebanon on the Syrian border. (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 14-15) In addition to the camps in Halve, Saika, and Zebadani, the PKK was using the camps in Qamishli, Ayn al Arab, Ra's al'Ayn, Hogo Stream, Derik, and Qunaytirah⁵⁸, and established places for accommodation in Damascus, Haseke, Telhalep, Amudah, and Jisrash in Syria.⁵⁹

4.2.4.3. Other PKK Activities in Syria

Cemil Assad personally visited the Halve camp in order to see the training facilities of PKK terrorists (Erciyes University, 1991: 38). Cemil Assad and Öcalan had personal contacts after Öcalan settled in Damascus. Öcalan stated that he established social contacts with Cemil Assad and visited him in festivals. Öcalan also stated that Syria restricted relations to the social level but did not developed political contacts, thus they could any time deny their relations with the PKK (Özkan, 2000: 68). When Turkey demanded Syria to close PKK camps in the Bekaa Valley in 1989, Hafez Assad responded, “the PKK’s existence in the Bekaa is preferable to its being out of the control of Syria. When it shifts to the Southern Lebanon, it will be out of control. We won’t let them infiltrate from the Syrian border” (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 42). This relationship revealed in Assad’s words then grew even bigger with the opening of bureaus in Damascus, Aleppo, Afrin, and Qamishli, aimed at providing support and making propaganda. These bureaus later turned into “Recruiting Offices” of the PKK, after being allowed by the Syrian regime to rally its Kurdish citizens against Turkey in accordance with Syrian

⁵⁸ Uğur Mumcu, “Kamplar”, Cumhuriyet , March 15, 1990.

⁵⁹ Milliyet, March 25, 1990.

objectives. Besides, the new recruited sympathizers coming from Europe were directed to the training camps after being provided with ID cards in these offices.⁶⁰

The PKK was cautious not to impose armed or political pressure against the Kurds of Syria. It continued an intensive propaganda campaign among the Syrian Kurds through publishing magazines and distributing videocassettes. By means of an organization called “Koma Fen”, the sympathizers performed activities of promoting Kurdish culture and folklore in Syria (Özcan, 1999a: 251). These facilities helped the PKK to provide logistical support and collect huge amounts of money for their gory attacks in Turkey. PKK members collected 70 million Syrian Liras as Ramadan Alms in the Afrin and Aleppo regions of Syria. In February 1995, the PKK continued its recruitment activities in northern Syria (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 51). Besides, through the sympathizers in the Kurdish villages near the Turkish border, the PKK controlled the smuggler and courier traffic for sending arms and logistics into Turkey.

The PKK established “Hospital Committees” in Syria for the medical treatment of the injured militants, which were transferred from northern Iraq. In October 1992, Cemil Bayik, one of the important leaders of the PKK, was brought to Damascus for a surgical operation after being injured in an operation of the Turkish military forces in northern Iraq (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 50).

Öcalan was residing in a three-story villa in Damascus protected by guards of Syrian Kurds and provided with a Mercedes car by Syrian administration. As a personal gesture, Rifad Assad also gave an armored vehicle to Öcalan to travel from Damascus to the Bekaa Valley. In every aspect, Öcalan enjoyed the life of a Syrian official in Damascus (Imset, 1992: 173). In addition, Öcalan had the opportunity to

⁶⁰ Milliyet, March 25, 1990.

have meetings with officials and politicians from Europe in Damascus. In these meetings, other than having the political support of the countries pleased with terror directed against Turkey, he also established links for the provision of arms and technical support.⁶¹

During the official Turkish visit to Damascus in 1987, Öcalan was asked to leave Damascus for the Bekaa Valley, one and a half hours drive away from the capital, until the Turkish visit ended (Imset, 1992: 174). During the visit of Turkish Interior Minister İsmet Sezgin to Damascus in 1992, when he presented some activities of the PKK in Syria⁶², a dictator like Hafez Assad, who had been governing his country by means of suppression more than twenty years, could say, “I hear for the first time, I am shocked.” On the other hand, Öcalan noted that the “command system” as the core of the organization was settled in Syria. According to PKK sources, almost 1000-1500 militants were trained annually in Syria and the number exceeded 10 thousand between 1987 and 1992. Besides, Öcalan himself asserted that, he trained 15 thousand guerillas up to 1994 in Syria (Özcan, 1999a: 248).

After Sezgin’s visit to Syria in April 1992, Syria temporarily suspended its support to the PKK. Syrian officials declared that around 500 PKK members were arrested and put in prison. Besides, Syrian intelligence service told the PKK to evacuate its biggest camp in the Bekaa Valley, Halve camp - or Mahsun Korkmaz

⁶¹ In one occasion on June 12, 1995, some Greek parliamentarians met with PKK terrorists in Syria. The Greek delegation included members from all mainstream Greek parties under the leadership of Deputy Speaker of the Greek Parliament. Besides expressing their political support for the PKK, the delegation awarded Öcalan with a plaque (Akalın, 1999: 184). Some of the other visits made to Öcalan in Syria include the following; by Heinrich Lummer, a political ally of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in Damascus on September 30, 1995 (Olson, 1996: 91); by a group of parliamentarians from Greece in August 1997; by a parliamentarian from Britain in June 1998 in Damascus; by a group from House of Lords of Britain in August 1998 in Damascus; and by some communist parliamentarians from Italy in September 1998 in Damascus (Şehirli, 2000: 414).

⁶² In his trip, Sezgin took some videocassettes with him showing Öcalan entering and leaving official Syrian buildings (Imset, 1992: 176)

Academy.⁶³ The ongoing cooperation of Syria with Turkey and coalition countries in the aftermath of the Second Gulf War had an effect on Syria's decision. Besides, Turkey and Syria agreed on preservation of Iraq's territorial integrity. Indeed, seeing that the PKK started to have successful results in Turkey, Syria did not want the organization go beyond the guerilla stage. However, although Syrian Interior Minister assured Prime Minister Demirel in his visit to Ankara in September 1992 that all PKK facilities were banned, Syria kept Öcalan with his central headquarters in Damascus and let small sized training facilities (Özcan, 1999a: 249). In April 1983, Öcalan stated that there was no decline in Syrian support for the organization (Cemal, 2003: 41).

Throughout the Turkish military operations against the PKK in northern Iraq in the summer of 1992, the PKK had lost many of its militants and most of its camps in the region. Upon this setback, the PKK had to declare a ceasefire in March 1993 for the purpose of reorganizing its structures.⁶⁴ However, it recommenced terrorist attacks in the late May of the same year, when Turkey rejected bargaining with terrorists. At the time, the PKK attack that caused the murder of 33 off-duty Turkish soldiers in Bingöl was deemed by the Turkish foreign ministry as a response of Syria to the building of Birecik Dam by Turkey on the Euphrates River (Cemal, 2003: 68).

The main deficiency of the terrorist organization was the absence of "qualified command structures". For this reason, the "Party Central School" was established in Syria in November 1993 to carry out ideological education and to coordinate the

⁶³ Milliyet, April 19, 1992.

⁶⁴ Before the ceasefire declaration of the PKK, Öcalan and Talabani met in the house of Rifad Assad in Damascus (Cemal, 2003: 65-66).

party activities.⁶⁵ In every training period, about 250-300 militants were trained in these schools (Özcan, 1999a: 250).

4.2.4.4. PKK Activities in Hatay

Despite the official denials from Syrian government, the support given to the PKK by Syria was increased in the year 1995. Following the severe casualties due to Turkey's operations in northern Iraq, PKK terrorists shifted some of their activities to the Syrian border, particularly to Hatay. Taking advantage of the regional topography, PKK terrorists crossed the Syrian border through Amanos Mountains and began their bloody attacks in northern Mediterranean as of August 1995.⁶⁶

The choice of the PKK to establish bases in Hatay, a significant and sensitive region in relations between Syria and Turkey, reveals one of the basic motives behind Syrian sponsorship. Hatay has a multi-ethnic structure that comprises the Turks, the Kurds, and the Arabs and involves many religious factions. In order to exploit ethnic and religious diversity of Hatay, the PKK tried to enlist the Arabian and Kurdish Alawite minority and it made attacks against the Sunni-Turkomen villages in the region. After failing in imposing its influence over the region due to the efforts of voluntary village guards, the PKK made the propaganda that the Turkish government armed Sunnis against the Alawites - Arab, Kurd, and Turk. Unable to exploit ethnic and religious sensitiveness of the region, the PKK then tried to exert influence and achieve popular support by purchasing food at prices significantly higher than the market price (Olson, 1996: 89-90).

4.2.4.5. The PKK-Syria Cooperation in Arms and Drug Trafficking

⁶⁵ Öcalan states that he had two party schools in Damascus, where both Turkish and Kurdish education were provided to PKK terrorists (Özkan, 2000: 69).

⁶⁶ According to the statements of the ARGK commander, the PKK started its activities in Hatay in 1994, but the Turkish security forces noticed them only after the early 1995s (Olson, 1996: 88).

As the PKK gradually settled in Syria, it constituted an important area in Syrian economy. The money collected as taxes by the PKK terrorists in Turkey and Europe together with other profits of the organization earned from commercial activities were spent in Syria. The PKK also run the leading smuggling network in Syria and Lebanon. The PKK deposits in Syrian commercial banks were alone reported to amount \$4 billion.⁶⁷ However, the PKK-Syrian cooperation in arms and drug trafficking has a particular importance in both of their economic resources. The structures of the military and intelligence services of Syria not only controlled and directed the terrorist organizations in the country, but also played an important role in arms and drug trafficking.⁶⁸ Accompanied by more than a hundred female guards in Europe, Rifad Assad was in full charge of the drug trafficking in Europe (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 14).

As an important financial resource for the PKK, drug trafficking also became an area that Syria and Öcalan had fully cooperated. After PKK's settlement in Lebanon in early 1980s, it started producing drugs by means of planting Indian hemp in the fields around Baelbek and Hermel in the Bekaa Valley under Syrian control. These drugs were sent with ships from Tripoli, Beirut, Sayda, Sur, and Minyah ports of Lebanon to Europe over Southern Cyprus, Greece, and Italy (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1999: 24). Since 1988, PKK terrorists in Europe became distributors of the drugs that were sent from Syria via Southern Cyprus ships to Europe. Öznur Dağ and Zahide Özbek, two PKK terrorists who were captured in Adana in 1990, declared that they were assigned in drug smuggling after being trained in the Bekaa Valley (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 21). In 1990, the income of the PKK from drug trafficking was estimated to be 300-400

⁶⁷ Turkish Probe, October 18, 1998.

million dollars (Buzoğlu, 1997: 149). According to German police sources, the PKK controlled more than 70% of the drug trafficking in Germany and 80% of the drugs captured in Europe was of PKK origin throughout the mid-1990s. With the money amounting to 500 million DM annually from drug trade, the PKK purchased weapons from international arms smugglers in Europe (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1999: 28-31).

The Greek port of Volos was the first point in route to Syria for the arms support to the PKK terrorist organization, which is mutually financed by Greece and Syria. By means of this route, the surface-to-air missiles and rockets with other weapons bought from the former Eastern Block countries were delivered to PKK terrorists in Syria in the years of 1991 and 1992.⁶⁹ In May 1992, based on an agreement between Greece and Syria of March 1992, the arms shown as bought for Syrian Army were transported with a Greek ship and handed over to the PKK. Again according to Western intelligence organizations, Stinger missiles were transferred by V. Ethem, a merchant from Syria, from a port in Salonica of Greece to Syria in October 1993 to be delivered to PKK terrorists in northern Iraq. (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 19). According to Turkish intelligence sources, 80% of the logistical support of PKK camps in the northern Iraq was provided by Syria (Aykan, 1999a: 175).

4.2.4.6. Provision of Transportation and Diplomatic Assets by Syria

For the purpose of denying its support to the PKK terrorist organization, Syrian officials changed the routes of the terrorists and of the international smugglers, who

⁶⁸ The annual income of Syria from drug trafficking is estimated to be more than 2 billion dollars (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1999: 50).

were infiltrating from the Syrian border to the Southeastern Anatolian region of Turkey. The new routes starting from the Latakia port of Syria, reached with boats either to the Samandağ, Hatay of Turkey or with ships first to the Greek side of Cyprus, and then with boats to the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. The ones using Southern Cyprus also infiltrated in Turkey either via Greek islands that are too close to the Aegean coasts of Turkey or via the Thrace after crossing the Maritsa River.⁷⁰

PKK terrorists got every kind of diplomatic support from Syria, particularly on their travel to and from Europe. Members of the PKK were easily provided with falsified passports from Syria when they wanted to go to other European countries. Besides, in cooperation with Syria, Greek Intelligence Service easily provided flight tickets, travel documents, and money to the sympathizers of the PKK terrorist organization, who wished to go to Syria. The Syrian Embassy in Germany also became a departures point for Syria for PKK terrorists both from Europe and Turkey. The ones applying to the Syrian consulates in Germany were easily provided with Syrian visas after proving their membership to the PKK - no matter what kind of passports they had (The Turkish Democracy Foundation, 1996: 54).

