CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN TURKEY-IRAN RELATIONS: 1989-2001

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ABSTRACT

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This study sought to answer why conflict in Turkey-Iran relations increased in the covered period, considering –relatively- smooth relations between Turkey and Iran in the 1980s, and thermidorizing of Iran in the 1990s. Indeed, ideology has had an important place in bilateral relations between Iran and Turkey for a long time. Ideological factors constituted the immediate reasons for conflict between Turkey and Iran in the 1990s as well. However, ideological differences between the two countries did not cause any serious conflict in the 1980s. Then, the question arises, why and how did ideological reasons led to severe frictions between Iran and Turkey in the 1990s. In this regard, this thesis paid attention to two factors that have profound effects on the foreign policies of Turkey and Iran; changing internal conditions, and the changing geopolitics of Turkey and Iran after the dissolution of the USSR and the Gulf War of 1991.

Keywords: Turkey, Iran, Thermidor, Ideological Confrontation, Geopolitical Competition, Northern Iraq, Caucasus, Central Asia, Economy, Cooperation.

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE-İRAN İLİŞKİLERİNDE ÇATIŞMA VE İŞBİRLİĞİ:1989-2001

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Bu çalışma 1980'lerde Türkiye ve İran arasındaki –görece- sorunsuz ilişkileri ve 1990'larda İran'ın termidorlaşmasını gözönünde bulundurarak incelenen dönemde Türkiye-İran ilişkilerinde çatışmanın niçin yükseldiği sorusuna cevap aramıştır. Aslında uzun zamandan beri Türkiye ve İran arasındaki ilişkilerde ideolojinin önemli bir yeri vardır. İdeolojik etkenler Türkiye ve İran arasında 1990'lardaki çatışmalarda da görünür nedenleri oluşturmuştur. Oysa iki ülke arasındaki ideolojik farklılıklar 1980'lerde hiç bir ciddi çatışmaya yol açmamıştı. O halde ideolojik nedenlerin niçin ve nasıl 1990'larda Türkiye ve İran arasında ciddi gerginliklere yol açtığı sorusu ortaya çıkar. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Türkiye ve İran'ın dış politikalarında temelli etkileri olan iki faktör; değişen iç koşullar ve Türkiye ve İran'ın 1991'de Körfez Savaşı ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra değişen jeopolitikleri üzerinde odaklanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, İran, Termidor, İdeolojik Çatışma, Jeopolitik Rekabet, Kuzey Irak, Kafkasya, Orta Asya, Ekonomi, İşbirliği

To My Dearest Parents...

And To Those All Supported Me ...

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Turkey and Iran are two countries, both located in strategically important places. Due to geographic proximity, the former has the potential to influence the Eastern Mediterranean, Bosphorus, and Black Sea, an important part of the Balkans and the Caucasus, as well as large part of the Middle East. The latter has the potential to exert influence over South Asia, Central Asia, the Caspian Basin and the Caucasus, some part of the Middle East and most importantly the "Persian" Gulf. Their historical and cultural bounds with aforementioned regions bestow them additional leverages. On the other hand, both of these two countries share the traditional transportation roads linking inner Asia to Europe. Thus, they constitute a link between the "east" and "west", in terms of culture, politics and economics.

Although two Muslim peoples have been habitating over these countries for centuries, they have belonged to different sects, i.e. Sunnism and Shiism, of the Islamic faith. The two neighboring countries experienced a difficult neighborhood, especially after the establishment of powerful rules in each side i.e. the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid rule, in the early sixteenth century. Then, both states were rising empires and enlarging in detriment of each other. In the meantime, the Safavids adopted Shiism as state sect and imposed it on whole Iran. Hence, the Safavid rule leaned on this sectarian difference in its enlargement strategy and exploited Turkmens of Anatolia, among whom there were adherents of Shiism. Therefore, the two states confronted in 1512, in Chaldiran that constitute a turning point in the relations between the Ottoman and the Safavid/Iranian states. The sectarian difference added a celestial meaning to the

Ottoman-Iranian/Turkish-Iranian conflict. Since then, Ottoman-Iranian relations went on with ups and downs. Although Turkish-Iranian border that was set by the Kasr-i Shirin Agreement of 1639 remained stable, Turkish/Ottoman-Iranian conflicts and clashes went on by the end of the World War I (WW I).[1]

It is notable that the Ottoman-Safavid/Turkish-Iranian conflicts and rivalry mainly revolved around Iraq and the Caucasus. Indeed, there were Ottoman/Turkish troops in the Caucasus and northern part of Iraq at the end of the WW I. The Republic of Turkey, successor state of the Ottoman Empire, gave up all its claims outside its borders driven by the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1923, including Iraq and the Caucasus. However, the parties to the Lausanne Treaty could not agree on sovereignty over Mosul, a province in the north of Iraq. This became a question between Turkey and the Great Britain, mandatory state of Iraq that was established after the end of WW I, dominated the early years of foreign policy of the Turkish Republic. Later, Turkey consented to 1926 regulation and gave up its sovereignty claim over Mosul.[2] The Caucasus, also, remained outside the borders of Turkey and soon fell into control of the Soviet Russia. So, the territories that caused friction and conflict between Turkey and Iran were totally lost by the two states.

In the 1920s, powerful, central, western-oriented and secular-minded rules were established in Iran and Turkey. They engaged in nation-building processes and embraced on internal affairs. These two tendencies facilitated close relations between the both countries. However, from time to time they confronted over border issues especially during the Ararat upheaval in Turkey in the late 1920s. They agreed on a small-scale border rearrangement in 1930, easing Turkey to secure its borders. After the solution of the border issue, they managed to

[1] Mehmet Saray, ***Türk-İran İlişkileri*** (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Yay., 2001).

[2] İlhan Uzgel and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "İngiltere ile İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran, ed., ***Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olaylar, Belgeler, Yorumlar,*** vol.I (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2001), pp. 259-69.

establish close relations that resulted in the Shah's visit to Turkey in 1934.[3] In this climate, Turkey and Iran, together with Afghanistan and Iraq established the Sadabad Pact, dated 1937, in order to secure their borders.

After the World War II, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) appeared as a threat to both Turkey and Iran,[4] which compelled them to align with the United States of America (USA). Consequently, Turkey and Iran entered an alliance relationship in 1955 with the joining of Iran to the Baghdad Pact. Thanks to their Western orientation and common threat perceptions from the USSR, they became the Middle Eastern allies of the US-led Western Bloc. It appeared that, the western orientation of the Turkish and Iranian governments and the "Soviet threat" were two columns of the "close" relations between Iran and Turkey until the Iranian revolution.

However, the 1979 revolution in Iran, led by Ayatollah Rouhullah Khomeini, fundamentally reversed Iran's policy orientation. The revolutionary ideology began to shape Iranian politics. Revolutionary politics, which will be discussed in the following chapter, could be sum up as rule of "velayat-i fakih" (governance of clergy) and the establishment of an autarkic structure in domestic politics. In foreign policy realm, pursuing an "independent foreign policy" that including an "anti-imperialist" discourse and "exporting revolution" to the "oppressed peoples of the world" were fundamental aims of the revolution. Being a revolutionary state, Iran challenged the international system, questioning its legitimacy and urging an "Islamic World government".

In terms of bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran, one of the two pillars that provided the basis for a "close" relationship during the pre-

[3] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye-İran İlişkileri, 1926-38", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol.5, no.3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 148-75.; Hüsrev Gerede, ***Siyasi Hatiralarım-İran*** (Ankara: Vakit Basımevi, 1952).

[4] After the WW II, the USSR wanted Turkey collective rule over the Bosphorus and Dardanel straits, and demanded three eastern provinces. The USSR resisted withdrawing from Iran after the end of the war and demanded share over oil that would be detracted from the Iranian part of the Caspian Sea.

Revolutionary period, the Western oriented policy, collapsed in Iran. Nevertheless, Turkey quickly recognized the revolutionary regime in Iran because it was worried about the consequences of a possible break-up of Iran and it's falling into the Soviet sphere of influence.[5] Indeed, the Soviet threat kept its validity both for Iran and Turkey until the disappearance of the USSR in 1991. Although the USSR tried to establish good relations with the revolutionary regime in Iran, the Soviet threat for Iran went on after the revolution. The Soviet leaders insisted on the validity of the 5th and the 6th articles of the 1921 agreement between Iran and the Soviet Russia that granted the USSR the right to intervene in Iran in case it perceived a threat emanating from the Iranian territory. On the other hand, the USSR's occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and its "interference" in Iranian internal affairs through "provoking minorities" of Iran made Iran very cautious in its relations with the Soviet Union.

Then, traditionally western oriented Turkey, being in favor of *status quo*, was confronted with a revolutionary and ambitious state next door. Iran's policy of exporting revolution and its confrontational discourse with the West made a clash between Iran and Turkey unavoidable. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the war between Iraq and Iran in September 1980 helped Turkey in two ways. Firstly, it prevented a political confrontation with Iran, because Iran was totally engaged in the war. Secondly, the belligerent states provided Turkey with profitable markets. Iran and Iraq acquired their urgent needs through trading with Turkey. Indeed, in the mid-1980s, Turkey's trade volume with Iran and Iraq exceeded the level of $ 2 billion. Yet, the Iran-Iraq war that fed Turkish exports during the 1980s and compelled both Iran and Turkey to adopt pragmatist policies ended in July 1988.

There were two major developments in the early 1990s that changed the geopolitics of the Middle East and Eurasia drastically and profoundly affected the Turkish-Iranian relations. Firstly, the Soviet threat - the other pillar of the Turco-Iranian "closeness"- disappeared with the dissolution of the USSR. The demise of the Soviet rule, while leading to a power vacuum in the Transcaucasus and

[5] Suha Bolukbasi, "Turkey Copes with Revolutionary Iran", ***Journal of South Asia and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.8, no.1/2 (Fall/Winter 1989).

Central Asia, at the same time, resulted in the independence of "Soviet Republics" including five Turkic and Muslim states in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Tajikistan was the sixth newly independent Muslim state, but was not Turkic. In contrast to other Muslim republics, it was close to Iran culturally and linguistically. At this juncture, Turkey and Iran entered in a competition for political influence and economic interest over these newly independent Muslim states (NIMS) of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The other major development was the Gulf War of 1991 that was triggered by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Gulf War affected Turkey-Iran relations in two ways. Firstly, after the Gulf War, the US began to pursue "dual containment policy" to contain both Iraq and Iran, the two so-called "rogue states" of the Middle East. The dual containment policy mainly intended to isolate the two states internationally through suspending all kind of relations. The US also urged her allies to join it in imposing this policy. Therefore, the dual containment policy posed a huge obstacle to the improvement of the Turkish-Iranian relations. The other important result of the Gulf War for bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran was the creation of "safe havens" in the north and south of Iraq in order to guard the Iraqi Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south of Iraq. Actually, the Iraqi government's control over the north of the country was rather weak due to the war with Iran between 1980 and 1988, and the Kurdish insurgency throughout the 1980s. The safe haven for the Kurdish people in northern Iraq was perceived by Turkey and Iran both as a threat because of the formation of a "Kurdish state" there, and an opportunity to exert their influence. The "vacuum" and ambiguity and struggle for influence in the north of Iraq led to a confrontation between Turkey and Iran.

It should be remembered that the Caucasus and Iraq were the two regions over which Ottoman/Turkish – Iranian rivalry revolved around until the end of the WW I. Therefore, as it will be highlighted in the fourth chapter of this study, it is not surprising to observe the resurgence of Turkish-Iranian competition over the

Caucasus and Iraq, after almost 70 years, when the geopolitical changes in 1990-91 altered the *status quo* in the region, which was established following WW I.

However, it should be noted that the Turkish-Iranian competition and issues in bilateral relations did not prevent Turkey and Iran from seeking ways for cooperation in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet, those cooperation efforts were limited to border security, and commercial relations. In this vein, Turkey and Iran established common security mechanisms for border security. Similarly, the possibility of the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and ambiguity regarding the future of the region following the Gulf War brought Turkey and Iran together to prevent the foundation of an independent Kurdish entity and to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq. As to economic cooperation, the two states tried to increase their trade volume. In order to increase economic-trade transactions between themselves and on a regional level, they reinvigorated the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) that was established in 1985 including Iran, Turkey and Pakistan. In this way, the two states agreed to integrate the newly independent Muslim states of Central Asia and the Caucasus to the Organization in 1992. Similarly, Turkey and Iran played a leading role in the establishment of the "Developing–8" (D-8) Group that includes eight Muslim and developing countries, in June 1997, as well. At the same time, Turkey and Iran held joint economic council meetings regularly, and finally, they formed the Turkish-Iranian Business Council in 2001.

Against such a background, this study aims to explore and analyze the nature of the Turkey-Iran relations in terms of conflict and cooperation during the 1990s. The concept of conflict refers to "the social process of opposition among antagonistic groups in which [they] deliberately seek to destroy, subdue, or thwart the other, whether such opposition is violent or not".[6] In this context, the concept of cooperation means "joint or collaborative behavior that is directed towards same goal and in which there is common interest or hope of reward".

[6] John T. Sadrezny, ***Dictionary of Social Science*** (Washington DC.: Public Affairs Press, 1959).

A comprehensive theoretical debate about "conflict" is beyond the scope of this study. However, considering the fact that conflict in Turkish-Iranian relations mainly intensified over ideological and geopolitical reasons, it should be indicated that in this context, ideological conflict means issues derived from ideological differences and incentives. The geopolitical conflict, in this study, presumes that states, in order to reduce their "insecurity" and defend their national interests, mainly rely on military means. States strike to improve their security by strengthening their armed forces, expanding their alliances and "tightening their grip on strategic assets abroad" such as bases, lines of communication, vital materials etc. In the same vein, they try to reshape political and economic features of their regions to their special interests.[7]

Since 1979, mainstream media and several observers have presented the conflict between Turkey and Iran as a conflict in which ideology constitutes the basic reason.[8] That is why some scholars like Henry Barkey, Robert Olson, and Gökhan Çetinsaya called escalation of the conflict between Turkey and Iran as "public" wars. In this respect, this study assumes that ideology is not the only determinant in bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran. Besides ideology, geopolitics, and developments in domestic politics, as well as the nature of international system have had profound effects on Turkish-Iranian relations. Moreover, it explains conflicts in Turco-Iranian relations during the 1990s by the changes in internal politics in these countries and changes in geopolitics, which played leading roles in Turkish-Iranian relations. In this regard, this study attaches great importance to internal developments in foreign policy analysis. Hence, it takes 1989 as a starting point because significant internal changes in both Iran and Turkey and changes in the geopolitics of these countries took place. The study is confined to the period between the years of 1989 and 2001.

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[7] Geoff R. Berridge, ***International Politics; States, Power and Conflict since 1945***, 3rd ed. (New York, London, Toronto: Prentice Hall, 1997), pp. 66-73.

[8] Mainstream media in Turkey addresses issues related to Iran within the framework of ideological difference and confrontation. Some scholars also defend such an approach to Turkish-Iranian relations. For instance see Türel Yılmaz, "İran İslam Devrimi ve Türk İran İlişkilerine Etkisi", ***Strateji***, no.10 (1997).

The following chapter deals with foreign policies and domestic developments of Iran and Turkey during the 1990s. In this period, Turkey experienced the problems of the rise in "political" and "radical" Islam, ethnic nationalism, political instability, and severe economic crises. In the foreign policy realm, the new geopolitics of Turkey offered it a great opportunity to exert her influence over a vast area stretching "from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China". Historical, cultural and linguistic affinities with the peoples living in this area facilitated this perception. However, this "dream", as will be discussed in the second chapter, was severely harmed by several developments in the mid-1990s, and thereafter, Turkish leaders adopted more realistic policies.

As to Iran, two developments profoundly affected both its foreign and domestic policies since the late 1980s: the end of Iran-Iraq war in August 1988, and the death of Khomeini in June 1989. Thereafter, throughout the 1990s, revolutionary policies of Iran gradually eroded. As we shall see in the following chapter, a moderate, pragmatist and reformist movement started to challenge conservatives and revolutionary radicals in Iran. Consequently, Iran of the 1990s greatly differed from that of the 1980s. Some observers, including Anaushiravan Ehteshami,[9] called the Iran of the 1990s as "the second republic" highlighting the transformation in Iran. In order to refer to this transformation process, this study defined Iran of the 1990s as the Iranian thermidor.

While studying Turkey-Iran relations, it is quite interesting to find out the rise in conflicts between the two countries that seems to have emerged due to ideological reasons. Actually, anti-Iran sentiments in Turkey soared to high levels in the 1990s. Especially after assassinations of the "Kemalist elite" including, Muammer Aksoy, Bahriye Üçok, Uğur Mumcu whose perpetrators were not found, Iran was accused of being behind these assassinations by mainstream media and several politicians in Turkey. Similarly, expressions of some Iranian officials criticizing Turkish regime and calling for an Islamic one, escalated the Turco-Iranian tension and triggered severe crises between Iran and Turkey. For

[9] Anaoushiavan Ehteshami, ***After Khomeini; the Iranian Second Republic*** (London, New York: Routledge, 1995).

instance, Iranian ambassador to Turkey, Muhammed Reza Bagheri's speech in a meeting in Sincan district of Ankara, in the "Jerusalem Day" in February 1997, culminated in severe crisis between Turkey and Iran. Due to the crisis triggered by ideological reasons the two states withdrew their ambassadors twice in the period covered by this study. In this regard, the question arises why ideological conflicts ascended to so high levels in the given period despite the fact that the revolutionary policies were gradually eroding in Iran. The third chapter of the study deals with ideological confrontation between Turkey and Iran and seeks answers to this question.

This study also discusses the coincidence of ideological confrontation with the changes in the geopolitics of Iran and Turkey. It assumes that, after geopolitical changes, Turkey and Iran found themselves in a geopolitical competition for maximizing their interests and gaining political influence in the north of Iraq, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The fourth chapter of this study addresses this geopolitical competition between Turkey and Iran in the 1990s.

This study argues that despite the rise in conflicts in Turco-Iranian relations, Turkey and Iran managed to cooperate in several areas. They acted against the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. In the same vein, in order to secure their borders Turkey and Iran established joint security commissions. Similarly, as neighboring states, they have a desire to expand economic relations. Given the high energy demand of Turkey, and gas and oil richness of Iran, the leaders of the two countries endeavored to increase trade relations despite the ongoing problems and pressures from the US. It is notable that, the territories of the both countries have served as transportation routes to each for centuries.

Though not denying the importance of ideological difference in bilateral relations, this study argues that the infusion of ideology into the already conflictual process exacerbated the confrontation further. Despite these confrontational patterns, relations between Turkey and Iran improved as a result of the thaw between them in the late 1990s. Therefore, this study suggests that

Turkey and Iran may transform their relations into cooperation through confidence-building measures and the development of joint initiatives in the areas that the two states competed.

CHAPTER 2

TURKEY AND IRAN:

CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

In the 1990s, both Turkey's and Iran's security and strategic environments drastically changed.[10] Major reasons for the changes were the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War in 1991. Moreover, internal affairs clearly had a profound influence on the nature and direction of the countries' foreign policies as well, and Turkey and Iran are not immune from this general trend.

In this chapter, internal developments in Turkey and Iran throughout the 1990s and their foreign policies will be reviewed. A comprehensive analysis of the Turkish and Iranian domestic politics and their foreign policies is beyond the framework of this study. Rather, these subjects will be addressed in order to identify general trends in Turkish and Iranian politics and foreign policies, and their implications on bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran.

2.1. Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s

2.1.1. Internal developments in Turkey in the 1990s

Several developments took place in Turkey during the 1990s that affected both domestic and foreign policies of the country. The rise of political Islam and the Kurdish separatist movement were the utmost important ones of these developments. The rise of nationalism, severe economic crises and their related

[10] Graham E. Fuller, ***The Center of the Universe, the Geopolitics of Iran*** (Boulder, Colombia: Westview Press, 1991); and Graham E. Fuller, ***et.al***., ***Turkey's New Geopolitics: from the Balkans to Western China*** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993).

social and political effects should be considered as well.[11] Political instability is another feature of Turkish politics throughout the 1990s. Actually, these developments are linked. For instance, political instabilities caused economic crises, the rise of political Islam and the military's involvement in politics. Similarly, economic problems contributed to the rise of political Islam and Kurdish separation that caused the erosion of political center, eventually leading to instability. However, this study is confined to definition of these developments and to their effects on foreign policy in general, and on Turkey-Iran relations in particular.

A new pro-Islamic, populist, technocratic elite challenged Turkey's predominantly secular and Western-oriented "established Republican elite" in the late 1980s and 1990s. Nilüfer Göle, a well-known Turkish sociologist, identified this new elite as "counter elite".[12] The advent of the counter elite was accompanied by the rise of political Islam. The political center was weakened in the face of growing political Islam on the one hand, and Kurdish separatism on the other, which respectively challenged the secular character of the Republic and the unity of the nation-state. As a result of the weakening of political "center" in Turkey and people's voting for "extreme" political parties in the elections, none of the mainstream political parties in Turkey achieved political majority in the parliament to govern on their own, since the 1991 ballots. Therefore, governments had to be based, in general, on short-lived, weak coalitions, often between ideologically antagonistic parties.[13]

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[11] Philip Robins, ***Turkey and the Middle East (***New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), pp. 3-17; and Shreen T. Hunter, ***Turkey at the Crossroads; Islamic Past or European Future*** (Brussels: CEPS Paper, no. 63, 1995).; and I.P., Khosla, "Turkey, the Search for A Role", ***Strategic Analysis***, vol.25, no.3 (June 2001).

[12] Nilufer Gole, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey: the Making of Elites and Counter-elites", ***Middle East Journal***, vol.51, no.1 (1997).; and Baskin Oran, "Kemalism, Islamism and Globalization; A Study on the Focus of Supreme Loyalty in Globalizing Turkey", ***Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies***, vol.1, no.3 (September 2001).

[13] Hunter, ***op.cit.***, pp. 27-28.; Emre Kongar, ***21. Yüzyılda Türkiye***, 16th print. (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1999), pp. 227-296.

The outcome of the Turkish parliamentary elections in December 1995 underscored the growing domestic strength of political Islam. Indeed, this was the continuation of a process since the 1970s. The Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), usually identified with political Islam, and its predecessors, i.e. the National Salvation Party and the National Order Party, gradually increased their appeal since the 1970s. Eventually, the Welfare Party received 21 percent of the national votes in December 1995, and captured 158 seats in the 550-member parliament.[14] It managed to come to power through a coalition with the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP) –the center right party- in July 1996. The rise of Welfare Party to power, with its Islamist tendency, and the growing strength of political Islam began to challenge "secularist" structure of the state.[15]

The Islamists maintained that Turkey should identify itself as part of the wider Islamic community. They criticized Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy orientation, its membership in the NATO, its efforts to join the EU, and its bilateral security and political relations with the US. They called repeatedly for closer ties with Islamic countries and improving relations with the Arab World and Iran. Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the Welfare Party, often stated his wish to see Turkey to lead the establishment of a "union of Muslim countries" that would increase the power of Islamic countries in world politics and extricate Turkey from its "dependence" on, and "control" by, the West.[16]

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[14] Political Islam represented by the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) made deep inroads among the impoverished urban masses. The party offered its services based on a political conception more in line with traditional Turkish worldview then the official Kemalist ideology as represented by the political parties at the center.

[15] Aryeh Shmuelevitz, ***Turkey's Experiment in Islamist Government; 1996-1997*** (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 1999), pp.16-34.; Sabri Sayari, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s", ***Journal of Palestine Studies***, vol.26, no.3 (Spring 1997), pp. 44-55.

[16] ***Ibid.***; Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy under Erbakan", ***Survival***, vol.39, no.2 (Summer 1997), pp. 82-100.; M.Bali Aykan "Refahyol Policy toward Islamic World and Turkish Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era; Continuity, Change and Implications for the Present and Future", ***Turkish Review of Middle East Studies***, no.11 (annual, 2000/01). See also Ruşen Çakır, "Necmettin Erbakan; Adaletin Bu mu Düzen?", in Seyfi Öngider, ed., ***Lider Biyografilerindeki Türkiye*** (İstanbul: Aykırı Yay., 2001), pp. 223-36.

However, after coming to power, the Welfare party dropped its opposition to the NATO and the Customs Union with the EU. Despite its earlier opposition, faced with the possibly of a major confrontation with military, Erbakan signed several accords with Israel. Nevertheless, Erbakan took steps to demonstrate his commitment to aligning Turkey with the Islamic countries and to implement his plans to forge an alliance of Muslim nations, as well. For example, in contrast to his predecessors, Erbakan paid his first official visit to Tehran, and achieved the establishment of the Developing-8. Although the Welfare led government did not alter Turkey's foreign policy priorities, ascendancy of the political Islam intensified the conflict between secularist and Islamist political groups.[17]

On the other hand, the rise of political Islam was perceived as a severe threat by the Kemalist elite, especially the military leadership and the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy, to the structure of state. Actually, the ruling elite kept its sensitivity to the "shariah"[18] since the Sheikh Said rebellion of February 1925. However, despite being outlawed within the framework of secularization, the Sufi orders (tariqats) managed to maintain their presence throughout the Republican history. Furthermore, with the end of the one-party rule and the accession of the Democratic Party to power, new Islamist groups proliferated after the 1950s. Moreover, in the 1990s, the Islamist groupings and orders increased their powers by working in education and business fields. On the other hand, unsolved murders in the early 1990s, the Madımak Affair,[19] and growing power of Islamic orders increased the concern of the ruling elite against arising "shariah threat". Finally, when the Welfare Party came to power, "radical Islamist discourse" of some members of the Welfare Party, Erbakan's extension of "iftar"• invitation in the Prime Ministry to the leaders of Islamic groupings and orders, and organization of "Jerusalem Night" by Bekir Yıldız, Mayor of the

[17] ***Ibid.;*** and see Sayari, ***op.cit.***, pp. 44-55.; Robins, ***"Turkish Foreign…."***, pp.83-94.

[18] Shariah refers to Islamic law and seen as ultimate goal of extremist political Islamists who desire complete Islamication of state affairs and daily life.

[19] In July 1993, radical Islamists burned the Madımak Hotel in Sivas and 33 intellectuals and artists died.

• Iftar refers to dinner to end fasting.

Sincan district near Ankara- and a member of the Welfare Party- brought the ruling elite's patience to an end. Eventually, military-instigated political pressure ousted Erbakan from the Prime Ministry in June 1997. Finally, the Constitutional Court closed down the Welfare Party and banned Erbakan from politics for five years in February 1998. The Virtue Party, successor of the Welfare Party also faced a similar fate in May 2000.[20]

It should be noted that the place of Islam in Turkish politics was not limited to political Islam that was largely identified with the Welfare Party. Indeed, in the 1990s, Turkey came face to face with terrorist actions of some radical Islamist groups, which will be discussed in the following chapter in detail. The "Madımak Affair" in Sivas in July 1993 and Hizbullah affair in the late 1990s are two noteworthy examples of the radical Islamist violence in Turkey in the 1990s.

On the other hand, Turkey experienced a rising tide of nationalist sentiments in the 1990s. Nationalism became the most important ideological force in Turkish electoral politics as became apparent in the 1999 parliamentary elections.[21] The Democratic Left Party, which was defined as nationalist left, and the Nationalist Action Party known as ultra-nationalist gathered a combined vote of almost 40 percent.

Another feature of Turkey that marked the 1990s was the rise of Kurdish separatist movement and the debate on the Kurdish question. In fact, the "Kurdish issue" for Turkey emerged when the Turkish leaders decided to establish a nation-state in the 1920s. Kurdish uprisings in the early Republican period were suppressed, and until the late 1970s the question remained frozen. However, in the

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[20] Heinz Kramer, ***Avrupa ve Amerika Karşısında Değişen Türkiye*** (translated by Ali Çimen) (İstanbul: Timaş Yay., 2001), pp. 67-91.; Shmuelevitz, ***op.cit***., pp. 30-40; and see Michael M. Gunter, "The Silent Coup: The Secularist-Islamist Struggle in Turkey", ***Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol. 21, no.3 (Spring 1998), pp. 1-12.

[21] See Heinz Kramer, "Turkey Toward 2000", ***Brookings Review***, vol.17, no.3 (Summer 1999).; Sabri Sayari, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol.54, no. 1 (Fall 2000), pp. 147-68.

late 1970s, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) was established to promote the Kurdish nationalism, using terrorist actions and armed struggle against Turkey in the late 1980s. Due to the power vacuum in northern Iraq that emerged following the Gulf War**,** the PKK was able to settle there and take over arms left by the Iraqi military. Moreover, military and logistical support of Syria made the PKK stronger in the early 1990s and the clashes between the Turkish Army and PKK intensified. After 1994, the Turkish armed forces successfully struggled against the PKK and managed to delimit its activities. After the seizure of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK, in 1998 the terrorist organization lost its effectiveness in Turkey significantly.[22]

The continuous growth of political Islam, radical Islamist movements, the Kurdish separatist movement, and the volatile environment of Turkey increased the military's influence in Turkish politics throughout the 1990s. As the founding institution of the Republic, the military saw itself as the guarantor of it. In fact, it acquired more visible role and greater autonomy in key political areas during the 1990s. In view of the Turkish military, there were two fundamental enemies; the Islamist movements threatening secular character of the state; and the Kurdish separatist movements that threaten the unity of the country. It should be noted that the Turkish military enjoyed the support of the vast majority of the population, including the media, particularly in its struggle against "terrorism, separatism and Islamist extremism".[23]

Finally, as to economic realm, Turkey adopted an export-oriented, liberal economic policy aimed at integration into international markets that started in the 1980s and continued throughout the period covered by this study. Indeed, this strategy enabled Turkey great benefits throughout the 1980s and in the early 1990s. Nevertheless, due to mismanagement, corruption, political instability, and

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[22] Henry J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, "Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities", ***Middle East Journal***, vol. 51, no1 (1997).