All in all, Syrian sponsorship presented the PKK the following provisions; (1) accommodation for PKK terrorists escaping from Turkey, (2) provision of money and ID cards for PKK terrorists going to Lebanon and other countries, (3) developing links for the PKK with other anti-Turkish terrorist organizations, (4) provisions for easily organizing Congresses and Conferences, (5) provision of weapons, and ammunition, (6) opening of propaganda bureaus on Syrian territory, (7) free

⁶⁹ Sami Demirkiran, a previous member of the PKK, mentions in his book about the international links of the PKK. Demirkiran asserts (2001: 124-125) that the PKK acquired Sarin gas, together with missiles, TNT, and C-4 explosives from Serbia, and acquired radios, binoculars, and night vision equipments from Romania and Japan. These weapons, and military equipment were sent to northern Iraq through the same route.

⁷⁰ Tercüman, March 15, 1990.

publication of PKK materials (Elibol, and Arıkan, 1994: 74). Besides, Syria cooperated with the PKK in its planning and guidance of the future activities, provided (8) camps and trainers either on its own territory or in the Bekaa Valley under its control, (9) medical treatment for the wounded PKK terrorists, (10) diplomatic support for easy access to and from Europe, (11) rhetorical support for Öcalan and PKK's activities, and (12) a safe headquarters for Öcalan and the leader staff of the PKK. Moreover, PKK terrorists were permitted for (13) fund-raising activities, including the cooperation in drug-trade and (14) became a destinations point for weapons procured from Europe and otherwise.

4.3. State Support to the PKK by Iran

4.3.1. The Causes and Objectives of Iran in Supporting Terrorism Against Turkey

The Islamic Revolution of Iran, led by Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1979, had long-lasting affects over the balances and alliances of the Middle East. The old ally of the US and Israel turned into a natural partner of Syria, and Libya with its radical anti-American and anti-Zionist policies. Since then, Iran started policies of exporting its Islamic Revolution to the states of the region by means of illegal religious and terrorist organizations. Hence, Iran became the main sponsor of various terrorist groups in the Middle East.

Although Iran is a country with a Kurdish population of 5 to 6 million⁷¹, Tehran did not hesitate to support Kurdish groups in Turkey and Iraq for years. Interestingly, the Kurds in Iran could establish the first and only Kurdish state - the Mahabad Kurdish Republic, with the help of Soviet Russia in the late 1945s and declared independence in January 1946. After the departure of the Soviet forces from

the region, Iran forces put an end to the Mahabad Kurdish Republic in December 1946 (Kocaoğlu, 1995a: 96). Since then, the Kurds in Iran have been harshly suppressed by Tehran. As seen in the example of Syria, while suppressing the Kurdish rebellion in Iran – the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran and the Kurdish Sunni Muslim Organization, Iran exploited the PKK against Turkey⁷² and mobilized Iraqi Kurds to tie down Iraqi army in the north during the war with Iraq (Criss, 1995: 31).

Iran's motives in sponsoring terrorist activities against Turkey can be outlined with four main factors. First is the Iranian aspiration of being the leader of the Muslims in the world. Thus, it became a state policy of Iran to export its regime with clandestine activities through terrorist groups. Second, the presence of the Iranian refugees in Turkey has been deemed as a threat by Iran. While accusing Ankara of supporting its regime opponents in Turkey⁷³, Iran followed activities for eliminating the leaders of these people. Third, as a secular Muslim state with its place in the Western Block, Turkey became a potential rival for the Iranian model in the region. Last but not least, Turkey's close relations with the US and the military existence of this country in Turkey have made her a target of Iran's anti-American policies. Therefore, Iran not only sponsored various radical Islamic groups such as (Turkish) Hizbollah, then the Muslim Movement organization, but also supported the separatist

⁷¹ According to Kurdish sources, the number of the Kurdish people in Iran is given as 6,7 million in 1990, comprising 12% of the total population of Iran, see *Kurdish Times* 4 (1992: 21), quoted in Olson (1996: 111).

⁷² Iran's support and exploitation of the Kurdish movements in Turkey started in the second half of the 1920s. Iran supported the Kurdish uprisings in Raman and Recko in 1925, Şeyh Sait in 1925, Koçuşağı in 1926, Sason in 1928, Zeylan Stream and Şemdinli in 1930, and particularly during the Ağrı revolts between 1926 and 1930 with Russia and Britain against Turkey. On the other hand, Iran has supported Barzani's KDP and Talabani's PUK for long years, and cooperated with them particularly during the war against Iraq between 1980-1988, see Kocaoğlu (1995a: 92-103), and also see EP Politika, 25 July – 1 August 1993, 12-19.

⁷³ Iran always criticized Turkey for supporting the Mujahedin-i Halq Organization, an anti-regime group deemed as terrorist by Iran.

Marxist-Leninist PKK – opposing any kind of religious belief, against Turkey (Tekin, 1999: 59-64).

Iran deemed Turkey as the base of the US imperialism in the region and accused Ankara of upsetting its neutrality in favor of Iraq as an extension of its Western policies. Again, it was Iran who harshly criticized Turkey's cross-border operations against PKK terrorists in northern Iraq⁷⁴, in line with the hot-pursuit agreement with Iraq⁷⁵. Besides, the peshmergas of Barzani in northern Iraq - Iran's main collaborator against Iraq, had severe casualties in these operations. Iran did not accept to conclude an agreement similar to the one Turkey signed with Iraq, but signed a security protocol with Turkey on November 28, 1984. Accordingly, the two sides agreed not to permit activities threatening other's security in their respective territory (Kocaoğlu, 1995a: 104).

In addition, the developments in the northern Iraq caused Iran to keep the PKK as a tool at hand in shaping its policies against Turkey. Northern Iraq has always been an area of concern for Iran, which feared that Turkey's cross-border operations in this area would turn into a permanent settlement. These operations increased Iran's suspicions about a hidden Turkish agenda regarding Mosul and Kirkuk. Iran has been uneasy about the developments in this region initiated whether by Turkey or the US, excluding Iran's concerns. Hence, Iran supported the PKK in order to “prevent or delay” Turkey's initiatives in this region. (Özcan, 1999a: 230, 236).

The causes and objectives of Iran in sponsoring the PKK have evolved as the international conjuncture changed in the region. The newly independent states in the

⁷⁴ Iran was not happy with Turkey's close relations with the US, who was in crisis with Iran's ally, Libya, in the early 1980s. When the Turkish aircrafts bombed PKK camps in northern Iraq in August 1986, Iran and Libya together protested Turkey's operations in Iraqi territory (Özcan, 1999a:101,232).

⁷⁵ In 1983, Turkey and Iraq made a “Border Security and Cooperation Agreement”, which provided Turkey with the capacity of mounting operations up to 10 km within the Iraqi border (Özdağ, 1999: 36).

Caucasus and Central Asia became a potential area of conflict between Iran and Turkey. Whether for exporting their regimes to the region, or for getting more shares in trade with these countries caused tension between the two states. While Iran supported Islamic revival along her northern borders and contained potential autonomy or independence initiatives within its considerable Azeri population, Turkey tried to promote a secular, pluralist, and liberal democracy of her type in the region, including the Farsi speaking Tajikistan. Besides, the competition in the potential pipeline projects to transport Azerbaijani oil along with the oil from Kazakhstan and natural gas from Turkmenistan either over Turkey to Mediterranean or over Iran to Persian Gulf became a major source of conflict. However, the rivalry between Turkey and Iran was mostly felt in Azerbaijan, when the pro-Iranian Islamic Party of Azerbaijan was founded in October 1992 in opposition to pan-Turkist Azerbaijan Popular Party of President Abulfaz Elchibey. (Gürkan, 1993a: 81-84). Turkey's upper hand in Azerbaijan – coupled with the pan-Turkist rhetoric of President Elchibey, including the unification of northern and southern Azerbaijan – meaning the northwest of Iran, increasingly alarmed Iran (Eralp, 1996: 106). Hence, Tehran supported Armenia against Azerbaijan and the PKK against Turkey to counterbalance the politics of the region.

4.3.2. Iranian Support to the PKK Terrorist Organization

4.3.2.1. Provision of Camps and Transportation

Iran's support for the PKK should be analyzed through its alliance with Syria. Throughout the cooperation of the two, Syria had always been the active part in backing the PKK, while Iran's support remained covert. When the PKK decided to settle in northern Iraq due to the region's easy reach to the so-called Botan area in 1982, Iran's close links with Barzani settled the issue. In need of the support and

shelter provided by Iran, Barzani had to accept PKK terrorists to use his camps in Iraq and Iran - near the Turkish border. According to PKK sources, the official relations with Iran started in 1984. However, Özcan asserts (1999a: 230) that it was the time the PKK did not need to cover the relations with Iran. Because, it was not possible of the KDP to let the PKK use its camps in the early 1983s without the approval of Iran.

On route to northern Iraq, the Syrian-Iraqi border became extremely dangerous for PKK terrorists after the increasing border controls of Iraq. Hence, the Damascus-Iran airway became active for the use of the PKK in the early 1982 and 1983. After the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in 1982, Turkey let Iran to use its air space for humanitarian assistance to the people in Lebanon. However, these Iranian planes going to Syria over Turkey carried PKK terrorists in return to Iran. Besides, PKK terrorists could easily get visas and tickets for planes going to Iran. By carrying PKK terrorists with planes, Iran could control the number of the PKK terrorists in its territory (Özcan, 1999a: 229). In addition, the PKK established relations with the Iranian-sponsored Hizballah, which granted it with corridors over Syria and Iran in crossing Turkey. In return, the PKK provided accommodation for the Hizballah members in Europe.⁷⁶

Turkey was not happy with the PKK-KDP agreement in northern Iraq and bombed the KDP camps, in which PKK terrorists inhabited. In the Turkish air-bombardments launched in August 1986, almost 165 KDP peshmergas died along with many PKK terrorists. Again in March 1987, Turkish aircrafts bombed the PKK camps in northern Iraq. Upon the increasing pressures from Turkey, Barzani's KDP unilaterally ended the agreement with the PKK (Özdağ, 1996: 85-86). Besides, the

⁷⁶ Günaydın, March 26, 1990.

severe military precautions of Turkey on the Iraqi border restricted the smuggling activities, which had an important place in logistical support of the KDP (Özcan, 1999b: 334). After that, the PKK was not permitted to use the KDP camps near the Turkish-Iraqi border and faced with difficulties in crossing Turkey. However, Iran-Syria cooperation once again helped the PKK to settle in northern Iraq by making an agreement with Talabani's PUK, who was at the time KDP's rival in northern Iraq. Following the official declaration of the KDP in May 1987 that its agreement with the PKK was not in force anymore, Öcalan signed a protocol with Talabani in May 1988 (Özdağ, 1999: 48-50).

After the closure of Iraqi border for PKK terrorists in 1986, they started to infiltrate into Turkey through the Iranian border and reached to Bingöl, Tunceli, Elazığ regions over the Lake Van. Iran's tactical support for the PKK had different repercussions for the organization. First, the PKK could pass into Turkey - to the deep back of the regions where hot engagements occurred. Second, by doing so, the PKK could reach to the inside regions - to the areas that it left in 1981. Third, it would enforce the Turkish army to scatter in a wide-range territory (Özcan, 1999a: 99-100). Besides, the objective in reaching and making attacks in the inside regions of Turkey was to cover the foreign relations of the PKK with neighboring countries (Özcan, 1999a: 231).

4.3.2.2. Covert Agreement with the PKK

Iran was always cautious to cover its support for the PKK. While denying its assistance in official declarations, Iran continued to support the PKK terrorist organization against Turkey and let it open a bureau in the Urumiya region in 1985 (Özdağ, 1999: 45). Seeing that it may be harmed by the uncontrolled actions of the PKK, Iran made an agreement with the terror organization in 1986. According to this

agreement, the PKK would (1) inform Iran about the condition of Turkey, (2) not initiate political activities in the Kurdish regions of Iran, (3) not have good relations with the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), (4) not make any attacks within 50 km. range of Turkish territory along the Iranian border, and (5) make attacks against the US bases in Turkey. Following this agreement, the PKK terrorists attacked at a radar base in Mardin in October 1986 (Özcan, 1999a: 232). Besides, in return for the Iranian support, the PKK made assassinations on behalf of Iran against the regime opponents in Europe and Turkey (Özcan 1999a: 235). Iran even employed the PKK to launch attacks against the Iranian Kurdistan Democratic Party.⁷⁷

In 1989, Abdullah Öcalan assigned his brother Osman Öcalan, who was in charge of PKK activities in Libya, as the one to command the activities in Iran. The PKK soon established 20 camps in Iran, and increased attacks in Kars, Ağrı, and Van provinces of Turkey. The camp in Urumiya, next to the Turkish border in Iran, became a main base for PKK terrorists in the region (Buzoğlu, 1997:121). It had also camps in Rajdan, Hevozan, Talih, Ziveh, Desaj, and Alaye in Iran.⁷⁸ The PKK established a hospital in Urumiya region, for the terrorists injured in armed clashes against Turkish forces (Demirkıran, 2001: 125). Upon the increasing PKK activities in the region, Turkey closed down its consulate in Urumiya (Cemal, 2003: 334).