[23] Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "The Evolution of the National Security Culture, and the Military in Turkey", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol.54, no.1 (Fall 2000), pp. 199-216.; O. Metin Öztürk, ***Ordu ve Politika*** (Ankara: Gündoğan Yay., 1997).

structural reasons it experienced two severe economic/financial crises in April 1994, and February 2001. On the other hand, Turkish economy was negatively affected by the Asia and Russia crises of 1998. However, Turkey's GNP (gross national product) increased by 33 %, from nearly $ 152 billion in 1991 to $ 202 billion in 2001.

Aforementioned internal developments in Turkey in the given period influenced Turkish foreign policy and particularly the Turkish-Iranian relations. To begin with, political instability in Turkey throughout the 1990s prevented the formation of consistent and long-lasting foreign policy strategies, which caused ups and downs in Turkish-Iranian relations, as well. Secondly, the rise of political and radical Islam increased the sensitivity of Turkish decision-makers to shariah threat and the Turkish suspicion about the activities of Iran, alleged "sponsor of political Islam" in Turkey. Thus, ascendancy of political and radical Islam in Turkey emerged as a negative factor for the relations between Turkey and Iran. Thirdly, increased Turkish nationalism in the 1990s caused a "fear of Pan-Turkism" in Iran as well. On the other hand, the Kurdish issue constantly increased the tension in the Turkish Iranian relations. The mobility of the PKK militants in the Turkish-Iraqi-Iranian border and the alleged Iranian support for these militants deepened the crisis. Moreover, the Iranian leaders were concerning about growing efficiency of Turkish military in politics, because they saw Turkish Army as "radical Kemalist" oppressing "Muslims" in Turkey.[24] Iran was also displeasured with Turkish-Israeli partnership, in which military played a leading role. The Iranian leaders suspected that Turkish army is cooperating with the US and Israel – two enemies of Iran- against Iran.[25] Finally, the only internal development that could have a positive impact on the Turkish-Iranian relations

[24] For instance See "The Islamic Human Rights Commission asked the UN to vote vigorously denounce the violation of human rights in Turkey", ***Echo of Islam***, no. 157-158 (July&August 1997), p.41. See also, Sahep Pasha, "The Trauma of Modern Turkey", ***Echo of Islam,*** no. 178 (July 1999), pp.9-14.

[25] Mahmood Sariolghalam, "Israeli-Turkish Military Cooperation: Iranian Perceptions and Responses", ***Journal of Political and Military Sociology***, vol. 29 (Winter 2001), pp.293-304. See, "Turkish Generals' Dilemma: Islam or Zionism?", ***Tehran Times***, 5 August 1999.

was Turkey's adoption of liberal foreign trade policy and the possibility of expanded bilateral commercial relations. Nevertheless, severe economic crises in both countries hindered increase in the volume of Turkish-Iranian economic transactions.

2.1.2. Turkish Foreign Policy

Geopolitical developments in the 1990s displayed that Turkey could play an important role in numerous regions. Several internal and external factors facilitated Turkey's further involvement into regional affairs and compelled it to pursue an "active foreign policy". While most of its neighbors, like Iraq and Syria, were experiencing decline economically and militarily, Turkey rose as a great regional power.[26] "Turkey's interests and potential influence stretched from the Balkans to western China throughout the 1990s". [27] Indeed, Turkey's policy horizons extended from defending the welfare of Turkish citizens resident in Germany to assert its influence in Central Asia and to take a stake in the Middle East politics and the Balkans. Turkey tried to mediate in ethnic conflicts i.e. in the Caucasus, Middle East and the Balkans around its borders, and in this vein, it joined to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans in the 1990s. Turkey's participation to the Gulf War; its leading role in the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and Developing-8; assertive policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia; and the establishment of close relations with Israel were the remarkable samples of "activism" in Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s.[28] In the same vein, Turkey threatened to use its military capability in order to "neutralize" S-300 -surface to air- missiles in case of their deployment in Cyprus. Similarly, Turkey exerted great pressure on Damascus to expatriate Öcalan, leader of the PKK, and to end its support to the PKK. On the other hand,

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[26] Sayari, ***"Turkish Foreign ….."***, pp. 147-68.

[27] Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey in A Changing Security Environment", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol. 54, no.1 (Fall 2000), pp. 169-82.

[28] Lesser, ***op.cit.***, pp. 169-82; Malik Mufti, "Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy", ***Middle East Journal***, vol.52, no.1 (Winter, 1998), pp. 32-49.

due to the subsequent military incursions into northern Iraq, Turkey managed to establish a *de facto* security zone in the north of Iraq.

Moreover, Turkey's interests coincided with those of the US, the only hegemonic power in the 1990s. There was a common interest between Turkey and the US over the regional developments in the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East. To prevent spillover of ethnic conflicts, to secure the independence of the newly independent states, too solve the Palestine question peacefully etc. became issues of common concern, thus making an "active Turkish foreign policy" easier to implement at that time. Public pressure stimulated by the "nationalist sentiments" and the sense of "Islamic-cultural solidarity" compelled Turkey to adopt such an active policy as well. Another reason for Ankara's active foreign policy was the presence of the ethnic communities such as Abkhazians, Azeris, Chechens, and Albanians in Turkey. They lobbied for a more active Turkish foreign policy in regional affairs. In this juncture, the "Turkish euphoria" that appeared as a result of changes in its geopolitics in the early 1990s encouraged Turkey to pursue active policies. On the other hand, the rise of political instability, war and ethnic conflict around Turkey's borders prompted Ankara to become involved in these regions to prevent spillover of these issues. Finally, leadership of Turgut Özal could be mentioned as another reason behind activist Turkish foreign policy in the early 1990s.[29]

Despite its "active" policies in a vast area, Turkey maintained its orientation towards the West that was the principal aim of the Turkish foreign policy. In this regard, Turkey's priority was to be a full-member of the European Community that transformed itself into the European Union (EU) in 1992. Another objective of the Turkish foreign policy was to ensure regional stability in order to prevent regional conflicts from spilling over into its territories. On the other hand, Turkey tried to access new markets that emerged as in the make of the

[29] Idris Bal, ***Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics*** (Aldersot, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate, 2000), pp.43-97.

collapse of the "Communist Bloc" in order to feed its export-oriented economic policy.[30]

However, sense of decreasing geo-strategic importance to the West among Turkish elite following the end of the Cold War, and the European Community's covert rejection of Turkish application for full membership in 1989 confirmed the "judgment" that Europe was closing the door on Turkey. Turgut Özal, the then President, reacted by pursuing an "active policy" that was intended to demonstrate Turkey's continuing strategic importance to the West. In this juncture, Turkey was presented with an opportunity to do this in August 1990 upon the emergence of the Gulf Crisis. Turkey also turned its sight to the former Eastern Bloc and played a leading role in the formation of the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation) in 1992.[31] In the meantime, emergence of the newly independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia offered Turkey another opportunity to establish close economic and political relations.

On the other hand, Turkey kept a "balance" between its relations with the regional countries and its relations with the West throughout the 1990s, which is quite clear in the case of Iraq. Turkey maintained its cooperation with the US because of ongoing threat posed by Saddam Hussein, ruler of Iraq, and Iraq's reluctance to cooperate with the UN over disarmament programs. However, Turkey had no more patience to tolerate authority vacuum in the north of Iraq. Additionally, ambivalence of the US policy towards Iraq and Turkey's suspicion of the US support for the establishment of an independent Kurdish entity in the north of Iraq, economic and political damages stemming from ongoing UN embargo against Iraq compelled Turkey to pursue a region-based policy prioritizing relations with its neighbors.[32] Similarly, in the case of Iran, despite US

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[30] Sayari, ***"Turkish Foreign…"***, pp. 147-68.

[31] Laurent Ruseckas, "Turkey and Eurasia; Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol.54, no.1 (Fall 2000), pp. 217-38.; and Sayari, ***"Turkey and the Middle…"***, pp. 44-55.

[32] See Mahmut B. Aykan, "Türkiye'nin Kuveyt Krizi Sonrasındaki Basra Körfezi Güvenliği Politikası: 1990-1996", in Meliha B. Altunışık, ed., ***Türkiye ve Ortadoğu: Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*** (İstanbul: Boyut Yay., 1999), pp.22, 31-32.

opposition, Turkey kept it's diplomatic and trade relations with Iran; even Turkey and Iran signed a gas-purchasing agreement in 1996.

In fact, the post-Gulf War developments in northern Iraq led to the growing burden of the Kurdish issue for Turkey as a security matter. Refugee flow following the harsh response of Saddam Hussein against insurgent Kurdish groups in the spring of 1991, both posed a threat to economic and social structure of the country, and made Turkey more vulnerable to the PKK infiltration. The UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 688 in April 1991, and started Operation Provide Comfort I (OPC) deploying an international force in Turkey in order to enable humanitarian aid to the refugees, and then to provide their repatriation. In this regard, the US declared no-fly zones in the south of 38th latitude and in the north of 36th latitude within the territories of Iraq in order to create "safe havens" for Shiites in the south and for the Kurds in the north. The second stage of the OPC, which started in July 1991, called OPC II, aimed to prevent the Saddam regime from starting a new assault on the refugees/Kurds in the north of Iraq.[33]

However, the no-fly zone in the north of Iraq created a "fertile" ground for the PKK because of the power vacuum there. On the other hand, the Kurdish groups in this region assumed the functions of government there and they formed regional governments, which highly discomforted Turkey. For this reasons, after 1992, Turkey pursued a multidimensional policy towards northern Iraq. Firstly, it allowed the deployment of international forces under the framework of OPC II, and later Operation Northern Watch[34] in order to maintain its cooperation with the US to deter Iraqi regime. On the other hand, Turkey established close relations with the Kurdish groups, especially with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Mesud Barzani, so that they would protect the Iraqi side of the Turkey-Iraq border and struggle against the PKK. Nevertheless, considering state-building efforts of the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq, Turkey also cooperated with Iran

[33] ***Ibid***, pp.27-29; and see Baskın Oran, ***Kalkık Horoz, Çekiç Güç ve Kürt Devleti*** (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1997).

[34] OPC II was transformed into Operation Northern Watch in December 1996 because of growing internal reactions against OPC II in Turkey.

and Syria. Iran and Syria were also worried about state-building efforts of the Kurdish groups because they feared that an independent Kurdish state could influence the Kurdish people within the borders of these states. That is why Turkey, Iran and Syria defended territorial integrity of Iraq and declared their objection to an independent Kurdish state. Finally, in order to compensate its economic losses due to the Gulf War, Turkey lobbied in the UN to end the embargo against Iraq after 1992 and it resumed diplomatic and trade relations with the Iraqi government in the late 1990s.

Another opening of the Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s was to forge a security cooperation arrangement with Israel. The signing of a military training and education agreement, and free trade agreement in 1996 created a new formidable alignment between the two militarily strongest states of the region. Turkey's motives were to send a signal to Syria, to improve its military capabilities, to acquire technical know-how and to find an alternative source for its weapons systems to forge such an arrangement. In addition, Turkey anticipated to cooperate in gathering intelligence in collaboration with Israel against the PKK and Islamist groups, and to gain support of the Jewish lobby in Washington.[35] Turkey supported the Middle East peace process, which would increase regional economic cooperation and provide new opportunities for trade and investment. The peace agreement would release Turkey from the difficulty of balancing its commitment to maintain diplomatic and political ties with Israel, and its efforts to show solidarity with the Arab and Islamic World. However, this development was perceived by Iranian officials as a threat against Iranian interests, and in every occasion they voiced their displeasure with the Turkish-Israeli alliance.[36]

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[35] Sayari, ***"Turkish Foreign…"***, pp. 147-68.; According to Bolukbasi, well-known Turkish professor, Turkey's reduced trade with the Arab countries; lack of Arab support on key issues, and bilateral disputes with Iraq and Syria led the Turkey's closing with Israel. See Suha Bolukbasi, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance; A Turkish View", ***Journal of Palestine Studies***, vol.29, no.1(Autumn 1999).

[36] Sariolghalam, ***op.cit.***, pp. 293-304.; Bülent Aras, "Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relations in the Nineties: Impact on the Midlle East", ***Middle East Policy***, vol. 7, no.3 (June 2000), pp.151-164. See,"Iran Calls on Turkey to Review Relations With Zionist Regime", ***Echo of Islam***, no. 169 (July&August 1998), p.26.; "Turkey Must Disentangle Itself from the Zionist Trap", ***Echo of Islam***, no. 186 (April 2000), p.36.; "Cooperation With Zionism, Confrontation With Islamic World", ***Tehran Times***, 20 July 1999.

Upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union, new states that have cultural, ethnic, and linguistic affinity with Turkey became independent. This transformation- together with other regional developments- created "euphoria" in Turkey to be a "regional superpower". Turkey was the first country to recognize the newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus in December 1991. The Turkish leaders subsequently visited the region. Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel visited the region in April-May 1992. Ankara not only saw a vast area to influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia, a view supported by the US, but also viewed itself as the leader of the newly independent Turkic states. In this regard, Süleyman Demirel, the then Prime Minister, declared in Baku; "Turkey has accepted the responsibility of representing the Turkic world" who shared "the same blood, religion and language".[37]

The Turkish television began to broadcast to Central Asia and the Caucasus; joint business councils were set up; Turkish cultural centers were opened; and hundreds of agreements were signed between the Turkic states and Turkey. Turkey became a large aid donor to the region, as well. A technical cooperation agency, Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA/TİKA) was set up in January 1992 to coordinate Turkish institutional aid and investment promised to the Turkic Republics.[38]

On October 30-31, 1992, Turkey hosted presidents of the Turkic Republics in Istanbul. However, President Özal misjudged the mood of his interlocutors. Despite his ambitious suggestions towards bringing Turkey and the newly independent Turkic states closer, the Central Asian leaders expressed their

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[37] Philip Robins, "Turkey's Ostpolitic: Relations with the Central Asian States", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp.130-31.; William Hale, "Turkey and Transcaucasia", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp.150-65.; Khosla, ***op.cit.***, pp.356-57.

[38] Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran, ed., ***Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,*** vol.II. (İstanbul, İletisim Yay, 2001), pp. 366-449.; Gareth M. Winrow, "Turkish Policy in Central Asia", in Touraj Atabaki and John o'Kane, eds., ***Post-Soviet Central Asia*** (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), pp. 91-108.

displeasure with any grouping based on religious or ethnic criteria. Moreover, they stated that their cooperation with Turkey should not harm their relations with other CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries.

On the other hand, the "Eurasianists" gained leverage in internal politics of Russia that became assertive in the former Soviet territories. Later, Russia proclaimed the "near abroad policy" in 1993. Through the near abroad doctrine, Russia defined the borders of former Soviet territories as its defense line and warned the third parties to avoid assertive politics directed to these territories. It should be regarded that Iran has also religious and cultural affinities with the newly independent Muslim states of Central Asia and Azerbaijan. In addition, it has a common history with these states and its geographic location offered Iran new opportunities. However, Turkey initially ignored the influence of Russia and Iran over the Caucasus and Central Asia, where they competed for political influence and economic interests. In addition to this competition, Turkey's lack of traditional deep-rooted linkages with these republics, Turkey's own economic scarcities and reluctant stance of the Turkic Republics for "cordial relations with Turkey" ended the Turkish "euphoria" in the mid-1990s.[39]

Consequently, Turkey has learnt two important lessons vis-à-vis its activities in the Eurasia. The first was the understanding that Russia has been more important than its southern neighbors as an economic partner of Turkey. The second was that aggressive foreign policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus was no more advisable given the risk of direct confrontation with Russia.[40] Then, it adopted a more realistic approach toward the Eurasia abandoning its confrontational discourse towards Russia and Iran. Thus, emotional rhetoric in Turkey towards Central Asia and Azerbaijan waned, and Turkey set its relations with these regions on the basis of concrete economic relations.

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[39] Robins, ***op.cit.***, pp. 136-39.; Khosla, ***op.cit,*** pp.357-60.; and see Oktay Tanrısever, "Russia and the Independent Turkic States: Discovering the Meaning of Independence", ***Eurasian Studies***, vol.20 (Autumn 2001), pp. 95-108.

[40] Ruseckas, ***op.cit.***, pp. 217-38.

Despite its increased involvement in the regional politics, Turkey's principal strategic, political and economic relations continued to be with the West throughout the 1990s. In this regard, Turkey maintained its insistence on being a full-member of the EU and maintained close relations with the US. Indeed, strengthening ties with the West has been the primary motivating force for much of Turkey's recent activism to display the importance of it. In fact, its Western orientation and good relations with the West made it attractive to the newly independent states. They intended to establish sound relations with European countries and the US through Turkey. Even the Refahyol (coalition between the Welfare Party and the True Path Party) experiment did not affect the Western orientation of Turkey.

2.2. Iranian Foreign Policy in the 1990s

2.2.1. Internal Developments in Iran in the 1990s

Two significant developments profoundly affected Iranian politics and foreign policy in the 1990s: the end of eight-year war with Iraq in July 1988, and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of the revolution, on June 4, 1989. The Iranian government encountered two kinds of difficulties following these developments. In the first place, it had to manage pressure, both from inside and outside, to transform revolutionary politics into policies of any "normal state". The domestic pressure for transformation extended to even questioning the legitimacy of "velayat-i fakih" rule, the main base of the Iranian regime. The outside pressure was conducted via international isolation of the revolutionary Iran to compel it to accept the existing regional and international system. Second, Iran had to overcome the problems stemming from deteriorating domestic economic and social conditions that further deepened due to the eight-year war with Iraq and the international isolation of Iran.[41] These difficulties led to the

[41] John Calabrese, ***Revolutionary Horizons, Regional Foreign Policy in Post-Khomeini Iran*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.3.

ascendancy of pragmatists/reformists in Iranian politics and deepening of competition between the reformists and radicals, which marked the 1990s in Iran.

After the consolidation of the revolutionary regime in Iran, there were mainly two factions among the ruling elite, the "revolutionary idealists" and the "revolutionary realists". The revolutionary idealists were the precedents of "radicals" of the 1990s arguing isolation from the outside world and full Islamication of the daily life – in economic, social and political aspects- as well as running the state. The revolutionary realists, who were succeeded by the pragmatists and reformists, advocated improving relations with the outside world and pragmatic policies both in state running and in daily life.[42] Ayatollah Khomeini kept a balanced approach to these two factions during his reign: while he was supporting idealists in one case, he extended his support to realists in another case.

The charismatic leadership of Khomeini and the continuing war with Iraq had provided an "unquestionable authority" to the revolutionary regime. Nevertheless, the end of the war, and the death of Khomeini in June 1989 lifted the veil of the unquestionable authority of the state. Hashemi Rafsanjani's assuming presidency in 1989,[43] one of the leading figures of the revolutionary realists raised the expectations that Iran would adopt liberal policies and integrate into the international system.[44] Indeed, the pace of reforms in Iran that already started after the end of the Iran-Iraq war accelerated encompassing almost all aspects of life in the country within the framework of reconstruction. The transformation was also visible in Iran's foreign relations, which could be seen in

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[42] For this classification see Rouhullah K. Ramazani, "Iran's Foreign Policy; Contending Orientations", in R.K. Ramazani, ed., ***Iran's Revolution*** (Washington D.C.: Indiana University Press-Middle East Institute, 1990), pp. 48-68.; and see Mohammad-Reza Dehshiri, "The Cycle of Idealism and Realism in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran", ***The Iranian Journal of International Affairs***, vol. XII, no. 2 (Summer 2001).

[43] Jalil Roshandel, "Iran's Foreign and Security Policies; How the Decision Making Process Evolved", ***Security Dialogue***, vol.31, no.1 (2000), p.109.

[44] Adam Tarock, "The Muzzling of Liberal Press in Iran", ***Third World Quarterly***, vol.22, no.4 (2001), pp. 588-89.

the context of the "thermidor"[45] of the Iranian revolution.[46] However, this transition did not mean a complete departure from the revolutionary politics. It had to be compatible with "Khomeini's legacy"[47] to counter criticisms of radicals.

The domestic pressure to transform revolutionary policies could be attributed to three reasons. Firstly, the revolutionary regime in Iran could not extend "freedom" to people because of the process of consolidation of the regime and elimination of counter-revolutionaries, and the war with Iraq. In this vein, Ayatollah Montazeri, one of the leading clerics during the revolution and foundation of revolutionary state said, "we desired independence, freedom and the Islamic Republic, but the mullahs forgot the freedom".[48] Indeed, after long years, people could not tolerate emergency rules anymore and demanded transformation. The second reason for transformation demand in Iran was that the Iranian people and intellectuals became aware of the fact that confrontation with regional and international powers brought nothing to Iran. Finally, the presence of huge young

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[45] "Thermidor" is derived from French Revolution. In the French Revolution, the revolt initiated on 9 Thermidor (July 27) 1794 which resulted in the fall of Maximilian Robespierre and the collapse of revolutionary fervor and the reign of terror in France. See, http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=73951. See also Theda Skocpol, ***States and Social Revolutions, A comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*** (London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 185-196.; Lüdgar Kühnardt, ***Devrim Zamanları***, (trans. Hüseyin Bağcı – Senay Plassman) (Ankara: ASAM, 2002), pp.109-29.; Michael L. Kennedy, "The 'Last Stand' of the Jacobin Clubs", ***French Historical Studies***, vol.16, no.2 (Autumn 1989), pp. 309-44.

[46] Anoushiravan Ehteshami, ***After Khomeini; The Iranian Second Republic*** (London, New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. XIII-XIV.; See Mehdi Mozaffari, "Revolutionary, Thermidorian and Enigmatic Foreign policy; President Khatami and the 'Fear of the Wave'", ***International Relations***, vol.14, no.5 (August 1999), pp. 12-13.; Mathew C. Wells, "Thermidor in The Islamic Republic of Iran: the Rise of Muhammad Khatami", ***British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.26, no.1 (May 1999), pp.27-39.; Farhang Rajaee, "A Thermidor of "Islamic Yuppies"? Conflict and Compromise in Iran's Politics", ***Middle East Journal***, vol.53, no.2 (Spring 1999), pp.217-31.; Farhang Rajaee, "An Iranian Thermidor", ***Review of Politics***, vol.59, no.3 (Summer 1997), pp.624-27.

[47] Ayatollah Khomeini's legacy could be sum up as the supremacy and hegemony of the Shiite priesthood through possession and exercise of power –velayat-e mutlaqhe faqih (absolute rule of clergy)-, confrontational discourse with the West and strongly anti-American and anti-Israel line. Khomeini saw confrontation between the "West" and "Islam" unavoidable. According to him, for the installation of Islamic world system –the ultimate goal- all methods could be used. He urged an autarkic economic structure to pursue fully independent foreign policy. See Mozaffari, ***op.cit.***, pp. 12-13.

[48] ***Radikal***, 22 February 2000.

population born after the revolution should be highlighted. They strongly reacted to "revolutionary despotism" and demanded social and cultural rights. Their main concern was not to export the revolution, and to liberate the oppressed people and to construct an Islamic system all over the world, but to find a job and to solve their economic and social issues. They desired more liberty in social life and integration into the international community.[49]

Moreover, the domestic pressure for transformation extended to questioning the legitimacy of the velayat-i fakih rule in the Islamic Republic. Failure of the Islamic regime to fulfill economic and social expectations of masses caused the questioning of validity of the theory of velayat-e fakih. Indeed, the theory was developed by Ayatollah Khomeini in the 1960s and 1970s and applied to the state structure of revolutionary Iran. However, some members of the ulema like Ayatollah Sheriatmadari and Ayatollah Khoi never accepted this theory. On the other hand, some part of clergy including Ayatollah Montazeri, who played leading roles in the revolution and building of the state, became critical of the theory of velayat-e fakih because their expectations were not materialized.[50]

Acceptance of the UN Security Council Resolution 598 in August 1988 that ended the war with Iraq, and its conciliatory stance in hostage crisis in Lebanon in 1989, reduced international pressure on Iran. Rafsanjani, the then president, renewed ties with Saudi Arabia, and Iran's relations with European Community followed the path of "critical dialogue". When Rafsanjani stepped down as president in the summer of 1997, he left clear message of "reconciliation with outside world; restoration of stability in the Gulf; reintegration into global economy; more active participation in global and regional organizations". His

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[49] Shreen T. Hunter, "İran Perestroikası Köklü Değişim Olmadan Mümkün mü?", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol. 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 77-78; and see Robin Wright, "Iran's New Revolution", ***Foreign Affairs***, vol. 79, no. 1 (January-February 2000), pp. 133-45.; Oliver Roy and Farhad Khorosrokhavar, ***İran; Bir Devrimin Tükenişi*** (trans. İsmail Yerguz) (İstanbul: Metis Yay., 2001).

[50] See, Wilfried Buchta, ***Who Rules Iran? The Structure of the Power in the Islamic Republic*** (Washington DC.:The Washington Institute for Near East Policy- Kondrad Adenaur Stiftung, 2000).; İsmail Safa Üstün, ***Humeyni'den Hamaney'e İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Yönetim Biçimi*** (İstanbul: Birleşik Yayıncılık, 1999).; Ruşen Çakır and Sami Oğuz, ***Hatemi'nin İran'ı*** (İstanbul: İletisim Yay., 2000).

aspiration was to recover ground, lost in the Iran-Iraq war, so that Iran could reassert its influence in the region. "He clearly understood that the economic and military recovering of Iran entails ending its regional and international isolation".[51]

In the presidential elections held in May 1997, Sayyed Mohammed Khatami, who had assumed the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance between 1982 and 1992 and was regarded as a reformer, won 69 % of the eligible votes. He pledged "reform at home, and peace abroad" to the Iranians. Khatami rejected the notion of the clash of civilizations, embraced the principle of "dialogue among religions, cultures and nations". He believed in the interdependence of societies, cultures and economies, and advocated a "pro-active and firm foreign policy". This policy, he believed, should be "based on non-violence and friendly relations with all countries as long as they recognized Iran's independence and not pursued "an aggressive policy" toward it".[52]

Under Khatami's direction, Iran boosted ties with its Arab neighbors in the Gulf, played a constructive role in the former Soviet states, and restored full relations with the EU. He tried to restore Iran's international image from a "rogue state" to the a sponsor of "dialogue among civilizations". On the other hand, he aimed to create sound civil society and the rule of law in the domestic arena. In foreign policy realm, Khatami developed three principles; dialogue among civilizations, "détente" with neighboring countries, and the establishment of international contacts with international organizations.[53]

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[51] Roshendal, ***op.cit.***, pp.109-110.

[52] For foreign policy implementation of president Khatami see, Shah Alam, "The Changing Paradigm of Iranian Foreign Policy under Khatami", ***Strategic Analysis***, vol. XXIV, no.9 (December 2000), pp. 1669-1653.; R.K. Ramazani, "The Shifting Premise of Iran's Foreign Policy; towards a Democratic Peace?", ***Middle East Journal***, vol.52, no.2 (Spring, 1998); Moustafa Torkzahrani, "Iran After Khatami; Civil Society and Foreign Policy", ***The Iranian Journal of International Affairs***, vol.9, no.4 (1997/98).

[53] Roshendal, ***op.cit.***, pp.109-10.

Nevertheless, a decade after the death of Khomeini, it is proven that despite the earnings of pragmatist/reformist faction, the Islamic regime could not meet the expectations of the people. In this regard, the closure of Salam, a daily owned by Ayatollah Khoeniha, triggered massive demonstrations in July 1999, which reflected displeasure of the masses with the regime.[54] Similarly, low participation to the last presidential elections held in June 2001 (33 percent of the electorate stayed away from the polls that were around 18 percent in 1997) seems as another proof of peoples' displeasure with the regime.[55]

The economic consequences of eight-year war with Iraq also marked Iranian politics throughout the 1990s. Direct and indirect damage caused by the war was around $ 871,5 billion, besides killing and injuring of thousands. Manufacturing output declined roughly 40 % below the pre-Revolutionary years while the Islamic populist government enlarged the non-productive service sector. Expansion of the government's "welfare politics" created a demand overload compounded by high birth rates.[56] The population dislocation caused by the war, de-ruralization of the population and its explosive growth and flight of the skilled population away from the country because of the revolution, war and dogmatic Islamication policies were among the reasons of economic difficulties experienced in the 1990s.[57]

Economic policies of the revolutionary regime were also challenged by several facts that caused denial of autarkic structure of revolutionary policy. To begin with, the international system has been highly interdependent and it was hard to function outside the system. On the other hand, the Iranian leaders

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[54] Tarock, ***op.cit.***, pp.591-99.

[55] Cristopher de Bellaigue, "Iran's Last Chance for Revolution?", ***The Washington Quarterly***, vol.24, no.4 (Autumn 2001), p.71.

[56] Iran experienced a baby boom in the 1980s because the Islamic regime encouraged people to have children. Consequently, Iranian population increase rate was about 3.2 per cent in 1996.

[57] K.L. Afrasiabi, ***After Khomeini; New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy*** (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 36-38.; and see for economic policy of revolutionary state see Ali Saedi, "Charismatic Political Authority and Populist Economics in Post-Revolutionary Iran", ***Third World Quarterly***, vol.22, no.2 (2001).

accepted the country's deep economic problems and the urgent need for reform of the entire economic system and its administrative machine. Finally, they recognized the necessity of foreign assistance in ameliorating Iran's economic difficulties, military weaknesses, and lack of investment capital.[58] That was the logic behind Rafsanjani's following remarks; "I will not engage in fantasying independent and self sufficient society".[59]

Therefore, the five-year development programs envisaged a departure from the self-reliance economy, adopting an open-door policy in conjunction with a laissez-faire approach. The reform was intended to attract exiled Iranian industrialists and well-educated people.[60] The government led by Rafsanjani boosted the internationalization of Iran's industry and economy, which gained a momentum with the declaration of free trade zones. Furthermore, the Iranian government applied to join GATT (General Agreements on Trade and Tariffs that transformed into the World Trade Organization) in 1993.[61]

On the other hand, the volatile situation in Iran and around it – Iraq, the Caucasus and Afghanistan- resulted in re-ascendancy of nationalism in the 1990s. It became compulsory for the Islamic Republic to accept and legitimize the concept of "Islam" with "Iran" and "Iranianism" because of growing nationalism. The trend was directed towards accepting the mutual dependence and inter-penetration of Iran and "Iranian Islam", and towards realizing that one without the other would be much poorer culturally and spiritually, and would not reflect the true feelings of the people. One element of this re-emergence of Iranianism was the rehabilitation of leading Iranian literary figures, like Sade Shirazi, whose

[58] Ehteshami, ***op.cit.***, pp.160-61.

[59] ***Ibid.***, p.42.

[60] Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, pp.38-39; Calabrese, ***op.cit.***, p.31. See also Jahangir Amuzegar, "Iran's Post-Revolution Planning; The Second Try", ***Middle East Policy***, vol. 8, no.1 (March 2001).

[61] Ehteshami, ***op.cit.***, pp.42, 104-117.

poems had been banned in early days of the Revolution.[62] Actually, Khatami contributed to nationalism by bringing Iran into the equation as a distinct entity, autonomous from the transnational identity policy of the revolution. In one occasion he said, "We are deeply proud of our Iraniannes". He said that Islam actually owed much to Iran; "in spite of all its greatness, Islam discovered a well-coming Iran and Iranian potential that it utilized. Islam blossomed in the shadow of Iranian ingenuity"[63]. Within the same vein, the leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamanei said that Persian, not Arabic, is the true language of Islam. The growth of nationalism in Iran caused a sense of disdain for other peoples of the region.[64]

2.2.2. Foreign Policy of Iran; from Revolutionary to Thermidorian

The Iranian foreign policy has in general been explained by Islamic character of the regime and decision-makers, regarding it as a revolutionary state. Although every revolution initially has a revolutionary foreign policy[65], in a

[62] Shreen T. Hunter, ***Iran After Khomeini*** (Washington DC.: CSIS, 1992), pp.94-95. For ongoing nationalism in Iran see David Menashri, "Khomeini's Vision: Nationalism or World Order", in David Menashri, ed., ***The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*** (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), pp. 40-57. Indeed, nationalist themes were always presented in the revolution. Soon after coming to power, revolutionary regime insisted that the "Gulf" should be termed as the "Persian Gulf". The war with Iraq reinvigorated Iranian nationalism, i.e. nationalist music started to play in media, with the waning of the belief in an international Islamic revolution, the regime has turned more to emphasis on Iran as a nation. "Mellat-i bozorg" (the great nation) quotes from Khomeini painted on walls. See, Fred Halliday, "Iran and the Middle East; Foreign Policy and Domestic Change", ***Middle East Monitor***, no.220 (Fall 2001), pp.45-46.

[63] A.Reza Sheikholeslami, "The Transformation of Iran's Political Culture", ***Critique,*** no.17 (Fall 2000), p 129. According to Sheikholeslami, Khatami's ability to combine religion and culture, making sure that this sense of Islam did not negate Iran was one of the reasons behind his popularity.

[64] Halliday, ***op.cit.***, p.45

[65] According to Mozaffari, a specialist on foreign policy of Iran, revolutionary foreign policy is revisionist; challenging the existent international system, active and threatening; resort to subversive actions and leading to wars, strongly value-oriented, and carried out by charismatic revolutionary leadership. Reflections of it were experienced in Iran as well. Revolutionary Iran led by Ayatollah Khomeini, challenging the existent international system – under the slogan of neither the East nor the West, only the Islamic Republic- presented a new one urging uprising of "oppressed masses" against "conservative regimes", and was strongly dominated by "Islamic" ideology. Khomeini viewed the international system unjust and repressive. He divided the world into two pieces, dar'ul Islam (domain of Islam) and dar'ul harb (domain of infidels or war), that a compromise between the two was impossible. He was opposed to the Westphalian system of international relations; his basic unit was clergy (ulema) and the ummah (community of believers

certain phase it could be no longer defined as revolutionary but called as "thermidor". Nevertheless, thermidorian foreign policy[66] does not contest the basic discourse of revolution, since it draws its legitimacy from the revolution. It is the phase in which the regime is subjected to change because of strong demands and pressure from inside and outside. Coincidence of inside and outside pressures poses a critical phase that regime's survival becomes dependent on adaptability of the thermidorian regime to the new situation.[67] Ayatollah Khomeini's decision to accept cease-fire with Iraq in August 1988 is generally taken as the inauguration of the Iranian thermidor. The thermidorian regime in Iran announced its first priority as "reconstruction" (sazendegi). Actually, the post-war return to normal life necessitated a number of important administrative and management reforms.

In fact, there are several factors affecting the Iranian foreign policy besides its ideological dimension. The first of them is its strategic position that made Iran an arena of great power rivalry during the 19th century and throughout the Cold War, which rendered it extremely vulnerable to events beyond its control. Secondly, Iran's historical experience, being heir of a great culture and an empire dating back to 2500 years before, has an important place in Iranian political thought. Finally, Iran's military, economic and technological weakness, and its

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of Islam). In Khomeini's vision, when Islam awakens and Muslims riot against their infidel/authoritarian rulers, the system would change. According to him, the state is not a Westphalian one based on limited territory and nation, but a state covering all of the countries on which Muslims live. See, Mozaffari, ***op.cit.***, p.9.

[66] Thermidorian foreign policy remains "revisionist", but there is a great openness to the outside world. It is also value-oriented and still perceived as a threat by those in favor of status quo. See also Wells, ***op.cit.***, pp. 27-29.

[67] Mozaffari, ***op.cit.***, pp.9, 13-14. Satisfaction of the new demands necessitates change of discourse and change in attitude and instruments, which is a different era that Mozaffari called "enigmatic". The enigmatic regime is a synthesis of the two previous regimes, at the same time sufficiently different to proclaim its autonomy and construct a self-sustained identity. There is a dichotomy in this phase, because still drawing its legitimacy from the revolution the enigmatic regime has to maintain its affiliation with the revolution. On the other hand it has to construct a new legitimacy and a new discourse. Survival of regime depends on to the adoption of a balanced way between new policies and discourse and revolutionary ones. According to Mozaffari with the assuming of presidency by Khatami in July 1997, enigmatic era has started in Iran. Khatami did not reject the idea of Ummah, but he considered it as a cultural construction. The nation-state was basic unit of the international system in his view. His approach to international law and human rights' concern was critical, yet respectful. However, while Khatami was trying for conciliation with outside world; the leader, the guards and judiciary took a confrontational line.

quest for modernization limited Iran's foreign policy options and compelled it to adopt policies to acquire its own economic and technological needs.[68] The internal developments and the structure of the international system also closely affect the foreign policy of Iran.

In the 1990s the world witnessed a change in Iranian diplomacy towards conciliation with the West, which started with the liberation of the Western hostages in Lebanon in 1989. Iran tried to improve its relations with the Gulf Arab states and Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Iran adopted a collaborative stance with the UN during the Gulf Crisis. The Iranian government led by Rafsanjani, aimed at "further and faster" integration with the international markets, and greater participation in regional and global organizations.

However, this policy faced the opposition and the sabotage of radicals. They conducted "covert activities" outside the country's borders, particularly against the Iranian opposition leaders. In this vein, in April 1997, a Berlin Court decided that the highest authority in Iran had direct responsibility for the assassination of the Kurdish leaders in Berlin, known as the Mykonos affair. On the other hand, radicals in Iran maintained their support for Palestinian organizations resisting the Middle East peace process and conducting armed struggle against Israel.[69]

Indeed, during Rafsanjani's presidency, Iran experienced a flourishing of decision-making processes. The Supreme Leader (velay-e faqih, the highest authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran), President, Speaker of the Parliament and various groups acted alone in adopting policies. Each faction had its preferences, allies and enemies. Therefore during the thermidorian era, Iranian foreign policy lacked consistency, coherence and clarity. For instance, "terror

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[68] Mahmood Sariolghalam, ***The Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: A Theoretical Renewal and a Paradigm for Coalition*** (Tehran: The Center for Strategic Research, 2000).; Hunter, ***Iran After…***, pp.101-02.; Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, pp.10-21.; Ehteshami, ***op.cit.***, p.160.

[69] This case that seems as a contradiction, in fact, is a product of Iranian thermidor. As discussed above, thermidorian regime keeps its affiliation with the revolution, because it draws its legitimacy from the revolution. However, it had to counter pressures to transform.

actions" were taken against Iranian exiled political activists and leaders, despite the government's official line pursuing normalization and improvement of relations with foreign states and respecting the rule of the international law.[70] Hence, two essential tendencies appeared in Iranian foreign policy and internal politics. While the president led the government, which was mainly dominated by the pragmatist/reformist wing, representing moderate and conciliatory face of the thermidorian Iran, the Leader, Revolutionary Guards, and the judiciary which were dominated by radicals, tried to keep the revolutionary line.

The multiplicity of decision-makers went on throughout the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, as well. He called for a more positive foreign policy, advocating dialogue among civilizations and promising that Iran would "avoid any action or behavior causing tension" abroad. However, the president was severely restrained by the Leader, the Guards and the "informal state apparatus". Although he avoided slogans and revolutionary rhetoric, he had to maintain the revolutionary line, particularly in relations with the US and on the Palestine issue in order to appease his domestic rivals and detractors.[71] In fact, hard-liners/radicals in Iran exploited the confrontation with the US and Israel both as a revolutionary aura to justify their continued hold on power, and to win greater influence among "Muslims" and throughout the "Third World".

The new geopolitical environment of Iran that emerged as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War greatly influenced the foreign policy of Iran during the 1990s. The new geopolitics presented Iran with a dilemma both in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and in the Middle East between opportunities and costs.

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[70] Mozaffari, ***op.cit***., pp.14-16. For instance see Kenneth Katzman, ***The Warriors of Islam; Iran's Revolutionary Guard*** (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), pp.135-37 and 165-78. Buchta, ***op.cit., passim.***

[71] ***Ibid.***, p.44.; Stephen C. Fairbanks, "Iran: No Easy Answers", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol.54, no.2 (Spring 2001), pp. 460-61.; De Bellaigue, ***op.cit.***, pp.76-77.

Disintegration of the USSR provided Iran with a large arena for foreign policy action, which it welcomed. Thus, Iran would free itself from its international isolation and it could exert its economic and political influence over the newly independent states, which have cultural and historical affinity with Iran. Iran competed with Turkey to gain influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It attached a great importance to the Caucasus considering that Iran's Azeri population might be influenced by an independent Azeri state next to Iran.

However, this opening was countered by the "opposition" of the West who shifted its gears from anti-communism to the containment of "Islamic fundamentalism". Iran was also faced with risks of the new geopolitics as well. Ethnic-based republics with no firm and established territorial division, the uneasy ethnic relations, and the "release of irredentist tendencies" were some points of instability in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Given the loss of Russia's "driving force for stability" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, prospects of the conflicts' spillover, massive influx of refugees and separatist influences replaced the initial pleasure of Iran concerning its northern borders. Consequently, Iran adopted a policy of promoting economic regionalism, and fostering new trade links to reap the economic benefits of a vast market while having close relations with Russia.[72]

Similarly, while welcoming the defeat of Iraq, Iran became anxious about the increasing US presence in the Gulf following the Gulf Crisis. There was a broad convergence of Iranian and Western policy to keep Iraq contained. However, Iran perceived the US military presence in the Gulf as a threat. As a matter of fact, the Gulf has been a region where Iran desired to establish its hegemony since the British withdrawal. The revolution did not alter this tendency. Because of the existence of sizeable Shiite communities within the borders of conservative Gulf States, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, revolutionary Iran directed its attention to the Gulf. In the

[72] Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, pp.117-18.; and see Adam Tarock, "Iran's Policy in Central Asia", ***Central Asian Survey***, vol.16, no.2 (1997).; Edmund Herzig, ***Iran and the Former Soviet South*** (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995).

post- Gulf War environment, with the absence of powerful Iraq, Tehran was eager to stamp its authority on the Gulf. Naturally, such assertions brought it into direct confrontation with the pro-western Gulf countries and the US.[73]

Another result of the Gulf War, the foundation of security zones in the north and south of Iraq for Kurdish people and Shiite population, closely affected Iranian foreign policy in the 1990s. In fact, Iran had been engaging the Kurds in the north since the early 1970s to gain leverage against Iraq in its rivalry with the latter regarding the Gulf. After the revolution, though Iran started to court Iraqi Shiites, in the south of Iraq, it could not succeed to provoke them to fight against Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. That is why; Iran embraced the Kurds of northern Iraq rather than Shiites throughout the 1990s. It tried to gain the friendship of the Kurdish groups near the Iran-Iraq border in order to secure the border against the Iranian armed opposition movements, i.e. the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Mujaheden-e Khalq Organization (MKO). Another major Iranian concern was the possibility of the increase of Turkish influence over the region. Its fear derived from two factors. Considering Turkey's close relations with Israel and the US, the Iranian leaders were concerned about covert Israeli and US penetration into northern Iraq where they could conduct activities against Iran. On the other hand, they saw growing Turkish influence in the north of Iraq as a threat to the unity of Iran, considering its Turkic minorities. Iranian leaders were also concerned that Turkey could upset the regional power balance to the detriment of Iran if Turkey succeeded to control northern Iraq and the oil region of Mosul-Kirkuk. Thus, Iran wanted to cooperate with Turkey and Syria against the formation of an independent Kurdish state.[74]

Next to the Gulf War, the Arab-Israel peace process was another important development that would affect Iran's regional role and ambitions directed to the

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[73] Ehteshami, ***op.cit.***, p.155.; see Mohd Naseem Khan, "The US Policy Towards the Persian Gulf:, Continuity and Change", ***Strategic Analysis***, vol. XXV, no.2 (May 2001).

[74] Nader Entessar, "Kurdish Conflict in a Regional Perspective", in M. E. Ahrari, ed., ***Change and Continuity in the Middle East, Conflict Resolution and Prospects for Peace*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp.47-73.

Middle East. The successful conclusion of the process would threaten to isolate Iran not only from its "forward bases" in Lebanon, but also would jeopardize its alliance with Syria. Therefore, the Islamic Republic extended strong rhetorical and material support for factions in Palestine opposing to the Oslo Accords of 1993, which were seen as another "sellout by secular nationalists". Actually, the radicals in the Majles and around Khamanei pushed for a more militant line in the Palestine question, refusing to accept any compromise with Israel.[75] However, their main concern was to use Iran's support for the Palestinians for political mobilization in Iran, in the Middle East and the Islamic world.

Iran's relations with the USA profoundly influenced Iranian foreign policy, as well. Despite the initial optimism to repair relations between Iran and the US with the advent of pragmatist-reformist wing in Iranian politics, hostility between them went on throughout the 1990s. Furthermore, the US adopted the "dual containment" policy to contain Iran and Iraq, suspending all kinds of relations in 1993. Moreover, the US Congress approved the Iran Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) in 1995 to forfeit foreign firms investing in Iran more than $ 20 million.

Nevertheless, some scholars in the US objected to isolating Iran on the basis of economic, diplomatic and financial costs, and thereby harming the US security interests.[76] On the other hand, New York Representative in the US Congress, Benjamin Gilman, sponsor of the ILSA, stated that he had detected "no appreciable difference" between moderate and hard-line Iranians on the subject of Israel and the US.[77] Indeed, regarding relations with the US, reformists and radicals shared a common ground. Both of them resented influence yielded by the Jewish lobby over US policy toward Iran, and they called for an end to sanctions and the unfreezing of Iranian assets as preconditions to hold official deliberations.

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[75] ***Ibid.***, pp.46-47.

[76] Fairbanks, ***op.cit.***, p.456.; for instance see Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brend Scowcroft, and Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment", ***Foreign Affairs***, vol.76, no.73 (May/June 1997).

[77] De Bellaigue, ***op.cit.***, p.78.

However, they were divided on the question of what kind of a relationship Iran should have with the US. Radicals favored trade relations with the US, yet they resented political and cultural transaction. On the other hand, through his calling for "dialogue", Khatami, representing the reformers, displayed his support for a rapprochement that involves cultural and political exchanges.[78]

Iran's tense relations with the US, and the dual containment policy directed against Iran, hindered the improvement of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran. While, the US opposed any initiative to cooperate with Iran, the Iranian leaders denounced Turkey's close relations with the US and Israel. On the other hand, the new geopolitics of Iran and Turkey that emerged after the dissolution of the USSR and the Gulf War caused competition between the two countries in the Caucasus and northern Iraq. In the meantime, economic problems of Iran also presented a negative factor to Turkish-Iranian relations and resulted in the decrease in the volume of bilateral trade relations. The end of Iraq war also caused a decrease in bilateral trade relations. As a matter of fact, the ascendancy of pragmatist/reformist wing in Iranian politics and thermidorizing of Iran pleased the Turkish leaders who anticipated that Iran would adopt moderate and constructive policies. In order to support the moderate-reformist wing, Turkey adopted a moderate approach towards Iran despite US opposition, and it maintained political and economic relations with Iran. In spite of the decrease in the importance of ideology in Iranian politics in the 1990s and Iran's growing relations with the European countries, conflicts that seemed to derive from ideological reasons prevailed in bilateral relations between Turkey and Iran. This contradiction is the subject of the following chapter of this study.

[78] ***Ibid.***, p.77.

CHAPTER 3

IDEOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TURKEY AND IRAN

Ideology had an undeniable importance in the relations between Turkey and Iran since the beginning of sixteenth century when the Shii Safavid dynasty came into power in Iran. Then, the wars between the "Ottoman Empire" and the "Iranian Empire" appeared as if they were wars between Shiism and Sunnism.[79] However, ideology lost its importance in bilateral relations following the establishment of secular, Western oriented states in the two countries in the 1920s. Nevertheless, even then, ideological confrontation between Turkey and Iran continued in new forms between the republic and the monarchy, or between democracy and totalitarianism. Ideological confrontation between the two countries escalated after the revolution in Iran, in the form of secularism vs fundamentalism.

Conflict between Iran and Turkey that seemed to be stemming from ideological causes intensified especially after 1989. For instance, both states withdrew their ambassadors twice in a decade for this reason. What is surprising is that this term was the period when revolutionary policies in Iran gradually disappeared, as discussed in the previous chapter. Then the question to be answered remains as what was the reason for escalation of ideological confrontation between the two countries in an era of declining importance of ideology in Iranian foreign policy?

[79] See Mehmet Saray, ***Türk-İran İlişkileri*** (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999).; Taha Akyol, ***Osmanlı'da ve İran'da Mezhep ve Devlet***, 4th print (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1999).; and Adel Allouche, ***Osmanlı-Safevi İlişkileri***, (trans. A. Emin Dağ.) (İstanbul: Anka Yayınları, 2000).

This chapter will seek answers to this question. The major aim of this chapter is to find out primary reasons for the escalation of ideological confrontation between Iran and Turkey. In this respect, I will analyze Iran's policy of the export of the revolution, radical "Islamist" movements in Turkey, and Iran's covert activities in Turkey within the framework of ideological confrontation. I believe that ideology, despite its ongoing – but gradually declining- importance both in the foreign policy of Iran and its relations with Turkey, is not the primary reason for conflicts in Turco-Iranian relations. Rather, it is a result of geopolitical competition, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter, and changing internal and external developments. Infusion of ideology into this already competitive process further exacerbated the conflict.

3.1. Iran's Export of Revolution Policy

In the previous chapter, I suggested that after the mid-1980s realist/reformist wing in Iran managed to come into power, and then Iran adopted pragmatic policies and gradually left its revolutionary politics and discourse.[80] However, according to some authors including Ely Karmon, lecturer at Haifa University, and Mohammed Mohaddessin, a member of the Mujaheden-e Khalq Organization (MKO), a major armed opponent of the current regime, Iran's ideological doctrine and policy orientation did not change in revolutionary era.[81] They claim that, rather than a change, revolutionary policies' implementation was adapted to the changing global developments and the internal economic, political and social constraints in Iran, which were discussed in the second chapter of this study.

In fact, these different views are results of the Iranian thermidor. As stated in the previous pages, thermidorian foreign policy is not diametrically different

[80] ***Supra***, pp.23-37.

[81] Ely Karmon, ***Iran's Policy on Terrorism in the 1990s***, available in www.ict.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=47
and Mohammed Modaddessin, ***Islamic Fundamentalism; the new Global Threat*** (Washington D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1993).

from the revolutionary politics, which caused duality in Iranian decision-making process. It means that, the Iranian leaders kept their revolutionary stance in several cases like policies antagonizing Israel and the US. In the meantime, radical factions maintained revolutionary politics aside from the official line of the Iranian government. Meanwhile, the Turkish leaders accused Iran of exporting its Islamic regime and revolution to Turkey as well, during the period covered by this study. Therefore, it is important to consider "exporting revolution", a *sine qua non* component of the revolutionary policies of Iran, and its evolution in the Iranian revolutionary era.

Indeed, Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian revolution, believed that the export of revolution was obligatory.[82] On one occasion, he said, "*We should try to export our revolution to the world. We should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and [Islam] is the supporter of all the oppressed peoples of the world*". In his view, Iran should export the revolution to pave the way for the ultimate establishment of an Islamic world order when the Mahdi appears.[83] On the other hand exporting revolution would meet the immediate short-term need to make the Iranian regional environment safe for Iran's power and for its revolutionary ideology.[84]

In this regard, Mir Hussain Musavi, the then Prime Minister, declared on assuming office in August 1981 to the prime ministry, that one of the "objectives

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[82] Khomeini, in developing an ideology, which sees the world in terms of an apocalyptic struggle between the forces of good and evil, has gone beyond traditional Twelver Shiism (Ithna Ashari messianism). Under his leadership there seemed to have been a significant shift on the part of Shiism toward viewing Twelver Shiism as a world religion. Khomeini claimed to be the leader not merely of all Ithna Ashari Shiis, but of all Muslims, which is the first time in Islamic history a Twelver Shii has made a conscious bid for the leadership of the whole Islamic world. See Roger M. Savory, "The Export of Ithna Ashari Shiism", in David Menashri, ed., ***The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*** (Boulder, San Fransisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1990).

[83] According to the Twelver Shiism that prevailed in Iran and in the thought of Ayatollah Khomeini, the hidden twelfth Imam, who is in occultation, Imam Mohammad al-Mahdi, would return before the doomsday and establish a just order over the whole world.

[84] Rouhullah K. Ramazani, ***Revolutionary Iran; Challenge and Response in the Middle East***, (4th ed.) (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp.24-25.

of Iran's foreign policy" was to "carry the message of Islamic revolution to the [entire] world". Ayatollah Meshhi, the joma imam (who conducts Friday prayers) in Qom, the religious center of Iran, said that the goal of the revolution was to impose the Qoran over the entire world.[85]

However, as Rouhullah K.Ramazani indicated legitimate means for exporting the revolution was unclear. Despite its universalistic discourse, as David Menashri suggests, Khomeini's Islamic Government concept did not present a blue print for the unification of the Ummah; nor did Khomeini lay down specific guidelines for a new scheme of foreign relations.[86] What Khomeini said about exporting revolution was his emphasis on "non-violent" nature of this policy. On numerous occasions, Khomeini declared "swords" should not be used. He said, *"It does not take swords to export this ideology. This export of ideas by force is not export"*; or "*when we say we want to export our revolution, we do not want to do it with swords".*[87] According to him, distinguished "Islamic behavior" of Iranians was one of the means to export revolution. On another occasion, Khomeini told the Iranian ambassadors and charge d'affairs: *"we shall have exported Islam only when we have helped Islam and Islamic ethics grew in these countries. This is your responsibility and it is [a] task which you must fulfill… this is a must".*[88] Khomeini consistently refrained from any mention of spreading the revolution by force. In early 1984, he said his country would display Muslims what "correct Islam" really was. By then, the emphasis on exporting the revolution had clearly shifted to cultural themes.[89]

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[85] David Menashri, "Khomeini's Vision: Nationalism or World Order?", in David Menashri, ed., ***The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*** (Boulder, San Fransisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), p.49.

[86] ***Ibid.,*** p. 41.

[87] Ramazani, ***op.cit.***, p. 25.

[88] ***Ibid.***, p.26.

[89] Menashri, ***op.cit.***, p. 49.

Moreover, there were significant differences between more pragmatist elements within the revolutionary establishment and a more doctrinaire group.[90] The pragmatists/realists suggested a pragmatic way of prioritizing Islamic culture. They disclaimed any intention to use force to spread the revolution. In this vein, Ayatollah Khamanei, the then President of Iran, said, *"We undoubtedly will not give direct aid to movements… to help them or to force them to change their regimes"* in 1984. Prime Minister Mosavi stated, *"We do not want to export armed revolution to any country. That is a big lie. Our aim is to promote the Islamic revolution through persuasion".*[91] Nevertheless, the idealists, the more doctrinaire group, then led by Ayatollah Montazeri,[92] advocated a militant way of exporting revolution following Khomeini's "earlier" words[93] literally. Their efforts to export revolution were as following: political and military intervention in support of Islamic revolutionaries in other states, violent activities directed against US and other Western targets, and covert actions against the conservative Arab governments and opponents of the regime. Actually, the idealists/radicals conducted these activities without the information of the "government", in which realists prevailed, particularly after 1984. It was mainly for that reason that Mahdi Hashemi, who was involved in such activities, was executed in 1987. In this regard, after assuming presidency, Rafsanjani, the pragmatist/realist leader said that Iran should put an end to adventurous policies towards neighboring countries and return to a moderate course in its relations with the countries of the region.

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[90] ***Ibid.***, pp. 40-54.

[91] ***Ibid.***, pp. 49-50.

[92] It is notable that Ayatollah Montazari was designed as successor to the Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini until his dismissing from this post in 1988. That is, radicals/idealists were also integrated in the state apparatus and they were dominant in several organizations such as the Revolutionary Guards.

[93] In fact, Khomeini's speeches and expressions prior to the revolution and during the revolution process contained more militant content than those in the mid-1980s. See R.K. Ramazani, "Iran's Foreign Policy, Contending Orientations", in R.K. Ramazani, ed., ***Iran's Revolution*** (Washington DC.: Indiana University Press-Middle East Institute, 1990), pp.48-68.; and Menashri, ***op.cit.***, pp. 40-53.

Yet, the radical faction opposing him rejected such a dialogue and defended the idea of exporting revolution.[94]

As stated in the previous chapter, the struggle between idealists and realists in Iranian decision-making process continued throughout the 1980s, and Ayatollah Khomeini kept a balance between these factions. Indeed, once he came to power, Khomeini became aware of the fact that he could not rule by means of revolutionary slogans. Moreover, the outbreak of war with Iraq and resulting requirements of the war and international isolation of Iran also led the Iranian leaders to adopt pragmatic approaches for the state affairs. This shift from revolutionary to pragmatist was gradual but increasingly felt in every field during the 1980s. For instance, contrary to his previous speeches that declared the existing governments, particularly those in Muslim countries as illegitimate and his preaching isolation as a virtue, Ayatollah Khomeini announced in October 1984 that his country wanted "relations with all countries" with the exception of the US, Israel, and South Africa.[95]

According to Menashri, reasons behind the change from radical to moderate were as follows. First, growing internal difficulties stemming from the ongoing war with Iraq, economic deterioration and domestic dissidence, and power struggle within the regime started to create a sense of disillusionment and posed a challenge to the stability of the regime. The second reason for altering the policy was the initial failure in exporting revolution. The initial expectation that chain reactions would take place virtually in every Muslim country was not realized. In fact, the policy of exporting revolution had targeted three groups of countries.[96] The Muslim countries which included a sizeable Shiite population, including

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[94] Ali Tekin, ***The Place of Terrorism in Iran's Foreign Policy*** (Ankara: Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Vakfı, [1997]), p.6.

[95] Menashri, ***op.cit.***, p.47.; Haggay Ram, "Exporting Iran's Islamic Revolution: Steering a Path between Pan-Islam and Nationalism", in Bruce Mady-Weitzman and Efraim Inbar, eds., ***Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1997).

[96] Kenneth Katzman, ***Warriors of Islam, Iran's Revolutionary Guard*** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp.95-101 and 115-39.

some the Gulf States, Iraq and Lebanon constituted the primary target of revolutionary Iran. Aside from its relative success in Lebanon,[97] exporting revolution policy failed in the Gulf countries and Iraq. The Muslim countries in general were the second group of the targeted countries. The export of revolution policy was ultimately intended to "all oppressed peoples of the world". The failure in exporting revolution to the first group hindered Iran from spreading its revolution further. Finally, the ascendancy of pragmatists in domestic politics who concentrated their attention on the economy had a remarkable effect in toning down the revolutionary discourse and policies.[98]

Turkey was in the second group of the targeted countries for exporting the Iranian revolution. During the Iran-Iraq war, Iran pursued pragmatic policies towards Turkey in order to ensure and maintain Turkey's neutrality so that Iran could acquire its urgent needs via Turkey. After the end of the war, the idealists/radicals who were part of the state apparatus did not refrain from operating against Turkey as well as in other areas contrary to general policies of the government. They conducted covert activities against opponents of the Iranian regime who had fled into Turkey after the revolution, and got in touch with several radical Islamist organizations.