Following the independence of Azerbaijan, PKK activities escalated as of 1992 in the so-called Serhat region, including Kars, and Ağrı cities of Turkey near the Azerbaijan and Iranian border. Iran wanted to curb Turkey's developing relations with Azerbaijan through putting a buffer zone by means of the PKK. The Tambat region of Iran neighboring Nakhchivan became a training center for PKK terrorists.

⁷⁷ Turkish Daily News, September 3, 1998.

⁷⁸ Uğur Mumcu, "Kamplar", Cumhuriyet, March 15, 1990.

Besides, the weapons, ammunition, and logistical stuff coming from the Caucuses were transferred to the PKK over this region (Özcan, 1999a: 233).

A crisis occurred between Turkey and Iran when PKK terrorists attacked a Turkish headquarters near the Iranian border in August 1992. While Turkey openly started to accuse Iran of her support to the PKK, Iran blamed Turkey for helping the KDPI and the Mujahedin-i Halq Organization to undermine her regime. At the time, Turkish Interior Minister Ismet Sezgin's visit to Tehran fell short of settling the issue (Buzoğlu, 1997: 121).

When Turkey launched one of its biggest cross-border operations in northern Iraq in the summer of 1992, a period of military retreat started for the PKK upon the heavy losses and destruction of its camps in the region. At this critical point, what saved the PKK from diminishing was the Iranian assistance through providing shelter in its territories. After an agreement with Talabani, PKK terrorists moved to Zele camp near Iranian-Iraqi border under Iranian protection (Özcan, 1999b: 339).

4.3.2.3. Tacit Support by Tehran

Although Iran and Turkey made several agreements in the 1990s for preventing terrorism in their own territories targeting other's security, Iranian promises fell short of prohibiting PKK terrorism based in her territory. While covertly permitting the PKK to use its soil, Tehran officially refused that it supported the terrorist organization and she tried to seem as cooperating with Turkey against terrorism. On September 30, 1993, Iran and Turkey signed a joint security protocol, in which they assured to prevent terrorist activities directed against the other in their territories. Golam Hussein Bolandijian of the Iranian delegation declared that Iran would take military precautions against the PKK (Olson, 1996: 92). In June 1994, during Iranian Interior Minister Bezharati's visit to Turkey, the two countries made an agreement

that included mutual precautions against the activities of the PKK (Özdağ, 1999: 128). While Iran agreed to prevent PKK attacks launching from its territory, Turkey accepted not to permit the activities of Iranian opposition groups, the Mujahedin-i Halq Organization and the KDPI, in her territory (Kirişçi, 1994/95: 56).

Iran handed over PKK terrorists to Turkey when it could not deny their existence or stuck in diplomatic terms. After an armed engagement with Turkish forces on March 12, 1994, some PKK terrorists escaped at daylight across the Iranian border. On this occasion, Iran gave 16 PKK terrorists to Turkey. At times, Iran also arrested some PKK terrorists in order to show its authority and control over the PKK, especially when it performed activities out of Iran's approval. For example, it was not legal for the Iranian Islamic law of women to fight together with men in the rural areas. However, despite some restrictions, Iran became an important shelter for PKK terrorists, particularly for the ones operating in the so-called Serhat region, which were passing to their shelters in Iran for the winter seasons (Özcan, 1999a: 232-234).

According to PKK reports coming from the region, sometimes Iran was providing support, and sometimes cutting it for the purpose of increasing dependency of the organization. In these reports, PKK leaders in the region were happy with the provision of medical assistance for the injured militants, the permission of the Iranian officials for the ones coming from Europe through airway, and the tolerance for the terrorists' movements in its territories. However, the long-ranged bombardments of Iranian artillery were creating anxiety for PKK groups in Iran. This was the Iranian method of pretending to cooperate with Turkey against the PKK (Özcan, 1999b: 340). Yet, according to Turkish Intelligence Service and Turkish military reports, Iranian officers were even making the military plans of some PKK operations to be launched against Turkey (Eralp, and Tür, 1999:94).

Iran and Turkey has made several agreements regarding the border security. For this purpose, the two established a “Joint Security Committee”, which held regular meetings regarding the issue. In the 12th session of the Joint Security Committee Meeting held in October 1995 in Tehran, the Turkish delegation presented information to the Iranian authorities about the presence of PKK facilities in Iran illustrated on the maps - including the location of the camps, offices, training and armament activities. While Iranian authorities denied their support to the PKK throughout the meeting, some PKK terrorists were launching attacks at the time against Turkish Security Forces from Iranian territory. Throughout the armed engagements, the Turkish soldiers observed that the injured PKK terrorists were taken from the region with official Iranian vehicles (Tekin, 1999: 66-67).

4.3.2.4. PKK Activities on the Iranian-Iraqi Border

During the cross-border operations of the Turkish forces in northern Iraq, PKK terrorists could flee in Iranian territory by exploiting the rugged terrain and the geography of the border. These terrorists were welcomed or just ignored by the Iranian border guards, and they could pass their camps on the Iranian side of the Iranian-Iraqi border, where they rest, retrain, re-equip, and then turn back for performing new attacks against Turkey. Hence, during the Turkish military operations in 1997, the Turkish forces took control of the Iranian and Syrian borders in northern Iraq, a responsibility that these countries did not fulfill. However, despite the efforts of Turkish forces, a terrorist group in Sersing region could obtain reinforcements from Iranian side of the border after suffering devastating casualties. As confirmed by the captured PKK terrorists, Iran delivered even Russian made Katyusha rocket launchers to the terrorist organization PKK (Gürkan, 1998/99: 29-30). Besides, it was stated by the General Secretariat of the Turkish General Staff in

June 1997 that almost 600-700 PKK terrorists run into Iran during these operations. The General Secretariat added that following the end of the Turkish cross-border operation into northern Iraq, PKK attacks were launched from the Iranian territory (Cemal, 2003: 332).

Iran did take into account the existence of the PKK in its calculations in northern Iraq. Not only did Iran support the PKK against Turkey, but also it exploited the PKK in its policies towards Kurdish groups and against both Turkish and the US initiatives in northern Iraq (Olson, 2000: 877). In August and September of 1995, Barzani's KDP and Talabani's PUK came together for peace negotiations through the US sponsored Drogheda conferences in Dublin, Ireland. Both Iran and Syria had severe anxieties about the Drogheda process, considering that the US would become influencer in the region. Under Iranian and Syrian sponsorship, PKK terrorists in northern Iraq attacked the KDP positions in August 1995 because of its cooperation with Turkey and the US. Talabani, due to its dependency on Iran, was acting together with the PKK (Olson, 1996: 95-96). As an alternative to the Dublin process, Iran arranged talks between the KDP and the PUK in Tehran in September 1995 (Buzoğlu, 1997: 121). Similarly, under the Syrian sponsorship, Talabani and Öcalan came together in Damascus to fail the Dublin process on October 10, 1995 (Özdağ, 1996:100-101).

Following Öcalan's expulsion from Syria in October 1998, Iran increased its support to the PKK. Iran allowed the PKK to organize its 6th Congress in Urumiya region in February 1999. Besides, the Iranian intelligence cooperated with the PKK in enlisting the Iranian Kurds in PKK to carry out attacks against Turkey. After being captured by Turkey, Öcalan confessed that Iran provided the PKK with weapons and let the arms transferring from Armenia and Russia. Öcalan's confessions also

revealed the fact behind PKK's alliance with Talabani that Iran pressured the PUK to open its territory for the use of the PKK (Olson, 2000: 877).

When Turkey arrested Öcalan in February 1999, PKK terrorists organized some of the biggest public demonstrations in Iran. After then, due to the restrictions in Syrian territory, PKK terrorists increasingly used the Iranian border in crossing Turkey. The PKK began settling its camps particularly around the Kandil Mountains near the Iranian-Iraqi border. Seeing that PKK activities had increased in Iran, Turkey began asking whether Iran would substitute for the role Syria played so far as the main sponsor of the PKK (Çetinsaya, 2002: 327-328).

In the year 2000, the PUK changed position and began cooperating with Turkey against PKK forces in northern Iraq. In fact, Talabani was not happy with increasing PKK influence in its region. The PKK and the PUK forces had armed clashes in Ranya and Qalat Diza, near the Talabani controlled Sulaymaniye region in northern Iraq. While Turkey cooperated with Talabani, Iran supported PKK forces against the PUK (Olson, 2002: 111-113).

4.3.2.5. The PKK-Iran Cooperation in Arms and Drug Trafficking

Iran actively participated in arms and drug trafficking in the region and so helped to finance the activities of the PKK against Turkey. The drugs procured from Afghanistan or produced in Iran – in any of the three production centers of the PKK in Oshnoviyeh, Iran, were transferred to the Western states over Turkey in control of the PKK and Iran Intelligence Service (Buzoğlu, 1997: 148). Osman Öcalan, as the one in charge of PKK activities in Iran, managed the trafficking of drugs in this country. Located in an important point on the drug-route to Europe, it was seen that 90% of the heroine seized in Turkey was coming from Iran, Iraq and Syria. (Tekin, 1999: 49-52).

Iran shipped the arms smuggled from Georgia, Armenia, and Russia to PKK terrorists and to the radical groups in Bekaa⁷⁹. As observed by Turkish security forces, some explosive materials and ammunition of Russian origin that smuggled through Nakhchivan-Iran border were delivered to PKK terrorists in Sitili village of Iran in December 1995. Again in January 1996, the Turkish Customs and Security authorities captured six cargo-trucks carrying arms and ammunition while going to Syria from Iran (Tekin, 1999: 50-51). In a declaration of the General Secretariat of the Turkish General Staff in June 1997, it was noted that Russian made SAM-7 missiles were procured from Armenia and shipped to the PKK terrorists over Iran. It was also added that the training of PKK terrorists in how to use these missiles was provided by Iran, Syria, Armenia, Greece, and Southern Cypriot administration (Cemal, 2003: 331-332).

All in all, although always denied its support, Iran has been one of the main sponsors of the PKK. Iran provided the PKK terrorist organization (1) with camps, and training facilities in its territory, (2) put pressure on the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq to open their territory and camps for the use of the PKK, (3) provided air-transportation for PKK militants coming from Syria or Europe, (4) helped in planning of the PKK attacks against Turkey, (5) permitted the PKK to use its territory for shifting units and for infiltrating into Turkey, (6) provided medical treatment for the injured PKK terrorists, (7) coordinated shipment of Russian-sourced weapons, ammunition, and logistical stuff over Caucuses to PKK terrorists, (8) cooperated with the PKK in fund-raising of the terrorist organization through drug-trade, and despite many promises and border agreements with Turkey, it (9) failed to prevent PKK activities in its territory.

⁷⁹ The PKK acquired SAM-7 missiles from Russia with the assistance of Iranian intelligence service (Demirkiran, 2001: 125). Using the same route, Russia also provided the PKK with rifles, RPG-7

Even though Iranian support to the PKK has mostly been covert and discreet, Tehran did not hesitate to intervene for the help of the PKK, particularly at desperate times for the terrorists. Opening of the KDP camps for the PKK terrorists in northern Iraq and Iran near the Turkish border in 1982; conclusion of an agreement between the PKK and Talabani's PUK in 1988 after the end of the KDP support; increasing use of Iranian territory after the 1992 setback of the PKK; and opening of Iranian territory for the PKK terrorists escaping from cross-border operations of Turkish forces in northern Iraq have all been vital supports for the PKK.

Consequently, Syria and Iran have been main sponsors of the PKK terrorism in the Middle East, since the very establishment of Öcalan's foreign relations. Global, regional, and bilateral factors played role in their exploitation of the PKK against Turkey. On the global, Turkey's alliance with the US potentially made her a target of pro-Soviet Syria and anti-American Iran, both resorting terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy. Iranian and Syrian suspicions about Turkey's cross-border operations in northern Iraq to have a hidden agenda regarding Mosul and Kirkuk, their contradicting policies in getting northern Iraq under their sphere of influence, and increasing Turkish partnership with Israel can be noted as regional troubles. While the water conflict and Hatay issue have been bilateral disputes between Turkey and Syria, Turkey's suspicions of Iranian efforts in exporting Islamic revolution and the rivalry between secular Turkey and Islamic Iran in the Caucuses and Central Asia - together with the economic competition of the two, have been bilateral concerns between Turkey and Iran. Therefore, Iran and Syria, at times together and at times on their own supported the separatist PKK terrorism in order to destabilize Turkey. However, considering the internationalization of the Kurdish issue, Iran and Syria, both having a considerable population of Kurdish origin, might be negatively affected by the separatist struggle of the PKK in the long-term.

rockets, hand grenades, C-3 and C-4 explosives in 1989 (Demirkiran, 2001: 245).