3.2. Radical Islamist Movements in Turkey

Islamist movements in Turkey could be divided into two sections: traditionalists and radicals. Tarikats (orders) and jemaats (associations/communities) constitute the traditionalist Islamists. They prefer accommodation with "the state", however; they are in favor of gradual Islamization of social life. Their adherents see democracy as compatible with Islam. These groups also support national values and argue that Islam and nationalism are compatible. Moreover, they try to conciliate "modern science"

[97] Karmon, ***op.cit***.

[98] Menashri, ***op.cit.***, p. 51.

with Islam. The radicals could be sub-grouped as Sunni radicals represented by IBDA-C (the Islamic Great East Raiders' Front) and "fundamentalist radicals" that deny all sects and argue for return to original sources of Islam. The IBDA-C was a loose organization and did not take remarkable activities with the exception of assuming responsibility for several bombing incidents. The fundamentalist radicals remained on the intellectual level and did not resort force. However, another radical Islamist current in Turkey was Iran inspired "Hizbullahis" who emerged following the revolution of 1979. They have not unified under a united organization and remained inactive until the late 1980s.[99]

The Iranian inspired *"Hizbullahi"* groups encountered sectarian hindrances in their ideological efforts in Turkey. Most of the traditionalist and radical Sunni movements in Turkey view the Shiite-Iranians as having deviated from the true path of Islam and perceived the Iranian revolution and its regime export efforts towards Turkey as Shiite activities against the Sunnis. Attributing to one of the revolution's basic slogan, that is "kulli yevmin Ashura, kulli arzn Karbala" (everyday is Ashura, every where is Karbala) referring to the Karbala affair in which saint Hussein was martyred by the Sunni ruler Yezid, they asserted that Iran want to "defeat" the Sunnis. In this vein, the IBDA-C called its attack on the pro-Iran *Tevhid* journal in 1980 as the "second Chaldiran". However, some of the Islamists in Turkey viewed the revolution and the establishment of the Islamic regime in Iran as a laboratory of Islamic experience. In order to counter this difficulty, the pro-Iranian groups in Turkey de-emphasized sectarian differences. On the other hand, they propagated in Turkey that the Iranian revolution works not only for the success of the Shiism alone but also for the rise of the unified Islam in the world.[100]

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[99] See, Binnaz Toprak, "The Reception of the Iranian Revolution by the Muslim Press in Turkey", and Ergun Ozbudun, "Khomenism- A Danger for Turkey?", in David Menashri, ed, ***The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*** (Boulder, San Fransisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1990), pp.250-260, and 242-249. For a detailed analysis of the Islamist groups in Turkey see Ruşen Çakır, ***Ayet ve Slogan; Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar*** (İstanbul: Metis Yay., 1990).

[100] ***Ibid.***, See also Zeytin Refref, ***İran'a Nasıl Bakmalı?***, (2nd print) (Ankara, Aylık Dergi Yay., 1986).; Ali Bulaç, **et.al.** ***İran İzlenimleri*** (İstanbul: Objektif Yay., 1992).; Yaşar Kaplan, ***Bir Şenliktir İnkilab – Gezi Notları-*** (İstanbul: Hüner Yay., 1992).; and Mustafa Talib Güngörge, ***Humeyni ve İran İnkilabı*** (İstanbul: Araştırma Yay., 1983).

Overall it can be said that, the Iran revolution of 1979 under the leadership of clergy, and the establishment of the Islamic Republic gave a new momentum to Islamist movements in Turkey. As Ruşen Çakır, a prominent researcher on Islamist movements in Turkey, indicated lots of young Islamists experienced the enthusiasm of the revolution and in the first opportunity they went to Iran. Moreover, they sought the way of revolution similar to Iranian example, in Turkey. In this regard, numerous books written by clergy in Iran including Khomeini were translated into Turkish. In the meantime, some small groups, which had Islamic credentials, established ties with Tehran. For a long time, as Çakır pointed out, these groups discussed among themselves "which group was allowed by Tehran" because each of them considered itself as the "Turkish Hizbullah".[101]

Actually, the radical Islamist strategy in Turkey was consisting of three stages. The first step was defined as the message (teblig) that means an effort to persuade the people to adopt Islam as religion, to accept an Islamic state and administration, and to agree to live in accordance with the Islamic rules. The second step was the establishment of a community (jemaat) in accordance with requirements of the message. Finally, they would initiate a struggle (jihad) in order to seize the state apparatus and to safeguard the Islamic way of life.[102]

As a matter of fact, the Islamist subversive and terrorist activity in Turkey had already begun in the 1960s under the name of Hizb'ul Tahrir that had limited impact. However, throughout the 1980s radical Islam gradually gained strength with the indirect "help" of the military rule between 1980 and 1983 which suppressed nationalist and leftist organizations. Nevertheless, radical Islamists did

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[101] See Sami Oğuz and Ruşen Çakır, ***Hatemi'nin İran'ı*** (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2000), pp.259-78.; Ruşen Çakır, "İslam Devrimciliği ve Terör", ***Milliyet***, 26 May 2000.

[102] Ely Karmon, "Radical Islamic Political Groups in Turkey", ***Middle East Review of International Affairs***, vol.1, no.4 (December 1997), in http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1997/issue4/jv1n4a2.html., and Ercan Çitlioğlu, ***Tahran-Ankara Hattında Hizbullah*** (Ankara: Ümit Yay., 2001).

not conduct any remarkable activity until the late 1980s.[103] Meanwhile, integration of the traditional Islamic sects into political system throughout the 1980s caused deep concern in radical Islamist groups. They were especially concerned about losing popularity to realize an Islamic revolution.[104]

A significant development occurred in the mid-1980s with the adoption of some ulkucus (ultra-nationalists) of radical Islamist ideology, who were experienced in the field of street fighting, representing a significant operational support for the Islamist movements. Eventually, their activities became more visible in the late 1980s.[105] The radical Islamists targeted the "secular establishment", exiled Iranian opponents, as well as "satanic" diplomatic missions. The "inactive term" of radical Islamists in Turkey as described by Çakır, was followed by assassination of some prominent intellectuals including Muammer Aksoy, Bahriye Üçok, Çetin Emeç, Turan Dursun and Uğur Mumcu. It was alleged in the Turkish media that murderers were radical Islamists who had links with Iran. Finally, some people alleged to be members of the "Islamic Action Movement" were detained. İrfan Çağrıcı, the so-called leader of the Movement, stated that they committed those murders upon demand of the Iranian diplomats, and through weapons provided by them.

In the same vein, a report, dated October 12, 1995 and prepared by TGNA (the Turkish Grand National Assembly) Investigation Committee of Unsolved Murders indicated numerous detailed information about the Islamic Action Movement. In the report, which was based on the confessions of the members of the Islamic Action Movement, it was stated that the Movement, then still in the process of teblig and preparing for jihad, was supported by Iran. However, it was ambiguous whether the Iranian state apparatus or informal groups in Iran

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[103] Anat Lapidot, "Islamic Activism in Turkey since the 1980 Military takeover", Bruce Mady-Weitzman and Efraim Inbar, eds., ***Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1997), pp.62-72.

[104] Oğuz and Çakır, ***op.cit.***, 259-78.

[105]Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …"***. ***Milliyet***, 9 May 2000.

supported it.[106] It is remarkable that, according to the report, İrfan Çağrıcı and his partners applied to the Iranian Consulate in Istanbul to acquire financial and material aid from Iran.[107]

Another well-known and lively debated radical Islamist organization in Turkey in the 1990s was the "Turkish Hizbullah"[108]. Unlike the other Islamist groups, Hizbullah was organized hierarchically. Hizbullah was founded in 1980 in the southeast of Turkey and grew during the 1980s in the region. Later, it split into two groups: Menzil and İlim. Reasons for the split were the leadership obsession of Hüseyin Velioğlu, who then became the head of İlim, and conflicts on several issues such as the method to be used, and the stance to be taken against the PKK and towards the Kurdish question. The Menzil group was more pro-Kurdish than the İlim. Therefore, Menzil objected to any struggle against the PKK, especially in collaboration with the "Turkish Republic". Nevertheless, they insisted on maintaining the teblig process to gain supporters, and did not resort to any violent action. Unlike Menzil, İlim called for the start of jihad stage and wanted to fight against the PKK. They regarded the PKK as Islam's enemy and accused it of "trying to create an atheist community, supporting the communist system, trying to divide people through chauvinist activities and oppressing the Muslim people." The strategy of the İlim was to eliminate all opposition forces against "the state" primarily in the southeast of Turkey and later all over the country, until it became one and "the only alternative" to the existing regime. After then, İlim planned to wage a struggle against the state and establish an Islamic state. That is why, after İlim's fight against the PKK in the first half of the 1990s, it attacked the Menzil group. Furthermore, İlim tried to organize throughout the country and killed many Islamist figures as well.[109]

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[106] Ruşen Çakır, ***Derin Hizbullah*** (İstanbul: Metis Yay., 2001), p.43; and see John Calabrese, "Turkey and Iran; Limits of a Stable Relationship", ***British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.25, no.1 (May 1998).

[107] Çakır, ***Derin Hizbullah***, pp. 34-35.

[108] Bülent Aras and Gökhan Bacık, "The Mystery of Turkish Hizballah***", Middle East Policy***, vol. 9, no. 2, (2002), 147-161.

[109] Mehmet Farac, ***Hizbullah'in Kanlı Yolculuğu*** (İstanbul: Günizi Yay., 2001).

There are some claims that Hizbullah was a state-sponsored organization used against the PKK by the state. Lack of planned attacks of the organization against the state and its refraining from entering into confrontation with security forces strengthens that idea.[110] It is remarkable that during the 1992-96 period, when activities of İlim intensified, according to Çakır's findings, security forces conducted few operations against İlim. However, after the mid-1995, when a drastic decrease appeared in activities of İlim, operations against the organization gradually intensified, which supports the idea that security forces ignored İlim until they eliminated its rivals, i.e. the PKK, and started to reorganize for the next stage.[111]

Hizbullah's links with Iran were discussed by the Turkish public as well.[112] According to the reported confessions of the arrested members of İlim and Menzil, both groups had links with [probably radicals in] Iran and some of them were trained there for a period of time. Indeed, leaders of İlim complained about decreasing aid of Iran after the death of Khomeini. Moreover, the religious leader of the Menzil, Molla Mansur Güzelsoy died in Iran, where he had gone for treatment.[113]

Iranian linkage of Hizbullah was stated in the introduction of Indictment of Hizbullah submitted to Diyarbakır State Security Court in May 2001, under the title of "foreign support" as well. It suggested:[114]

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[110] See for instance, Hikmet Çiçek, ***Hangi Hizbullah*** (İstanbul: Kaynak Yay., 2000).

[111] The Turkish officials countered these allegations arguing that during the 1992-96 period, security forces were greatly engaged in struggling against the PKK and could not had brokered the codes of the organization. Cakir, ***Derin ….***, pp.75-77.

[112] Tuncay Ozkan, "Iran'a Ne Yapılacak?", ***Radikal***, 21 January 2000.; and "Hasiralti Edilen Ifadeler", ***Radikal***, 23 January 2000.; Ismet Berkan, "Hizbullah ve Iran", ***Radikal***, 15 February 2000.

[113] Çakır, ***Derin ….***, p. 170.; and see, Çitlioğlu, ***op.cit.***.

[114] Quoted in Çakır, ***Derin ….***, pp. 139-40.

> Following the Islamic revolution in Iran led by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, a ministry was founded in 1981 aiming at exporting revolution to countries especially in which Muslim peoples live. [Moreover the Iranian] consulates and embassies in these countries (chosen as target) were used as quarters. … Cultural activities with ideological aims, financed by Islamic Guidance Ministry, were organized in targeted countries. Those who participated in 15-day journeys to the city of Qom were subjected to propaganda for loyalty to Imam Khomeini. Those who accepted this loyalty joined the Hizbullahi movements after turning back to their country. **…** For this purpose, Iran spent great efforts through propagating activities conducted in several ways to support "irtica" movement that aimed at establishing a sharia-based state in Turkey. … It is proven by cordial confessions of high-level members of Hizbullah/İlim that Iran contacted with Hüseyin Velioğlu and his associates within the framework of the policy of exporting revolution. Velioğlu and his associates went to this country for many times … where commanders of the Revolutionary Guards trained them militarily and politically in the 1980s. … It is known that İlim / Hizbullah criticized Iran in recent times considering the reduction in the support extended to Hizbullahi groups outside Iran after the death of Khomeini…, but still the Islamic Republic of Iran is the only model for the organization.

3.3. Iran's Covert Activities in Turkey

In the aftermath of the revolution, the secret service of Iran conducted covert operations against regime opponents living outside the country, which continued throughout the 1980s and in the early 1990s. In this vein, Ali Fallahian, the then Minister of Intelligence, on August 30, 1992 said "we track them [opposition forces] outside the country, too. We have them under surveillance ... We have succeeded in dealing blows to many of these grouplets outside the country and at the borders ... Last year, we succeeded in striking fundamental blows to their top members".[115] Turkey was also one of the arenas where Iran conducted covert activities against the regime opponents. [116] Assassinations of the

[115] Mohaddessin, ***op.cit.***, p.102.

[116] Turkey gave shelter to more than a million Iranians in the aftermath of the revolution in Iran. Because visa is not required in crossing the Turkish-Iranian border, many of them have been unidentified. However, mutual suspicions between Turkey and Iran arose over the Iranian population in Turkey. The Turkish officials were concerned that this population could constitute a fertile ground for infiltration of the Iranian spies. Their Iranian counterparts were worried about the Iranian population in Turkey could engage in anti-Iranian activities in concert with the rich Iranian opponents in Europe and the US. Throughout the 1980s, the Iranian officials claimed that Turkey harbored opponents of the Iranian regime, especially the MKO. On the other hand, the Turkish officials charged Iran of interfering in domestic politics of Turkey and conducting "terrorist" operations against Iranian dissidents on Turkish soil. According to allegations, Iran sent

MKO members such as Ali Akbar Gorbani, Zehra Recabi, Abdul Ali Murad and Abbas Golizade in Istanbul were leading examples of Iranian covert activities against the opponents of Iran regime in Turkey.[117]

According to Mohaddessin, the Qods Force, attached to the Revolutionary Guards, was established with the task of "commanding, planning, and executing extraterritorial operations of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps". It has several directorates and units responsible for operations outside the country including Turkey. He claims that the 3rd Corp based near Urumiye provided logistical support for the forces in Turkey and northern Iraq in coordination with Corps 5.000. The Corps 5.000 was consisting of highly experienced assassination and bombing squads. According to Mohaddessin, the Corps 5.000 was responsible for all of Tehran's covert activities in Turkey. Its operational headquarters was in Urumiyeh and the central command was on Pasdaran Street in Tehran, near the ministry of Intelligence.[118] It is also claimed in statements of the Turkish security officials that the Qods Force, besides its covert activities in Turkey, trained radical Islamists in camps in Iran and provided them with logistical support.[119]

Turkish accusations of Iran concerning sheltering, training, and providing support for the radical Islamist organizations continued throughout the 1990s. As a matter of fact, İrfan Çağrıcı, leader of the Islamic Action Movement, who was arrested on March 8, 1996, confessed that the arms used in assassinations of

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many agents to Turkey in order to contain and intimidate regime opponents, where almost 200 Iranian dissidents were killed in the past two decades. See Philip Robins, ***Turkey and the Middle East*** (New York: The Royal Institute of International Affairs – Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), pp. 56-58.; Calabrese, ***op.cit.***, ; Robert Olson, "Turkey-Iran Relations, 1997 to 2000; the Kurdish and Islamist Questions", ***Third World Quarterly***, vol.21, no.5 (2000), p.885.; Henry J., Barkey, "Iran and Turkey, Confrontation Across An Ideological Divide", in Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles Smolansky, eds., ***Regional Power Rivalry in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*** (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), p.157. See also ***http://www.iran-e-azad.org/english/terrolist.html*** .

[117] Tekin, ***op.cit.***, pp. 60-62.; Tuncay Özkan, "İran'a Ne Yapılacak?", ***Radikal***, 21 January 2000.; and "Hasıraltı Edilen İfadeler", ***Radikal***, 23 January 2000.

[118] Mohaddessin, ***op.cit.***, p.108.; See also Oğuz and Çakır, ***op.cit.***, p. 272-74.

[119] Oğuz and Çakır, ***op.cit.***, p. 272-74.; Olson, ***op.cit.***, p.834.

journalist-writer Çetin Emeç, Turan Dursun and some Iranians who were opponents of the Iranian regime were provided by the Iranian diplomats. According to his confessions and the findings obtained by the Turkish police, the Iranian diplomats holding offices in Turkey planned and guided these terrorist actions.[120]

In the same vein, the Second Chamber of the State Security Court of Ankara also charged Iran of its relations with Tevhid-Selam organization (a small radical Islamist group organized around the *Tevhid* and *Selam* journals) in its decision related to the "Umut Case"[121] in May 2002. In the decision, the court convicted members of the organization because of 22 criminal activities including assassinating Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, Uğur Mumcu, Muammer Aksoy and Bahriye Üçok. It is stated in the decision that the aim of these criminal activities was to drag Turkey into chaos, to destroy the constitutional order, and to establish an Iran-like Islamic state in Turkey. Referring to Iran's alleged desire "to lead revolutionary movements around the world", the court stated that Turkey was among the countries targeted by Iran. According to the decision, because of the wide gap between Iran's capabilities and its aims, Iran resorted to terrorism as a foreign policy instrument. The decision highlighted the fact that members of the Tevhid-Selam organization went to Iran many times throughout the 1980s, where the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards trained them. It is also stated in the decision that the Iranian intelligence service and the Qods Force provided equipment and arms to the organization.[122]

It is alleged that, there are three main reasons for the Iranian involvement in various terrorist activities in Turkey. Firstly, Iran adopted exporting revolution policy oriented to the neighboring Muslim countries. Secondly, Iran perceived the

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[120] Tekin, ***op.cit.***, p.61.; Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …"*** .

[121] The Turkish security officials named their operation against the Tevhid-Selam organization in the spring of 2001 as "Umut" (hope). Thus, the trial process of the members of the Tevhid-Selam called as "Umut Case".

[122] ***Hürriyet***, 30 May 2002.; ***Zaman***, 30 May 2002.

existence of sizeable Iranian refugees in Turkey as a threat for the security of its regime. Finally, Tekin argues, considering the Iranian revolutionary will to present itself as an Islamic state model, Iran regarded Turkey as a threat to its own "model", because Turkey present itself as a competing model for the Islamic world with its secular structure and Western orientation.[123] However, Iran did not establish an organization to conduct terrorist activities in Turkey. Rather, as Karmon argues, Iran used radical Islamic groups in Turkey --those had been seeking Iranian support-- so that it could easily deny accusations.[124]

3.4. Escalation of the Ideological Confrontation

Despite the declining importance of ideology in Iranian foreign policy and maintenance of pragmatic relations between Turkey and Iran during the 1980s, ideological confrontation between the two countries escalated in the 1990s starting in 1989. For instance, on several instances, visiting Iranian officials criticized Turkish secularism and the memory of Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic. On the other hand, Iran was closely interested in "turban affair" in March 1989[125], and protested the Constitutional Court's resolution banning the wearing of Islamic attire in schools. "Support rallies" were organized in Tehran to back Islamists in Turkey. Moreover, Manochehr Mottaki, the then Iranian ambassador to Turkey, declared, "Iran is considering to implement economic sanctions against Turkey". Upon growing tension, Turkey and Iran recalled their ambassadors respectively.[126]

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[123] Tekin, ***op.cit.***, p.59.; See Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …"***

[124] See Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …"*** .

[125] Bahram Navazeni, ***Gaahshomaare Seyaasete Khareceye Iran; Az Mordad Maahe 1367 to Khordad Maahe 1380*** (Tehran: Markaze Esnaade Enghalaabe Eslaame, 2002), p.37.

[126] Robins, ***op.cit.***, pp.54-56; Türel Yılmaz, "İran İslam Devrimi ve Türk İran İlişkilerine Etkisi", ***Strateji***, no.10 (1997), pp. 96-97.; Saaber Ghasemi, ***Torkeye*** (Tehran: Daftare Moatalaate Seyasee ve Baynalmelelee, 1995), pp. 237-38.

Another important incident within the framework of ideological confrontation was the assassination of Uğur Mumcu, a prominent Turkish journalist and writer, in a car bomb explosion in Ankara on January 24, 1993. İsmet Sezgin, the then Interior Minister, linked the killing of Mumcu to activities of organizations located in Iran, and he stated that these organizations were also involved in the murders of Çetin Emeç and Turan Dursun, also prominent journalists and writers.[127]

For the first time the Turkish minister of interior, in a press conference, declared that members of radical Islamist organizations underwent months of military and theoretical training in Iranian security installations; traveled with Iranian real and forged documents, and participated in attacks on Turkish citizens and also Iranian regime opponents. However, (the then) Prime Minister Demirel called for a "cool headed" approach to the Iranian linkage in order not to disrupt bilateral relations unnecessarily.[128] Despite growing public pressure, Turkey continued to pursue a moderate and pragmatist policy towards Iran. Turkey avoided imposing visas on Iranian citizens and sustained its political and economic relations with Iran. Furthermore, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatically refrained from accusing Iran of involving in illegal activities in Turkey arguing the lack of enough proof.

Ali Akbar Valayeti, former foreign minister of Iran, in an interview to Turkish TV denied Iran-geared activities against Turkey, and he proposed to discuss these "mutual allegations" within the framework of the common security committee.[129] Yet, he also said that if there were groups in Turkey, which liked

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[127] Atila Eralp, "Facing the Challenge; Post-Revolutionary Relations with Iran", in Henry J. Barkey, ed., ***Reluctant Neighbor; Turkey's Role in the Middle East***, (Washington DC.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.106.; See also ***Demokrasiye Karsi Siyasi Cinayetler*** (Istanbul: Tempo Kitapları, 1993), pp. 8-9.; Ghasemi, ***op.cit.***, p. 238.

[128] Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …"***.

[129] Turkey and Iran established common security mechanisms in September 1992, See, ***infra***, pp. 112-117.

the "Iran model" and were inspired by its values, it could not be argued that Iran created them.[130]

Ideological confrontation between Turkey and Iran escalated one more time in March 1996, when İrfan Çağrıcı, the leader of the Islamic Action Movement, was detained. His confessions revealed linkages between his organization and Iran, and culminated in the deportation of four Iranian diplomats from Turkey.[131]

Tension in Turco-Iranian relations due to ideological reasons reached its climax following the "Sincan Affair" of February 1997. The Mayor of the Sincan district of Ankara, Bekir Yıldız, a member of the Welfare Party, organized a "Jerusalem Night" on January 31. The then Iranian ambassador to Ankara, M. Reza Bagheri, who was invited to address the meeting, was reportedly told not to be afraid of being called as "radical", and he urged audience to follow the path of sharia.[132] This speech triggered a political storm in Turkey that not only culminated in the ousting of the Erbakan-led government, but also caused the reciprocal withdrawal of Turkish and Iranian ambassadors. Besides Bagheri, M.Reza Rashid, head of Iranian consulate in Istanbul, and Said Zare, consul in Erzurum --because of his remarks critical of General Çevik Bir's statements that Iran was a "state that supported terrorism"-- were expelled. Iran retaliated by evicting Osman Korutürk, Turkey's ambassador to Tehran and Ufuk Özsancak, Turkish consul in Urumiyeh.[133]

After the establishment of new governments in Turkey and in Iran – i.e. the ANASOL-D in Turkey and Khatami government in Iran- in late 1997, tension between Turkey and Iran was toned down. Succeeding the productive contacts

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[130] Karmon, ***"Radical Islamic …", Idem.***

[131] ***Idem.,;*** Tekin, ***op.cit.***, pp. 61-63.

[132] ***Turkish Daily News***, 6 February 1997.

[133] Robert Olson, ***The Kurdish Question and Turkish -Iranian Relations, from World War I to 1998*** (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998), pp. 56-57. Ilnur Cevik, "What kind of ties should we have with Iran ?", ***Turkish Daily News***, 1 March 2003., Navazeni, ***op.cit.***, p.267.

between the new foreign ministers of both countries, i.e. İsmail Cem and Kamal Kharrazi, throughout the autumn 1997, Turkey and Iran appointed new ambassadors to Tehran and Ankara respectively.[134]

However, ideological confrontation between Turkey and Iran escalated again following the April 1999 parliamentary elections in Turkey. Iran gave verbal support to Merve Kavakçı, the turban-wearing deputy of the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) -- whose parliamentarian status was taken away and whose Turkish citizenship was stripped off by the government of the time. Foreign minister of Iran, Kemal Kharrazi stated, "Iran did not like Turkey's secular policies; respecting peoples' values and beliefs was required to establish democracy". On 8-9 May 1999, hundreds of Iranian students, [allegedly prompted by officials] demonstrated to support "the Turkish women to wear the turban and other Islamic attire".[135]

As stated in the previous chapter, the closure of pro-reform *Salam* daily by the judiciary in July 1999 provoked large-scale demonstrations in Iran. In the aftermath of July demonstrations, Bülent Ecevit, the then Prime Minister stated, "*Violence was a natural reaction of the Iranian people to an oppressive regime. The Iranian people have a rich historical and cultural background. They could not be expected to bear the out-dated regime of oppression for along time"*.[136] These statements of Turkish Prime Minister increased the tension in Turco-Iranian relations further.[137]

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[134] Hamed Mottalebi, "Tehran – Ankara Ties Revived", ***Echo of Islam***, no. 166 (April 1998), pp.36-37.

[135] Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran …."***, pp. 875-77. See also, Sahep Pasha, "The Trauma of Modern Turkey", ***Echo of Islam,*** no. 178 (July 1999), pp. 9-14.; "Expert: Can a Headscarf Shake Turkish Secular System?", ***Tehran Times***, 13 May 1999.

[136] ***Ibid.***, p.878.; ***Hürriyet***, 14 July 1999.

[137] Moreover, Iranian officials highlighted activities of those participated in student demonstrations, in Turkey, see "Counterrevolutionary Groups behind Recent Incidents: Information Ministry", ***Tehran Times***, 19 July 1999.

The assassination of A.Taner Kışlalı[138] on 21 October, 1999, one day after the arrest of 92 Hizbullah militants allegedly "trained in Iran", led to blistering attacks in the Turkish press that Tehran had been supporting both the PKK and the Islamist Hizbullah. Just one day after Kışlalı's assassination, three Iranians were detained at Istanbul airport while trying; it was alleged, to flee the country. Tehran managed to note that "the arrest of the three Iranians ... indicates the influence of the pro-Zionist elements in some decision-making bodies in Turkey. Whenever there is a serious move to improve Iran-Turkey relations, certain circles try to undermine these attempts".[139]

Turkish security forces started a large-scale operation against Hizbullah in early 2000. Turkish police raided headquarters of the organization in Beykoz, Istanbul, on January 17. The leader of Hizbullah/Ilim, Hüseyin Velioğlu was killed in the shot out. Some of the captured Hizbullah militants said that their highest-ranking leaders received political and military training from the Revolutionary Guards. In the same vein, Gökhan Aydıner, governor of the OHAL (State of Emergency)[140] region, stated that, in addition to guerrilla warfare and killings that the Hizbullah carried out, they also operated as spies for Iran.[141] He claimed that Hizbullah wanted to establish an Iranian-style Islamic regime in Turkey whose operations, tactics and methods resembled those used in Iran. Similarly, Kemal İskender, the Chief of Ankara Police, said that all Hizbullah leaders were trained in Iran. They went to Iran for their military and theoretical training. He stated, "Iran's secret service is (deeply involved in) this work".[142]

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[138] A.Taner Kışlalı was a professor at Ankara University and columnist at ***Cumhuriyet*** daily, and known for his Kemalist views.

[139] Olson, "***Turkey- Iran ...***", pp. 880-81.

[140] In order to establish tranquility, the Turkish government implemented the state of emergency in certain provinces in the south east of Turkey during the 1990s.

[141] Indeed, Hizbullah leadership wanted militants to go military service and gather information about military units in Turkey.

[142] Olson, "***Turkey- Iran ...***", p. 882.; ***Hürriyet***, 21 January 2000.

Incidentally, Kamal Kharrazi, foreign minister of Iran was visiting Istanbul when the Beykoz operation took place against the organization and news and commentaries about Hizbullah and its links with Iran were highly covered by the Turkish press. He denied categorically that Hizbullah received any support whatsoever from Iran.[143]

Relations between Turkey and Iran greatly deteriorated in May 2000. It was announced in the Turkish media that the killers of some 17 well-known elites had been apprehended within the framework of the Umut operation.[144] According to reports, those arrested confessed that they had received training and support from the agents of Iranian intelligence in the "Jerusalem Warriors' Organization" (Qod's Force), attached to the Revolutionary Guards.[145]

The strongest criticism of Iran came from Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, seemingly in disagreement with foreign minister, İsmail Cem,[146] who advocated a moderate and pragmatist policy, as to what kind of attitude to be taken towards Iran. In May 17, 2000, Ecevit, in a news conference, expressed that Iran "had been providing shelter to separatist terrorists" for years and was still trying "to export its revolution. Supporting the separatist terrorism in Turkey could be seen as interference in our domestic affairs. Unfortunately, certain separatist terrorists and fundamentalist organizations in Turkey have, in different ways, benefited from Iranian support and have been exploited by … Iran in its policy of exporting its revolution". However, he drew a distinction between those supporting the PKK and Hizbullah and the Khatami government. "… If Iranian extremists have been involved in crimes in Turkey, the current regime in Iran has to catch them and put

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[143] Olson, ***op.cit.***., pp. 882-83., ***Hürriyet***, 20 January 2000.

[144] See for a critic of this development, Süleyman Arslantaş, "Umut Operasyonu ve Türkiye-İran İlişkileri", ***Fecre Doğru***, vol.5, no. 56, pp. 51-55.

[145] Oğuz and Çakır., ***op.cit.***, pp. 272-77.; ***Yeni Şafak***, 1 June 2000.

[146] In fact, there was a disagreement among officials in Turkey on allegations about Iranian linkages to the mentioned murders. In contrast to the Ministry of Interior, and the General Staff, Foreign Ministry of Turkey adopted a cautious stance. See, "Tahran Bilmecesi", ***Akşam***, 25 May 2000.

them in trial. After then, the Khatami regime could be taken seriously." Contrary to such initial accusations, Ecevit continued with a softer tone. " … We need [primarily] to prove that Iranian extremists or agents contributed to the assassination of prominent Turks".[147]

Kamal Kharrazi, foreign minister of Iran, responded Ecevit's comments as an unacceptable interference in Iran's internal affairs. Iranian media stated that Ecevit should realize that "… the growing trend of Islamist tendencies in Turkey has nothing to do with the Islamic revolution in Iran. Mr. Ecevit should not give into the pressures of Zionist circles. Documents presented by some official Turkish organizations indicate that the alleged supporters of such an idea and such organizations as Hizbullah are fabrics of Turkey's intelligence agency". An article published in *Tehran Times* stated: "Many observers believe that making a commotion about these murders and accusing Iran of involvement at this junction is due to the pressures of the Zionist regime, which is trying to divert the world's public attention from the trial of the Iranian Jews who have confessed to spying for the Zionist regime".[148]

In early June 2000, it was announced in the Turkish media that Ahmed Behbahani, an alleged coordinator of the terrorist activities of Iran inside and outside the country and the head of security team for Rafsanjani, turned himself over to the MIT (National Intelligence Agency of Turkey).[149] Attributing to the expressions of Behbahani – later, who was announced by the Turkish Intelligence and CIA as an imposter -- mainstream Turkish media went on accusing Iran of conducting covert activities in Turkey.[150]

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[147] Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran …"***, p. 885.; ***Hürriyet***, 17 May 2000.; Ilnur Cevik, "Time to talk about concrete evidence", ***Turkish Daily News***, 18 May 2000.

[148] Quoted in Olson, ***op.cit.,*** p. 886. It was the time that 13 Jews were on trial in Iran in charge of spying for Israel.

[149] ***Milliyet***, 5 June 2000.

[150] ***Milliyet***, 7 June 2000.; and ***Yeni Şafak***, 12 June 2000.

Recent tension did not result in a diplomatic crisis, but started a lively debate in Turkish public; whether newly-elected president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, would/should attend the ECO Summit meeting to be held in Tehran on June 10, 2000.[151] Some, like Şükrü Elekdağ, retired ambassador and columnist for *Milliyet*, argued that the President should not go to Tehran in order not to pay his first official visit to abroad in a country like Iran, which supported the separatist PKK and radical Islamist organizations. Furthermore, they urged that it is time to give a harsh response to Tehran.[152] Others, like Fehmi Koru, columnist in *Yeni Şafak*, and well-known Turkish professor Hüseyin Bağcı, advocated that the president should attend to the ECO summit because such a trip to Tehran should not be regarded as an official visit to Iran. Moreover, they urged that Sezer's attendance at the summit was obligatory for Turkish national interests regarding the ECO and newly independent Muslims states.[153] Nevertheless, A. Necdet Sezer did not attend to the summit due to "the intensity of his program"*, and the State Minister Mehmet Keçeciler represented Turkey in Tehran.[154]

3.5. Causes of the Ideological Confrontation

Despite the prevalence of ideology in Iran's foreign policy in the aftermath of the revolution, pragmatism determined the Turco-Iranian relations during the 1980s. The pragmatism set in by revolutionary Iran's direction of its almost all energy primarily to Lebanon and the Gulf. Turkey's desire to prevent Iran from falling into the Soviet sphere of influence just after the revolution, and its

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[151] M. Ali Birand, "We cannot Solve This Problem by Snubbing Iran", ***Turkish Daily News***, 25 May 2000.

[152] Şükrü Elekdağ, "İran'a Kesin Tavır", ***Milliyet***, 15 May 2000.; and "Cumhurbaşkanı İran'a Gitmemeli", ***Milliyet,*** 5 June 2000. See also İsmet Berkan, "İran'a Tedbir ve Görüsler", ***Radikal***, 31 May 2000., and Gündüz Aktan, "İran'a Tavrımız Ne Olmalı", ***Radikal***, 17 May 2000.

[153] Fehmi Koru, "ECO, ya da Oyun", ***Yeni Şafak***, 7 June 2000.; Hüseyin Bağcı, "President Sezer Enters Real Politics", ***Tukish Daily News,*** 1 June 2001. See also Taha Akyol, "İran'la İlişkiler", ***Milliyet***, 9 June 2000.

* It seems that Sezer, known for his sensitivity to secularism, did not want to pay his first official foreign visit to Iran considering the recent debates in the Turkish public.

[154] ***Yeni Şafak***, 8 June 2000.

prioritization of economic transactions during the 1980s hindered the prevalence of ideology in bilateral relations between Iran and Turkey. On the other hand, due to the ongoing war with Iraq between the years of 1980 and 1988, pragmatism in its relations with Turkey was compulsory for Iran, so that it could acquire its urgent needs via Turkey and could keep Turkey neutral.[155] In this respect given the pragmatic policies of the two states towards each other throughout the 1980s and the declining importance of ideology in Iranian foreign policy in the 1990s one might have anticipated promising relations between Turkey and Iran. Ironically, ideological confrontation reached its peak in the 1990s and resulted in reciprocal withdrawals of ambassadors of Turkey and Iran twice in the period covered by this study.

There are several explanations regarding the reasons of escalation in the Turco-Iranian ideological confrontation in the 1990s. Firstly, radical Islamists in Turkey began their violent activities in this period -- sometimes in collaboration with the Iranian intelligence services where the key positions were held by radicals -- which increased the concern of the Turkish ruling elite towards the Islamist groups and their relations with Iran. The Welfare Party's integration to political system resulted in irritation of radical Islamists that started to resort violent activities. However, in the Hizbullah case, the İlim wing's incentive to resort to force was to eliminate all of its possible rivals to overthrow the regime.

It is also important that in accordance with "global trends" in the post-cold war period, and due to internal developments such as rise of political Islam and violent activities of radical Islamists, Turkey changed its threat evaluation and placed "fundamentalist Islam" at the top of its threats list. On the other hand, fear of the Turkish leaders about possible dissolution of Iran and its fall into Soviet sphere of influence during the 1980s was not valid anymore after the collapse of the USSR. In this regard, John L. Esposito, one of the leading scholars studying the Islamic "revivalism" states:

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[155] Unal Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey, 1979-1989: State Pragmatism and Ideological Influences", ***Middle East Review of International Affairs***, vol.7, no.1 (March 2003).

> Cognizant of a Western tendency to see Islam as a threat, many Muslim governments use the danger of Islamic radicalism as an excuse for control or suppression of Islamic movements. They fan the fears of monolithic Islamic radicalism both at home and in the West, much as many in the past used anti-communism as an excuse for authoritarian rule and to win the support of Western powers.[156]

> Similarly, the Turkish government, no longer able to portray itself a buffer state against the spread of communism to NATO'S southern flank, "is recasting itself as a buffer state and bulwark, only this time against revolutionary Islam". Thus Prime Minister Tansu Çiller warns that if Turkey is not admitted to the European Economic Community, there "will be a confrontation in the world … Fundamentalism will find a fertile land to flourish in, and then this will be the last fortress which will fall".[157]

On the other hand, after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, "radicals" in the Iranian State apparatus consolidated their propaganda efforts in Turkey. As a matter of fact, Iran did not establish any Islamist organization in Turkey to export its revolution. However, some people in Turkey –"who were inspired from the Iran revolution"- founded organizations, and then, applied to Iranian officials in Turkey in order to receive financial and logistical support. Iran, initially, did not refuse their demands; moreover, kept in touch with them to gain leverage against Turkey, and to exploit them in its covert activities in Turkey.[158]

Additionally, as remarked by Turan Moralı,[159] the former Turkish ambassador to Tehran, radicals in Iran wrongly evaluated growth of the Welfare Party in Turkish politics and Islamism, as if Turkey had been getting closer to "shariah" through "ballots". This is why, statements of some Iranian diplomats,

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[156] John L. Esposito, ***The Islamic Threat, Myth or Reality?***, revised 2nd ed. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 194.

[157] ***Ibid.***, p. 200.

[158] See M. Ali Birand, "If Iran is In The Right, Then It Should Convince Us As Well", ***Turkish Daily News***, 13 May 2000.

[159] In a seminar meeting in Foreign Policy Institute, Ankara, May 2002. For instance, Hashemi Rafsanjani following his visit to Turkey in December 1996, said: "Islam dominated here for centuries, and 98 percent of the Turkish people is Muslim, and we think that moving towards Islam in Turkey is serious", Navazeni, ***op.cit.***, p. 255.

which go beyond diplomatic traditions, led to severe diplomatic crisis Turkey and Iran.

Last, but not least, it should be kept in mind that geopolitical competition between Turkey and Iran, which will be discussed in the following chapter, was also intensified in the early 1990s. "Hawks" in both states attempted to use their ideological posture as leverage against the other to gain influence in northern Iraq, the Caucasus and Central Asia**.** Nevertheless, the Turkish Foreign Ministry officials were much more circumspect than the Interior Ministry or the media.[160] Similarly, official policies of the Iranian governments were far from supporting radical Islamist organizations in Turkey in the 1990s. That is why Hizbullah complained about the decrease of Iranian aid after the death of Khomeini. Similarly, the Turkish allegations that Iran has been sheltering the Turkish radical Islamists and training them were mostly contained to the 1980s and the early 1990s. Nonetheless, revelations of early linkages between the Turkish radical Islamists and Iran in the 1990s greatly contributed to escalation of ideological confrontation between Turkey and Iran. Yet, cautious and moderate stance***s*** of foreign policy decision-makers in both countries prevented more hostile relations between Turkey and Iran.

[160] Olson, ***op.cit.***, p. 884.

CHAPTER 4

TURCO-IRANIAN GEOPOLITICAL COMPETITION

IN THE 1990s

As stated in the previous chapters, the Ottoman-Iran wars and competition revolved around Iraq and the Caucasus, which continued until the end of WW I. That is why Tabriz and Baghdad, leading cities of these regions, changed hands several times between Iran and the Ottoman state. When the two states began to lose their powers in the late 19th century, confrontation between Iran and the Ottoman state decreased. Besides both countries' cessation of their claims over Iraq and the Caucasus, concentration of their attentions on internal affairs, particularly on nation-building efforts after the WW I explain the lack of severe conflict between Turkey and Iran during the 1920s and 1930s. Following WW II, because of the Cold War both Turkey and Iran avoided confrontation.

Nevertheless, a power vacuum emerged in the north of Iraq after the mid-1980s because Iraq lost its authority over there due to the ongoing Iran-Iraq war and the Kurdish uprising. On the other hand, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, another power vacuum aroused over the Caucasus and Central Asia, where Turkey and Iran competed for influence. Because of security considerations of the two countries' and of their political and economic interests, Iran and Turkey adopted ambitious policies towards these regions that led to competition between them. Moreover, due to geographical proximity and geopolitical reasons, competition between Iran and Turkey intensified particularly over northern Iraq and Azerbaijan.

This chapter aims at analyzing the Turco-Iranian geopolitical competition over northern Iraq, the Caucasus and Central Asia throughout the 1990s. It argues that geopolitical competition between Turkey and Iran greatly impacted their

bilateral relations in this period creating a conflictual atmosphere between the two countries. In this regard, it addresses developments in northern Iraq after the late 1980s, and the PKK question within the framework of Turkish-Iranian relations. This chapter also reviews Turkey and Iran's relations with the newly independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus, and then analyses the Turco-Iranian geopolitical competition.

4.1. Competition over Northern Iraq and the PKK Issue

4.1.1. Turkish-Iranian Competition in Northern Iraq

As stated in the previous pages, Turkey gave up its claims in Iraq, i.e. Mosul region, after the Turkey-Iraq Border and Neighborhood Agreement of 1926[161] and focused on nation-building process and domestic affairs. In the same vein Iran did not intervene in Iraqi affairs until the 1960s.

The "Kurdish question" dominated the foreign policies of regional countries including Iran, Iraq and Turkey since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.[162] It was a potential source of conflict between Turkey and Iran during the 1920s, when the Turkish army crashed the Kurdish revolts in Turkey, and resurgent Kurds fled into Iran. Turkey's desire to pursue activists caused friction between the two states that culminated in the 1930 territorial arrangements by which Turkey and Iran exchanged small-scale territories (Kotur) around the Mount Ararat. Furthermore, Turkey, Iran and Iraq -together with Afghanistan- where significant Kurdish populations exist with the exception of Afghanistan, established the Sadabad Pact

[161] This agreement was renewed in 1936 and 1946. According to the agreement, the parties, i.e. Turkey and Iraq promised to prevent destructive activities of any group within its borders against the other. On the other hand, they agreed to a 75-km security belt on both sides of the border to prevent subversive activities on the other side of the border. See, İlhan Uzgel, "İngiltere ile İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran, ed., ***Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olaylar, Belgeler, Yorumlar***, vol.I (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2001), pp. 258-68.

[162] Nader Entessar, "Kurdish Conflict in a Regional Perspective", in M. E. Ahrari, ed., ***Change and Continuity in the Middle East, Conflict Resolution and Prospects for Peace*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 47-73. See also Hüsrev Gerede, ***Siyasi Hatıralarım- İran*** (Ankara: Vakit Basımevi, 1952); and Robert Olson, ***The Kurdish Question and Turkish Iranian Relations, from World War I to 1998*** (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998).

in 1937, in order to secure their borders and to prevent subversive [Kurdish] activities within their territories.[163]

Turkey, Iran and Iraq generally eschewed the temptation to use their "Kurdish card" against each other's interests, and they adhered to the Sadabad Pact for a long time. However, following the 1958 coup against the Hashemite dynasty in Iraq, the Pan-Arab socialist Baath Party ascended to power in Baghdad temporarily in 1963 --and then permanently in 1968. Hence, Iran was faced with a power in the Gulf capable of challenging Iran's ambitions to be hegemonic power over the Gulf after British withdrawal. Moreover, this geo-strategic rivalry between the two states was accompanied by nationalist/ideological clash and long term border demarcation disputes. Then, the Kurdish card became an attractive political and military weapon for Iran in its conflicts with Iraq.[164] Throughout the Iran-Iraq crisis of the 1970s, Turkey apprehensively watched playing off Kurds by Iran and Iraq as a political leverage against each other. Turkey was concerned about a possible refugee flow to Turkey due to harsh response by the Iraqi regime against the Iraqi Kurds, and establishment of an independent Kurdish entity next to its borders. The breakout of the Iran-Iraq war in September 1980 heightened the apprehension in Turkey about possible uses of the Kurdish card by the two belligerents and its implications for Turkish security.[165]

During the Iran-Iraq war, Turkey and Iraq were concerned about a possible attack by Iran, or the Kurdish groups supported by Iran, on the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline that transported Iraqi oil via the Turkish soil, and providing a third of Turkey's oil need as well as providing Ankara with over $ 300 million royalties. Another Turkish concern was that a possible victory of Iran would cause eventual

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[163] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye-İran İlişkileri, 1926-38", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol.5, no.3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 148-175.

[164] Iran and Iraq faced off for sovereignty over the Shat'ul Arab river and regional hegemony over the Gulf reigon. Entessar, ***op.cit.***, pp. 50-52. See also Graham Fuller, ***The Center of the Universe, the Geopolitics of Iran*** (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp.48-49.; Mehmet Kocaoğlu, "Kürtçülüğün Siyasi bir Sorun Haline Dönüştürülmesinde ve Kürtçülük Faaliyetlerinde İran Faktörü", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol.2, no.1 (Spring 1995).

[165] ***Ibid.***, pp. 53-55.

disintegration of Iraq and the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq.[166] That is why during the Iran-Iraq war, while Turkey was watching the Iranian advances against Iraq with apprehension, especially in northern Iraq in 1986, the possibility of Turkish intervention to block these advances was openly discussed by the Turkish public. Turkey announced that it would view any Iranian or Iran-supported Kurdish attack on the pipeline as an attack on Turkish interests and a hostile act against itself. On the other hand, military incursions of Turkey into northern Iraq in late 1986 in order to destroy the PKK camps there upset Tehran because at the time it was preparing to launch a major offense against the Iraqi targets in collaboration with the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq), a major Kurdish group in northern Iraq. These developments confirmed Tehran's suspicions regarding Turkey's intention to annex northern Iraq, especially the Mosul-Kirkuk region to its territories.[167] Ali Khamanei, the then Iranian President, stated in December 1986 that Iran would not hesitate to challenge another country's intervention in Iraq's internal affairs. In the same vein, the Iranian Prime Minister Musavi said that other countries should not revive old territorial claims towards Iraq.[168]

Occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 resulted in the Gulf War in January-February 1991 between Iraq and the US-led international force that was formed within the framework of the UN Security Council Resolution demanding Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. During the Gulf War, Turkey granted permission to the US to use the military bases in Turkey in order to launch attacks against the Iraqi targets. Unlike Turkey, Iran's stance towards the Gulf War was ambivalent. Despite the damage Saddam Hussein would incur, Iran did not welcome the

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[166] ***Ibid.***, pp. 56-57.; Suha Bölükbaşı, ***Türkiye ve Yakınındaki Ortadoğu*** (Ankara: Dış Politika Enstitüsü, 1992), pp. 27-33, 50-82.

[167] Bolükbaşı, ***op.cit.,*** pp. 27-33, 74-75.; Henry J. Barkey, "Iran and Turkey, Confrontation Across An Ideological Divide", in Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles Smolansky, eds., ***Regional Power Rivalry in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*** (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), p. 160.

[168] Entessar, ***op.cit.***, pp.57-58.; Bölükbaşı, ***op.cit.***, pp. 30-32.; Seyyed Asadollah Athari, "Bazkhaanei Ravaabete Do Keshvar pas az Cange Sard; Iran ve Torkeye", ***Rakhbord***, no.27 (Spring 2003), pp.258-260. See also, Hassan Laasecardee, " Barreseye Nagshe ve Movazeghe Torkeye dar Cange Tahmelee Iraq aleyhe Iran", ***Faselnameye Motalaate Khavarmeyane***, vol.8, no.2 (Summer 2001), pp. 227-268.

stationing of a large contingent of American troops so close to its borders because of the US-Iran animosity.[169]

Developments in northern Iraq following the Gulf War increased the importance of the Kurdish issue, since the Kurds in Iraq were encouraged by the US to revolt against Baghdad. Despite initial succession, they were defeated which led to a mass exodus of Kurdish refugees to Turkey and Iran. In order to provide the refugees' return and prevent Saddam's further reprisals on the Kurds, the US-led alliance started Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 688. On the other hand, the US declared "no-fly zones" for the Iraqi air forces in the north and south of Iraq. Thus, a "safe haven" was enabled to the Iraqi Kurds, which gave them an opportunity to establish an independent state, at least an autonomous entity. Turkey, in order to enable repatriation of the Kurdish refugees and to prevent similar refugee flows, participated in the OPC.[170] In fact, the OPC became a crucial tool for the Turkish government both to prevent the PKK from utilizing power vacuum in northern Iraq for launching attacks and to develop good relations with the Iraqi Kurdish leaders.[171]

Relations between Turkey and the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq improved as far as issuing Turkish diplomatic passports to Jalal Talabani and Mesud Barzani, leaders of the main Kurdish groups in northern Iraq, respectively the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and allowing them to open offices in Ankara. In turn, the Kurdish leadership seemed determined to assure Turkey that the PKK could not use the Kurdish "safe haven" for mounting raids into Turkey. Actually, the KDP and PUK, sometimes, cooperated with Turkey against the PKK, especially in Turkey's military incursion in October 1992.

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[169] Entessar, ***op.cit.***, pp. 60-61.

[170] ***Ibid.***, p. 62.; Baskın Oran, ***Kalkık Horoz, Çekiç Güç ve Kürt Devleti*** (Ankara: Bilgi Yay., 1998), pp. 23-74.; and M. Bali Aykan, "Türkiye'nin Kuveyt Krizi Sonrasındaki Basra Körfezi Güvenliği Politikası; 1990-96", in M. Benli Altunışık, ed., ***Türkiye ve Ortadoğu; Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*** (İstanbul: Boyut Yay., 1999), pp. 19-66.; pp. 27-29.

[171] Kemal Kirisci, "Turkey and the Kurdish Safe-Haven in Northern Iraq", ***Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol. XIX, no. 3 (Spring 1996), pp.29-31.

Unlike Turkey, Iran consistently opposed Western operations including the OPC, inside Iraq and questioned the legality of the de facto partition of Iraq. In its view, no-fly zones could be exploited by the US to threaten Iran's territorial integrity, or might become a "safe enclave" for the Iranian armed opposition forces, i.e. MKO and Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI).[172] As a matter of fact, the "safe zone" in northern Iraq, became the place from which the KDPI launched raids into Iran that prompted periodic Iranian military incursions into Iraq.

On the other hand, Iran apprehensively watched the Turkish-Kurdish cooperation and it objected to the Turkish military incursions into northern Iraq. Iran's main concern was that Turkey would seek to control the oil fields of northern Iraq, which could alter the balance of power in the region. In this vein, in view of Iran, existence of about one million Turkmen population that inhabited particularly Mosul and Kirkuk might give pretext to Ankara for this purpose.[173]

Nevertheless, the Iraqi Kurdish leaders sought to decrease tension with Iran. In early 1993, the "Kurdish National Congress" sent a letter to the Majles of Iran. The Kurdish "authority" expressed in the letter, its desire to cooperate with Iran, and assured that establishment of a federated Kurdish state was not prelude to the disintegration of Iraq; rather it would be an essential ingredient of a democratic peaceful Iraq that would not be threat to its neighbors. It was also stated in the letter that the Kurdish leaders understood the Iranian security concerns and would do their utmost not to jeopardize Iran's interests. In the summer of 1993, an Iranian military-political delegation visited the Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds assured Iran to keep the KDPI away from the border and to prevent its assaults in return for increasing ties with Iran and opening representation offices in Tehran.[174]

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[172] Barkey, ***op.cit.***, p.160.; Entessar, ***op.cit.***, pp. 63-64.

[173] Entessar, ***op.cit.***, p.67.

[174] ***Ibid.***, pp. 67-68.

The situation in northern Iraq intensified Turkey's own Kurdish dilemma. In addition to strengthening the PKK, the post-Gulf War developments heightened the ethnic consciousness among Turkey's Kurdish citizens. The *de facto* fragmentation of Iraq gave momentum to Kurdish nationalist aspirations and shifted Ankara's priorities to preservation of the unity of Iraq and the re-establishment of some form of stability along the Turkish-Iraqi border. Turkey sought to normalize its relations with Saddam regime, and worked through diplomatic channels to remove the UN economic sanctions on Iraq.[175]

Restart of clashes between the KDP and PUK in 1994 and their ineffectiveness against the PKK led to Turkish military incursion in March 1995. Unlike the operation in 1992, the Kurdish leadership was not informed about the operation, which drew criticisms both from the KDP and the PUK. Nevertheless, while the KDP was willing to cooperate with Turkey in order to rid its territory of the PKK militants; The PUK joined Iran in denouncing Turkey's actions. Moreover, the PUK sided with the PKK. That is why Talabani said, "We do not view the PKK as a terrorist organization but as a political organization" in March 1995.[176] Consequently, in order to provide border security, both Iran and Turkey collaborated with the Iraqi Kurdish factions next to their borders.

After then, Iran tried to strengthen its position in northern Iraq. In this vein, the Badr Forces, military arm of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI) that affiliated with Iran, were deployed in northern Iraq. On the other hand, Iran sent military troops deep into PUK territory to pursue rebellious Iranian Kurds in July 1995. In response to growing Iran-PUK alliance, the KDP agreed to cooperate with Saddam Hussein in August 1996. Meantime, The Iranian officials viewed debates in Turkey to establish a security zone in northern Iraq to interdict the PKK raids into Turkey as expansionist aims. Finally, Iran extended its support for the PUK and the PUK achieved to regain its lost-ground in northern

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[175] Sabri Sayari, ***"***Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s***"***, ***Journal of Palestine Studies***, vol. 26, no.3 (Spring 1997), pp.44-56.; and Kirisci, ***op.cit,***, pp. 30-34***.***

[176] Kirisci, ***op.cit.***, pp.30-34.

Iraq. In this juncture, the KDP blamed Tehran stating "the Iranian Islamic regime has stepped up its direct intervention in support of Talabani's PUK and has sent several thousand new troops with heavy weapons across the border".[177]

Iran was also concerned with the "Ankara process", that is mediation attempts by the US, Turkey and Britain to end clashes between the KDP and PUK in October 1996, January and May 1997. Regarding the establishment of sound military ties between Israel and Turkey, the Iranian leaders denounced the Ankara process defining it as an attempt by the US to establish "a spy base and spring board to carry out its malicious schemes in the region". Iran viewed the Ankara process as "a concerted effort [by] the US and Zionist regime … to create another Israel in the Kurdish areas."[178] Indeed, as Michael M. Gunter, well-known professor with his studies on Kurds, indicated, the new Turkish-Israeli ties strengthened Turkey's hand in its competition with Iran over northern Iraq by making US and Israel technology more readily available to Turks.[179]

Large-scale military incursions of Turkey into northern Iraq took place again in May 1997 and October 1997 when Turkey increased its support for the KDP by bombing the PUK and PKK positions. Besides aiming at destroying the PKK units in northern Iraq and strengthening the KDP, Turkey aimed at balancing Iran's relationship with the PUK as a step toward preventing the Iranian domination of the region. Iran denounced Turkey's activities as violation of international law and sovereign rights and territorial integrity of the "Iraqi Muslim nation".[180]

However, by the late 2000, "it was clear to Talabani that he had to lessen his dependency on Iran if he hoped to mend fences with Turkey and improve relations". In this vein, the PUK started to struggle against the PKK. Robert Olson

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[177] Michael M. Gunter, "Turkey and Iran Face off in Kurdistan", ***The Middle East Quarterly***, March 1998, in http://www.meforum.org/meq/march98/turkey.shtml .

[178] ***Ibid.***

[179] ***Ibid.***

[180] ***Ibid.***

says another reason for change of the PUK's stance towards Turkey and the PKK: "The PKK with Iran's help, had entrenched itself at the northern end of the Qandil mountains that rise along the Iran-Iraq border" where the PKK organized a local administration and became able to challenge the PUK. That is why the PUK sided with Turkey in the late 2000 and throughout the 2001. On the other hand, because "the PUK continued to lose strength vis-à-vis the KDP (a process begun in 1996), it became clear to Tehran that the PUK alone no longer effectively served Iran's geopolitical interests in northern Iraq". Appearance of the weakness of the PUK by the end of 2000 "further weakened Iran's geopolitical posture and its ability to challenge Turkey's increasingly strong position in northern Iraq". For this reason, Iran started to improve its relations with the KDP, while at the same time, keeping in touch with the PUK.[181]

Despite their agreement on territorial integrity of Iraq, Turkey and Iran did not trust each other respecting northern Iraq and they remained suspicious regarding the other, which made competition between the two countries inevitable. Turkey was uncomfortable by Iran's growing influence over the Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq. Its main concern about Iran was to shelter the PKK militants in its sphere of influence in northern Iraq that posed vital threats to Turkey. Turkey also feared about Iran's activities via Iraq to establish an Islamic Kurdish state that would encircle Turkey from the south.

Iran accused Turkey to have sided with Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war because Turkey agreed with Iraq to expand the capacity of Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline to transport Iraqi oil. (The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline was the only way for Iraq to meet its financial needs since it was unable to use the Gulf way, and Syria cut the flow of Iraqi oil via its soil in 1982.) Similarly, Iran interpreted Turkish announcements in 1986 to protect the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline as if Turkey was supporting Iraq. On the other hand, the Iranian leaders viewed Turkey's military incursions in northern Iraq throughout the 1980s and 1990s as activities

[181] Robert Olson, "Turkey-Iran Relations, 2000-2001: The Caspian, Azerbaijan and the Kurds", ***Middle East Policy***, vol. IX, no.2 (June 2002), pp. 112-113.

aimed at capturing the oil-rich Mosul region, which would drastically alter the balance of power in the region to the detriment of Iran.[182] Furthermore, Turkey's presence in northern Iraq, near the sensitive Kurdish and Azeri regions of Iran both would give Turkey an opportunity -- may be in collaboration with Israel and the US-- to manipulate ethnic dissent in Iran, and would give it a stake in the Gulf politics as well. That is why Iran strongly reacted to Turkish military operations in northern Iraq against the PKK, and that is why --besides its security considerations stemming from armed opposition near Iran-Iraq border-- Iran tried to get involved in northern Iraq against Turkey making alliances with Kurdish groups there.