CHAPTER V:

The Impact of PKK Terrorism on Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East

Throughout the 1990s, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East had been mostly shaped within Turkey's efforts to eliminate the separatist PKK terrorism. Accordingly, Turkey tried to prevent northern Iraq of being a safe heaven for the PKK, searched diplomatic solutions, as well as military, to end foreign support to the PKK by Syria, Iran, and Iraq, and gradually developed relations with Israel. These efforts have brought about a change in Turkish foreign policy towards the region, which was best reflected in Turkey's relations with Syria and Israel.

Compared to Syria, Turkish foreign policy has been always cautious and pragmatic towards Iran. The cooperation between Iran and Turkey, starting with the establishment of Turkish republic and continuing with the northern tier of the Cold War did not change significantly even after the 1979 Islamic revolution (Eralp, 1996:110). Contrary to Syria, Iran has been a big and important country, therefore irrational to exclude relations completely even for the traditional Turkish elite. Despite the Iranian sponsorship of separatist PKK terrorism and attempts to export her regime abroad, Turkey has always left an open door for any improvement in relations with this country that she carefully tried not to break off completely. (Sever, 1998/99: 164). Hence, this chapter shall particularly deal with Turkey's relations with Syria and Israel, within the scope of Turkey's changing threat perceptions.

5.1. Turkey's Changing Threat Perceptions

From the mid-1960s to the end of the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East had applied some principles that enabled her a freer path from the West in general, and the US in particular. In this era, Turkish decision-makers

decided not to involve in the Western-inspired security projects in the Middle East, a region where Ankara considered herself sufficient to deter potential threats emanating from (Kibaroglu, 2002:62). Hence, Turkey followed the principles of non-involvement in domestic affairs of the Middle East, non-interference in intra-Arab relations, and maintenance of a balance that necessitated political support to the Arab states for Palestine and continuance of diplomatic ties with Israel.

During the Gulf War (1990-1991), Turkey actively supported international coalition against Iraq, and thus acted against two of its principles in the Middle East, non-involvement in the affairs of the region and non-involvement in an inter-Arab dispute (Karaosmanoğlu, 1996: 14-15). Turkey participated in the economic embargo against Iraq by closing the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık oil pipeline and stopping all trade with Iraq, let the United States use her air base in İncirlik and tied down some 8-10 Iraq divisions in the north by deploying approximately 120,000 troops along the Turkish-Iraqi border (Soysal, 1991: 74). Turkey's active policies during the Gulf War were mostly directed by President Özal, with the hope of displaying Turkey's regional importance to the US and thus obtain an influential place for Turkey in the post-Gulf War era (Sever, 1998/99: 159). However, not only opportunism but also security concerns dominated Özal's policies during the Gulf War. In his inaugural speech before the Turkish parliament on September 1, 1990, President Özal stated that Turkey should pursue an active foreign policy and not present a wait-and-see attitude. In December 1990, Özal noted that the developments in Iraq should not be against the interests and security of Turkey. The primary security concern for Turkey was the fragmentation of Iraq and establishment of a Kurdish state in the region (Gözen, 2001: 519-520).

Being deeply affected by the developments in the region as a Middle Eastern country, Turkey could not escape taking a stand on the issues that were not exclusively inter-Arab. Hence, the non-involvement principle of the Turkish foreign policy in the affairs of the Middle East has not been appropriate for the issues that involved her (Ergüvenç, 1995: 4). In the aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey became increasingly concerned about the potential threats stemming from the Middle East. State sponsorship of PKK terrorism and radical Islam supported by its southern neighbors, settlement of PKK terrorists in northern Iraq, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the region together with their long-ranged means to deliver them⁸⁰ have all been new security concerns for Turkey in the region (Bir, and Sherman, 2002: 25). Among these issues, PKK terrorism emerged as the salient threat against national security of Turkey.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War (1990-1991), the authority vacuum in northern Iraq provided a safe haven for the separatist PKK terrorism and endangered Iraq's territorial integrity, which is considered as vital for regional stability (Ergüvenç, 1995: 2). The new international structure of the post-Cold War era, and the increase of PKK terrorism stemming from the developments in northern Iraq, caused a change in threat perceptions of Turkey. Accordingly, the 1992 National Security Policy Document changed Turkey's previous defense concept, which was prepared against the Soviet Union and Greece, and defined the primary threat as the separatist PKK terrorism having sources in the southern neighbors of Turkey - Syria, Iraq, and Iran (Ülman, 1998: 108).

During the first half of the 1990s, the politics in Turkey had always referred to foreign support while talking about terrorism. In March 1992, Turkish Prime

⁸⁰ The population centers, dams, power stations, air bases, and military headquarters are all within ranges of these missile systems (Kirişçi, 1997).

Minister Demirel underlined the foreign support as the main cause of terrorism, provided by some states that are not happy with a Turkey getting gradually stronger. Demirel added that terrorism became a national problem of Turkey that surpasses party politics. In this era, almost all leading political parties in Turkey referred to the foreign support as the main cause of terrorism either provided by Turkey's neighbors or some Western states aimed at undermining Turkey (Ülman, 1998: 111-120).

Due to the changing threat perceptions of Turkey from north to south, Ankara kept pursuing active policies in the Middle East also after the Gulf War. Yet, contrary to the Özal period, the active involvement in the post-Gulf War era was not blurred with opportunism, but totally caused by Turkey's security concerns, particularly by the separatist PKK terrorism (Altunışık, 1998: 334). Hence, Turkey could no longer isolate itself from the developments of the Middle East.

In addition, Turkey also undermined another main principle of Turkish foreign policy, preserving the balance between Arabs and Israel. The changing threat perceptions of Turkish decision-makers led them to initiate a wide-ranging military partnership with Israel. Particularly, the pragmatic Turkish military, as the main supporter of the strategic partnership, decided that "a *de facto* military alliance with Israel is in Turkish national interest" (Kibaroglu, 2002: 61). Yet, as noted by Çandar (2000), it is not similar to the approach of President Özal that he thought Turkey should remain equidistant to the three main power centers of the region, which were Israel, Iran, and Egypt (representing the Arabs).

5.2. Securitization of Turkish Foreign Policy

In the post-Cold War era, Turkish foreign policy has been security dominated due to the geopolitical and security concerns of the country. Indeed, it was the continuation of a traditional security-based foreign policy rather than a proactive

economic diplomacy. The threat-based geopolitical concerns, which were inherited from the Ottoman times, kept on dominating Turkish foreign policy during the Kemalist Era, before and after the Second World War and throughout the Cold War years. According to a quantitative analysis prepared by Aydınli (1998: 17-21), it was asserted that survival concerns kept on dominating Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. In reference to Aydınli's investigation seen in Table 4 covering the years from 1995 to 1998, the issues raised in the weekly press conferences of the foreign ministry and the questions asked to the spokesperson in those meetings indicate that Turkish Foreign Ministry was highly occupied with geopolitical and security matters.

TABLE 4. Summary of Questions Raised at Weekly Foreign Ministry Press Briefing⁸¹

SUBJECT	1995 Issues Raised	Questions	1996 Issues Raised	Questions	1997 Issues Raised	Questions	1998 Issues Raised	Questions	Total Issues Raised	Questions
Security	9	140	15	131	2	197	7	131	33	599
Economic	2	8	5	15	1	18	1	39	9	80
General Diplomatic	11	3	17	57	2	27	1	30	31	117
EU	1	4	0	2	1	15	3	65	5	86
Other	15	39	7	36	2	28	5	40	29	143

In this period, the Turkish foreign ministry was occupied with many topics, including the Cyprus issue, Aegean disputes, the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, Armenian allegations, human rights, and the water conflict with Iraq and

⁸¹ Ersel Aydınli, "Geopolitics Versus Geoeconomics: The Turkish Foreign Ministry in the Post-Cold War Era" *International Insights* Vol.14 (1998, Special Issue), 19.

Syria. Besides, everyday events in the Balkans, the Caucuses and the Middle East became subject of the Turkish security debate (Lesser, 2000: 184). However, the main reason for the securitization discourse was the PKK issue. This is mostly related with the increasing PKK activities that became more lethal in the years of 1992 and 1993, just after the Gulf War.⁸² As a result, the National Security Council accepted separatist PKK terrorism as the primary threat to Turkish national security in 1992.

After the end of the Gulf War in 1991, the PKK found appropriate conditions in northern Iraq to develop its capabilities and structures. First, PKK terrorists acquired heavy weapons and positions following the withdrawal of Iraqi army from the region. Secondly, the authority vacuum in northern Iraq, which was filled by the Kurdish *de facto* entity in time, helped the PKK to become stronger in the area, from where it mounted attacks against Turkey. In order to suppress PKK terrorism, Turkey launched increasingly tougher cross-border operations in northern Iraq and had established a security zone in the region (Lesser, 2000: 185). Hence, preservation of Iraq's territorial integrity within the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution 688 and putting an end to the authority vacuum in northern Iraq became crucial factors in Turkish policy-making towards the region (Altunışık, 1998: 336).

Turkish military operations in northern Iraq has complicated Turkey's relations with Kurdish groups in the region and caused international criticism. In order to diffuse critiques, Turkey renewed the mandate of Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) in every six months, despite the domestic displeasure and critiques about the OPC that it was providing the base for the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq (Kirişçi, 1997).

⁸² The increasing activities of PKK terrorists were reflected in the statistics of the Turkish government that the number of PKK terrorist incidents between 1991 and 1994 increased to 15,146 compared to

5.3. Increasing Role of the Military in Foreign Policy

During the 1990s, with the failure of weak governments to find diplomatic solutions to end the foreign support provided to the PKK, the military has gradually become more active in foreign policy-making of Turkey. Besides, the fact that separatist PKK terrorism and radical Islamic movements had aimed at destroying the basic fabric of the Turkish regime particularly reinforced the role of the military in exerting its influence in decision-making structure (Altunışık, 1998: 334).

It is a fundamental fact of the international relations that those states having a strong army are more powerful in foreign policy activities. In 1992, Turkish Chief of General Staff Doğan Güreş underlined that strengthening of the Turkish armed forces is crucial for the implementation of a trouble-free foreign policy (Özcan, 1998: 81). Although almost in every state the military has a certain degree of influence in foreign policy, Altunışık argues (1998: 335) that the army has become the direct and main decision maker of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East in this era. Turkey's policies toward Syria, Iraq, and Iran during the 1990s and its developing relations with Israel after the mid-1990s should be considered within this respect.

Under the provisions of Turkey's constitutional system, the military is charged with guarding Turkish state and country against domestic and foreign threats and protecting "the secular republican legacy of Kemal Atatürk" (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 27). In Turkey, the army has a certain degree of influence in foreign policy decision-making structure mostly through the channel of National Security Council

3,533 incidents between 1984 and 1990 (Kirişçi, 1996b: 28).

(NSC)⁸³ (Altunışık, 2000: 180). Besides, generals and diplomats regularly come together to negotiate important foreign policy matters of Turkey (Gresh, 1998: 190). Moreover, foreign policy issues in Turkey are deemed as national matters, therefore as national security matters, which should be pursued as state politics beyond party benefits. Hence, it provides the military with the capacity of participating in decision-making structure of foreign policy and hence causes securitization of foreign policy issues.

However, in contrast to the Third World states, the Turkish military participates in decision-making body of Turkey through constitutional mechanisms, which reflects its intention not to undermine the democratic regime by usurping civilian authority. Besides, the military in Turkey enjoys an extensive support from the majority of the population and media, especially in its struggle against separatist terrorism. Accordingly, the military operations launched against the PKK in southeastern Turkey, as well as in northern Iraq – performed upon the permission of the government, have all been approved by the majority of the population, including the media (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000: 214). Moreover, the military coercion policy pursued against Syria in October 1998 - implemented mostly on the initiative of Turkish army, enjoyed a wide-ranging popular support in Turkey (Aykan,1999: 181).

⁸³ The NSC, a constitutional advisory body of the government, holds meetings monthly under the chairmanship of the President. In accordance with Article 118 of the 1982 Constitution, the prime minister, the chief of the General Staff, deputy prime ministers, the ministers of justice, national defense, internal affairs and foreign affairs, and the commanders in chief of the army, navy, and the air force and the general commander of the gendarmerie participate in the meetings of the NSC. In these meetings, issues concerning national security of Turkey are negotiated and recommendations on the formulation, establishment and implementation of the national security policy of Turkey are submitted to the Council of Ministers. According to the same constitutional provision, the Council of Ministers should give priority to these decisions (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000: 213-214). The NSC became effective particularly during the 1990s. Kenan Evren, who was the Turkish President between 1982 and 1989, states that the NSC decisions were not so effective, nor they were taken into account by the governments when he was the President. See the interview with Kenan Evren in Mehmet Ali Kışlalı, *Güneydoğu: Düşük Yoğunluklu Çatışma* (The Southeast: Low Intensity Conflict) (Ankara, 1996), pp. 211-214.