4.1.2. The PKK Question in Turkish-Iranian Relations

One of the issues complicating the Turkish-Iranian relations throughout the 1990s was the Turkish perception of Iran that allowed the PKK to use its territory. Turkish officials routinely complained about Iranian support for the PKK. As a matter of fact, Iran-PKK relations were not as "certain" as Syria-PKK relations. Nevertheless, Ismet G. Imset, Turkish journalist who wrote a book on the PKK in 1992, after indicating this fact, stated:

> Throughout the years the PKK increased its force and armament abroad, it was known that the organization had a perfect understanding especially with Syrian officials. Its cooperation first with the Kurdistan Democrat Party (KDP) and later with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) served to increase its presence in neighboring Iraq in the 1980s.Osman Öcalan's [brother of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan] personal relationship with [some from the leader cadre of the] Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Pastars) during the same years resulted with a high-level meeting in Tehran in the early 1990s and the PKK has been allowed to use Iranian territory for its attacks on Turkey as well.[183]

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[182] Tschanguiz H. Pahlavan, "Turkish-Iranian Relations; An Iranian View", in Henry J. Barkey, ed., ***Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*** (Washington DC.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), pp.71-91.; Athari, ***op.cit.***, pp.258-260.

[183] Ismet G. Imset, ***The PKK, A Report on Separatist Violence in Turkey*** (Ankara: Turkish Daily News Publications, 1992), p.168.

Nihat Ali Özcan, Turkish expert on the PKK and terrorism, dates Iran-PKK relations to the early 1980s.[184] According to him, considering the threat perceptions of Iran from Turkey after the revolution --that deriving from the presence of many Iranian regime opponents in Turkey and reports that pro-Shah dissidents established an army in the east of Turkey, and the US would attack Iran via Turkey -- Iran aimed at eliminating the regime opponents abroad and destabilizing Turkey. Özcan argues that, the Iranian view of Turkey siding with Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war further prompted Iran's anti-Turkey sentiment and led to Iran-Syria alliance against Turkey to strengthen and support the PKK. On the other hand, Iran compelled Mesud Barzani, leader of the KDP, to cooperate with the PKK in return for Iranian support for the KDP in its struggle against Iraq.[185] Moreover, Özcan argues, when the KDP was uncomfortable with Turkish military incursion in 1986 into northern Iraq and viewed the PKK activities as detrimental to it, Iran gave shelter to the PKK in its land. According to Özcan, Iran wanted PKK to gather intelligence in Turkey, to struggle against the KDPI – the Iranian armed opposition group, and not to attack Turkish troops within the 50 kilometers of the border so that Iran could easily deny involvement.

Özcan suggests that anti-imperialist discourse and opposition to Turkey were common grounds for cooperation between Iran and the PKK. Despite Iranian denials, Iran-PKK relations were revealed by confessions of the detained PKK militants and even the expressions of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the terror organization. Öcalan stated in an occasion that "... the regime differences [between Iran and Turkey], presence of Iranian asylum seekers in Turkey, Turkish policy towards Azerbaijan, even its policy towards Iraq, and its membership in the NATO contradicts with the interests of Iran. These are the objective reasons for us to establish closer relations with Iran".[186]

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[184] Nihat Ali Özcan, "İran'ın Türkiye Politikasında Ucuz ama Etkili Bir Manivela: PKK", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol.5, no.3 (Autumn 1999), pp. 325-42.; and "İran'ın Türkiye Algılaması ve Politik Araç Olarak Terör, ***Stratejik Analiz***, vol.1, no. 2 (June 2000), pp. 49-53.

[185] Özcan, ***"İran'in Türkiye Politikasında …",*** pp. 334-35. Compare to Pahlavan, ***op.cit.***, pp.79-80.

[186] Quoted in Özcan, ***op.cit.***, p. 338.

According to Özcan, Iran viewed Turkey's active foreign policy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War as a threat for Iran's territorial integrity due to the pan-Turkism fear and close relations between Turkey and the US. Particularly after the independence of Azerbaijan in September 1991, Iran's fear that it's nearly twenty million Azerbaijani population might be encouraged to revolt by the independence of Azerbaijan increased. Moreover, Iran feared, the Azerbaijani nationalists in Iran might receive support from Turkey. Özcan argues that for these reasons Iran decided to destabilize Turkey, and for this purpose it had two instruments; radical Islamists in Turkey demanding aid from Iran and the PKK. In view of Özcan, Iran supported the PKK activities in Turkey, especially around the Turkish provinces Van, Ağrı, and Kars in order to harm Turkey-Azerbaijan territorial contiguity.[187]

Imset reports in his study that as of 1992, only several of the 20 camps established in Iranian territory at the end of the Gulf War remained open. He estimates the number of the PKK militants in Iran in 1992 at about 700-800. He also reveals that the PKK was purchasing weapons from the Revolutionary Guards and Osman Öcalan was placed in charge of these contacts. He claims that Turkey has information about the PKK leaders crossing into Iran and holding meetings with senior Iranian officials as well as Revolutionary Guard Commanders. He highlights in his book that in early 1992, the PKK increased its cross border attacks violating the Turkey-Iran border and the PKK was even using vehicles such as trucks to arrive at the Turkish border. He concludes that these developments indicate extensive cooperation between PKK and Iranian local officials or Revolutionary Guards if not directly with Tehran.[188]

As a matter of fact, Turkish Intelligence and security units alleged that Iran provides accommodation, training, camping facilities, health assistance and

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[187] ***Ibid.***, pp. 338-39. Compare to Barkey, ***op.cit.***, p.161.

[188] Imset, ***op.cit.***, p.205. See also Oktay Pirim and Süha Örtülü, ***PKK'nın 20 Yıllık Öyküsü***, (4th print) (İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 2000).

logistical support to the PKK, especially at the Western Azerbaijan province of Iran near the Turkey-Iran border. Moreover, on several occasions, Turkish officials gave information and documentation to the Iranian authorities as to the presence of the PKK camp, offices, training and armament activities based upon the confession of the detained PKK militants. However, Iran always denied these allegations; furthermore it responded to the continuing Turkish complaints about the PKK activities by arguing that Turkey should make more effort to stop the activities of Iranian opposition groups on its territory. [189]

Tension related to the PKK in Turkish-Iranian relations went on throughout the 1990s. For instance, Turkey detained an Iranian flagged vessel, the Cap Maleas, transiting from Bulgaria on suspicion that it was carrying arms for the PKK, in 1991. Similarly, some Turkish contingents run into Iranian territory in pursuit of the PKK militants in August 1992 despite the absence of a hot-pursuit agreement between Turkey and Iran. In the same vein, massive Turkish air force attack in January 1994 on a PKK camp deep in northern Iraq that killed nine Iranian villagers were samples of frictions between Turkey and Iran related to the PKK.[190]

Turkish-Iranian conflict regarding the PKK went on in the second half of the 1990s as well. Upon growing PKK assaults through the Iran-Turkey border in the mid-1996, and after the arrest of İrfan Çağrıcı Turkey increased its pressure on Iran to stop its support for the PKK and Islamist organizations.[191]

In March 1997, the Border Security Research Committee of TGNA publicized a detailed report on the location of PKK training and logistic support camps in Iranian territory, along with border violation attacks, and mine-laying activities by the PKK guerillas infiltrating from Iran. At this juncture, General Kenan Deniz, the chief of the domestic security department attached to the Turkish

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[189] Ali Tekin, ***The Place of Terrorism in Iran's Foreign Policy*** (Ankara : Uluslararası Stratejik Arastirmalar Vakfi [1997]), pp. 65-69.

[190] Barkey, ***op.cit***., p. 67.; Pahlavan, ***op.cit.***, p.77.

[191] Atila Eralp and Özlem Tür, "İran'la Devrim Sonrası İlişkiler", in M. Benli Altunışık, ed., ***Türkiye ve Ortadoğu; Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*** (İstanbul: Boyut Yay., 1999), pp.69-102., pp. 90-91.

General Staff declared, "Iran is using terrorism for its political ends [and] giving logistical support to the PKK and also supports fundamentalist Islamic organizations ... to harm established order in Turkey".[192] Tension went on through Turkish military incursion into northern Iraq in May 1997 against the PKK. Despite the fact that Iran was informed and that it was wanted to take necessary measures to prevent infiltration of the PKK members, --allegedly-- about 7,000 PKK militants crossed into Iran.[193]

After the seizure of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK, by Turkish security units in February 1999, Turkey-Iran relations entered into a more difficult phase. Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, in July 1999 said, "We have some complaints against Iran. The PKK's existence in Syria became nearly extinct, but Iran seems to take place of Syria. Iran takes the PKK under her wings. This is an attitude that cannot be suitable for good neighborly and friendly relations".[194] Soon after Ecevit's remarks, Ankara was accused of violating the Iranian airspace and bombing the Iranian territory on July 18, 1999.[195] Ankara denied any planned violation of the Iranian airspace, but accepted that in the pursuit of the PKK terrorists such a violation might have occurred. On the other hand, on July 22, Iran arrested two Turkish soldiers charging them of unlawful border crossing and spying.[196]

At this juncture, Bahman Akhavan, a member of Iran's Parliament Commission for Defense Affairs said: "Turkey's attack is a new strategy and this attack is a scenario based on analysis by the foreign [Western] media that a new

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[192] Gunter, ***op.cit.***

[193] Eralp-Tur, ***op.cit.,*** pp.94-95.

[194] Sever, ***op.cit.***, p.66.; "Turkish PM's New Allegation Against Iran", ***Tehran Times***, 4 July 1999. See also, "Demirel Corrects Turkish Stance on Iran", ***Tehran Times***, 27 July 1999.

[195] "Iran Repels Invading Turkish Air Force, Protests New Attack", ***Tehran Times***, 24 July 1999.

[196] ***Ibid.***, p.67.; Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran …"***, pp. 877-78; Bahram Navazeni, ***Ghaahshomaare Seyaasete Khareceye Iran; Az Mordad Maahe 1367 to Khordad Maahe 1380*** (Tehran: Markaze Esnaade Enghalaabe Eslaame, 2002), pp.342-45. See also Alan Makovsky, "Turkish-Iranian Tension: A New Regional Flashpoint?", ***Policywatch***, no. 404 (9 August 1999), (available in http://www.washingtoninstitute.org.watch/Policywatch1999/404.htm).

revolution is taking place in Iran. Considering the recent visit of the US Defense Secretary William Cohen to the Middle East and the visit of Turkish President to occupied Palestine, this move by Turkey cannot be taken as a marginal bombing raid".[197]

Upon Iranian allegations subsequent to the arrest of two Turkish soldiers in Iranian territory Ecevit replied "if we have intended to invade Iran, we would not have done so with two soldiers". The Turkish General Staff, Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu stated: "Iran's intentions have never changed. From 1639 there has not been a war between us, but Iran never wanted a strong Turkey. It seems clear that Iran's intention is to show Turkey as an aggressive country".[198] Nevertheless, foreign policy makers of Turkey and Iran acted cautiously, and thereby, prevented escalation of the crisis. In August 1999, Turkish-Iranian High Security Commission met in Ankara; and both Turkey and Iran admitted that the bombing incident was a mistake, and Turkey consented to compensate its damages.[199]

In spite of aforementioned conflicts between Turkey and Iran throughout the 1990s, the two states accomplished to cooperate on several occasions as well. Besides adopting identical postures towards the establishment of an independent Kurdish State and preservation of territorial integrity of Iraq, Turkey and Iran established common security mechanisms such as the High Security Commission, Joint Security Commission and Security Subcommittees, which run regularly.[200] It is remarkable that these security arrangements were taken in September 1992, when the competition between the two countries was at its peak. The Iranian leaders constantly denied the Turkish accusations that Iran was supporting the PKK, and repeated their desire to cooperate with Turkey in every occasion. On several

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[197] Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran…",*** pp. 877-78.; "Turkish Attack on Iran Calculated", ***Tehran Times***, 20 July 1999.

[198] ***Ibid.,*** pp.877-78.

[199] ***Ibid.***, p.880.

[200] ***Infra.***, pp.105-109.

occasions Iran delivered PKK militants to Turkey as well. Then, one may conclude that Turkey faced a collaborating Iran.

Furthermore, the Iranians were also worried about the revival of Iran's own domestic Kurdish question.[201] Turkey had ability to exploit the discontent among dissident Iranian Kurds in Iran. Indeed, the KDPI like its counterparts in Iraq sent positive signals to Turkey to try to win its support for its case. For instance in an article in *Kurdistan,* daily published by the KDPI, it is asserted; "Turkey is a country in which religion and politics are separated. No one is persecuted in Turkey because of his religious views and no one is denied basic rights in that country. This is not the case in Iran where religious intolerance and political oppression rule supreme". Nevertheless, Turkey eschewed to attempt to play this card.[202]

In fact, as Özcan highlighted, there is a coincidence between the escalation of PKK activities that were alleged to be affiliated with Iran and growing Turco-Iranian geopolitical competition over northern Iraq and the Caucasus. In the same vein, it is proven by revelations by the senior PKK members, and revelations by former Iranian officials[203] that the PKK had nearly 800 militants including "special forces" in seven camps, and hospitals in Iran.[204] It is notable that during the 12th session of Joint Security Committee meetings in Tehran in June 1995, Turkish security forces detected attacks by the PKK militants housed in Iran and injured militants were taken away from the area of incident by the Iranian official license plated vehicles.[205]

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[201] For the Kurdish question in Iran see Mojab Shahrzad, "The politics of Nationality and Ethnic Diversity", in Saed Rahnema and Sohrab Behdad, ed., ***Iran After the Revolution, Crisis of an Islamic State"*** (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1995).; Olson, ***The Kurdish Question …*** , ***op.cit.***, pp.20-47.

[202] Entessar, ***op.cit.***, p.70.

[203] For instance See Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, ***"Iran Report"***, vol. 3, no. 40 (23 October 2000).

[204] See "Türkiye'den İran'a Bayık Dosyası", http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/144877.asp?0m=_1EQ (4/4/2002).

[205] Tekin, ***op.cit.***, p. 66.

It could be concluded that Turkey was faced with two kinds of structures in Iran. While the government and foreign ministry adopted a conciliatory and collaborative stance towards Turkey regarding the security issues, the radical wing in Iran embodied by the Revolutionary Guards took a confrontational line against Turkey.[206] Radicals in Iran viewed the PKK as a useful instrument to unbalance Turkey, especially in the competition between Turkey and Iran over northern Iraq and the Caucasus.

4.2. Geopolitical Competition over Central Asia and the Caucasus

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the former Soviet Socialist Republics became independent. The newly independent states included six Muslim republics, namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, five of which –with the exception of Tajikistan- were Turkic speaking. In order to refer to these republics this study preferred to use "newly independent Muslim states" (NIMS) instead of "newly independent states" (NIS) that refers to all states that became independent after the collapse of the USSR. In the following pages the Turkey-Iran competition over the Caucasus and Central Asia, particularly over the NIMS will be examined.

4.2.1. Turkish Policy towards the NIMS

Turkey's policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia can be classified into three periods. The first period covered transition in the Caucasus and Central Asia between the years of 1989-1991. In this period, Turkish foreign policy towards the NIMS was cautious in the sense that it was trying to avoid alienating Moscow. Turkey kept its traditional policy towards the Soviet Union since the 1920s: Moscow first and non-interest in "dış Türkler" (outside Turks). Indeed, until the last days of the USSR, Turkish government was not interested in Central Asia and the

[206] Taha Akyol, "Türkiye, İran ve PKK", ***Milliyet***, 5 April 2002.

Caucasus.[207] Because Turkey accepted the sovereignty of the USSR over the (Soviet) "republics" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, when Turkish President Turgut Özal visited Kazakhstan in March 1991, it was prefaced by a visit to Moscow.[208] In this vein, in late August 1991, the Turkish Undersecretary of Foreign Ministry, Özdem Sanberk declared that Turkey would prioritize Moscow in its evaluations considering developments in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Moreover, he stated that Ankara-Moscow relations were more important than Ankara-"Republics" relations.[209] Nevertheless, Turkey's interest in the region gradually increased throughout 1991, and eventually led Turkey's recognition of all newly independent states in the Caucasus and Central Asia in December 1991. (Turkey recognized Azerbaijan earlier than other states on November 9).

The second period of Turkey's policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia that is called "euphoria" in Turkish foreign policy, covered the period between the late 1991 and 1993.[210] Turgut Özal, the then president of Turkey, in his augural speech at the TGNA (Turkish Grand National Assembly) stated that the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the USSR provided Turkey with a historical opportunity to be leader of the region. He said that Turkey should have not missed such an opportunity that appeared first time after 400 years.[211] In this period, many high-level visits between Turkey and the NIMS culminated in the conclusion of many agreements. Officials of NIMS declared many times that they would adopt the "Turkish model" as restructuring and development model, and they would attach great importance to their relations with Turkey. At this juncture, the cliché of

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[207] Idris Bal, ***Turkey's Relations with the West and the Turkic Republics, the Rise and Fall of the 'Turkish Model'*** (Aldershot, Burlington, Singapore: Asghate Pub., 2000), pp. 45-50.

[208] See Philip Robins, "Turkey's Ostpolitic: Relations with the Central Asian States", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp.130-31.

[209] Mustafa Aydın, "Kafkasya ve Orta Asya ile İlişkiler", in Baskın Oran, ed., ***Türk Dış Politikası, Kurtulus Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar,*** vol.II (İstanbul: İletişim Yay, 2001), pp. 366-449; pp, 366-75. See also Mustafa Aydın, "Turkey and Central Asia; Challenges of Change", ***Central Asian Survey***, vol.15, no.2 (1996).

[210] Robins, ***op.cit.***, pp.130-36.

[211] Aydın, ***"Kafkasya ve Orta ...",*** p.370.

"the Turkic world from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China" was voiced by the Turkish leaders. Similarly, Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan announced the coming 21st century as "the Turkish century", which perpetuated the euphoria among the Turkish leaders.[212]

There were several pragmatic reasons for Turkey's involvement in close relations with the NIMS apart from their historical, cultural and ethnic affinities. Firstly, when the NIMS became independent, Turkey was experiencing difficult relations with the European Community (EC), due to the EC's rejection of Turkish application to be full-member of the Community. Furthermore, many politicians and intellectuals in Turkey thought that the decrease in strategic importance of Turkey because of the dissolution of the USSR adversely affected the EC's attitude towards Turkey. Similarly, lack of support for Turkish position on crucial issues at international platforms compelled Turkey to seek new alliances. Hence, Turkey turned its face to the NIMS, sharing the same traits with Turkey such as history, culture, language and religion. In late 1991, Turkey was the first state to recognize the newly independent states' independence, and then, Turkey began to court them. Turkish policy towards the Caucasus and Central Asia dramatically changed; Turkey abandoned its Moscow-first policy and embarked upon intensive relations with the NIMS.[213]

As Gareth Winrow indicated,[214] many people in Turkey hoped that an active role in post-Soviet Central Asia would boost Turkey's international image and would enhance the prospects of Turkey's admission to the European Union (EU).[215] Moreover, close ties with new republics would enhance Turkey's regional power and role. Furthermore, the West, particularly the USA encouraged Turkey to pursue assertive policies towards the region in order to prevent Iran from filling the

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[212] ***Ibid.***, p. 380.; ***The Economist***, vol.323, no. 7756, 25 April, 1992, p.60.

[213] Aydın, "***Turkey and Central …",*** pp. 158-60.

[214] European Community was transformed into European Union in 1992.

[215] Gareth M. Winrow, "Turkish Policy in Central Asia", in Touraj Atabaki and John o'Kane, ed., ***Post-Soviet Central Asia*** (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), pp. 91-108, p.91.

vacuum in the Caucasus and Central Asia that appeared due to the dissolution of the USSR. In this regard, the Western governments were eager to promote the "Turkish model" as a secular, democratic state based on free-market economy in order to preempt the expansion of Iranian influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus.[216]

New economic and business opportunities were another reason for Turkey's involvement with the NIMS. Turkish private sector entered the newly emerged market and undertook huge projects.[217] In order to coordinate Turkish activities towards the Caucasus and Central Asia, and to aid developments of newly independent states, especially the Turkic states, Turkey established Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in January 1992.[218] Moreover, existence of huge oil and gas resources in the Caspian basin also drew the attention of Turkey to the region. Throughout the 1990s, Turkey was pressed for the adoption of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline by the international consortium extracting oil in the Caspian. Hence, Turkey would meet its growing energy demand, and acquire royalty fees as well as strengthening the "independence" of newly independent states.[219]

Another aspect of Turkey's policy towards the NIMS was cultural-educational cooperation with the Turkic states, with particular emphasis on common "Turkish culture". In addition to encouraging the NIMS to adopt the Latin alphabet instead of Cyrillic, Turkey established many Turkish Culture Centers and schools including several universities in the Caucasus and Central Asia, aside from the project of granting scholarships to students from the Turkic world. Furthermore, while the Turkish Education Ministry started a project to develop common

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[216] ***Ibid.***, p.96.; ***The Economist***, vol.323, no. 7756, 25 April, 1992, p.60

[217] Sabri Sayari, "Turkey, Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War", ***Journal of International Affairs***, vol.54, no. 1 (Fall, 2000).; Mehmet Dikkaya, "Orta Asya'da Yeni Büyük Oyun: Türkiye, Rusya ve İran", ***Avrasya Dosyası,*** vol.5, no.3 (Autumn 1999), pp, 189-208.

[218] Mustafa Yilmaz, "An Assesment of Turkey's Activities Towards the Turkish World", ***Eurasian Studies***, vol. 21 (Spring 2002), pp. 165-192.

[219] Kramer, ***op.cit***., pp. 154-56.; Suha Bolukbasi, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources, Conflicting Perceptions and Clashing Interests, ***Europe-Asia Studies***, vol.50, no.3, (May 1998), pp.397-414.

literature and history textbooks, the Turkish Ministry of Culture led the work of the Turkic Culture and Arts Joint Administration (TUKSOY). Moreover, TRT Avrasya TV began to broadcast to the NIMS. Turkey's policy towards the NIMS had an Islamic dimension as well, within the framework of struggle against "Iran-based" radical Islam. In this vein, besides the activities of unofficial Sufi orders based in Turkey in the NIMS, Turkey sent religious material to the region. Moreover, the Directorate of Religious Affairs sponsored construction and restoration of many mosques in the NIMS, and established three theology faculties in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.[220]

After declaring their independence the newly independent states were eager to establish good relations with Turkey. Their immediate need was recognition by the "international community", and thereby, to strengthen their independence. Thus, Republics' leaders turned to Ankara as their principal intermediary in integration into the international political and economic system, hoping that Ankara's close ties with the West, particularly with the USA would enable them to receive US backing. On the other hand, they wanted to utilize experiences of a country such as Turkey that shared a common culture with them, in their state-building efforts.[221] Furthermore, the NIMS were discouraged by the West from imitating Iranian model. For instance, James Baker, the then secretary of state of the US stated in February 1992 that they hoped the newly independent states would imitate the Turkish model rather than those of other neighbors, such as Iran.[222]

However, the Turkish euphoria ended in 1993, and was replaced by "caution and realism". It was initially shattered with the "failure" of the Summit of the leaders of the Turkic countries held in Ankara in October 1992.[223] In contrast to President Özal's announcement of his intention to establish a Turkic Common

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[220] Aydın, ***"Kafkasya ve Orta …"***, pp.384-87. ; Winrow, ***op.cit.***, pp. 102-103.

[221] James Somerwine, "Nation Building in Central Asia; the Turkish Connection", ***Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.28, no.4 (Summer 1995), pp.25-38.

[222] Aydın, ***"Kafkasya ve Orta …"***, p.383. ***The Economist***, vol.323, no. 7756, 25 April, 1992, p.60.

[223] Robins, ***op.cit.***, pp.136-39.

Market, and a Turkic Development and Investment Bank, the Ankara Declaration after the summit did not refer to such "ambitious" projects. Turkey's desire to acquire support of these countries for the construction of oil and gas pipelines to be passed through Turkish territories and to adopt a common posture on several issues, i.e. the Cyprus issue and the Karabagh issue, were not materialized in the Summit. Furthermore, leaders of the newly independent Turkic states displayed their opposition to the establishment of any organization based on ethnicity or religion and the establishment of supranational organizations among the Turkic republics. This failure could be explained by the fact that having secured international recognition by that time, the NIMS wished to maintain their freedom of maneuver and cultivate ties with other states interested in the region. They also became aware of the fact that Turkey could offer little financial and technical support to them with its limited sources. Finally, leaders of the NIMS tried to avoid antagonizing Russia by committing themselves to exclusively Turkic bodies.[224]

Economic and cultural interactions between Turkey and the Turkic republics have increased significantly in the post-Cold war era. However, "great expectations" in the euphoria period have not materialized due to several factors. These factors include Turkey's limited financial sources, the absence of common borders with the republics, the ongoing Russian presence and influence in these countries and the reluctance of the leaders of the Turkic Republics to become dependent on another country after decades of dependence on Moscow.

In addition to reasons already explained, Turkey was also greatly concerned about developments in the Caucasus. Eruption of ethnic and secessionist conflicts in Georgia, Karabakh, and Chechenia raised Turkish concern about the impact of them on stability and energy security in the Caucasus. There was growing apprehension about the possibility of instability spilling over into Turkey, since the ethnic fighting took place close to Turkey's borders and involved Turkic and other Muslim peoples with whom Turkey had historic ties. In addition, there has been sizable numbers of Abkhazians, Azeris, and Chechens in Turkey who sympathized

[224] Winrow, ***op.cit.,*** pp, 96-97.; Aydın, ***"Kafkasya ve Orta …",*** pp. 388-90.

with their ethnic kin in the Caucasus. Nevertheless, Turkey maintained its caution rather than risk involvement in the ethnic conflicts in the Caucasus that could have brought it into conflict with Russia.[225] In this regard, Süleyman Demirel, the then Prime Minister explained his government's standing, which was maintained by successive governments, as "Turkey will adjust its policy by taking into account [existing] balances and sensitivities, and by abstaining from creating hostilities and abstaining from creating problems".[226]

4.2.2. Iran and the NIMS

The break up of the Soviet Union and the emergence of newly independent states along Iran's northern border eliminated the traditional Russian threat for Iran. Thus, Iran appeared as a powerful force in comparison with the newly independent states. At the same time, the defeat of Iraq after the Gulf War enhanced Iran's security as the war resulted in dismantling Iraq's nuclear program and its chemical and biological warfare capabilities. Nevertheless, there were security concerns stemming from regional instability as well as the country's serious unresolved economic problems.[227]

There were immediate consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which created an extremely volatile situation. Iran had understandable worries about uncertain process of the formation of national armies and security doctrines, in the former Soviet states. These uncertainties could cause weakening or possible breakdown of border security and involvement of outside powers in the region by new security agreements, military training and arms supply.[228] Growing nationalism in the Caucasus and Central Asia following the collapse of the USSR,

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[225] See, Suha Bolukbasi, "Ankara's Baku-Centered Transcaucasia Policy; Has It Failed", ***Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.51, no.1 (1997). Sayarı, ***op.cit.***

[226] Bal, ***op.cit.***, pp. 50-52, 78.

[227] Edmund Herzig, ***Iran and the Former Soviet South*** (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), pp. 4- 5.

[228] ***Ibid***., pp. 14-15.

and possible autonomy and independence demands of minorities in Iran might pose a more general threat to Iran's multiethnic fabric. A further potential threat was posed by the upsurge in nationalist sentiment among Turkic speaking peoples of the former Soviet Union, which might have an impact among Iran's minorities. War and extreme political instability in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan, and outbreak of ethnic violence in the region left the Iranian Government anxious about the domestic impact of these conflicts. Iran was concerned about the spread or escalation of these conflicts as well as the possibility of foreign interference in these conflicts next to its territories and a refugee flow into Iran.[229]

The fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the enclave of Karabakh initially pushed the Baku government closer to Iran, which could have been a powerful ally. However, Baku was disappointed by Iran's response. It was a call for a peaceful solution that would not be detrimental to either side. Similarly, when deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan visited Tehran to seek support and cooperation in January 1991, before the demise of the USSR, he was informed that Tehran would reciprocate within the framework of existing cooperation between Iran and Russia.[230]

As a result of bordering both Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran had the immediate problem of dealing with the influx of thousands of Azeri refugees fleeing the fighting. Therefore, Iran became active in calling for a cease-fire in Karabakh and in becoming a broker in the conflict. An adherent of Shiite Islam like Azerbaijan, Iran worried that its nearly 20 million Azeri population could become politicized and polarized along ethnic lines. However, the pragmatic leadership in Iran attempted to play a mediating role in the dispute. In playing the role of mediator, Iran tried to preserve stability, and thereby to reduce the chances of a drive for

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[229] ***Ibid.***, pp. 3,15.; and Sohrab Shahabi and Farideh Farhi, "Security Considerations and Iranian Foreign Policy", ***The Iranian Journal of International Affairs***, vol.3, no.1 (Spring 1995), p.93.

[230] Talal Nizameddin, ***Russia and Middle East; Towards a New Foreign Policy*** (London: C.Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1999), p.242.

unification between Iranian Azeris and Azerbaijan.[231] They also hoped that their mediation efforts would signal the West that Iran could play a constructive role in international relations. Likewise, the US involvement in the conflict and region would be hindered; and Iran would appease its ethnic Azeri and Armenian population.[232]

Similarly, Tehran assumed an intermediary role in the Tajik civil war because of the possible spillover effect of the conflict, and the deployment of foreign contingents there. In August 1995, Tajikistan's President Imamali Rakhmanov and Abdollah Nouri, the leader of Tajikistan's Islamic opposition, were invited to Tehran, and in the presence of Rafsanjani they signed an agreement to settle their differences peacefully.[233]

On the other hand, after the dissolution of the USSR, the question of sovereignty over the Caspian Sea greatly affected Iranian foreign policy in the 1990s. Iran, which was initially in favor of "condominium", became a partner of AIOC (Azerbaijan International Oil Consortium) with the share of five percent in 1994. However, because of the political pressure of the US, Azerbaijan cancelled the agreement with Iran in April 1995. And then, Iran began to question the legitimacy of the international consortium, claiming that the Caspian was a lake, and because of this reason any of coastal states could not unilaterally exploit its resources. In other words, resources of the Caspian should be shared equally among all the littoral states. Otherwise, Iran, whose offshore waters are believed not to be

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[231] Adam Tarock, "Iran's Policy in Central Asia", ***Central Asian Survey***, vol.16, no.2 (1997), pp.188-190.; and Jim Nichol, ***et.al., "Central Asia and Azerbaijan; Regional Rivalries and Implications for the United States"*** (CRS Report for Congress, Washington: Congressional Research Service- The Library of Congress, 1992) pp. 15-16.

[232] John Calabrese, ***Revolutionary Horizons, Regional Foreign Policy in Post-Khomeini Iran***, New York, St. Martin's Press., 1994, pp. 101-02.; K.L. Afrasiabi, ***After Khomeini; New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy*** (Boulder, San Fransisco: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 140-44.

[233] Tarock, ***op.cit.***, pp.190-91. See also, Graham Fuller, ***Central Asia, the New Geopolitics*** (Santa Monica, RAND, 1994).; Cristopher Rundle, "Iran; Continuity and Change since the Revolution – carrying water in a sieve?", in M.Jane Davis, ed., ***Politics and International Relations in the Middle East, Continuity and Change*** (Aldershot, Brookfield: Edward Elgar Pub.,1995), pp. 105-117.

rich in oil and gas, would lose access to the Caspian hydrocarbon sources. However, Iran's accession to the Caspian minerals would give it a stake in this region and symbolize its acceptance by the West and regional states. Its exclusion would be seen as an ongoing result of US enmity and denial of Iran's "just and historical place" in the region.[234] In this juncture, Iran sided with Russia, and they signed a joint declaration in the early November 1995 stating their opposition to unilateral action by the littoral states to exploit the reserves of the Caspian Sea. It was stated in the declaration that "all issues concerning the exploitation of the 'lake' and its resources should be settled and handled within the framework of international contracts and with the participation of all the Caspian Sea littoral states".[235]

Apart from taking share in extracting the Caspian resources; Iran also desired to transport oil and gas from the Caspian basin via the Iranian territories to the Gulf. Iran offered itself as "the safest, closest and economically most viable route for the export of the Caspian regional states' energy resources to world markets because of its geographical proximity and its existing infrastructure". Iran also presented itself as a client for the Caspian oil because of the distance between Iran's energy production regions in the south and northern cities where no production taken place. Hence, the proximity of its northern cities to Iran's land-locked northern oil and gas producing neighbors was presented as compatibility.[236]

Iran, to some extent, was also motivated by its revolutionary discourse in its policies towards the Caucasus and Central Asia.[237] Indeed, Tchangiz Pahlevan,

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[234] Fred Halliday, "Iran and the Middle East; Foreign Policy and Domestic Change", Middle East Monitor, no.220 (Fall 2001), ***op.cit.***, p.47.; Bolukbasi, ***op.cit.***, pp.397-414.

[235] Tarock, ***op.cit.***, pp.194.; and Galia Golan, ***Russia and Iran: A Strategic Partnership*** (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998), pp.15-16. Nevertheless, after 1995 agreement, both Iran and Russia became shareholders in several cosortiums in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in order to exploit gas and oil. Yet, their formal stance remained unchanged. See Golan, ***op.cit.***, pp.17-18.

[236] Ali Hashemi Bahremani, "Oil and Gas Policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran", ***Insight Turkey***, vol.4, no.1 (January-March 2002), pp. 35-36.; Bolukbasi, ***op.cit.***, pp.397-414.

[237] CRS, ***op.cit.***, p.15, and Shahram Chubin, "Iran's Strategic Predicament", ***Middle East Journal***, vol. 54, no.1 (Winter 2000), pp. 16-17. See also David Menashri, "Iran and Central Asia; Radical Regime, Pragmatic Policies", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp.73-97.

categorizes Iran's relations with the NIMS in three phases after indicating Iran's "Moscow centered" policy prior to the completely dissolution of the USSR.[238] He argues, "The IRI [Islamic Republic of Iran] was predisposed to interpret the newly acquired independence of Central Asian Republics as a victory of Islam. It was thought that the disintegration of he Soviet Union would automatically entail a strengthening of the Islamic world and that new space had been created for the dissemination of Islamic ideals in the region". He claims that such an analysis of the situation led Iran "to predicate its policy in Central Asia on Islamic principles". As Pahlevan indicated, because Shiite Islam, propagated by Iran, was incompatible with Sunni Islam that was adhered to by the overwhelming majority of believers in the NIMS, and due to the secular nature of Central Asians, Iran "tried to combine its Islamist policy with more general forms of cultural activity". Finally, as Pahlevan says, Iran "decided to [return to its] pro-Russian policy and concentrate its efforts on economic cooperation".[239]

The Iranian leaders legitimized their emphasis on Islamist policy as it would deny nationalism, and therefore, would hinder breakout of ethnic and nationalist symbiosis in the region. Iran's emphasis on Islam was also a part of Iranian strategy to attach importance to "common culture" in its relations with the NIMS. In this view, "the greatest single source of cultural vitality has been the Islamic heritage of its population". That is the logic behind the Rafsanjani's following statement: "All the Islamic countries, party and the functional leaders must … put the interests of Islam, Muslims, and the Islamic countries above their own personal, geographical, and nationalistic interests, because these narrow-based interests cannot co-exist with these basic eternal and long term issues of our Islamic nation."[240] By February 1992, Iran had already established a special government agency to form Islamic links with the NIMS, and had set up four training centers in Qom, Maskhad, Tabriz,

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[238] Tchangiz Pahlevan, "Iran and Central Asia", in Touraj Atabaki and John o'Kane, ed., ***Post-Soviet Central Asia*** (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), pp. 73-90., pp. 73-74.

[239] ***Ibid.***, p.74.

[240] Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, p. 133-35.

and Tehran for Central Asian clerics. It also dispatched 1.300 Islamic preachers to the region.[241]

Nevertheless, as Pahlevan indicated Islamist strategy of Iran faced sectarian difficulties in Central Asia. Except for Azerbaijan, the vast majority of the NIMS were Sunni in contrast to Shiite Iran. There was suspicion among the leaders of the NIMS that Iran was working for the creation of Iran-like states in Central Asia. This suspicion was perpetuated by expressions of fundamentalist organizations in these countries yearning for the "Iran model". For example, some fundamentalist organizations in Tajikistan were proposing the establishment of an Islamic state like Iran. Such expressions concerned the leaders of the NIMS and they emphasized, "the democratic path of development is the only alternative to 'fundamentalist Islam'".[242]

Indeed, initial hopes that newly independent Muslim states would turn to Iran as an ally on grounds of Islamic solidarity and history, proved unfounded. Iran encountered sectarian difficulties, and an international campaign against the "Iranian model". At the same time, Iran pursued pragmatist policies contrary to its Islamist discourse. For instance, Iran did not support the "obvious" Islamist party in any of the conflicts emerged in the Caucasus and Central Asia, because of its own multi-ethnic society, and fear of instability**.** In fact, strategic interests of Iran took precedence over Islamic solidarity.[243]

Besides Islamism, Iran's Central Asia and the Caucasus policy had a cultural dimension.[244] Particular emphasis on the revitalization of the Persian culture and language in Central Asia was visible in Iranian broadcasting to the NIMS. Iran set up cultural institutions and libraries, organized cultural weeks and

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[241] Calabrese, ***Revolutionary …..*** , p. 84.

[242] Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, p.135.

[243] Halliday, ***op.cit.***, pp. 46-47.; Menashri, ***op.cit.***, pp.79-81.

[244] ***The Economist***, vol.322, no.7748, 29 February 1992, p.56.

exhibitions, accepted students from the region at Iranian teacher-training colleges, donated elementary and secondary school textbooks including books in the Persian language and exchanged lecturers, broadcast news and other radio and TV programs to Central Asia. These were ingredients of its culture-based policy towards the NIMS.[245]

In this regard, Tajikistan, the sole Persian speaking country of the NIMS received extra attention. Iran was eager to expand its relations with Tajikistan, and it was the first state to open an embassy in Tajikistan. An Iranian deputy minister said that the expansion of ties between Iran and Tajikistan was "a natural continuation of common history between the two nations which was disrupted during 70 years of communist rule"[246]. Tajikistan reciprocated, and the street where Iran's embassy located in Dushanbe, was renamed from Maxim Gorky to Tehran; and the statute of Lenin was replaced with that of Iran's greatest epic poet, Ferdowsi. Iran encouraged Tajikistan to adopt Persian alphabet instead of Cyrillic.[247]

Iran realized that there was no "Islamic medicine" to the problems existing and rising in Central Asia. Its priority became to establish and consolidate economic ties with the NIMS.[248] Iran's primary goal in the region was to reduce uncertainty. Eventually, national interests of Iran that prioritize stability and development superimposed its revolutionary policies. Consequently, Iran emerged as a conservative power that favored the *status quo* in the Caucasus and Central Asia.[249]

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[245] Calabrese, ***op.cit.***, pp.83-84.; Farhad Kazemi and Zohreh Ajdari, "Ethnicity, Identity and Politics, Central Asia and Azerbaijan between Iran and Turkey", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 60-61.

[246] Rundle, ***op.cit.,*** p.114.

[247] Afrasiabi, ***op.cit.***, pp. 137.

[248] Pahlavan, " ***Turkish-Iranian Rel ...*** ", p. 85.

[249] Afrasiabi***, op.cit.,*** pp. 129-30. ; Kazemi-Ajdari, ***op.cit.***, pp.52-70.

4.2.3. Competition over Central Asia and the Caucasus

As stated in the previous pages Turkey and Iran were surprised by the collapse of the USSR, because they did not anticipate such a development, and until that time, both of them had adopted Moscow-centered policies in their relations with the NIMS. The surprise ended in a short term and was followed by "euphoria periods" in Turkey and Iran[250] between the late 1991 and 1993. Iran, which no longer faced Soviet pressure in the north, got the chance to establish economic and political relations with the land-locked NIMS. In this way, Iran hoped to break its isolation, even it could gain influence among the newly independent Muslim states that had lived under "atheist rule" for years. For its part, Turkey, which was worried about its diminishing strategic role for the West became aware of a vast area on which it could gain influence thanks to religious, cultural and ethnic affinities, and thereby regaining its strategic importance for the West. On the other hand, there was an intellectual movement in Turkey that could be called as "Turkist", eager to establish cordial relations with "brothers" in Central Asia. Moreover, Western encouragement of Turkey to serve as "a model" for the NIMS perpetuated Turkish euphoria. In this term, Turkey and Iran entered into severe geopolitical competition over the NIMS, particularly over the Caucasus. This competition had two dimensions: firstly the two countries urged their own models, i.e. the "Turkish Model" and "Iranian model", for structuring and development of the NIMS. The second dimension of Turkish-Iranian competition was the economic rivalry between the two states, particularly represented by their rivalry for transportation routes of the Caspian hydrocarbon resources.[251]

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[250] Menashri, ***op.cit.***, p.78.

[251] Nur-Mohammad Noruzi, "Contention of Iran and Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus", ***Amu Darya***, vol.4, no.5 (Summer 2000), pp.102-135.; Farhad Attaei, "Raghaabat der Mentegha: Barreseye Seyasathaaye Iran ve Torkeye, ***Faselnameye Motalaate Rakhbordyy***, vol.3, no.3 (Autumn 2000), pp.47-59.

After the dissolution of the USSR, it was expected that "secular" Turkey would intervene economically and culturally to block "fundamentalist Iran's" advance into the region. This was both encouraged by the US, which sought to limit the extension of Iranian influence, and the Turks themselves, who sought markets and political influence. For Iran, the new republics of Central Asia were means of escaping geographic isolation, which was imposed on it by "hostile" West and the Gulf Arab countries. Similarly, for Turkey, increasingly distanced from the EC/EU, Central Asia provided a chance to be the leader of a block of countries that shared common culture and language. Economically, Turkey and Iran expected to benefit from the region by offering themselves as transportation routes for commodities and resources of the NIMS, and as product suppliers to the relatively underdeveloped markets of the NIMS.[252]

In this competition, Turkey's advantages were as follows: Firstly, five of the six NIMS were Turkic speaking. Secondly, Turkey had a more dynamic and more competitive economy and access to Western capital and political support. Nevertheless, Turkey soon found out that its capacity was not sufficient to undertake ambitious projects in the region. For their part, the NIMS maneuvered politically to avoid one dominant patron, from being replaced by another, whether it is Turkey or Iran.[253] The greatest advantage of Iran was its geographic proximity to the region. Indeed, the most important aspect of Iran to the NIMS was its role as the primary overland link to the Persian Gulf. Iran's good relations with Russia also provided another remarkable advantage. Nevertheless, it faced Western opposition which desired to keep Iranian influence in the region at a minimum level.

Within the Turkish-Iranian competition for influence in Central Asia, Turkey made the best of its connection with the West. James Baker, then Secretary of State of the US, acknowledged that Turkey was the vanguard in halting the

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[252] Barkey, ***op.cit***., p. 161.

[253] ***Ibid.***, p. 162.; Kemal Karpat, "Orta Asya Devletleri, Türkiye ve İran'in Dış Politikaları", ***Yeni Türkiye***, vol.2 (July-August 1997), pp. 2168-70.

spread of fundamentalism among the newly independent states.[254] In Moscow, in February 1992, the NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner declared that the NATO looked to Turkey to support the Western alliance's interest in Central Asia and to oppose the danger of Islamic fundamentalism spreading there. George Bush, the then US President, defined Turkey "…as the model of democratic, secular state which could be emulated by Central Asia" in his meeting with Prime Minister Demirel on February 13, 1992. The West supported the Turkish Model since its adoption would ease the transformation to Western style democracy. The West was worried about the possibility of growing Iranian influence over the NIMS, because in case they adopted radical Islam represented by Iran, the region could pose threats to Western interests in the region. Therefore, the Muslim states of the former Soviet Union were to be discouraged from adopting the "Iranian-style Islamic model".[255] Consequently, in the euphoria period, all leaders of the Turkic republics favored "Turkish model", as a secular, democratic Muslim country, aiming to achieve Western standards, in partnership with the West, and adopting free market policies.[256]

Nevertheless, Western support for the Turkish model began to decline in 1992 and by the end of 1993 it ended almost completely due to two reasons. To begin with, it became clear that the influence of Iran in the region was limited and that there was no real danger that the NIMS would adopt the Iranian model. Secondly, after the initiation of the near abroad policy of Russia, there was not any power vacuum in the region to be filled by Iran.[257]

Similarly, the NIMS' inclination towards Turkey as a valid model during the "euphoria period" lasted for about two years. This fact could be explained in several ways. Firstly, leaders of the republics gradually began to realize the

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[254] Barkey, ***op.cit.***, p. 65.

[255] Bal, ***op.cit.***, pp. 108-11.; Attaei, ***op.cit.***, p.52

[256] Bal, ***op.cit.***, pp. 5-35.

[257] ***Ibid.***, pp. 116-26.

limitations of Turkey. Therefore, their desire for the Turkish model shrunk, and they began to say that they wanted only "good parts" of the model.[258] Another reason for the decline of the Turkish model among the NIMS was Turkish support for the Azerbaijan Popular Front that alienated the leaders of the Turkic republics, because they viewed it as Turkish meddling in internal affairs of the newly independent states. Nevertheless, Turkey also failed to keep Elchibey in power, which indicated that Turkey's support or hostility was not so important since Turkey was too weak to compete against Russia in the region. Finally Russia's return to the region adversely affected the rise of the Turkish model. Furthermore, the "Turkish model" did not operate perfectly even in Turkey. That is to say, it could not have cured its own ethnic-religious minority problem and political instability.[259]

Due to aforementioned reasons, competition between the Turkish and Iranian models was not questioned anymore since the mid-1990s. However, geopolitical competition between Turkey and Iran over the NIMS, especially in the Caucasus, went on throughout the period covered by this study. According to John Calabrese, competition between Iran and Turkey did not materialize on the same level over every state.[260] Moreover, both Calabrese and Svante E. Cornell indicate that the Caucasus, particularly Azerbaijan, has had special place in Turkish-Iranian competition.[261] For Turkey, Azerbaijan was a gateway to the Caspian Sea, and the rest of Central Asia. Of all the NIMS, Azerbaijan was culturally and ethnically the closest country to Turkey. The ethnic dimension compounded international importance by the fact that the Azeris were locked in a conflict with Armenians, Turkey's age-old foe. In addition, Azeri oil and its potential transit through Turkey

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[258] ***Ibid.***, p. 183.

[259] ***Ibid.,*** pp. 183-87.

[260] John Calabrese, "Turkey and Iran; Limits of a Stable Relationship", ***British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.25, no.1 (May 1998).

[261] Svante E. Cornell, ***Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethno political Conflict in the Caucasus*** (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), pp. 317-32. See also Tadeusz Swietochowski, "Azerbaijan's Triangular Relationship: the Land Between Russia, Turkey and Iran", in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Werner, eds., ***The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and Its Borderlands*** (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 118-35.; Athari, ***op.cit.***, pp. 260-66.

promised to be economically very rewarding to Turkey.[262] On the other hand, Azerbaijan shares a border with Iran, while its people have cultural affinities with Iran's Azeri population. Azerbaijan's importance for Iran derived from the large number of Azeris living in Iranian Azerbaijan, though creating the potential for a separatist movement in Iran. Moreover, Iran also stood to benefit from a pipeline crossing through its territory.

Competition over Azerbaijan between Iran and Turkey manifested itself in the geopolitical and commercial areas, within the context of the Karabakh conflict and oil/gas production and transportation negotiations. To encounter the threat of Azeri "revisionism" represented by the nationalist government led by Abulfez Elchibey, Iran kept its good relations with Armenia despite the Karabakh conflict. However, the costs of the protracted conflict –including the burdens of humanitarian and refugee assistance, along with the risk of increasing friction with Turkey- affected Iran's policy towards the Caucasus. Above all, signs of Armenian territorial aggression caused Iran to confine its support for Yerevan, and to concentrate on mediation efforts, in order to prevent the escalation of the conflict.

Meanwhile, the Elchibey government was overthrown in June 1993, and Haidar Aliyev, the former Politburo member and the former leader of the Azerbaijan Communist Party managed to come to power in Azerbaijan. Change in leadership and return of old communists in Azerbaijan gave Iran a better opportunity to make advances there. Indeed, Aliyev had established friendly relations with Iran during his leadership in Nakhcevan (1991-93), the Azerbaijani enclave encircled by Armenia, Iran and Turkey. Contrary to Elchibey's irredentist discourse, Aliyev kept himself distant from the anti-Russian and anti-Iranian rhetoric throughout his leadership. In turn, Tehran endorsed Aliyev's policies and declared its readiness to support him. Aliyev visited Tehran in the summer of 1994, and Azerbaijan and Iran carried out negotiations on the abolition of visas,

[262] William Hale, "Turkey and Transcaucasia", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998, pp. 150-65); and Shreen T. Hunter, "Iran and Transcaucasia", in David Menashri, ed., ***Central Asia Meets the Middle East*** (London: Frank Cass, 1998), pp. 98-125.

construction of a gas pipeline from Iran to Nakhcevan, and cooperation in the fields of transportation, agriculture, shipping, and oil. Actually, declaration of Hassan Hassanov, the then foreign minister of Azerbaijan, that he considered Iran as a bridge connecting Azerbaijan to the Gulf, was a clear sign of changing attitudes in Azerbaijan.[263]

At this juncture, Azerbaijan gave 5 percent of its share in the AIOC (Azerbaijan International Operating Consortium), led by Western companies in 1994, to Iran.[264] However, the US forced Azerbaijan to exclude Iran from the deal, which soured relations between Azerbaijan and Iran. After then, Iran, together with Russia, defended the "creation of an international regime in the Caspian, where all resources would be jointly exploited by the riparian states". The harsh response of Iran to its exclusion from the Caspian oil consortium and its close cooperation with Armenia and Russia promoted Azerbaijan-Turkey ties later.

On the other hand, Iran sustained its opposition to the projected pipeline, namely the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) that would transport the Caspian oil via Turkey, and insisted on the Iranian route. The Iranian route for Caspian oil would "give Iran more royalties and control over the outlet of Azeri oil, and thereby, an important leverage on Baku".[265] For Iran, the completion of the BTC would mean that Iran would be bypassed for oil and gas pipelines. Moreover, in view of the Iranian leaders, the BTC pipeline would "leave Azerbaijan free to support Iranian Azeris against Iran" in the absence of Iranian influence over Baku.[266]

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[263] Pahlavan, ***"Turkish-Iranian ..."***, p. 87.

[264] Bolukbasi, ***op.cit.***

[265] Cornell, ***op.cit.***, pp. 325-30.

[266] Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran Relations, 2000-2001, …"***, p. 120.

However, Iran neither achieved its policy towards the Caspian Sea,[267] nor prevented the adoption of the BTC for transporting the Caspian oil. Moreover, Iran lost its main supporter, i.e. Russia, in the Caspian issue which preferred delimitation of the Caspian after Viladimir Putin came to power and contracted bilateral agreements with other littoral states. Furthermore, Russia wanted to participate in the BTC project.[268] At this juncture, Turkey and Iran confronted each other over Azerbaijan in July-August 2001. On July 23, two Iranian Air Force planes flew over a BP (British Petroleum)/Amoco oil exploration ship in the Caspian Sea. In the same evening, an Iranian warship entered Azerbaijan's territorial waters and threatened to fire on the research ship, unless it left the area called by Azerbaijan as the Araz-Alov-Shargh field and named by Iran as Alborz. After the July 23 incident, Azerbaijan constantly complained that Iran was violating its air space throughout August. In this climate, an official in Azerbaijan embassy in Turkey declared on August 13, "There was nothing more natural than our friend and brother Turkey to take a strong stance against Iran's aggressive position".[269] Meanwhile, the Turkish Chief of the Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu visited Baku on August 25, accompanied by 10 F-5 fighter aircraft - Turkish air force acrobatic team called "Turkish Stars", which caused unease in Iran.[270]

In fact, the show of Turkish acrobatic team was scheduled one year before, and visit of General Kıvrıkoğlu was scheduled three months earlier in order to take part during the ceremony of the first graduating class of the Azerbaijan War School, a Turkish-assisted institution. However, coincidence of this scheduled visit

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[267] That was "to declare the Caspian a closed sea jointly owned by its five littoral states. Under the Iranian plan the Caspian would be jointly managed as far as such issues protecting the environment, regulating commercial navigation, fxing quotas for fishing, and devloping tourism are concerned. When it comes to oil and gas resources, however, the Iranian plan would give each of five littoral states 20 precent of the total". See, Amir Taheri, "Iran Getting Isolated in the Caspian", ***Arab News***, 14 August 2002, http://www.arabnews.com/Article.asp?ID=17675 .

[268] Ferruh Demirmen, "Baku-Tiflis-Ceyhan: 2001 Yılı Öyküsü", ***Dünya Enerji***, vol.2, no.15 (January 2002), pp. 48-49.; Taheri, ***op.cit.***; and Olson, ***op.cit.***, pp. 118-27. See also Erdal Güven, "Hazar Kıyılarında Ulusal Güvenlik", ***Radikal***, 25 August 2002.

[269] Olson, ***"Turkey-Iran Relations, 2000-2001; ...",*** pp.118-19.

[270] ***Ibid.***, p.120.

accompanied by the Turkish Stars with Azerbaijan-Iran crises of July-August 2001 was presented in the press of the three countries as a "severe" crisis. While, the Azerbaijani press interpreted it as "Turkish solidarity", Turkish press commented on it as an intimidation towards Iran.[271] There was a similar –escalating- stance towards the issue in the Iranian press as well. For instance, English-language daily *Iran News* described Turkey's actions as "unambiguous and a blatant sign of interference and intervention in the affairs of its neighbors". Furthermore, the newspaper stated that Turkey's actions were aimed at fulfilling and satisfying the interests and policies of its friends and allies like the US and Israel -the Zionist entity. Moreover, the daily accused Ankara of being opportunistic on the ground that it was taking advantage of the Tehran-Baku row and dispute among its neighbors for its own interests as well as those of its allies.[272]

In general, Turkey and Iran did not admit the existence of a competition between the two countries over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Respecting Turkish activities in the Caucasus and Central Asia, former Iranian foreign minister Velayati said, "This is not a threat. Every country has the right to pursue its own interests, and we do not see it as a threat. However, Iranian government expressed disapproval of Turkey's involvement in concert with, or on behalf of the US to "contain Iran".[273] Yet, when 200-member Turkish delegation toured Central Asia with pledges of US $ 1.2 billion in credits prior to the Askhabad Summit of ECO in May 1992, some irritation was detectable in Rafsanjani's remarks. Respecting Turkey's pre-summit maneuvering he stated; "there is competition everywhere in the world … but we are of the view that this competition should be honest and healthy".[274]

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[271] ***Hürriyet***, "İran'a Gözdağı", 23 August 2001., ***Milliyet***, "Tahran Tırmandırıyor", 22 August 2001. See Erdal Güven, "Akrobatik Diplomasi", ***Radikal***, 26 August 2001.

[272] http://www.irna.com/newshtm/eng/29140157.htm.

[273] Calabrese, ***Revolutionary …..***, p. 107.

[274] ***Ibid.***, p. 99.

It could be concluded that Iran-Turkey competition was real and emerged as competition between the Turkish and Iranian models, and economic-strategic competition between the two states, particularly over the Caucasus. It should also be added that, although competition between the Turkish and Iranian models almost disappeared after the mid-1990s, economic-strategic competition between Turkey and Iran remained in force throughout the period covered by this study.

As a matter of fact, as Gökhan Çetinsaya, indicated, the Iran –Turkey competition over the NIMS relatively mellowed in the mid-1990s due to several reasons.[275] To begin with, Russia continued to exercise its influence in the region militarily and economically. Russian involvement in the Caucasus and Central Asia deterred both Turkey and Iran from playing more active roles in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Another factor facilitating the moderation was Turkey's dependence on Iran in order to have access to the Caucasus and Central Asia, because it did not possess a direct land corridor to Baku. For its part, Turkey served as a gateway to the West for Iran as well. Therefore, the two states refrained from alienating the other and escalating the conflicts. Finally, Turkey and Iran became aware of the fact that neither Turkey nor Iran had enough capacity to fill the vacuum in the Caucasus and Central Asia left by Russia; and that unmitigated competition for this purpose was detrimental to both countries. Having awakened to this fact, they managed to cooperate on some occasions such as the admission of the NIMS to the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in 1992, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

[275] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Rafsancani'den Hatemi'ye İran Dış Politikasına Bakışlar", in Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel, eds., ***Türkiye'nin Komşuları*** (Ankara: İmge Yay., 2002), pp. 293-329. See also Barkey, ***op.cit.***, p.164.

CHAPTER 5

COOPERATION IN TURKEY-IRAN RELATIONS

Gökhan Çetinsaya, referring to the Turkish-Iranian geopolitical competition that was discussed in the previous chapter, says that contrary to the earlier expectations, Turkey and Iran found a conciliatory way after they became aware of the negative effects of such an attritional competition. He indicates that Turkey and Iran tried to protect their interests through avoiding conflicts in their bilateral relations. Moreover, they cooperated in several areas. He argues that the primary proof of this cooperation is that, Turkey and Iran agreed to admit the NIMS to the ECO, in 1992.[276] In fact, one may add to this the Turkish-Iranian cooperation against the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and their cooperation for border security throughout the 1990s. Similarly, Turkey and Iran tried to expand their bilateral economic relations during the same period. Furthermore, they played leading roles in the establishment of the Developing-8 in 1997 bringing together eight Muslim countries to cooperate in the economic field.

As a matter of fact, Turkey and Iran managed to cooperate in several areas despite the frictions between them on some issues. In spite of these ongoing frictions between Iran and Turkey in the period covered by this study, how did they achieve cooperation? In this regard, this chapter will review the areas of cooperation in Turkish-Iranian relations including economic relations and security matters while seeking answers to the question above.

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[276] Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Rafsancani'den Hatemi'ye İran Dış Politikasına Bakışlar", in Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel, ed. ***Türkiye'nin Komşuları*** (Ankara: İmge Yay., 2002), p. 308.

5.1. Economic Relations between Turkey and Iran

As stated in the previous chapters, Turkey pursued a pragmatic policy towards Iran after the revolution. Hence, Turkey did not join the West in imposing an embargo against Iran during the 1980s. Furthermore, economic relations between Turkey and Iran grew remarkably in the first half of the 1980s, greatly thanks to the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq. During the Iran-Iraq War, both countries considered Ankara as a reliable supplier of goods and a transit route for their imports from Europe. Thus, Turkey realized an export explosion toward the two belligerents. The export explosion and the revenues, derived from transportation of goods, provided Turkey with amount of foreign exchange.