Declarations of Turkish generals have also showed that Turkish army has a great deal of influence in foreign policy decision-making structure. In his visit to the US in February 1997, General Çevik Bir, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Turkish armed forces, defined Iran as a terrorist state not only supporting the PKK, but also trying to export its Islamic regime to Turkey. Bir's statements caused a crisis in Turkey's relations with Iran, which was already fragile. The timing of Bir's statements, while the Turkish Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu was visiting Israel, revealed the efforts of the military in exerting its influence in foreign policy. Besides, in a briefing given to the bureaucrats of foreign ministry by the Turkish General Staff in June of the same year, General Bir criticized the Foreign Minister, Tansu Çiller, for not being active in pursuing foreign policy issues of Turkey (Özcan, 1998: 82-86).

Looking into the progressing relations of Turkey and Israel, particularly after February 1996, it was clear that the army has been the main actor of the Turkish side in the process. Despite the opposition from the Welfare Party wing of the government⁸⁴, the modernization of F-4 fighter project and mutual military exercises with Israel were continued upon the final authorization of the army (Özcan, 1998: 82-86). Throughout the establishment of strategic cooperation with Israel, the Turkish military has pursued a pragmatic attitude that considered the partnership in Turkey's national interest and did not care about how it was "interpreted elsewhere in the Middle East" (Kibaroğlu, 2002: 65). In May 1997, upon a question regarding

⁸⁴ Before his election, Erbakan was talking of freezing relations with Israel. Some analysts argued that Erbakan's election in 1996 would break the relations with Israel. After coming to power, Erbakan government tried to pursue an Islamic agenda, on both domestic and foreign context. However, the military made it clear to Erbakan that it would not let him turn Turkey toward Islam and harm Turkish-Israeli relations. Turkey and Israel concluded their most important agreements during the Erbakan government (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 27).

the Welfare Party's opposition to the relations with Israel, General Bir stated that the military considers the Turkish-Israeli relations as a state policy (Altunışık,2000:183).

5.4. The PKK and Water in Turkish-Syrian Relations

5.4.1. The Evolution of Tough Rhetoric in Relations with Syria

Throughout the 1990s, Turkey's relations with Syria have been restricted within water/security framework. Beginning with the 1987 Security and Cooperation Agreement accorded between the two countries, in which Turkey assured the flow of at least 500 m³/sec of water from the Euphrates during the accumulation of waters at the Atatürk Dam until a final accord on the issue of water would be signed, Syria has promised not to allow terrorism operating against Turkey in general, and the PKK in particular. While the Syrian pledges to cooperate against terrorism had fallen short, Turkey kept trying to find a solution out of the quagmire within the limits of diplomacy.

The 1987 water-security deal was quick to fail because of Syria's continuation of supporting PKK terrorism against Turkey. On October 1, 1989, Prime Minister Özal stated that he had doubts whether Syria was adhering to the Mutual Security Accord of 1987. He added that as far as Syria did not fulfill the requirements of the 1987 security accord, Turkey would not be bound by the requirements of the protocol to let 500 m³/sec of Euphrates' water to Syria (Bölükbaşı, 1993: 22-23). During the fill-up of Atatürk Dam in 1990, Syrian President Assad even attended at ceremonies of PKK terrorists (Mazlum, 1998: 392).

However, Syria's participation in the international coalition against Iraq during the Gulf War and her cooperation in the 1991 Madrid Arab-Israel peace process increased hopes in Ankara for reestablishing dialogue with Damascus. As a part of the rapprochement in Turkish-Syrian relations, a Turkish delegate involving Interior

Minister İsmet Sezgin and Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin together with some other high-ranking bureaucrats visited Damascus in April 1992 to negotiate with President Assad and top Syrian military officials (Altunışık, 1998: 332). During the Turkish visit, the two countries signed a security protocol, in which they decided to cooperate against terrorism and not to let infiltration of any terrorists to the other country. Besides, the parties assured each other not to let accommodation, organization, training, and propaganda facilities of the groups outlawed by the other and extradite their members to the other state when they are caught (Mazlum, 1998: 392-393). During the visit, Syrian officials stated that almost 500 PKK members were arrested and put in the prison.⁸⁵ The April 1992 security agreement, in which Syria recognized the PKK as an outlawed organization - but not terrorist, reduced the tension between the two states. However, it was short-lived alike the 1987 security accord when PKK attacks on Turkey emanating from Syria resumed once again (Sezgin, 2002: 48).

The establishment of an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq to no doubt played a role in regionalization and internationalization of the Kurdish problem. As the states of the region, not only Turkey, but also Syria and Iran were sensitive about the territorial integrity of Iraq. These states feared that the Kurdish entity in the region would be a possible model for their own Kurds (Barkey, 1996: 33). After the elections of a Kurdish national assembly in May 1992, the possibility of Kurdish statehood in northern Iraq alarmed Turkey⁸⁶ and Syria, as well as Iran. These three countries, on Turkey's initiative, began to arrange meetings in November 1992 for the purpose of evaluating regional developments, particularly those in

⁸⁵ Milliyet, April 19, 1992.

northern Iraq, and called reestablishment of the territorial integrity of Iraq (Altunışık, 2000: 177).

In January 1993, Prime Minister Demirel visited Damascus in order to discuss PKK terrorism and water issue. During the visit, Assad assured Demirel that Syria was not in need of supporting any terrorist action directed against Turkey (Soysal, 1998/99: 109-110). On November 20, 1993, Turkey and Syria accorded another security protocol concerning the PKK and other terrorist organizations running against Turkey (Alaçam, 1994/95: 15). A few days after the conclusion of the accord, Syrian State Minister for Security, Nasir Kaddur, declared in a television interview that upon President Assad's orders, Syria had began to forbid the PKK. Kaddur added that Syria would not permit PKK members to pass through their territory for attacks in Turkey, and Öcalan or other terrorists would not be allowed to use Syrian soil. This was the first time that Syria defined the PKK as a terrorist organization. (Olson, 1995: 4).

In February 1994, Turkish Foreign Minister Çetin declared that Turkey and Syria would do their best to develop relations in all areas. In the aftermath of the 1993 security protocol, Syrian government temporarily ceased her support to the PKK and closed the PKK camp in the Bekaa Valley. In those days, Turkish papers noted that Syria arrested 400 PKK terrorists. (Altunışık, 2000: 177).

In August 1994, Turkish, Syrian, and Iranian foreign ministers once again came together in Damascus to discuss the situation in northern Iraq and they expressed their concerns about the planned elections in 1995 in northern Iraq - fearing to lead the fragmentation of that country. During the Damascus summit, the direct

⁸⁶ The government circles in Turkey feared that it might adversely affect the Kurdish problem of the country by putting the region in a volatile situation, which was already unstable. Considering that PKK terrorists would operate easily from northern Iraq, the counter-terrorism efforts in the southeastern region thought to be further complicated (Kirişçi, 1996b: 23).

connection between terrorism and the waters of Euphrates was revealed once again when Turkey underlined that she would not negotiate on the issue of water until Syria assured to end supporting the PKK and sheltering Öcalan (Olson, 1995: 5-6).

5.4.2. End of Negotiations with Syria

The lack of trust between Turkey and Syria and the interpretation of the relations within security framework soon deteriorated the relations. The tension with Syria once again increased due to the growing support of this country for the PKK terrorists in the second half of 1995. The PKK started activities in the summer of the same year in Hatay, a region that Syria has never accepted unified with Turkey⁸⁷. Besides, Syrian efforts to internationalize water dispute by taking the issue under consideration of the Arab and Western states alarmed the decision-makers in Ankara in December 1995.⁸⁸

Although officially denied by the Syrian government, the so-called Syrian-Greece military cooperation agreement of 1995, which permitted Greek fighters to use Syrian airspace in case of an armed conflict of these countries with Turkey, caused the decision-makers in Ankara become more worried about Syrian intentions (Altunışık, 1998: 338). Indeed, in her covert warfare against Turkey, Syria had been supported and encouraged by her natural ally Greece. As underlined by Elekdağ (1996), Turkey has well learned by experience that it was hardly possible to eradicate PKK terrorism without stopping foreign support and shelter provided to Öcalan and his leading staff by Syria. Elekdağ adds that the very reason of why Turkish governments had so long fallen short of employing necessary measures against Syria

⁸⁷ Hürriyet, September 17, 1995.

to counter PKK terrorism lies in the fact that Turkey was simultaneously faced many threats. According to the two-and-a-half war strategy proposed by Elekdağ, while engaging in a hot conflict with Syria, Turkey had to be ready to counter Greece not to realize her objectives in the Aegean and must be prepared for a half war that might be prompted by the PKK within the country. Hence, Turkey was prevented from employing an active policy of deterrence against Syria.

In the mid-1990s, one other cause of anxiety for Ankara was the expectations about Syrian-Israeli peace talks that it would end up with a peace agreement. Turkish foreign and security elite feared that Syria, after having peace with Israel, might concentrate her political and military potential against Turkey. Besides, Turkey was not happy with the inclusion of her waters as a subject of the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel. Fearing that Israel and the US may be too generous toward Syria for peace, Turkey decided to pursue a more active policy in the region (Altunışık, 1998: 338). Turkey demanded Israel to use her influence in Washington to assure that Syria would not be removed from the US list of state-sponsors of terrorism until she ceased supporting the PKK.⁸⁹

However, Turkey was well aware that foreign support must be cut off in order to achieve lasting success against PKK terrorism (Aykan, 1999a: 175). After launching serious blows to the PKK structures in northern Iraq in the summer of 1995, Turkey decided to increase the pressure over Syria not to support the PKK. At the time, as the main supporter of the PKK, Syria was deemed as “the head of snake”

⁸⁸ In fact, Syria had already achieved some support of the Arab world on the issue. In November 1993, the Arab League’s Assistant Secretary General asserted that Turkish threats against Syria jeopardized her relations with the rest of the Arab world (see endnote 16 in Barkey, 1996: 37). On December 28, 1995, the *Damascus Declaration* forum, which was established by Syria, Egypt, and the six Gulf states – Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman, condemned Turkey’s water policies and called her to sign a water agreement with Syria and Iraq (Mazlum, 1998: 391).

by the Turkish foreign ministry and General Staff, which should be soon crushed (Cemal, 2003: 438). Hence, Turkish policy and rhetoric towards Syria became increasingly tougher as of the early 1990s. Turkey suspended the security and cooperation meetings with Syria, which were supposed to be held in every three months (Altunışık, 1998: 337-338). Upon the calls from Syria to resume these meetings, Turkey stated that she would not negotiate with Syria until it extradites Öcalan to Turkey or to a third state and she accepts inclusion of Lebanon in the security and cooperation meetings in order to prevent PKK activities in this country.⁹⁰

In a memorandum issued on January 23, 1996, Turkey called Syria to meet some specific demands in order to normalize relations. In the memorandum, Ankara wanted that Syria should not to give PKK terrorists support, sanctuary, and financial assistance and should prosecute PKK perpetrators and extradite Öcalan to Turkey, together with his collaborators. Besides, it was stated that Syria should not permit camps for PKK terrorists in the territory under its control, not provide weapons, logistics, and identification documents, not permit the propaganda activities of the PKK, stop helping infiltration of terrorists into Turkey, prevent passage of terrorists from the third countries (Europe, Greece, Southern Cyprus, Iran, Libya, Armenia) to northern Iraq and Turkey, cooperate with Turkey in all activities aimed at fighting terrorism, and refrain from provoking Arab countries against Turkey. Accordingly, Turkey underlined that unless Syria fulfilled these demand immediately, she reserves her right of self-defense in accordance with the Article 51 of the UN Charter.⁹¹

⁸⁹ In addition, Turkey feared that after having a peace agreement with Israel, like in the case of Egypt and Jordan, Syria would be awarded with financial and military aids from the US and her support to PKK terrorism would be overlooked (Makovsky, 1996: 156).

⁹⁰ Sabah, June 9, 1997.

⁹¹ For the text of the memorandum, see İsmail Soysal, "Turkish-Syrian Relations (1946-1999)," *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 10 (1998/99), p. 123.