Turkish exports to Iran increased from $ 45 million, in 1978, to $ 1,088 billion in 1983, making up almost 19 % of the total exports of Turkey. Turkish imports from Iran increased from $ 189 million, in 1978, to $ 1,548 billion in 1984. However, the ongoing war and the significant decline in oil prices finally led to the suffering of Iran from foreign exchange shortages, which resulted in the curtailment of its purchases from Turkey. Another factor that severed Turkish-Iranian trade relations was the perception on the part of Iran concerning the Turkish traders. According to the Iranians, Turkish traders were re-exporting third party products by significantly overcharging them to their Iranian counterparts. This led to the cancellation of barter trade agreements that had been signed in 1981 and 1982, in August 1985. Consequently, Turkish export to Iran declined to $ 440 million by 1987.[277]

[277] Suha Bolukbasi, "Turkey Copes with Revolutionary Iran", ***Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol. 8, no.1-2 (Fall/Winter 1989), pp. 99-101.; Henry J., Barkey, "Iran and Turkey, Confrontation Across An Ideological Divide", in Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles Smolansky, eds. ***Regional Power Rivalry in the New Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*** (New York: M.E. Sharpe 1995), p.154.

Turkey's exports to Iran remained in the level of nearly $ 470 million between the years of 1986-1992. Thereafter, Turkish export further declined to the levels of $ 250-300 million annually. Decrease in bilateral trade relations in the late 1980s and in the early 1990s stemmed partly from the accumulation of debts in large quantities by Iran and partly from Iran's imposition of strict curbs on imports to conserve its foreign exchange reserves. Escalation of political issues deriving from the ideological conflicts and geopolitical competition in this period also affected the Turco-Iranian trade relations in a negative manner.

Table 1. Turkey-Iran Trade Relations

YEAR	TURKISH EXPORTS TO IRAN ($ 1,000)	TURKISH IMPORTS FROM IRAN ($ 1,000)	TRADE VOLUME ($ 1,000)
1980	84,821	802,503	887,324
1985	1,078,852	1,264,655	2,343,507
1990	495,483	492,400	987,883
1991	486,903	90,538	577,441
1992	455,211	364,883	820,094
1993	289,571	667,027	956,598
1994	249,784	692,409	942,193
1995	268,434	689,476	957,910
1996	297,521	806,334	1,103,855
1997	307,008	646,402	953,410
1998	194,697	433,026	627,723
1999	157,815	635,928	793,743
2000	235,784	815,730	1,051,514
2001	360,536	839,800	1,200,336

Source: "İran Ekonomisi ve Türkiye ile İliskileri", DEİK, June 2002.

Nevertheless, the Joint Economic Council envisaged by the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement of 1982 that addresses trade and economic issues between Iran and Turkey was met regularly in Tehran and Ankara

respectively. Therefore, trade disputes between the two countries could be easily toned down. Furthermore, thanks to the Joint Economic Council, Iran and Turkey managed to improve economic relations in the mid-1990s.[278]

In this regard, Prime Minister Erbakan's visit to Iran in August 1996 resulted in the Turco-Iranian commerce accord, which envisaged Turkey's gas purchases from Iran totaling $ 23 billion in 20 years and construction of a pipeline between Tabriz and Ankara.[279] In fact, the deal with Iran reflected Turkey's efforts to cope with the domestic energy demand and its desire to avoid over-reliance on the Russian gas that currently constitutes 75 % of the Turkish consumption. It is notable that the agreement was signed just after the proclamation of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act by the US that intended to punish foreign firms trading with Iran in excess of $ 20 billion.[280]

The expansion of the Turkey-Iran economic transactions in the mid-1990s was partly facilitated by the improvement in the Iranian balance of payments thanks to the rise in international oil prices. However, decline in oil prices in 1998 and 1999 once more dragged the country into dire economic straits, which limited its imports. Thus, Turkish exports to Iran decreased to its lowest level in 1999, to $ 157,815 million, in the last two decades. While discussing this decrease, escalation of political tension between Iran and Turkey should be take into account that discouraging trade relations.

Nevertheless, in May 2000, Turkey and Iran signed trade agreements reducing customs taxes at their border crossings and extending the crossings

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[278] John Calabrese, "Turkey and Iran; Limits of a Stable Relationship", ***British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies***, vol.25, no.1 (May 1998).

[279] ***Ibid.***

[280] See Suha Bolukbasi, "The Controversy over the Caspian Mineral Resources, Conflicting Perceptions and Clashing Interests, ***Europe-Asia Studies***, vol. 50, no.3 (May 1998), pp.397-414.; Harun Kazaz, "The potential price of the newly-found relationship with Iran", ***Turkish Daily News***, 20 December 1996.; and see "U.S. Blasts Iran-Turkey Gas Accord", ***Echo of Islam***, no.192 (October 2000), p. 17.; "Turkey-Iran Deal: 'A Slap in the Face to US?'", in http://www.fas.org/news/iran/1996/960816-452798.htm [accessed in 11.24.2002].

through two of the most important gates, Gürbulak/Bazergan and Kapıkoy, to 24 hours. Both countries would beef up the customs facilities at the border crossings in order to lessen smuggling. Their respective foreign trade banks would cooperate more closely, and both countries would try to turn the ECO (Economic Cooperation Organization) into a common market. Kürşat Tüzmen, the then Undersecretary of Foreign Trade, stated in his visit to Iran in May 2000 that Turkey would continue its cooperation with Iran despite the "recent revelations".[281] His Iranian counterpart Reza Shafei said, "Turkey should not compare us to the previous government. President Khatami is not responsible for the legacy of the past. We want to open a new page with you".[282]

According to the data of 2001, Turkey's exports to Iran were around $ 360 million.[283] Its imports from Iran were close to $ 839 million. Due to the start of gas purchases of Turkey from Iran after December 2001, trade imbalance has been anticipated to further deteriorate against Turkey. Aircraft, iron and steel, boilers, machinery and mechanical equipment, textile fibers and yarns, man-made staple fibers, confectionery, automotive and spare part, plastics, electrical machinery, and paper constitute the bulk of Turkish exports to Iran. Turkey's imports from Iran have kept up pace with its exports. Mineral fuels and oil have an important place (93 %) in Turkish imports from Iran. In addition to hydrocarbon resources, copper and copper products, organic chemicals, rawhides and skins, plastics constitute major elements of Turkey's imports from Iran.[284]

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[281] Tüzmen referred to rising tension because of the revelation Hizbullah-Iran relations in early 2000.

[282] Tüzmen's visit to Tehran paid in May 2000 when the political tension escalated due to alleged linkages between the Turkish Hizbullah and Iran. See Robert Olson, "Turkey-Iran Relations, 1997 to 2000; the Kurdish and Islamist Questions", ***Third World Quarterly***, vol.21, no.5 (2000), p. 887.

[283] This relative improvement in Turkey-Iran trade relations was both supported by the easing of political tension that aroused between the years of 1997-1999, and encouraged this process.

[284] "İran Ekonomisi ve Türkiye ile İlişkiler", DEİK, Haziran (June) 2002 in www.deik.org.tr , and www.dtm.gov.tr/ead/YAYIN/kitap/iran.htm ; Osman Y. Bekaroglu***, et. al.***, ***İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Ülke Profili*** (Ankara: İhracatı Geliştirme Etüd Merkezi-İGEME, 2001).

Aside from bilateral economic relations, Turkey and Iran cooperated through regional organizations such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Developing-8 (D-8), in which the two countries have founding-member status and play leading roles. The "Developing-8", including Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, and Nigeria was established in June 1997 following the Istanbul Conference. Actually, the D-8 was the brainchild of the Welfare Party, the then part of the coalition government in Turkey. Due to the D-8's identification with Erbakan and the latter's consequent demise, the D-8 received insufficient attention even in Turkey. Therefore, the D-8 remained as a "dormant" organization since then.[285]

The ECO is the successor organization to the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), which was established by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan in 1964. It was renamed as the Economic Cooperation Organization on 28 January 1985, which came on the heels of growing trade relations between Turkey and Iran.[286] The main objectives of ECO are sustainable economic development of member states, incremental removal of trade barriers and promotion of intra-regional trade, and gradual integration of the economies of the member states with the world economy. It also aimed at developing transport and communications infrastructures linking the member states with each other and with the outside world.[287]

The emergence of the NIMS provided an opportunity to expand the ECO, and thus transformed it into a major regional player. "In light of their geographic proximity, and their historical, cultural, religious and other affinities with the ECO founding states, these republics soon sought membership in ECO both as part of their bid to open up to the outside world and as manifestation of their independent

[285] Ayhan Kamel, "D-8 Ekonomik Birliği Örgütü", ***Avrasya Dosyası***, vol.7, no.2 (Summer 2001), pp. 250-60. See also M. Bali Aykan, "Refahyol Policy toward Islamic World and Turkish Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era; Continuity, Change and Implications for the Present and Future", ***Turkish Review of Middle East Studies***, (annual), no. 11 (2000/01).

[286] K.L. Afrasiabi and Yadollah Pour Jalali, "The Economic Cooperation Organization: Regionalization in a Competitive Context", ***Mediterranean Quarterly***, vol.12, no.4 (Fall 2001), pp. 63-67.; Onder Ozar, "Economic Co-operation Organization: A Promising Future", ***Perceptions***, vol. II, no. 1 (March – May 1997).

[287] http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/decdo/eco.htm.

foreign policies". Applications of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for accession to the ECO were accepted at the second ECO Council of Ministers in Tehran in February 1992. Later, the extraordinary meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Islamabad in November 1992 culminated in the accession of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to the ECO. The expanded ECO "achieved an exponential growth, covering a vast geographic area inhabited by more than 300 million people –linked by centuries of common history, culture and tradition".[288]

One of the major accomplishments of ECO has been preferential tariff agreement signed by Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, which calls for a 10 % tariff reduction on almost 66 commodities. Furthermore, a trade agreement entered into force in 1998 addressing various transport issues such as training and capacity building and simplifying transit procedures. However, the actual ECO record in improving trade and economic transactions within the organization has been less than satisfactory. Problems such as lack of adequate transit routes, inadequate financial resources, information scarcity, and competition with non-ECO members have hampered the ECO-based trade cooperation.[289] Moreover, inclusion of largely backward and poorly industrialized countries gives ECO a poor man's image. On the other hand, the rivalries and disputes of narrow territorial, economic, and political issues between the member states have provided a fertile ground for interstate conflict. In fact, the ECO region could be defined as a "turbulent environment", which affects the efficiency of the organization in a negative manner.[290] Finally, competition between Turkey and Iran adversely affected the strengthening of the ECO. While Turkey has been promoting the BSEC (Black Sea Economic Cooperation), Iran tried to establish a similar group made up of the Caspian Sea countries.

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[288] Afrasiabi and Jalali, ***op.cit.***, pp. 67-70.

[289] ***Ibid.***, pp. 72-74.

[290] K.L. Afrasiabi, ***After Khomeini; New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy*** (Boulder, San Fransisco: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 121-22.

To sum up, despite Turkey and Iran's playing leading roles in the establishment of economic cooperation organizations, i.e. ECO and D-8, these organizations' contributions to the expansion of Turkish-Iranian economic transactions remained limited. Similarly, the competing nature -- except in the fields of oil and gas -- of the two economies reduces the number of tradable goods between Iran and Turkey. The economic crises in Turkey and the fragile structure of Iranian economy because of its large dependence on oil -- due to the decline in international oil prices during the 1990s-- adversely affected the Turkish-Iranian economic relations.

Last, but not least, there has been a positive correlation between political relations and economic relations between Turkey and Iran. Furthermore economic relations have been subordinated to political relations. Improvement of political relations between Iran and Turkey promotes economic relations between the two countries, as well. When, economic transactions between the two states were at their peak in the mid-1980s, Turkish-Iranian relations were nearly smooth. There is a coincidence between the decrease in the economic transactions and increase in conflicts between Iran and Turkey between the years of 1988-1994. Similarly, when Turkish-Iranian relations relatively improved in the mid-1990s, economic relations between the two countries expanded remarkably. Likewise, the rise of the Turkish-Iranian conflicts, especially after February 1997, and the subsequent decrease in bilateral economic relations between the two countries followed this process. Finally, in the last two years of the period covered by this study, i.e. 2000-2001, both economic and political relations between Turkey and Iran improved notably. In conclusion, it could be said that political conflicts between Turkey and Iran adversely affected the Turkish-Iranian economic relations, despite the absence of sanctions, boycotts etc. It is clear that improvement of political relations and economic relations between Iran and Turkey would support each other.

5.2. Turkish-Iranian Cooperation on Security Issues

Although the new geopolitics of Iran and Turkey led to Turkish-Iranian frictions, the same geopolitics offered them opportunities to cooperate -- moreover made it compulsory-- with respect to the Caucasus and the Kurdish Question, where they have been sharing the same fears and problems. Both states fear the disintegration of Iraq and establishment of an independent Kurdish state, which could encourage the Kurds living in Iran and Turkey to seek similar outcomes. Similarly, both countries prefer to have stability along their borders in the Caucasus and share the same concerns about Russian hegemony in the Caucasus and Central Asia.[291] Therefore, Iran and Turkey maintained diplomatic relations in spite of all frictions. [292]

However, cooperation between Iran and Turkey on security matters appeared mainly oriented to around the Kurdish question. When the PKK threat for Turkey grew in the early 1980s, Turkey signed an agreement with Iraq in 1984 allowing for automatic hot-pursuit incursions in northern Iraq. In the same vein, Turkey sought an agreement with Iran similar to that with Iraq in August 1984. In spite of the Iranian leaders' categorical refusal of a hot-pursuit treaty, Iran did not want to antagonize Turkey. In order to allay Turkish anxieties, Iran signed a "security agreement" with Turkey on November 28, 1984, which required each party to prohibit any subversive activity on its territory directed against the other.[293]

Nevertheless, despite the security agreements of 1984, the PKK managed to engage in cross-border attacks along the Turkey-Iran and Turkey-Iraq borders, and Turkey continued to accuse Iran of harboring the PKK militants. Turkey's accusations of Iran sheltering the PKK militants went on during the early 1990s as well.

[291] Barkey, ***op.cit.***, pp. 158-59.

[292] Olson, ***op.cit.***, pp. 888-89.

[293] Bolukbasi, ***op.cit.***, pp. 102-03.

Furthermore, some Turkish military contingents entered the Iranian territories in August 1992 in pursuit of the PKK militants. Eventually, Turkish interior minister Ismet Sezgin visited Tehran in September 1992 when Turkey and Iran concluded a Security and Cooperation Agreement. Within the framework of this agreement, Turkey and Iran established the Turkish-Iranian High Commission for Security composed of the Undersecretaries of the Interior Ministries of the two countries, the Joint Security Committee, composed of the deputies of the Undersecretaries of the Ministries of Interior, and the Security Subcommittees including security officials in charge around the Turco-Iranian border.[294] The basic aim in establishing these mechanisms was to facilitate exchange of information as well as to establish joint inspection and observation teams on issues related to border security. These committees served to ease Turkish-Iranian tensions, and to keep the dialogue as possible during the 1990s.

From 1992 onward, Turkey and Iran signed a series of security protocols following the meetings of the security commissions. In this respect, they signed a joint security protocol in November 1993, which envisaged that neither country would permit any terrorist organization to exist in its territory.[295] Similarly, Turkish Interior Minister Nahit Menteşe announced on May 4 1994 that Iran had turned over to Turkey 28 members of the PKK, ten of whom were dead. Moreover, on June 13, 1994, Ankara requested from visiting Iranian Interior Minister, Mohammad Besharati, that Turkey be allowed to attack the PKK bases located around the areas of Mount Ararat and Tendürek close to -and on- the Iranian territory. Consequently, Turkey and Iran issued a declaration on June 16, 1994 that arose from the Turkish-Iranian agreement to prevent crossings of the PKK members from northern Iraq to Iran, and from there to Armenia and Russia. Besharati stated that his country would cooperate with Turkey in every way against

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[294] Atay Akdevelioğlu and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, "İran'la İliskiler", in Baskın Oran, ed. ***Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olaylar, Belgeler, Yorumlar***, vol.II (İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2001), p.582.

[295] Olson, "The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995; from Gulf War to Incursion into Iraq", ***Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies***, vol. 19, no.1 (1995), p.5.; Seyyed Asadollah Athari, "Bazkhanei Ravaabete Do Keshvar pas az Cange Sard; Iran ve Torkeye", ***Rakhbord***, no. 27 (Spring 2003), pp. 268-69.

their "common enemies". In turn, Ankara announced that it would move "against" the Mujaheden-e Khalq (MKO). On his part, Menteşe stated that Turkey would not allow any group operating from Turkish territory against Iranian interests.[296] Similarly, when Demirel met with Rafsanjani in July 1994, Rafsanjani gave assurances that Iran was fully cooperating with Turkey against the PKK. Indeed, following each meeting of joint security commissions or after high-level visits, Turkey and Iran signed similar protocols or memoranda of understanding, pledging cooperation against the activities of illegal organizations in their territories.[297] Furthermore, from time to time they agreed to conduct coordinated operations against the PKK and the MKO.[298]

Another dimension of the Turkish-Iranian cooperation was their identical posture towards the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. The Kurdish groups in northern Iraq assumed the functions of government because Saddam Hussein withdrew all Iraqi officials from the north of Iraq and imposed an economic embargo towards this region since October 1991. Eventually, they managed to establish governmental institutions and organized parliamentary elections in May 1992.[299] the establishment of the interim Kurdish government in northern Iraq -- despite its overtures towards Turkey and Iran -- increased suspicions of the both countries about the ultimate goal of the Iraqi Kurds. This common concern eventually resulted in closer cooperation among Iran, Turkey and Syria, the latter a country that shares the fears of the establishment of an independent Kurdish State and the disintegration of Iraq. These three states met routinely to devise strategies against the burgeoning of a Kurdish autonomous zone.

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[296] Olson, ***op.cit.***, pp. 10-11. Nader Entessar, well-known professor on the Kurdish question claims that both Turkey and Iran, despite officially denied, allowed military incursions into each other's territory in "hot-pursuit" of the peshmergas of the PKK and KDPI. See Nader Entessar, "Kurdish Conflict in a Regional Perspective", in M. E. Ahrari,ed. ***Change and Continuity in the Middle East, Conflict Resolution and Prospects for Peace*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp.47-73.

[297] For instance see, "From Now On Turkey not to Allow Anti-Iran Activities on Its Soil-16-Point MoU Signed between Iran, Turkey", ***Tehran Times***, 10 December 1998.

[298] For instance see Radio Free Europe- Radio Liberty, ***"Iran Report"***, vol.3, no. 4 (January 2000). See also Athari, ***op.cit.***, p. 259.;

[299] Ümit Özdağ, ***Türkiye Kuzey Irak ve PKK*** (Ankara: ASAM, 1999), pp. 79-82.

They expressed their constant opposition to the fragmentation of Iraq on every occasion.[300] Nevertheless, tripartite meetings between Iran, Turkey and Syria ended in the summer of 1995, because of escalating tension between Turkey and Syria due to the PKK activities in Syria. Negotiations between Iran and Turkey went on within the framework of common security mechanisms.

Although Iran had been supporting Iraqi dissident activity against the Saddam Hussein rule over Iraq, it staunchly opposed their maximalist goals. On an occasion the Iranian Supreme Security Council declared that "in no circumstances should Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity be threatened" and has explicitly warned the Kurdish leaders against their attempts to establish greater Kurdistan considering the dangers of the disintegration of Iraq.[301]

Identical postures of Turkey and Iran regarding the territorial integrity of Iraq, and the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, were maintained throughout the 1990s. In every meeting of high-level officials from Turkey and Iran, they declared their opposition to the establishment of Kurdish state, and extended their will to keep territorial integrity of Iraq.[302] In fact, this identical posture of Turkey and Iran has been a result of the Turkish suspicion of the West, especially of the US, to establish a Kurdish state that was discussed in the second chapter of this study. Such an independent Kurdish state could instigate Turkey's own Kurdish people to join such an activity, and could be center for separatist movements. On the other hand, Iran has shared the same fears with Turkey related to the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Moreover, the possible US and/or Israel "presence" due to their cooperation with the Iraqi Kurds in this region, next to Iran's borders, greatly discomforted Iran.

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[300] Robert Olson, ***The Kurdish Question and Turkish Iranian Relations, from World War I to 1998*** (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998), pp. 39-43.

[301] John Calabrese, ***Revolutionary Horizons, Regional Foreign Policy in Post-Khomeini Iran*** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.71.

[302] For instance, see "Iran, Turkey Stress Territorial Integrity of Iraq, Condemn Foreign Intervention", ***Echo of Islam***, no. 176 (April & May 1999), p. 33.

In conclusion, it could be argued that the geopolitical location of Iran and Turkey compelled them to limit their conflicts, and cooperate in the Caucasus and northern Iraq against common threats and risks derived from instability around them, such as Russian assertiveness in the Caucasus, and the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. In the same vein, both Turkey and Iran geographically needed each other in their trade with (many) third countries in order to have access to them. On the other hand, economic needs of the two countries, particularly Turkey's energy needs, led to economic cooperation between Iran and Turkey. Turkey and Iran's desire to expand their economic relations on a regional basis culminated in the establishment of economic cooperation organizations. This cooperative manner contributed to the softening of political and ideological conflicts between the two countries.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

It has become quite clear that Turkey and Iran experienced "difficult" relations throughout the period covered by this study, i.e. 1989-2001. Frictions in the Turkish-Iranian relations in this period reached such a point that, Turkey and Iran withdrew their ambassadors twice, in 1989 and in 1997. This study analyzed conflict in the Turkey-Iran relations in two categories; that is ideological confrontation and geopolitical competition.

It was remarkable that much of the frictions in Turco-Iranian relations between the years of 1989-2001 seemed to be deriving from ideological tensions. Indeed, conflicts between revolutionary Iran that represents "radical Islam", and secular and Western-oriented Turkey seemed unavoidable. However, Turkey and Iran pursued pragmatic policies towards each other throughout the 1980s when the influence of ideology in revolutionary Iran was at its peak. In fact, ideological dimension of the Iranian foreign policy gradually decreased during the 1980s and was completely superimposed by pragmatic policies in the 1990s. As a matter of fact, after the end of Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989 the wave of reform that engulfed the whole of Iran was called the Iranian thermidor. In this period, Iran gave priority to its "national" interests rather than to revolutionary slogans, pursued an opening policy to the outside world, and restored diplomatic ties with all countries with the exception of Israel and the US. Regarding these developments one might have anticipated that Iran and Turkey, the two states that managed to keep smooth relations due to their pragmatic policies even in the 1980s, could establish sound relations after the initiation of the Iranian thermidor.

However, contrary to such anticipation, Turkey and Iran experienced strained relations throughout the 1990s.

This study sought to answer why conflict in Turkey-Iran relations increased in the covered period, considering smooth relations between Turkey and Iran in the 1980s, and thermidorizing of Iran in the 1990s. Indeed, ideology has had an important place in bilateral relations between Iran and Turkey for a long time. Ideological factors constituted the immediate reasons for conflict between Turkey and Iran in the 1990s as well. However, ideological differences between the two countries did not cause any serious conflict in the 1980s. Then, the question arises, why and how did ideological reasons led to severe frictions between Iran and Turkey in the 1990s. In this regard, this thesis paid attention to two factors that have profound effects on the foreign policies of Turkey and Iran; changing internal conditions, and the changing geopolitics of Turkey and Iran after the dissolution of the USSR and the Gulf War of 1991.

Indeed, internal developments in Turkey and Iran closely affected their foreign policies and bilateral relations. As a matter of fact, political instability in Turkey during the 1990s adversely affected Turkey-Iranian relations because it prevented the formation of consistent foreign policy strategies.[303] In fact, there were two kinds of approaches to Iran among Turkish politicians and intellectuals. While the Kemalist elite, the nationalists and the military were viewing Iran as a fundamentalist state that wanted to export its regime to Turkey, Islamists and liberals were in favor of improving relations with Iran. In this respect, the foreign ministry of Turkey adopted a cautious approach towards Iran. On the other hand ascendancy of political and radical Islam in Turkey increased the sensitivity of the "Turkish established elite" to the shariah threat, which adversely affected the Turco-Iranian relations given the so-called export of revolution policy of Iran. On

[303] Turkey's experience of many coalition governments in the 1990s and its experience of ideologically different governments in this period ranging from liberal to Islamist and to nationalist prevented consistent foreign policies, especially in its relations with regional countries. For instance, While Özal and Erbakan led governments pursuing for better relations with Iran, Ciller, Yılmaz and Ecevit governments viewed Iran as a threat harboring hostile intentions against Turkey. It is noteworthy to pay attention to different stances of various ministries; whereas foreign ministry adopted a cautious stance towards Iran, interior and defense ministries took a confrontational line toward Iran.

the other hand, increased Turkish nationalism perpetuated the "pan-Turkism" fear of Iran that has been home to many ethnically Turkic and Turkic-speaking minorities. Similarly, the Iranian leaders were discomforted with the increasing power of military in Turkish politics because they viewed the Turkish military as being responsible for Turkey's "anti-Islamic" policies, and for forging close relations with Israel, the principal foe of Iran.

The rise of pragmatism in Iran and the ascendancy of realists in Iranian politics quite pleased Turkey. However, the Iranian thermidor did not mean complete disappearance of ideological dimension from Iranian politics. Because the thermidorian Iran derived its legitimacy from the revolution, it could not contest the basic discourse of the revolution of 1979. Moreover, most factions, including radicals or idealists in Iran were strongly adhered to the revolutionary "discourse". The power struggle between the realist/reformist wing and the idealist/radical factions resulted in inconsistent policies in the foreign policy realm. Furthermore, contrary to the conciliatory and pragmatic policies of the realists in the government, idealists/radicals who were controlling the judiciary, the Revolutionary Guards, and the Intelligence Services adopted confrontational postures that can be attributed to the "revolutionary ideals". In the case of Turkey-Iran relations, despite the collaborative and conciliatory stances of the Iranian governments, radicals in Iran conducted activities such as supporting some radical Islamist organizations in Turkey, and cooperating with the PKK that caused frictions between the two countries.

In addition to internal developments, this study paid attention to the coincidence of rising ideological confrontations with geopolitical competition between Iran and Turkey throughout the 1990s to determine the reasons for the escalation of conflicts in the Turkish-Iranian relations. Turkey and Iran entered into a severe competition in northern Iraq particularly after the mid-1980s. Both states established tactical ties with the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq to be influential there. Turkey suspected that Iran supported the establishment of an Islamic regime in Iraq, and backed Islamist entities in northern Iraq, through which Turkey would

be encircled by “fundamentalist threat” from the south. In addition, Turkey feared Iran’s sheltering of the PKK in its sphere of influence in northern Iraq.

Iran, for its part, was concerned with Turkish military incursions into northern Iraq, suspecting that Turkey aimed at capturing the oil-rich Mosul-Kirkuk region, which would dramatically change the balance of power in the region to the detriment of Iran. Furthermore, Turkey’s presence in northern Iraq -- possibly in collaboration with the US and Israel-- would enable Turkey to manipulate ethnic dissidents in Iran. Moreover, the domination of Turkey over northern Iraq would give it a stake in the Gulf politics where Iran jealously guarded its “hegemony”.

Turkey and Iran entered into geopolitical competition over the Caucasus and Central Asia following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Actually, there were two areas in the Turco-Iranian competition over the Caucasus and Central Asia. Initially, they competed to be “model countries” for the NIMS for re-structuring and development whose outcome would accrue huge political influence to the “model country”. However, because the NIMS adopted pragmatic policies, and Russia “returned to the region” in the mid-1990s, competition of the models nearly ended in the mid-1990s. The other area of the Turkish-Iranian competition over the Caucasus and Central Asia was based on concrete pragmatic reasons such as acquiring benefits, offering themselves as transit routes for commodities and energy resources, and maximizing their economic benefits in these countries. This sense of competition between Turkey and Iran went on throughout the period covered by this study.

Despite the existence of conflicts between Turkey and Iran, during the period covered by this thesis, they managed to cooperate in several areas including expansion of economic relations, taking identical postures towards northern Iraq, and establishing common security mechanisms to address mutual interests of the two states. It is remarkable that Turkey and Iran established common security committees in September 1992 when the geopolitical competition and ideological confrontation between the two states were at their height. In the same vein, they

cooperated in the enlargement of the ECO towards Central Asia and the Caucasus. Similarly, the two states played leading roles in the establishment of the D-8 in June 1997, when Turco-Iranian diplomatic relations were strongly strained due to the Sincan Affair.

In conclusion, the new geopolitics of Turkey and Iran, and the internal developments in these countries established a sense of competition and a conflictual atmosphere between the two countries. The infusion of ideological differences and tensions into the already conflictual process further exacerbated the frictions in Turco-Iranian relations. Another reason that deepened the conflict between Turkey and Iran is mutual distrust between the two countries. Despite many agreements, failure in the prevention of the frictions --albeit in different levels-- further perpetuated this distrust. The solution of this mutual distrust depends on the further democratization of and transparency in each country. Improvement of cultural interactions between Turkey and Iran would also help eradicate mutual distrust.

Taking into account the general trend in Iran, one may anticipate that the impact of ideology in bilateral relations could decrease gradually. However, because the large national interests of Turkey and Iran coincide with their sects/ideologies, the entire disappearance of ideological differences should not be expected. Nevertheless, increase in democratic culture and transparency both in Iran and Turkey, and improvement of cultural transactions between them could buffer ideological differences in such a way as to prevent them from being important factors for creating conflicts between the two states.

Nevertheless, considering the fact that, geopolitical competition is among the leading reasons for Turkish-Iranian frictions in the 1990s, developing joint projects towards the regions of competition could contribute to cooperation between the two countries. Indeed, the analysis of economic relations between Turkey and Iran displayed that frictions in bilateral relations decreased to lower levels when their economic transactions increased to remarkable levels. In this regard, expanding trade relations would serve to the improvement of Turkish-

Iranian relations. Cautious stance of foreign policy decision-makers both in Turkey and Iran, in spite of all "challenging incidents", proved the possibility of promoting cooperation in the Turco-Iranian relations.

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