However, when İsmail Cem became foreign minister of Turkey with the change of government in February 1997, he initiated a new concept called “regional foreign policy”, long advocated by his Democratic Left Party, in the hope that normalization of relations with Turkey’s neighbors would help solving the problems with them. Accordingly, the head of the Middle East Department of Turkish foreign ministry, Aykut Çekirge, visited Damascus in February 1998 in order to resume relations that had been cut off since 1995 (Aykan, 1999a: 176). It was followed by the meeting of foreign ministers of the two countries, İsmail Cem and Faruq Al-Shara, in the OIC meeting in Qatar in March 1998. The warming of relations continued with the withdrawal of a Syrian proposal in the OIC meeting that condemned Turkey due to its relations with Israel and her stance in the water issues against Syria. Turkish Foreign Minister Cem argued that developing economic relations would lead to the settlement of other conflicts between the two countries (Altunışık, 1998: 346-347).

Nevertheless, the good neighborly policy did not work in normalizing the relations with Syria. Besides, government’s and foreign ministry’s efforts to develop relations with Syria were criticized by the military for the reason that it might delay relations with Israel (Altunışık, 2000:185). In a briefing given to the Turkish press by the Turkish General Staff in the late June of 1998, as noted by Cemal (2003: 332), a military official underlined that against the sponsor states of terrorism, Turkey should take the issue of deterrence on its agenda and even resort to the use of armed forces as the last point of deterrence if necessary.

5.4.3. The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998

Turkey became out of patience when her diplomatic efforts since 1987 had failed to change Syrian policies of sponsoring terrorism. For this purpose, many Turkish politics and officials had visited Syria and security protocols had been

accorded three times in 1987, 1992, and 1993. Besides, Syria did not even respond to a Turkish request file sent in May 1996 that wanted the hand-over of Öcalan to Turkey and end of all support to the PKK. Similarly in July 1998, the official “goodwill” letter presented to the Syrian envoy, who were in Turkey in an atmosphere of a new peace initiative, had no reply (Aykan, 1999a: 179). In the early September 1998, as Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz underlined, “Ankara is convinced that Damascus is using the separatist Kurds as a trump card, expecting that Turkey will give in to Syrian demands concerning a number of issues between them, including territorial disputes and water sharing problem.”⁹²

The failure of Turkish foreign ministry to find a diplomatic solution and the increasing annoyance with PKK terrorism caused the Turkish military to play a more active role in foreign policy. The Turkish military also considered the foreign ministry as not effective enough in launching an international campaign against the supporters of PKK terrorism (Aykan, 1999a: 181). The crisis began when the army took initiative with the speech of Atilla Ateş, commander of the Turkish Army, in Hatay on September 16, 1998. General Ateş clearly underlined that Turkey was out of patience with Syria and she would have right to take any kind of measures, had not Syria responded positively. In the late September 1998, the Turkish Chief of General Staff Kıvrıkoğlu accused Syria of waging an “undeclared war” against Turkey (Altunışık, 2002: 284-285).

These statements led the start of October 1998 crisis with Syria, throughout which the army, either directly or indirectly, was the main actor of Turkish decision-making process (Özcan, 1998: 83). Ertuğrul Özkök, a political columnist in the Turkish daily *Hürriyet*, argued the process as a rivalry between the army and the

⁹² Turkish Probe, September 13, 1998.

foreign ministry in deciding Turkish stance during the crisis.⁹³ Besides, Cemal argues (2003: 446) that Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit was not so happy with Turkey's new policy against Syria, developing on the initiative of the military. Cemal adds that the Turkish foreign ministry also had some doubts with the policy of escalating the crisis and advocated the persistence of diplomatic means.

Nevertheless, the Turkish management of the crisis went on with escalation of Turkish rhetoric by the political leaders. İsmet Sezgin, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister, stated on October 1, 1998, that Turkey had "tried hard" through diplomatic means to get Syria to give up supporting terrorist activities. Sezgin added that "Turkey has patience; we believe that the problem can be solved through diplomatic ways but when these diplomatic ways are blocked we will take the necessary steps."⁹⁴ In his inaugural speech before the Turkish Parliament on October 2, 1998, President Demirel stated, "I declare to the world we retain our right to counter Syria, which has not given up its hostile attitude despite our warnings and peaceful approaches. Our patience is running out".⁹⁵ Although top government officials have already declared that Turkey prefers a diplomatic solution, Deputy Prime Minister Ecevit stressed that "Turkey will not wait much longer for Syria to end its support for PKK terrorism."⁹⁶

While the top of Turkish military and political elite kept explicitly threatening Syria to resort military action, Turkish reinforcements of 10,000 troops near Syrian border was reported (Sezgin, 2002: 49-50). Turkish forces were preparing to carry out a military exercise along the Syrian border amid the crisis with Damascus.⁹⁷ On the other, Syria retaliated by concentrating troops 30-40 km. aside the Turkish border

⁹³ Hürriyet, October 2, 1998.

⁹⁴ Milliyet, October 2, 1998.

⁹⁵ Turkish Daily News, October 3, 1998.

⁹⁶ Sabah, October 9, 1998.

and deploying 36 of her 120 Scud-C missiles 55 km. away from the Turkish frontier. Although Syrian statements initially blamed Turkey for the lack of dialogue between the two states and she refused to obey pressures, mediation efforts of Egyptian President Mubarek⁹⁸ and Iranian Foreign Minister Kemal Kharrazi helped to convince Assad that Turkey was not bluffing and serious to take some sort of military action against Syria. Mubarek explained Assad that the Arab world and Syria would be losers in their struggle against Israel in case of a Turkish military intervention.⁹⁹ Besides, Kharrazi reportedly asked Damascus whether Syria really thought Öcalan was worth of war with Turkey.¹⁰⁰

Although the initial Turkish demand – Öcalan’s hand-over to Turkey, was not fulfilled, the crisis was defused when Öcalan was extradited to another country from Syria (Aykan, 1999a: 179). It was stated in the “Text of Minutes” of the Adana Agreement¹⁰¹ that as an answer to Turkish demands, Syria accepted the following commitments through the intermediary of Egypt. Accordingly, Syria assured that Öcalan was not in Syria and he definitely would not be allowed to enter Syria any more; PKK elements abroad would not be permitted to enter Syria; PKK camps were not operational and definitely would not be allowed to become active any more; and many PKK members had been arrested and taken to court in Syria, with their list presented to the Turkish side.

⁹⁷ Turkish Daily News, October 4, 1998.

⁹⁸ When Mübarek demanded Turkey to give a last chance for diplomacy, President Demirel and Premier Yılmaz was reported to tell him that they could not hold on the soldiers anymore (Cemal, 2003: 448).

⁹⁹ Turkey succeeded in deterring Syria by means of military coercion, but without direct application of force. However, it was stated by a high-level official of the Turkish military that had Turkey’s move to deter Syria from supporting the PKK failed, Turkey would resort military escalation ranging from the harassing of Syrian ships in the Mediterranean to the air bombardment of key targets in Syria” (Aykan, 1999a: 177-178).

¹⁰⁰ Turkish Daily News, October 10, 1998.

¹⁰¹ For the “Text of Minutes” of the Adana Agreement, and for the texts of security protocols accorded between Turkey and Syria in 1987, and 1993, see Soysal (1998/99: 116-123). For the text of 1992 Turkish-Syrian security protocol (in Turkish), see Mazlum (1998: 393).

Syria's water-terror game seemed to pause with the extradition of Öcalan from Syria and signing of the "Text of Minutes" in Adana between Turkey and Syria on October 20, 1998. In fact, the main elements of the Adana minutes could be seen in the previous agreements with Syria signed in 1987, 1992, and 1993. As recorded in the "Text of Minutes" of the Adana agreement, Syria recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization and prohibited all activities of the PKK and its affiliated organizations including supply of weapons, logistic material, financial support, propaganda activities, establishment of camps and other facilities, and commercial activities on its territory. Syria agreed to take all necessary measures to prevent Öcalan from entering her territory and assured not to allow PKK members to use its territory for transit to third countries. Besides, within the framework of future cooperation in counter-terrorism, Syria accepted the establishment of a direct phone link with Turkey and a system that would provide monitoring security enhancing measures and their effectiveness. It was also agreed that Turkey and Syria, depending on Lebanon's consent, work together in a tripartite framework in combating against PKK terrorism.

What made the 1998 Adana agreement different from the previous security protocols was not the terms of the agreement but the Turkish handling of the crisis including the role of the army, verbal accusations of an "undeclared war" and troop concentrations on borders, worldwide attention to the crisis with mediation efforts of Egypt and Iran, and finally a sudden surprising Syrian decision to sign an agreement with Turkey. Besides, the extradition of Öcalan even before conclusion of an agreement between the countries and the expulsion of 300-400 PKK terrorists from Syria to northern Iraq just after the signing of the agreement convinced many

observers that Syria had “surrendered” and was sincere about her commitments (Makovsky, 1998/99: 130-131).

5.5. The Repercussions in Turkish-Israeli Relations

5.5.1. The Rapprochement Period in Turkish-Israeli Relations

The developments in Turkey’s relations with Israel start in the aftermath of the 1991 Madrid Arab-Israel peace process, when Arab states own approach against Israel began to improve. Greek recognition of Israel because of the European Union (EU) pressures had left Turkey as the only NATO state without having ambassadorial representation in Israel (Makovsky, 1996: 151). On December 19, 1991, Ankara upgraded her diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level in both Israel and Palestine at the same time, to demonstrate the preservation of traditional balance (Altunışık, 1998: 331).

Despite the improvements in Turkish-Israeli relations in the early 1990s, Turkey had been still reluctant in developing her relations with Israel and tried to maintain the balance between Arabs and Israel until the mid-1990s. In this era, Turkey relatively underlined the economic, technical, and cultural dimensions of relations with Israel. In October 1992, as the General Secretariat’s Office at the Turkish General Staff declared, “in the light of the realities of the Middle East, Turkey, which is an Islamic and secular country, is careful to balance its relations with Israel and Arab world” (Altunışık, 2000:176). Besides, the visit to Israel by Turkish Foreign Minister Çetin was postponed in July 1993 due to the Israeli bombing of southern Lebanon (Kirişçi, 1997).

The real progress in Turkish-Israeli relations came after the signing of Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles in September 1993, when the parties recognized each other. Subsequently, Çetin made Turkey's first-ever foreign ministerial visit to Israel less than two months later in November 1993 (Makovsky, 1996: 151). The positive atmosphere produced by the September 1993 Israel-PLO agreement and the peaceful conduct of Labor-led Israeli government gave Turkey a more free hand in developing relations with Israel (Kirişçi, 1997).

Prime Minister Çiller's visit to Israel in November 1994 was a turning point in developing Turkish-Israeli relations. Although some circles in Israel criticized Çiller's break to the Orient House of Palestine, made for the purpose of showing that Turkey preserves her traditional balance, Çiller's visit to Israel strategically enlarged the volume of relations between the two states. During the visit, an agreement regarding the modernization of Turkish F-4 fighters by Israel Aviation Industry was signed and cooperation against terrorism was on Çiller's agenda. These developments marked the beginning of a strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel as of the late 1994s. Seeing that her southern neighbors became the chief sponsors of either separatist PKK terrorism or radical Islamic movements operating against the territorial integrity of its country and the survival of the Turkish regime, Ankara felt the need of reassessing her policies in the region and became less reluctant in starting a strategic dialog with Israel (Altunışık, 2000: 177-178).

Although happy with the close ties with Turkey, Israel was not so forthcoming about Turkey's open desire for cooperation against the PKK and Syrian sponsored terrorism. In order not to give the impression that Israel and Turkey are uniting against Syria, Israel was hesitant about close cooperation with Turkey when it overtly appeared targeting Syria (Makovsky, 1996: 150-155). Hence, Turkish

attempts to achieve Israeli support against PKK terrorism, particularly with reference to Syrian support, were not approved by Israeli leaders in the first half of the 1990s. Israel did not want to add a new area of conflict in her relations with Syria.¹⁰² Besides, by standing with Turkey at the front, Israel did not want to add the PKK to the list of terrorist organizations targeting the security of her territory, citizens, and diplomats abroad. A third factor of Israeli reluctance to cooperate against the PKK was the pro-Kurdish sentiment within Israeli public and security establishment. Israel, having Kurdish Jews mainly of Iraqi origin, had supported the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq against the regime in Baghdad. Although she did not support the PKK, the popular support for the Kurds in Israel did not let Israeli governments openly support Turkey on the issue (Makovsky, 1996: 166).

Several other factors played role in Turkey's motive for boosting strategic relations with Israel. In the post-Cold War security posture, particularly during the Gulf War, Ankara has seen that West European members of NATO were not so sensitive about Turkey's defense concerns, particularly "in a Muslim attack on Muslim Turkey"(Makovsky, 1996: 153). Hence, through strengthening strategic ties with Israel, Turkey tried to search Middle Eastern solutions for her problems stemming from the Middle East. In August 1997, Turkish Prime Minister Yılmaz appraised the Turkish-Israeli cooperation within the thought of realism that it "is necessary to the balance of power" in the region (Inbar, 2002: 23). However, Inbar notes (2002: 25) that this partnership is not of a typical example of balance of power that Israel and Turkey, as the two non-revisionist and strongest states of the region, are cooperating "to fend off common threats and to preserve the regional *status quo*".

¹⁰² In an interview in November 1995, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Sharaa criticized the similar approach of Turkey and Israel towards terrorism by stating, "Israel and Turkey insist on defining resistance movements as terrorism as well. In citing excuses such as the PKK and the opposition movements in Southern Lebanon respectively, Israel and Turkey attempt to present all armed

Similarly, in September 1998 (a month before the October 1998 Turkish-Syrian crisis), the Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu noted, “Turkey and Israel established a relationship to induce stability in an area where instability prevails.”¹⁰³ Another aspect of the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel was the understanding of Ankara that close relations with Israel would provide her with a strong support from pro-Israel members of the US Congress for the issues of vital importance to Turkey (Gresh, 1998: 191).

One other important factor in developing relations with Israel was Turkey’s disappointment about the failure of Arab support for the Cyprus case. In order to fulfill the expectations of the Arab states, Turkey has suspended her relations with Israel and supported the PLO. Her support to the Arab world provided Turkey with only an occasional progress in economic relations during the 1970s and 1980s, which faded in the early 1990s (Altunışık, 2000: 174-175). Arab countries did not recognize the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence ever since November 1983. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has only given observer status in the meetings of Islamic Conference Organization (Makovsky, 1996: 149). Turkey could achieve Arab support neither on a number of disputes with Greece nor during the harassment of Turkish minority by the Bulgarian regime in the mid-1980s (Gresh, 1998: 191). Therefore, although the Palestinian issue remains an important subject of domestic and foreign policy of Turkey, Ankara had given up hoping diplomatic support from the Arab world (Makovsky, 1998/99: 132).

In spite of the Turkish support to the Arab countries, Syria became main sponsor of the PKK and cooperated with Iraq in developing a joint policy against Turkey on the water issue. While Iran joined Syria in the terror-campaign directed

movements as terrorism. Syria cannot accept this.” (Makovsky, 1996: 154-155).

¹⁰³ İlnur Çevik, interview with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Turkish Daily News,

against Turkey, other Arab states openly supported Syria and Iraq on their water policies against Turkey. Hence, Turkey's improving relations with Israel was much a consequence of the "hostile attitudes adopted by these states against Turkey" (Aykan, 1999b: 9). Consequently, Turkey explicitly upset the balance on behalf of Israel, which she tried to preserve between Arabs since the mid-1960s.

5.5.2. Towards a Strategic Cooperation Between Turkey and Israel

Gresh argues (1998: 203) that since the 1991 Gulf War, the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation has been the most important political development of the decade in the Middle East. An important point in developing strategic relations between Turkey and Israel has been the military cooperation agreements. On February 23, 1996, Turkey and Israel signed the Military Training and Cooperation Agreement, which was not made public until two months after the signature.¹⁰⁴ The published parts of this agreement include the parties' cooperation in the fields of "the exchange of information in military training, exchanges of visits between military academics, joint training, the invitation of observers to other training exercises, port visits, and exchanges between military archives" (Altunışık, 2000:187). Accordingly, as long as Turkish pilots exploited the electronic simulation training in Israel, Israeli pilots had opportunity to have flights in a rough terrain with a strategic depth in Turkey.¹⁰⁵

The two countries also signed the Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement on August 26, 1996 and started a strategic dialog with the regular meetings between Chiefs of Staff of Turkey and Israel.¹⁰⁶ In December 1996, Turkey signed an agreement of \$590 million for the modernization of 54 Turkish F-4 fighters, 26 in

September 3, 1998.

¹⁰⁴ Hürriyet, July 14, 1996.

¹⁰⁵ Israeli jets accomplished 120 long-ranged sorties and Israeli CH-54 helicopters had training flights in Turkey throughout 1997. On the other hand, Turkish pilots had trainings of electronic war techniques in Nevatim base of Israel (Özcan, 2002: 224-225).

Israel and 28 in Turkey, by the credits from Israel. Besides, an agreement of \$75 million to modernize 48 Turkish F-5 fighters by Israel Aviation Industry was signed in December 1997. Israel became a good market of arms for Turkey, at a time when most of the European states and the US imposed a covert arms embargo against Ankara due to the human rights abuses in Turkey. In response to the Greek Cypriot S-300 missiles, Turkey bought Popeye I missiles from Israel in July 1998 (Özcan, 2002: 222-223). By means of military agreements, each side could afford what the other wanted that while Turkey needed technologically advanced military equipment, Israel required geostrategic depth (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 25).

On the part of Turkey, the strategic cooperation process with Israel was mostly planned and implemented by the military, as a part of its efforts in managing Turkish foreign policy towards the region. The Turkish-Israeli strategic relations, as noted by General Bir, “were the initiatives of the Turkish leadership” (Inbar, 2002: 38). In the second part of the 1990s, Turkey was the part that openly emphasized the strategic nature of the relations with Israel. However, during the very beginning of the Turkish-Israeli relations in 1950s, it was Israel, who tried to boost a strategic cooperation with Turkey in the hope of reducing religious nature of Arab-Israeli conflict and reinforcing ties with NATO and Europe. In those days, Turkey did not show much interest in strategic partnership with Israel (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 24). Contrary to the 1950s, Turkey openly developed relations with Israel not only in military issues, but also in the fields of tourism, trade¹⁰⁷, culture, sports, and academics (Inbar, 2002: 21).

¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, Turkey and Israel agreed for technology transfer and mutually training of technicians and researchers in defense industry (Altunışık, 2000: 187).

¹⁰⁷ The two states signed a cooperation agreement on tourism in June 1992 (Altunışık, 2000: 186) and a free trade agreement in March 1996 (Kirişçi, 1997).

In May 1997, Turkey's overt support to Israel against Syria could be seen when Defense Minister Turhan Tayan enlarged his visit program to include Golan Heights, which is under Israeli occupation since the 1967 War with Syria. A few days after Tayan's visit, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told in a Turkish channel that "Turkey has long suffered from terrorist attacks from the PKK and we see no difference between the terrorism of the PKK and that which Israel suffers".¹⁰⁸ Netanyahu added (Özcan, 2002: 229) that the PKK is a terrorist organization and the two states are exchanging intelligence regarding the issues of terrorism.¹⁰⁹ Although mostly remained secret due to its nature, these declarations demonstrate the growing Israeli support for Turkey on PKK issue.

In 1998, Turkey continued improving her strategic ties with Israel. In the summer of this year, both Foreign Minister Cem and Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz visited Israel. During Yılmaz's visit in July, Turkey and Israel decided to make a new naval maneuver together with the US. In response to Syrian criticism about his visit to Israel, Prime Minister Yılmaz stated, "I am not interested in what Syria comments about my visit to Israel. Everyone knows Syria's hostile intentions about Turkey" (Altunışık, 1999: 202-203).

5.5.3. Strategic Content of the Relations

Since there is no formal and documented commitment to the mutual defense and military cooperation, the Turkish-Israeli relations cannot be categorized as traditional alliance. The two states did not defined a *casus foederis*, which specifically identifies the situations that will oblige them to undertake military

¹⁰⁸ (Gresh, 1998: 193-194). The answer to Netanyahu soon came from Halil Ateş, a member of the PKK Central Committee, that they would then also target Israeli centers.

¹⁰⁹ Israel reportedly provided Turkey with satellite intelligence about PKK sites in Syria. On the other hand, it was reported in June 2000 that Turkey demanded information about the cargo carried by Iranian aircrafts over Turkish airspace to Syria, possibly including military equipment sent to Hizballah to be used against Israel (Inbar, 2002: 26).

assistance one another in the event of an armed conflict. The relations were considered as strategic partnership of the two countries having mutual interests on a wide range of issues in both regional and global levels. Although the strategic nature of the relations lacks formality, it can enhance future cooperation with “the present level of military cooperation - including joint exercises, staff-to-staff coordination, intelligence sharing, and mutual visits” (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 29).

Turkish and Israeli leaders now and then stated that their cooperation was not a military pact directed against any state in the region, but an instance of military training agreement similar to that Turkey had concluded with 27 different countries in the past (Aykan, 1999b: 8). Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu noted in September 1998 that “our relationship with Turkey is not directed against any country [but] it is directed to the benefit of the region.”¹¹⁰ On September 7, 1998, Israeli Defense Minister Mordechai denied reports that Israel was being asked to side with Turkey against Greece and stated, “we are not doing anything with Turkey against any other country in the Middle East, certainly not against Cyprus.”¹¹¹ Similarly, a month after the Turkish-Syrian crisis of October 1998, David Ivry, an adviser of the Israel defense ministry, stated that during the crisis, Israel decreased the intensity of her military facilities to demonstrate that the partnership was not directed at anyone (Özcan, 2002: 218).

However, a very motive of the strategic dialog of the two countries was to send a message to both Syria and Iran. In several occasions, Turkish leaders underlined that their strategic cooperation with Israel aimed at deterring some regional states, particular her neighbors in the south, from supporting PKK terrorism (Aykan, 1999b: 9). During his visit to Turkey in April 1997, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy

¹¹⁰ Turkish Daily News, September 3, 1998.

¹¹¹ Turkish Daily News, September 8, 1998.

argued that the cooperation of the two countries would deter Iran and Syria from their antagonistic policies and enable that those countries jeopardizing regional peace had to think twice (Özcan, 2002: 253).

In January 1998, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai defined the nature of the relations stating that, “when we lock hands, we form a powerful fist...our relationship is a strategic one” (Inbar, 2002: 23). Although Turkish-Israeli partnership is not considered as a traditional alliance, a careful interpretation of the 1996 military cooperation agreement reveals that it may lead an enhanced cooperation only reached by allies (Kibaroglu, 2002: 61). According to the 1996 military cooperation agreement, the two states can temporarily deploy their land, air, and naval force units in others territory and for that purpose, they can use others’ airspace, airbases, and naval ports. It provides Israel, lacking strategic depth, with a crucial strategic deterrent for second-strike capability in the event of a crisis (Kibaroglu, 2002: 64).

In a region where power politics dominate international relations and military might is perceived as the main component of the national power, informal alliances are as significant as the formal ones. Besides, potential rivals of Turkey and Israel have been deterred by their cooperation and consider them as allies. States calculating the use of armed force against either of Turkey or Israel has to consider their combined might. Strategic cooperation with Israel had already contributed Turkish deterrence against Syria during the October 1998 crisis when Turkey pressured Damascus to expel Öcalan and stop her support to PKK activities. It was argued that Turkey would not pursue such an aggressive attitude against Syria “had it not been for its alliance with Israel” (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 30). Besides, depending on an interview with Greek Cypriot officials, Inbar (2002: 26) argues that

Turkish deterrence against the deployment of S-300 surface-to-air (SAM) missiles bought from Russia was credible due to her cooperation with Israel. The training of Turkish pilots in Israel about how to attack SAM sites and how to eliminate their radars enhanced the deterrence.

An important test to the Turkish-Israeli relations was the war of attrition between Israel and Palestinians as of September 2000. Despite the increasing criticism towards Israeli policies, Turkey did not suspended or cancelled the agreements with Israel. It was seen that “the partnership did not arise from the Israeli-Palestinian “peace process” and the demise of the peace process has not stopped cooperation” (Bir and Sherman, 2002: 28). Besides, the ongoing cooperation despite the critiques once again revealed the fact that the strategic context of the relations is in Turkey’s national interest.

5.5.4. Regional Grievances Against the Partnership

The 1996 military cooperation agreement caused a major disapproval of the Arab public opinion, and achieved criticism particularly from the governments of Syria, Egypt, and as well as Iran (Kirişçi, 1997). Alarmed by the fear of encirclement, Syria tried to mobilize the Arab and Muslim world against Turkish-Israeli partnership, and could achieve their support, vital for her not to be isolated in the region (Gresh, 1998: 203).

The Arab League repeatedly declared their concerns about Turkish-Israeli agreements and called Jordan not to join the pact. During the Arab Summit held in June 1996 in Cairo, the Syrian resolution condemning Turkey’s relations with Israel was softened just to call Turkey to reconsider its cooperation with Israel. After a meeting in Syria held in June 1997, the Damascus Declaration Forum (Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf States) released a statement that called Turkey to be more careful in her

relations with Israel and restart contact with her Arab neighbors. Similarly, Turkey was criticized in December 1997 Tehran meeting of the OIC due to her relations with Israel (Inbar, 2002: 27-31). Besides, in the September 1998 meeting of Arab foreign ministers, Turkey was invited to stop her military relations with Israel “due to the danger it entails to the security of Arab countries” (Makovsky, 1999: 14). Arabs considered that Turkey’s military partnership with Israel reinforced its position in the Arab-Israeli peace process by easing the pressure on Tel Aviv to negotiate (Sever, 1998/99: 167). During the Turkish-Syrian crisis of October 1998, Iraq, Yemen, Qatar, and Lebanon criticized Turkish officials’ remarks, reaffirmed their support to Syria, and called parties for a peaceful solution of the crisis. Yemeni President Saleh demonstrated his support stating, “Syria’s security is an integral part of pan-Arab security”.¹¹²

As the most disturbed country by the Turkish-Israeli strategic relations, Syria portrayed the alignment as targeting the interests of Arab nation. In June 1997, Syrian Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam defined the Turkish-Israeli partnership as “the greatest threat to the Arabs since 1948” (Inbar, 2002: 28-29). Egypt was also concerned about the growing ties of Turkey with Israel and worried about the failure of her leadership aspirations in the region. In January 1998, Osama al-Baz, an adviser to President Husni Mubarek, argued that the Turkish-Israeli military partnership “would lead instability and possibly war in the Middle East” and “threatens the interests of the Arab states” (Inbar, 2002: 29).

¹¹² Turkish Daily News, October 6, 1998.

Çandar (2000) argues that Turkish-Israeli military relations have brought Israel to Iran's border at where Israel reportedly has listening-posts.¹¹³ Besides, Çandar adds that Israel can launch attacks aiming at Iran's non-conventional weapons from Turkey or can refuel over Turkey. These developments severed Turkey's pragmatic relations with Iran, which were even preserved after the Islamic revolution of Iran. In September 1998, Iranian President Khatemi asserted that the Turkish-Israeli closeness "provokes the feelings of Islamic world" (Inbar, 2002: 30).

All in all, in the post-Cold War era, Turkey has turned into the Middle East as an actor in the affairs of the region by violating its long-established principles of non-interference in affairs of the region and preserving the balance between Israel and Arabs. While Turkey pursued a path of non-interference for long years, Syria and Iran were less careful about not intervening in Turkey's domestic affairs (Karaosmanoğlu, 1996: 15). Consequently, Turkey's new threat perceptions, which were defined by the political and military elite as *separatist PKK terrorism* having sources in the Middle East, caused a deviation in Turkey's established principles in the Middle East.

Whereas the weak governments of the 1990s fall short of stopping foreign support to these challenges by means of diplomatic channels, the army gradually became the main actor of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. Hence, in the hands of the soldiers, Turkish foreign policy towards the region was caught in a rigid circle of survival and could not produce flexible diplomatic solutions (Altunışık, 1998: 350). However, these strategic choices caused a successful deterrence period against Syria, which was initiated by the soldiers and agreed by the

¹¹³ Although denied officially, some rumors now and then heard about Israeli intelligence facilities in Turkey. Depending on General Bir's statements, it was argued in Israeli Army Radio on April 7, 1996 that Turkey had permitted Israel to arrange electronic intelligence flights alongside her Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian borders (Özcan, 2002: 227).

politics. As a result, Turkey stepped back the state sponsors of terrorism in the region and achieved important success against the PKK.

In the near future, Turkey's strategic relations with Israel might continue but without being displayed against Iran and Syria. On the other hand, following the end of the Saddam regime in Iraq, Turkey may also cooperate with Syria and Iran, who share similar concerns with Turkey about the establishment of a Kurdish entity in northern Iraq, while the US and Israel are more sympathetic to a possible Kurdish autonomy. Turkey fears that the establishment of a Kurdish entity in northern Iraq would be a model for the separatist Kurdish circles of its own and might prepare suitable conditions for the reactivation of PKK terrorism in the region. Syria and Iran, both concerned about being in line for a would be US intervention, are less likely to support terrorist movements against Turkey in the near future, while seeking her cooperation in order not to be isolated in the region. However, Turkey would probably continue her strategic relations with Israel, not only for that she is a reliable source of weapons but also to keep deterring Syria and Iran, as long as the PKK terrorism was not totally eradicated. Last but not least, keeping in mind the role of the army in relations with Israel, the future participation of the military in decision-making structures of Turkey would affect the course of relations with Israel.

CHAPTER VI:

Conclusion

In the post-Cold War era, Turkish foreign and security policy has become more assertive and far-ranging with the enlargement of her external horizons. Turkey not only demonstrated willingness and ability to follow her interests in the Middle East, Aegean, and Cyprus, but also she exerted influence in a region ranging from the Balkans to the Caucuses and Central Asia.¹¹⁴ However, the Middle East region has attained a particular importance for the multi-faceted Turkish foreign policy with the changing threat perceptions of Ankara from north to south.

Actually, the evolving Western identity of the new Turkish republic had avoided her involving in the affairs of the Middle East. Besides, when drawn in the affairs of the region as in the 1950s, Turkey learned by experience that it provides nothing more than becoming mired in the swamp of regional politics but isolation in the region due to the increasing Arab resentment against her. Hence, Turkey established some principles of its own in the region, which were then called traditional or Kemalist principles of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. These principles necessitated non-interference in the affairs of the region and inter-Arab relations, a balanced attitude towards Arab-Israel dispute, prevention of Turkey's Western relations adversely affect her relations in the Middle East and vice versa, and following equal and bilateral relations with all states in the region.

However, although Turkey turned her face towards the West, her diplomacy and security have been affected by the regional developments. Besides, while Turkey has pursued a course of non-interference in the region for long years, Syria and Iran were not so sensitive about not intervening in Turkey's domestic affairs. From the very establishment of PKK structures, Syria and Iran not only encouraged and supported the organization but also provided it with shelter and camps in the territory

¹¹⁴ For a *tour d'horizon* of Turkey's position in a changing security environment, see Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey in a Changing Security Environment," *Journal of International Affairs* Fall 2000, 183-198.

under their control, as well as in northern Iraq. Together with the foreign support, the suitable conditions in northern Iraq flourished during the first and second Gulf crisis enabled the PKK to develop its capabilities in launching attacks against Turkey. Particularly after the Second Gulf War, the PKK became a considerable threat for Turkish security when it acquired positions and heavy weapons of the Iraqi army - following its withdrawal to the south of 36th parallel.

By the year 1992, separatist PKK terrorism substituted the Northern Menace as the primary threat against security and territorial integrity of Turkey and led the revision of Turkish national defense concept. Since then, Turkey sought diplomatic and military ways to cut the foreign support being provided to the PKK and launched tougher military operations in northern Iraq to destroy the PKK structures in the region (Sayari, 2000: 171). Besides, preventing establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq became the basis of Turkish foreign policy towards the region fearing that it may boost separatist PKK activities in her southeast. For that purpose, Turkey also arranged trilateral meetings with Syria and Iran.

In fact, Turkey had dropped the low profile wait-and-see attitude with Özal's proactive policies that caused her participation in the international coalition during the Gulf War of 1990-1991. By doing so, Turkey hoped that she could both display her geo-strategic importance to the US and take part in the post-war development in her south, including the prevention of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

In the hope that she could cut Syrian support to the PKK, Turkey has accorded security protocols with this country in 1987, 1992, and 1993 and tried diplomatic solutions until the diplomacy was exhausted to the very end in 1998. When diplomacy failed to end Syrian support for the PKK, with the initiative of the military, Turkey employed a deterrence strategy toward Syria through decisive

military coercion, but without direct application of force. As a result, it led the expulsion of Öcalan from Syria and surrender of Damascus to sign the Adana Protocol with Turkey on October 20, 1998, in which she recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization and declared to prohibit all PKK activities in the territory under its control.

With respect to Iran, Turkey has pursued a more cautious policy that sought cooperation to prevent the PKK activities in this country. In fact, Iranian support to the PKK was not overt as of Damascus', but remained covert and officially denied by Tehran. Besides, Iran's perceived regional weight and position as producer and supplier of energy important to Turkey caused Ankara to take relations seriously with Tehran (Lesser, 2000: 191). Hence, cutting relations with Iran due to its alleged support to terrorism targeting Turkey was not rational even for the traditional foreign and security elite in Ankara, which supported normalization of relations with Tehran in 1998 following a short-term suspension (Altunışık, 2000: 185).

In addition, the PKK has a significant contribution to Turkey's decision of boosting strategic relations with Israel (Sayari, 2000: 172). In the second half of the 1990s, Turkey developed overall relations with Israel in general, and enhanced military cooperation in particular. Although Turkey and Israel have not accorded a formal alliance that defined *casus foedaris*, their strategic cooperation is of a nature only to be reached by allies. Besides, despite the declarations that the Turkish-Israeli relations were not directed to any third party, an important motive of Turkey was to send a signal to both Syria and Iran, who deemed the strategic ties as a threat to their security. The strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel, initiated and implemented mostly by the military on the part of Turkey, not only provided Turkey with technical know-how and sophisticated weapons systems along with the support

of Jewish lobby in Washington, but also included intelligence cooperation against terrorism, particularly against the PKK.

With the failure of politics to end the foreign support for the PKK, the military has become more assertive in Turkish foreign policy, as seen particularly in the October 1998 Crisis with Syria and during the enhancement of strategic relations with Israel in the second half of the 1990s. Besides, the fact that separatist PKK terrorism aimed at destroying the very nature of Turkish Republic caused the will of the military in exerting influence in decision-making structures. Although increasing participation of the military led to securitization of foreign policy issues and put Turkey in a rigid course, Turkey successfully deterred Syria to cease her support to the PKK and achieved a regional weight through the strategic ties with Israel.

In line with these considerations, it is seen that Turkey modified her long-established low-profile attitude in the region and started producing policies in the Middle East. Her changing threat perceptions in general and the PKK in particular, made her understand that the wait-and-see attitude is not sufficient to deter threats emanating from the region. Hence, Turkey involved in an inter-Arab dispute between Iraq and Kuwait, kept one foot in northern Iraq to undermine the PKK in the region, tried to manage regional affairs to prevent the establishment of a Kurdish state, followed a tougher stance against Syria, and upset the long-established balance on behalf of Israel in the face of alienating the Arab world. Concomitantly, Turkey has become an actor in the politics of the Middle East.

Following the seizure of Öcalan, Turkey's struggle with the PKK seems to continue in a political nature rather than military. European involvement in the Kurdish issue due to the Kurdish Diaspora and the required Turkish reforms for the EU membership - including a political solution to the Kurdish issue and the

promotion of Kurdish cultural rights, have increased the “Sèvres Syndrome” in Turkey that Europe supports PKK’s political course in order to divide Turkey. Actually, Turkey’s suspicions turned into criticism with the reported official letter correspondence between the Chief of the Turkish Desk in the EU and the PKK Central Committee (Aydınlı, 2002: 218-220).

Moreover, current exclusion of the KADEK¹¹⁵ - the modified form of the PKK, from the European list of terrorist organizations, while it was included in the US list of foreign terrorist organizations on May 23, 2003¹¹⁶, indicates “the level of common understanding of terrorism attained in the international field”, underlined the Turkish Chief of Staff, General Hilmi Özkök¹¹⁷. Last but not least, suspicions in Turkey reached the peak with the correlation of the 7th Congress decisions of the PKK taken on November 4, 2000 and the EU Turkish National Program for the adoption of the Aquis of 2001. Accordingly, it was debated in Turkey whether the EU had been advising guidelines to the PKK (Özcan and Gün, 2002: 16-17).

Consequently, the next battlefield for the struggle between Turkey and the PKK - or KADEK, will not probably be the southeastern Turkey nor northern Iraq, but the political arena of Europe. In this regard, perhaps not the physical threat of the PKK, but the fear of its political success will continue to affect Turkish foreign policy not only towards the region but also towards Europe and the US. Turkey’s

¹¹⁵ In the 8th Congress of the PKK held on April 4-14, 2002, the PKK was renamed as KADEK (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress) in an effort to legalize its political struggle, and Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned in İmralı Island in Marmara Sea, was elected as the chairman of KADEK (Özcan and Gün, 2002: 17). As noted by Turkish Deputy Chief of General Staff General Yaşar Büyükanıt, it is noteworthy that the EU decided on May 2, 2002 to include the PKK in its official list of terrorist organizations - excluded in the first list issued on December 27, 2001, just after it changed the name to KADEK (Turkish Daily News, May 29, 2002).

¹¹⁶ See the US list of foreign terrorist organizations as of May 23, 2003, available online at <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/fs/2003/12389.htm>, and for the EU list of terrorist organizations, see Council Common Position of 2 May 2002, available online at <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2002/may/terr750077.pdf>

¹¹⁷ “Özkök Slams EU over KADEK”, *Ntvmsnbc*, June 2, 2002, available at <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/218545.asp>

long-established fear in the region, creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq – now thought to boost political struggle of the separatist PKK, has already dominated Ankara's agenda during and after the war in Iraq in March 2003, particularly in her relations with the US. A future research might be conducted on the issue of how this political fear affects Turkish foreign policy in many fields. Besides, whether the indicated Turkish foreign policy is temporary or a consolidated one is yet to be seen. Moreover, how Turkey's struggle with the PKK has been shaped by the so-called international cooperation in counter-terrorism - emphasized much after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, might be another topic for the conduct of a future research.

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